

Subject: Trip Report on October/November Missions by Larry Roeder

Between October 27 and Nov 13, GDIN Executive Mr. Larry Roeder made two related missions in support of the GDIN initiative, the first to New Mexico and the second to Paris, Geneva and Pretoria. The trip also supported US Department of State initiatives. This report only covers GDIN aspects of the trip.

New Mexico from October 27-30.

(a) **Conference on UAV's:** Mr. Roeder attends a NOAA and New Mexico State University sponsored conference at this time each year on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's). This is the largest such event in the world. Often thought of as military or counter-terrorism tools, UAV's also have direct applications to disaster response and telecommunications and as a remote sensing platform to advise how to reduce risks to hazards. For several years, Mr. Roeder has been invited to the conference to discuss the non-military/terrorism applications. He is also acknowledged as the inventor of an application to use solar-powered UAV's in this arena. In October, his focus was on ISDR and how the UN does disaster management, in order to stimulate partnerships. New Mexico State also agreed to foster a UAV panel at GDIN2004.

(b) **Meetings with American Indians:** At the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the Interior Department, Mr. Roeder drove to three remote Indian reservations to discuss GDIN, as well as a proposed GDIN prototype service to facilitate the flow of disaster information in remote regions of the world, including the reservations. Mr. Roeder met with senior leaders from the San Juan, Laguna and Zia Pueblo tribes, and the First Vice President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). The result of was the creation of a "Native American Panel" at GDIN2004 to examine the disaster needs of North American indigenous populations in Mexico, Canada and the United States. In addition, a separate GDIN Working Group will explore how to apply the information service in the Pueblo region, expand it to other regions of Indian Land and link it to a similar

proposed service under discussion with South Africa. The National Science Foundation agreed in principle to help fund research in support of the Indian project. In addition, during Mr. Roeder's trip to Paris, the OECD study group agreed to examine the disaster information needs, weaknesses and strengths of the Pueblos. The working group now contains officials from the Pueblo nations, BIA, ISDR and OECD.

For the service to take off, funds will be needed. GDIN management is exploring this.

Paris Nov 2-5 Meetings at OECD

The Department of State's IO Bureau partially funds a study on systemic risks to society. Mr. Roeder represented the US Government in the first meeting of the Steering Committee to examine phase two of the study. In this phase, member nations engage in self-analysis of potential disaster preparedness weaknesses, based on principles in phase one. The group supported the GDIN examination of Pueblo Indian disaster information needs.

Geneva Nov 5-6, 2003 Meetings at UN ISDR

Mr. Roeder chairs the US ISDR Committee and attended meetings of the UN's ISDR Task Force. He also brought with him the Chairman of the OECD Systemic Risks Project, at the invitation of the UN. Most sessions were chaired by Jan Egeland, Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. One meeting was devoted entirely to a proposed ISDR World Conference on Disaster Reduction was chaired by Katsuhiro Hara, Director for Disaster Preparedness, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. The Director of the ISDR Secretariat recommended that GDIN consider hosting a one day event at the World Conference. This is being discussed by GDIN Management.

Pretoria Nov 7-11 Meetings with South Africans

GDIN Infectious Disease Working Group: The US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) asked GDIN to approach South African health professionals about the possibility of small grants to develop disease information systems. Thanks to the help of Embassy Pretoria, Mr. Roeder met with the principal leaders of the nation's main disease

institutions, who agreed to work with NAS and also with the GDIN Infectious Disease Working Group

GDIN2005 South Africa has been suggested as the venue for GDIN2005. The National Disaster Center confirmed their interest, but final cabinet approval is needed first. This might be done with the cooperation of the University of Witwatersrand. A roundtable of thirty UN, industry, academic and NGO disaster experts assembled by Embassy Pretoria expressed great enthusiasm to hold GDIN2005 in South Africa as a [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\)](#) event. That is also the desire of the Water Ministry and the National Disaster Center.

GDIN Information Facilitator Service: The Pueblo Indian project was discussed at length with the National Disaster Information Center, who proposed that they might support a similar concept within the SADC umbrella. The concept has both systems supporting each other, and trading staff.

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