

Melbourne Statement

13th Congress of the World Association of Disaster and Emergency Medicine

- Whereas, disasters and emergencies include exceptional events caused by natural hazards and man-made factors, including armed conflict;
 - Whereas, disasters have global consequences and continue to result in large numbers of potentially preventable deaths and human suffering;
 - Whereas, disasters create major problems for the public health of populations and the health systems of countries affected by disasters, especially poor countries;
 - Whereas, there exists a large number of organisations and professional disciplines worldwide that are involved in disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery;
 - Whereas, there exists a need to develop collaborative relationships between such organizations and disciplines;
 - Whereas, there is a need for better understanding of the epidemiology of disasters and to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of preventive and response measures;
 - Whereas, there currently exist standardized structures for the development of evidence-based indicators and standards for disaster response and for the conduct of structured research (Health Disaster Management: Guidelines for the Evaluation and Research in the Utstein Style);
 - Whereas, there is a paucity of international systems that independently collate and transfer experiences into improved understanding of these mechanisms.
- Thus:
- WADEM will focus more of its energies on the public health aspects of disasters and emergencies;
 - WADEM will contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge concerning disaster epidemiology, policy, planning, response, recovery, and program evaluation;
 - WADEM will promote international professional standards and educational programs for persons involved in disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery;
 - WADEM will facilitate the development of global multidisciplinary collaborative relationships with other organizations and institutions committed to disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery;
 - WADEM will coordinate a series of consultations to prepare a formal framework of action that will be presented at the 14th World Congress for Disaster and Emergency Medicine to be convened in Edinburgh in 2005.

**Passed Unanimously, 17 May 2003, Melbourne, Australia
General Assembly
The World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine**