The United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 18–22 January 2005. People from United Nations organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals who were willing to contribute to disaster reduction joined this Global Cooperation Conference. This Conference was organized soon after the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster on 26 December 2004 which killed about 230,000 people. It is apparent that this tragedy would have been reduced by understanding of mechanism, preparedness, early warning, and evacuation. Landslide disaster can be reduced by understanding of mechanism, prediction, hazard assessment, early warning and risk management. In addition, landslides can be prevented from occurring by various measures to remove landslide causes and to stabilize slopes, while it is not possible to prevent most other hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and typhoons. Thus, landslide disaster reduction is the function where human efforts and financial investment are most effective.

The International Consortium on Landslides (ICL), which was founded on 21 January 2002, sent 51 delegates to the WCDR. The number of delegates was one of the biggest within participating entities. The ICL organized a thematic session on the International Programme on Landslides (IPL) and the International Flood Initiative (IFI) together with the flood group and UNESCO and other global stakeholders. This session resulted in a Letter of Intent (LoI) concerning strengthening cooperation in research and learning on earth system risk analysis and sustainable disaster management within the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR). The LoI was approved by seven global stakeholders: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN-ISDR), the United Nations University (UNU), the International Council for Science (ICSU), and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) within the year 2005.

Based on this Letter of Intent, the Tokyo Round Table Discussion “Strengthening Research and Learning on Earth System Risk Analysis and Sustainable
Disaster Management within the UN-ISDR as Regards Landslides—towards a
dynamic global network of the International Programme on Landslides (IPL)
was held at the United Nations University, Tokyo, from 18 to 20 January, 2006.
The 2006 Tokyo Action Plan of the International Programme on Landslides
(IPL) was adopted by the participants in this Tokyo Round Table Discussion.
The Action Plan proposed the global cooperating network of the IPL, and
established the IPL Global Promotion Committee and the IPL World Centre
as its secretariat to coordinate and support implementation of the International
Programme on Landslides. The Plan also proposed organization of a World
Landslide Forum in order to bring together academics, practitioners, politicians,
and other stakeholders to a global, multidisciplinary, problem-focused platform.
The first IPL Global Promotion Committee was held in January 2007 at the
UNU, Tokyo, where it was decided to organize the First World Landslide Forum
at the UNU on 18–21 November 2008. This decision led to a very short preparation
time. The ICL is expected by its Statutes to organize its General Assembly
every 3 years in order to disseminate its activities and to provide a forum for open
discussion and new initiatives from all participants. The First General Assembly
was organized at the Keck Center of the National Academy of Sciences,
are well represented by the World Landslide Forum. Thus, the First World
Landslide Forum was planned for 2008, including the aim of the General
Assembly of ICL. The First World Landslide Forum is jointly organized by the
following global stakeholders together with the ICL:

Organizers: The International Consortium on Landslides (ICL), United
Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World
Meteorological Organization (WMO), Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations (FAO), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster
Risk Reduction (UN-ISDR), United Nations University (UNU), United
Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Bank (IBRD), United
Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Council for Science
(ICSU), World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), Kyoto University
(KU), and the Japan Landslide Society (JLS).

Honorary Chairpersons: Salvano BRICENO (Director of UNIISDR),
Jacques DIOUF (Director-General of FAO), Konrad OSTERWALDER
(Rector of UNU), Michel JARRAUD (Secretary-General of WMO), Koichiro
MATSUURA (Director-General of UNESCO), Goverdhan MEHTA (President
of ICSU), Shuzo NISHIMURA (Executive Vice President of Kyoto University)

Chairperson: Kyoji SASSA (President of ICL, IPL World Centre), Co-
Chairpersons: Paolo CANUTI (European Centre of ICL, University of Florence),
Srikantha HERATH (Senior Academic Programme Officer of UNU), Kazuhiro
ISHIHARA (Director of Disaster Prevention Research Institute of Kyoto
University), Howard MOORE (Senior Advisor of ICSU), Badaoui ROUHBAN
(Chief, Section for Disaster Reduction of UNESCO), Peter Lyttle (U.S. Geological
Survey)

The Forum will organize an Open Forum “Progress of IPL Activities”; a
Plenary Symposium “Global Landslide Risk Reduction”; Keynote lectures;
Thematic Parallel Sessions; Public forum “Protection of Society and Cultural
and Natural Heritage from Landslides”, including a session titled “Landslides for
Children”, which will invite 50 children from landslide disaster areas of the
Philippines, Shikoku Island and Niigata Prefecture, Japan; and the monthly exhibition “Landslides and Risk Mitigation of the World”. This volume presents (1) Progress of IPL Activities, (2) eight keynote lectures, (3) three examples of IPL Projects from research, capacity building and the protection of cultural heritage, (4) Major contents of 16 thematic parallel sessions which are classified by four global cooperation fields proposed by the Tokyo Action Plan as follows:

Global Cooperation Field (1): Technological Development

Global Cooperation Field (2): Targeted Landslides: Mechanism and Impacts

Global Cooperation Field (3): Capacity Building

Global Cooperation Field (4): Mitigation, Preparedness and Recovery
1. Climate change and slope instability, 2. Economic and social impact of landslides, 3. Environmental impact of landslides, 4. Engineering measures for landslide disaster mitigation, 5. Watershed and forest management for risk reduction
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