

18 August 2008

Natural Disaster Updates:

Laos PDR, 15 Aug: Mekong "100-year flood" threatens Indochina

Four people have been killed in flooding and landslides in Laos, where the Mekong river has hit its highest level in at least 100 years after several months of unusually heavy rain. The government and the communities in the landlocked Southeast Asian country have been rushing to complete a 2.5 metre (8 ft) wall of sandbags to stop the chocolate-brown waters inundating the capital, Vientiane. Police have closed roads leading to the riverbank to make it easier for trucks delivering sandbags.

The Mekong, which flows 4,350 km (2,700 miles) from the glaciers of Tibet to the rice-rich delta of southern Vietnam, hit 13.68 metres (44.88 feet) in Vientiane on Thursday, trouncing a high of 12.38 metres (40.61 feet) recorded in 1966, the worst floods in living memory.

Downstream, eastern Thailand and low-lying Cambodia, where the annual flooding of the Mekong is crucial to rice and fish production, are braced for major flooding as the water surge moves slowly south. The high waters will ultimately flow down into Vietnam, where at least 130 people were killed and 36 were missing this week after the worst floods in decades due to the remnants of a tropical storm. Forecasters said the waters in the delta had risen to an initial alarm level two weeks earlier than last year, although it was likely to have little impact on rice production as most of the current crop had already been harvested.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SP192460.htm>

Overflowing Mekong River ravages northern, northeastern Thailand

Several of Thailand's northern and northeastern provinces along the Mekong River are now badly hit by water flooding as heavy rains continue in the two regions, causing damage to homes and farmsteads. Three districts in the northeastern province of Mukdahan are now submerged as the water level in the river rose to 12.6 metres, overflowing the banks and affecting at least 50 homes with at least partial submersion. Fishponds and croplands were also badly affected. More than 100 relief workers with flat-bottomed boats moved to help affected flood victims and sandbagged the banks of a canal to prevent floodwaters from reaching the town's commercial centre.

In Nong Khai province bordering Laos, many roads and structures were partially under water after heavy rains lashed the area Thursday night, damaging at least 400 homes in Pak Khat district. Thirty thousand sets of medicine were sent Friday to assist victims in the three provinces. Mobile medical units found that more than 3,600 flood victims were suffering from severe cold and skin diseases. The public was also advised to consume clean drinking water as diarrhea is usually found during the flood season.

Death toll from floods, landslides in China climbs to 40

The death toll from flash floods and landslides in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Kammuri in China's southwestern Yunnan province has now reportedly climbed to 40 people, with six people missing and 42 injured. Storm has caused some US\$108 million (746 million Yuan) in

direct economic losses with damage to agriculture and infrastructure. Adverse weather conditions have affected some 1.25 million people and damaged thousands of homes. More than 16,000 people have been evacuated from severely affected areas. Provincial authorities have allocated US\$1.5 million (10 million Yuan) for disaster relief to affected communities. Kammuri is the third storm to hit China this season, Xinhua reported. It first slammed into the southern province of Guangdong on August 6 and then swept across the Beibu Gulf to Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region before moving west to Yunnan. Flooding is an annual phenomenon for much of southern and eastern China, with most of the casualties occurring in poor rural areas. More than 200 people have died in floods this year. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/13/content_9270342.htm

Vietnam flood death toll rises to 122

Vietnam's death toll from floods triggered by Tropical Storm Kammuri rose to 119 Wednesday (August 13), while a new bout of flooding elsewhere in the country claimed at least three lives. The new flooding is the result of a tropical low-pressure system in the Gulf of Tonkin that produced heavy rain over Quang Ninh province beginning Tuesday (August 12). The low-level storm hit Vietnam's mountainous northern provinces on Friday (August 8) after hitting China's southwestern Guangdong province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Yunnan province earlier in the week. About 40 people have been killed in Kammuri-triggered floods in Yunnan. Floods and landslides kill hundreds of people each year in Vietnam, which is prone to heavy rainfall during the May through September monsoon season. Storms moving inland from the South China Sea can also trigger floods in Vietnam between July and November.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MUMA-7HG9H8?OpenDocument>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KLMT-7HG9JU?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=vnm>

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/08/11/vietnam.floods/index.html>

