

25 August 2008

Natural Disaster Updates:**21 August: 5.9-magnitude earthquake kills three in southwestern China**

At least three people were killed by a 5.9-magnitude quake which hit southwestern China. Around 100 other people were injured, including 20 who were seriously hurt, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The quake was centered in Yingjiang County in Yunnan province, near China's border with Myanmar (Burma). The quake reportedly destroyed many houses in Yingjiang, forcing tens of thousands to spend the night in a square and playgrounds, Xinhua reported. According to the US Geological Survey, the quake struck at around 20:24 local time Thursday (08:24 ET Thursday) about 155 miles (250 km) from the tourist city of Dali in Yunnan, and around 580 miles (930 km) north of Yangon (Rangoon), Myanmar, CNN reported. The quake occurred a day after a 5.0-magnitude quake shook Yunnan which was also centered in Yingjiang. Yunnan is located south of Sichuan province, which was hit by a devastating 7.9-magnitude quake on May 12 which killed at least 70,000 people and left 5 million homeless. Thousands of aftershocks have hit the region since then. <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/08/22/china.earthquake/index.html>
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=&id=ca78b0d8-d4a0-485f-8cb7-d854c27c5b51&MatchID1=4730&TeamID1=2&TeamID2=3&MatchType1=2&SeriesID1=1193&PrimaryID=4730&Headline=Strong+quake+kills+three+in+China&strParent=strParentID>

22 August, At least three dead in southern China after Tropical Storm Nuri sweeps Hong Kong

Tropical Cyclone 13W (Nuri), after passing over Hong Kong, is moving inland over mainland China, the Hawaii-based Pacific Disaster Center (PDC) reported Friday (August 22). The latest Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) warning #24 shows this quickly dissipating tropical storm, about to become a remnant low-pressure system, with 35-knot (40-mph) sustained winds, and gusts to near 45 knots (52 mph). Nuri majorly disrupted transportation in the highly populated Hong Kong metropolitan area. Hundreds of airline flights were canceled or delayed by early evening, according to Reuters. Strong gusty winds, along with flooding rainfall, brought unusually inclement weather conditions as the storm came in off the warm waters of the South China Sea, according to the PDC. Rainfall, rather than strong winds, will be the dominant threat from here on out, with heavy precipitation of a flooding nature expected as this soon-to-be retired storm moves inland, with flash flooding and landslides possible, over Guangxi Province, the PDC reported.

<http://metocph.nmci.navy.mil/jtwc.php>

<http://ph.news.yahoo.com/rtrs/20080822/tbs-hongkong-typhoon-b16dd24.html>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/PANA-7HRD9R?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=chn>

22 August, Food riots amid flooding in northern India

Flood victims in the northern India state of Bihar beat up government officials Friday (August 22), demanding that more food and shelter assistance be delivered at a quicker pace, according to Reuters. The incidents followed days of escalating monsoon flooding in the northern part of the state, where rescue workers used boats to ferry supplies to thousands of people who have been cut off by rising rivers. On Friday hungry villagers reportedly damaged government vehicles and chased local officials and politicians and beat them with iron rods. The flood situation in India's northeastern Assam state has also worsened this

week, with the Press Trust of India reporting Friday that the rising Brahmaputra River and its tributaries have inundated more than 160 villages.

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

<http://reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/LRON-7HRE6S?OpenDocument>

www.hindustantimes.com/redirect.aspx?ID=e0a7d462-f90b-4778-bda8-b908e03287a2

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Chandigarh/Flood_loss_Over_Rs_500_crore/articleshow/3391163.cms

20 August, Typhoon Nuri leaves at least four dead in northern Philippines

Powerful Typhoon Nuri hit the northern region of the Philippines on, triggering landslides which left at least four people dead. According to the Associated Press (AP), the Office of Civil Defense in the northern Cordillera region said that three people were killed in a house that was buried in a landslide on a mountain in Itogon township in Benguet province, while another landslide killed another person in Itogon earlier in the day. Itogon is located around 125 miles (200 km) north of the capital, Manila. The typhoon skirted the northeastern tip of Cagayan province, on the main island of Luzon, with gusts up to 106 mph (170 kph), the AP reported.

