

14th World Conference on Disaster Management, Toronto, Canada



Over 1,300 members of the world's emergency management community met in Toronto this June for one of the largest annual conferences in the field. Attendees came from 43 countries to hear over 100 presenters offer the latest thinking in emergency management, response, recovery, planning, security, risk management, and infrastructure protection, among a number of other topics and issues of interest across the full disaster management spectrum.

The World Conference on Disaster Management (WCDM) has always attracted large contingents from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. This year, however, there were some interesting newcomers—from China, South Korea, Slovenia, Afghanistan, and dozens of other countries.

“Government officials from Canada and the United States are often surprised at the number and diversity of WCDM attendees,” said Adrian Gordon, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness (CCEP), which hosts the event. “When people enter the opening plenary session and sense the scope of the event, they often ask what government ministry we're part of.”

The purpose of the WCDM is to provide topical, up-to-date information on advances in the emergency management field from a wide number of perspectives. “We're fortunate in having hundreds of presentation

submissions each year to choose from,” said Gordon. “That means we not only have first rate workshop and break-out sessions, but we also have superb presentations as back-ups.”

The conference also provides a unique opportunity for networking across disciplines. Throughout the four-day event, small and large groups can be seen huddled in quiet, focused conversations or spilling out of a workshop engaged in a long, loud, free-wheeling debate that continues into the evening.

The WCDM offers presentations, workshops, pre-conference courses, demonstrations, and numerous networking opportunities from across the disaster management spectrum. The conference returns to Toronto July 10-13, 2005, with a new theme: “Defining the New Normal.” Full details about the 15th WCDM can be found on the Web at www.wcdm.org.

ABOUT CCEP

The CCEP is an Ontario-based, not-for-profit organization devoted to the promotion of disaster management to individuals, communities, and organizations in both government and the private sector with the aim of reducing the risk, impact, and cost of natural, human-induced, and technological disasters. Their aim is to raise awareness of the increasing risks of disasters, promote the need for sound disaster management practices, and disseminate information on the availability of professional expertise and resources, including technology. For more information, visit CCEP on the Web at <http://www.ccep.ca>, or contact them directly at 905-331-2552.

David Auger, Communications Director, Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness, Burlington, Ontario, Canada.