<http://www.canada.com/calgaryherald/news/story.html?id=2bca26a2-18e6-4416-a28f-80c2e3cff238>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7553797.stm>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KKAA-7HE7S3?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=vnm>

Heavy rains bring India's monsoon deaths to 1,119

Heavy monsoon rains across the central part of India have brought the death toll so far this season to 1,119, according to the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs' report, released Monday (August 11). Sustained heavy rainfall has been reported in recent days in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority have issued eviction notices for several vulnerable buildings in the city, as the rains are expected to continue. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) warned that a low-pressure area resting over the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh will likely produce widespread heavy rainfall over the central states for the next several days. A separate system is also affecting northeastern states and is expected to worsen over the next two to three days, according to the IMD. That system is also affecting Bangladesh, where the Padma, Arial Khan and Kangsha rivers are all flowing above danger level in some places. The Brahmaputra and Ganges rivers are also on the rise, according to Bangladesh's Flood Information Center. South Asia's monsoon season typically runs from June through September, affecting millions of people and leaving hundreds dead. Although this year's rains began a few weeks early, the season is expected to produce average rainfall.

<http://www.ndmindia.nic.in/flood-2008/floodMonth/floodsAugust.htm>

www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/retrieveattachments?openagent&shortid=MUMA-7HD3LM&file=Full_Report.pdf

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/10_dead_60_hurt_as_two_Mumbai_buildings_collapse/articleshow/3360751.cms

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/storypage/storypage.aspx?sectionName=&id=fa8c1857-7c71-41f5-9240-f17c221017ae&&Headline=18+killed+in+house+collapse+in+south+Mumbai&strParent=strParentID>

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/storypage/storypage.aspx?sectionName=&id=fa8c1857-7c71-41f5-9240-f17c221017ae&&Headline=18+killed+in+house+collapse+in+south+Mumbai&strParent=strParentID>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MUMA-7HG4PS?OpenDocument>

Worst floods in 200 years hit Ukraine -Red Cross

The worst flooding in two centuries has devastated parts of Ukraine and Moldova, leaving more than 30 dead and dozens missing, according to the Red Cross. In Moldova, Europe's poorest country, homes with walls built of mud have "dissolved and crumbled like chocolate", Red Cross regional representative Joe Lowry says. The floods have caused over \$1 billion in damages in the two countries, according to reports. And there is a danger of more flooding as rivers are still swollen and the land is sodden. Romania has also been affected.

Heavy rains in the Carpathian mountains at the end of July caused rivers to spill into towns and villages, submerging homes and displacing tens of thousands of people. "Moldova is still recovering from a succession of serious droughts ... This is the worst possible irony," he adds. The worst of the damage is along the banks of the Dniestr and Prut rivers. In Moldova, the Prut rose nine metres over its normal level, Lowry says.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is launching an emergency appeal for \$1.2 million. Aid agencies responding to the disaster say there are urgent needs for clean water, food, hygiene articles and water filters. The European Union which has sent experts to the region is warning that the situation in Moldova could still deteriorate with many dikes along the Dniestr completely destroyed. Russia and Japan were also flying in tents, blankets, drinking water and generators.

News:

13 August, Afghanistan: The education in emergencies community lost three exceptional members, all employed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in an ambush of a humanitarian aid vehicle in Logar Province, Afghanistan. They were Shirley Case, who managed education programs designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities; Nicole Dial, IRC child protection coordinator; and Jacqueline (Jackie) Kirk, an education technical advisor who provided support for the IRC's children's education programs worldwide. Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies <http://www.ineesite.org>

First responders get more emergency communications options

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is developing a prototype two-way radio emergency communications system for emergency crews-and the technology could be a boon for emergency response teams.

The system features smart multihop relay devices, called breadcrumbs. The relay devices run software that can notify emergency crews when they need to place another of the breadcrumbs along their route to extend the range of communications down a hallway or tunnel.