<http://metocph.nmci.navy.mil/jtwc.php>

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080820/ap_on_re_as/asia_typhoon

20 August, USA, Tropical storm Fay

Tropical storm Fay struck the United States at about 21:00 GMT on 20 August. Data supplied by the US National Hurricane Center suggest that the point of landfall was near 28.8 N, 80.5 W. Fay brought 1-minute maximum sustained winds to the region of around 83 km/h (51 mph). Wind gusts in the area may have been considerably higher.

http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/emergency/TSR/200806N_AL06.htm

18 August, Floods in southern Nepal displace 40,000, three feared dead

At least three people have been killed and over 40,000 displaced by a river that overflowed in southeastern Nepal, according to local Nepali media. At least three people were killed after being swept away by the swollen Saptakoshi River in Sunsari district, Kantipur Online (KOL) reported. According to Nepalnews, another 12 people are thought to be missing. A team of local Nepal Army and police rescued around 5,000 people from Shripur and Haripur Village Development Committee (VDCs). According to Nepalnews, local officials say that the displaced have been put up at 12 government-run schools, offices and private homes in Inaruwa, the district headquarters of Sunsari. According to Nepalnews, the tens of thousands displaced had begun to flee their homes Monday (August 18) night as the river began to erode dams and inundate nearby homes. The Saptakoshi River completely swept away more than 3,000 houses and destroyed huge tracts of paddy fields, Nepalnews reported.

<http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2008/aug/aug19/news01.php>

<http://ip-72-167-53-34.ip.secureserver.net/kolnews.php?&nid=157556>

W. Africa floods: Annual floods uproot thousands

Severe floods across West Africa after heavy seasonal rains beginning in July 2008 have uprooted more than 200,000 people, according to the U.N. World Health Organisation (WHO).

- Six countries in need of urgent aid
- Fears of waterborne diseases like cholera
- Homes destroyed, bridges and cellphone networks down

Six countries - Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo - need urgent aid after floods caused widespread damage and massive displacement, according to WHO.

Some 150,000 are displaced in Benin alone, it said. A climatologist there said more flooding was likely during this year's rainy season, which typically runs from May to September.

Liberia is also experiencing the worst storms in its recent history, with about 1,000 people pushed out of their homes, U.N. news service IRIN reported.

In Togo, bridges have collapsed and most of the cell phone network cut off.

In Niger, it said more than 40,000 people had been affected, with hundreds camping in schools. Aid workers say there were no plans for what to do when the school year begins in October. http://www.alertnet.org/db/crisisprofiles/WA_FLO.htm

News:

Thailand: Tsunami warning system improvements stalled: Plans for Thailand to launch two more "tsunameters" off the Andaman coastline to improve its tsunami warning system capability have become bogged down by red tape and technical problems, leaving only one direct detection unit in place as the fourth anniversary of the 2004 disaster nears. Technically known as Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami (Dart) monitoring systems, the state-of-the-art tsunameters consist of a pressure sensor on the ocean floor that relays data to a surface buoy equipped with satellite technology. <http://www.phuketgazette.net/news/printing.asp?Id=6727>

Afghanistan: UN calls for more food aid

The UN is urging donor nations to contribute urgent food aid toward feeding some 4.5 million food-insecure people in Afghanistan. Speaking to reporters in the Afghan capital, Kabul, on Tuesday (August 19), the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, urged donors to commit resources toward funding a US\$404 million food aid appeal launched last month by the world body.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27742&Cr=Afghan&Cr1=#>

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=52648>

Thailand: Avian Flu and the Workplace

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has partnered with the International Union of Food Workers (IUF) in an effort to promote best workplace practices in poultry production to limit the effects of avian influenza, and to encourage behavioural change related to preventative and protective measures in the workplace. Research was first conducted to establish appropriate programme strategies for reaching the commercial poultry sector. The finding that farmers who were aware of avian flu kept fowl in separate cages or isolated them in separate rooms shaped the collection of good practices to be incorporated into existing Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) manuals, and a checklist on bird flu prevention. In addition, various workshops for workers - as well as employers and government constituents - have been held in order to raise awareness, build capacity, and facilitate policy recommendations. bangkok@ilo.org, <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/270706/293>

