

RESOLUTION

The following resolution was adopted by the participants of the 2000 International Symposium on Geological and Environmental Hazards in Mexico City.

Disasters are not natural. They are a result of decisions by society on where to live and how to protect itself from natural phenomena.

Mexico City is subject to natural forces of volcanic, seismic or hydro-meteorological origin. It is necessary to pursue joint actions between the Federal District government and the Federal government against hazards of geological origin and severe air pollution.

In recent years, there have been substantial advances in scientific fields concerned with natural hazards and pollution. Many of these advances remain confined to publications, reports, conference rooms, and classrooms. Yet the new version of the Building Code of the Federal District to be published, incorporates important new knowledge on seismic, structural and foundations engineering. We recognize that the building code is not always complied with. We support the application of a single building code for the Metropolitan Area, including the townships in the State of Mexico.

Existing laws are insufficient to prevent and mitigate disasters. A basic agreement among the population, academics and government to identify their respective obligations, responsibilities and fields of action is required.

- Water supply is a priority and a serious issue. External sources from outside the basin are economically and politically costly, and vulnerable to natural and political factors, including legitimate regional and local interests.
- Sewage disposal, including storm runoff, has long been a central problem in the region. A failure of the drainage system, especially of the deep drainage, could represent one of the major risks for the urban area.
- Serious air, soil, and aquifer pollution risks exist.
- Earthquakes will continue to threaten the city.
- Ashfall is a major volcanic hazard that may affect health and interrupt air traffic.
- In the western part of the city the collapse of caves and old mine shafts represent a hazard to home construction.

The Media could play an important role in the diffusion of scientific information to the population. Communications between the media and technicians and academics who generate relevant information should be strengthened.

The growth of the metropolitan area of Mexico City is reaching the limits of sustainable development. Hazards associated to natural processes and human activity represent a growing risk for the population. Risk mitigation requires action as well as a change of attitude and a sense of responsibility among the population.

Editor's note: This text was published in an extended version in the Mexico City daily press. Copies were sent to President Vicente Fox and to Governor López Obrador of the Federal District in Mexico City.