"The system uses off-the-shelf microprocessors and other standard hardware along with the NIST-developed software, which monitors the status of radio communications signals," Hamblin says. "NIST said the software can rapidly assess the strength of the signal that emergency workers are receiving, so they can get an alert before they walk out of range and lose contact with the last relay device. Instead, the new prototype system has two versions; one for the 900-MHz communication channel and the other for the 2.4-GHz channel.

http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&taxonomyId=15&articleId=9111967&intsrc=hm_topic

Space Charter triggered for Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam: US Geological Survey (USGS) has triggered the International Charter Space and Major Disasters for floods in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Thailand and Vietnam. UNOSAT has been appointed Space Charter Project Manager working closely with USGS and supporting the Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Centre (www.mrcmekong.org). Satellite image derived flood maps and analyses will be available from GDACS/VirtualOSOCC and www.unosat.org.

Warnings on floods faulted

Environmentalists have hit out at the Mekong River Commission (MRC) for allegedly failing to alert people in member countries about flooding. The Thai People's Network on Mekong, the Foundation for Ecological Recovery, the Living River Siam and the Chiang Khong Conservation Group also rejected the commission's claim that the flooding has not been caused by water released from big dams in China. Heavy rains have caused serious flooding in the MRC's four member countries of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. http://bangkokpost.com/170808_News/17Aug2008_news01.php

India: 75 institutions roped in to study climate impact: New Delhi: How vulnerable is India to climate change? The answer will emerge with the widest and largest set of studies being now undertaken to look at the possible impacts of climate change on the country. The ministry of environment and forests is coordinating the details of what will be the largest ensemble of scientific and economic studies undertaken by the government as part of its official report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Seventy-five research, academic and government institutions are being coordinated into studying all kinds of possible impacts that global warming could bring to Indian shores. Based on projections developed by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology on how dozens of climate parameters will play out with different levels of global carbon dioxide emissions, these prime Indian institutions will carry out their studies to evaluate an array of possible impacts, for good or for bad that could hurt or benefit the country.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Global_Warming/75_institutions_roped_in_to_study_climate_impact/articleshow/3353759.cms

Events:

Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness

Accra, Ghana

2-4 September 2008

In September 2008, ministers from over 100 countries, heads of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, donor organizations, and civil society organizations from around the world will gather in Accra for the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2-4 September). Their common objective is to help developing countries and marginalized people in their fight against poverty by making aid more transparent, accountable and results-oriented. The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Third HLF) will:

- review progress in improving aid effectiveness
- broaden the dialogue to newer actors
- chart a course for continuing international action on aid effectiveness

Information Resources:

Report: ActionAid's report on climate change adaptation and women in South Asia, We Know What We Need

As the food crisis escalates, women are bearing the brunt of the burden, jeopardising their chances of working outside the home or attending school, warns ActionAid. "Women are

responsible for more than 50% of household production but according to FAO they own only 2% of land and receive only 1% of the resources allocated to agricultural enterprise," Livia Zoli, policy analyst with ActionAid Italy. "This means that women and girls are disproportionately poor and, as unpredictable weather patterns impact adversely on agriculture, they are more vulnerable to its effects," she added. Although women farmers are adapting to these changes using local knowledge and experience, they lack access to cheap credit, information and technical assistance and women are still left out in the cold when it comes to international decision-making.

http://www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf/ActionAid%20%20IDS%20Report%20_We%20know%20what%20we%20need.pdf

Report-We know what we need: South Asian women speak out on climate change adaptation": The report, states how women are coping with rising weather-related disasters and what their priorities are for securing their livelihoods in the face of climate change. The report argues that women are not passive victims of climate change but have strong ideas about how to improve their resilience. The report urges governments to give women an equal say in how the funds given to poor countries to help them adapt to climate change are managed and spent. But are policy makers really listening?
http://www.actionaid.org/assets/pdf/ActionAid%20%20IDS%20Report%20_We%20know%20what%20we%20need.pdf

Publication: Facts & Trends to 2050: Energy & climate change

"This publication provides an overview of key facts and societal challenges related to economic development, future energy demand and the impact that demand could have on the climate system. It forms part of the work program of the WBCSD's Energy and Climate Council Project and provides a platform for future discussion."