America is safer when our schools are safer

U.S. Schools Receive Life-Saving NOAA Public Alert Radios Federal agencies have begun distributing more than 182,000 Public Alert Radios to preschools, Head Start programs, K-12 nonpublic schools and nonpublic school central offices, K-12 school district offices and post-secondary schools. In two earlier phases, the federal government distributed radios to all 97,000 K-12 public schools across the country, bringing the program to a close this September with life-saving radios in every school in the nation. The radios sound an alarm to alert school personnel about hazardous weather and other emergencies, even when other means of communication are disabled. For additional information on the Public Alert Radios for Schools program, see the Web site at <http://public-alert-radio.nws.noaa.gov>. The general public can learn about these radios at <http://www.weather.gov/nwr>.

Information Resources:

Study: Joint study identifies humanitarian hotspots and warns of dire consequences unless world leaders act now

India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indonesia are among the pivotal states identified as climate change “hotspots”-- countries particularly vulnerable to the increase in extreme drought, flooding, and cyclones expected in the coming decades—according to a new report commissioned by humanitarian relief agency CARE International and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/217440/88e8cca17126483fe145d4690d48fd67.htm>

Publication: Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction

Good Practices and lessons Learned from Experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region 2008: The publication "Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction: Good Practices and Lessons Learned from experiences in the Asia-pacific Region", produced with the assistance of the European Union, aims to build awareness for indigenous knowledge as an effective tool for reducing risk from natural disasters. By improving the understanding of indigenous knowledge and providing concrete examples of how it can be successfully used, this publication can help all practitioners and policy makers to consider the knowledge hold by local communities and act to integrate this wealth of knowledge into future disaster-related work. http://www.unisdr.org/indigenous_knowledge-drr

Article: Who's helping media in developing countries tackle climate change?

Written by: Megan Rowling

Ugandan journalists who specialize in reporting on environment and science tell me there's growing public demand for stories about climate change, but they still come low down the newsroom pecking order compared with the political and business beats. Environmental issues shot up the media agenda in Uganda last year when protests erupted over plans to give thousands of acres of the Mabira rainforest to an Asian-owned sugar company. The proposal was put on hold after three people died in the demonstrations, but as a recent interview in Britain's *Weekly Observer* suggests, there are concerns it could be resurrected.

<http://www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/20316/2008/07/15-173925-1.htm>

Tools: UNOSAT has produced several **satellite maps** and analyses over current situations. These are available on GDACS/VirtualOSOCC and www.unosat.org.

Please see below for direct web-links.

Georgia: Active fire locations

http://www.unosat.org/asp/prod_free.asp?id=101

Lao PDR (including also Thailand): Mekong river flood map (in the context of International Charter Space and Major Disasters) and base-maps

http://www.unosat.org/asp/prod_free.asp?id=77

Togo: Flood map (in the context of International Charter Space and Major Disasters)

http://www.unosat.org/asp/prod_free.asp?id=100

Report: National Development and Reform Committee (NDRC)'s **draft reconstruction plan:**

The state overall planning for post-Wenchuan Earthquake Restoration and Reconstruction

<http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/wcdz.pdf>

Briefing paper: Responding to earthquakes 2008

Learning from earthquake relief and recovery operations This briefing paper provides a distillation of the learning from thirty years of humanitarian response to earthquakes, looking at preparedness, relief and recovery. The paper is intended for operational decision-makers and relief programme managers working in the response to such sudden-onset natural disasters. The paper was jointly developed by ALNAP and ProVention. It is available in English and in Chinese. Organisation: ALNAP & ProVention Consortium

http://www.proventionconsortium.org/themes/default/pdfs/ALNAP-ProVention_earthquake08.pdf