**Cities and Megacities at Risk**  
This forum -- sponsored by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Stanford University's John A. Blume Earthquake Engineering Center, and the World Seismic Safety Initiative -- was held on Capitol Hill on January 21, 1998. After a brief introduction by forum organizers from SNDR and IBHS, current GSA Congressional Fellow Dave Verardo, who is serving in Senator Wyden's office, spoke on behalf of the Senator on the importance of the forum. He was joined by Oregon's Deputy Chief Geologist John Bolio, who stressed the need to "include Mother Nature" in these discussions, and remember that she uses "the language of geology." Ben Wisner, California State University of Long Beach, gave a morning keynote address on *Global and Domestic Issues and Risk in Cities and Megaciti es.* He spoke of the new dangers facing society, including climate change, new diseases, economic globalization, war and civil unrest, complex emergencies, and environmental racism resulting from wealth inequities. He suggested several tools to mitiga te these problems -- promoting a democratic city government, respecting local knowledge, and focusing on the total urban environment and quality of life.

A panel discussion on *Mitigation and Planning -- Reducing Risk in the City* was led by Anne Kiremidijian of Stanford University. Klaus Jacob, Columbia University Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, spoke of the hazards facing New York City. Although the probability of a natural disaster hitting the area is moderate, New York's vulnerability to and assets lost from such a disaster are huge. He believes that the private sector is "unaware and unprepared" for such an event. Jeff Williams, U.S. Geolog ical Survey, emphasized the importance of sound, reliable, and accessible scientific information to mitigate hazards in coastal cities. Kendra Briechle, International City/County Management Association, reported the results of a recent study on *Needs, Barriers, and Opportunities to Mitigation in Local Government.* The survey showed that many governments are confused about mitigation, and most perceive a lower risk for their area than actually exists. In addition, smaller governments generally have fewer tools for mitigation, including a lack of capacity and enforceable building codes. Briechle suggested building partnerships and creating viable outreach strategies to aid local governments. Bill Sherman spoke about his experience planning for natu ral disasters with Intel Corporation, located in the San Francisco Bay area. Although Intel and other companies had extensive mitigation programs, downsizing, mergers, and the emphasis on quarterly profits have reduced efforts. He recommended educating and encouraging company auditors on the benefits of mitigation and creating an updated manual on the costs of damages to a company. Jerry Jarrell, Acting Director for the National Hurricane Center, focused his remarks on the problems of building on barrie r islands and the land just behind them.

Two afternoon keynote addresses were given by Bob Volland, FEMA, and Stuart Mustow, World Federation of Engineering Organizations. Volland reminded participants that the U.S. has not seen a "huge" disaster in over 100 years, which has desensitized many t o the risks. He emphasized the need for cost-effective mitigation measures. Mustow provided predictions that the world's population will double by 2025 (from 5 billion people to 10 billion), and that most of that growth will occur in cities, especially in developing countries. He suggested increasing the amount of information that is available worldwide, linking financial support from development agencies to risk reduction, and mobilizing big business support as several measures to reduce the vulnerabi lity of these megacities to natural disasters.

A second panel focused on Post-Disaster Response and Recovery in Cities and Megacities, and was moderated by Haresh Shah of Stanford University. Mark Homan, the Hartford, emphasized the importance of accessibility to an area after a disaster, noting that delays in service often cost more than the physical repairs. Fouad Bendimerad, Risk Management Solutions, summarized the actions of the International Project on Megacities, and noted that it still faces many challenges, including a lack of funding and vo lunteer capacity. Mark Cackler, World Bank, spoke about the World Bank's policies with respect to disaster management in South America. The World Bank is more active in post-disaster aid than mitigation, mainly because it is difficult for the Bank to con vince countries to borrow money to fund mitigation activities. Kawika Daguio, American Bankers Association, emphasized the importance of banks in the recovery phase of disasters, and willingness of banks to cooperate with other sectors to aid the communit ies.

William Hooke, SNDR, closed the meeting by asking all participants to answer the question, "What is the most important need for PPP2000 to address." The responses are being compiled and will be available shortly.