<http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/FjSOTYajhk3cIRxCbijT/Basic-Facts-Trends-2050.pdf>

The World Bank: The Little Green Data Book 08

Agricultural productivity to drop because of climate change, warns World Bank publication. - Little Green Data Book. Climate change is expected to lower the potential for agricultural production, according to the Little Green Data Book 2008 published by the World Bank. The Little Green Data Book shows that worldwide agricultural potential could fall by as much as 16 percent due to climate change. The drop would be particularly steep in developing countries (-20%) compared to industrial countries (-6%). At the heart of the problem are worldwide carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions: the world today produces 27.7 percent more CO₂ than in 1990.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/ENVIRONMENT/0,,contentMDK:21764857~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:244381,00.html>

Article: School collapses in China's recent earthquake

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/24/world/asia/24quake.html?_r=1&partner=rssuserland&mc=rss&pagewanted=all&oref=slogin

Research papers: DRR & EWS for Indonesia

Governance for the Sustainability of Hazard Early Warning System- An Interdisciplinary Approach http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/407b_Governance-of-sustainability-of-EWS.pdf

When Heaven (barely) Meets the Earth: Towards Convergency in Tsunami Early Warning Systems. http://www.zef.de/module/register/media/d614_Lassa-Tsunami-Early-Warning-System.pdf

The Rise of Risk: Where is the Resilience. Paper & Presentation for DRR Actors in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, Initiated by OGB http://131.220.109.9/module/register/media/8b80_Lassa-rise-of-risk.pdf (only in Bahasa)

Survey: 2008 Trends in Business Continuity & Crisis Communications

All survey participants will receive the complete unabridged results, detailing the latest trends from your industry peers. This survey is designed to gather valuable information from BC practitioners and crisis management professionals to measure current trends, issues, and practices in business continuity and crisis communications. The survey is designed to take less than 15 minutes. <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB227ZYSDXEHQ>

Quiz- Lightning

<http://edu4drr.ning.com/>

To see the full question put your mouse over it.

Research findings: Research findings in the British Medical Journal (2006), with regard to mobile phone use during a thunder storm - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/5106510.stm>

Inventory: The Asia Regional Task Force on Urban Risk Reduction (RTF-URR) is in the process of producing the inventory of urban risk reduction initiatives in the region. The templates of initiatives received will be compiled and analysed to be used to develop a regional thematic report on urban risk reduction. A preliminary report will be disseminated at the Asia Ministerial Conference on DRR in December 2008 in Malaysia. <http://www.adrc.or.jp/events/RTFmeeting20080130/top.html>

Primer: East Asian cities urged to get ready for climate change

A new report backed by the United Nations warns climate change could undermine rapid economic growth in many of East Asia's cities and displace millions of their inhabitants if they don't do more to prepare for its impact. Already an estimated 46 million people living in the region's cities are threatened every year by flooding caused by storms, according to the Climate Resilient Cities 2008 Primer.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:21845641~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:226301,00.html>

And the report warns that a one-metre rise in sea level could lead to a 2 percent loss of gross domestic product (GDP), wiping out development gains and poverty reduction efforts in one catastrophic stroke. Vietnam, China, Myanmar and Thailand will be most affected, it says.

Produced jointly by the World Bank, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery and the U.N. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the primer is the first practical guide linking climate change and disaster risk reduction with steps to identify the risks at the city level.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:21845641~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:226301,00.html>

CD-ROM-City profiles of sound practice accompany the Primer. There are two types of city profiles on the CD-ROM—long and short. The long profiles include a comprehensive analysis of a city's disaster management systems, and of climate change impacts. The short profiles are those that focus on a selected aspect of a city's climate and disaster management path, which has been highlighted, i.e., adaptation to climate change, mitigation of climate change impact or mitigation of disaster risks. City profiles included on the CD-ROM are available for download:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:21845641~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:226301,00.html>

"Sisters on the Planet", a series of short films-Women and climate change - a tale of two mothers

"Sisters on the Planet", a series of short films released by aid agency Oxfam to highlight the impact of climate change on women, available on YouTube. The other two films in the series star a British teacher who's making sure her pupils are aware of climate change and a high-up Brazilian civil servant and activist who have campaigned tirelessly on green issues since she was a teenager. Oxfam says women in developing countries are under particular threat from the consequences of climate change because of their role as main family carers and their greater reliance on natural resources like rivers and forests to do that job. This exposure is often made worse by restricted access to money, physical assets like land and machinery, education and public information, as well as women's lower social status and limited involvement in decision-making. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSMB8m4_4BM&feature=related

Web page: In an effort to increase student safety in schools, the Oregon Dept of Education has launched the Quake Safe Schools page at: <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2061>

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