

19 December 2008

Natural Hazard Update:**Hundreds of thousands of poultry culled as bird flu spreads in eastern India**

Since the first outbreak confirmation of the H5N1 bird flu virus in India's northeastern state of Assam in late November, four states in total have culled hundreds of thousands of poultry. The virus has spread to at least seven districts in Assam, which has resulted in the culling of over 300,000 poultry there in two weeks. Patients in Assam's Guwahati had symptoms of fever and respiratory infections, which are signs of the H5N1 bird flu virus in humans. In response to the outbreak, Assam launched a culling operation and a massive campaign to make people aware of the disease, the Press Trust of India (PTI) said. The government imposed a ban on the sale of poultry and poultry products in most parts of the state following the outbreak. Federal medical teams have brought in supplies and equipment as a preventive measure in the event the virus spreads to humans. In addition, although results from blood samples of birds had not been returned from Assam-Meghalaya border villages in Ri Bhoi district, the culling of birds continued in Meghalaya as a precaution on to prevent the spread from Assam. Meghalaya has set up 150 Rapid Response Teams and posted them along border areas, in addition to setting up control rooms in all seven districts. On Tuesday (December 16), Malda district in the state of West Bengal was hit for the second time this year, which so far has resulted in the culling of over 9,000 birds. Despite culling operations in full swing in West Bengal, the Hindustan Times reported that the state had fallen way behind the target mark due to a section of villagers refusing to hand over their poultry to health officials, demanding higher compensation for their poultry. The H5N1 bird flu virus was confirmed by the High Security Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Bhopal after dead poultry samples from the village of Narhatta were sent to the laboratory. According to the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS), around 5,000 poultry had died during the past week. In March, an outbreak of bird flu was detected and more than 50,000 birds were culled. Following confirmed reports of West Bengal's outbreak of H5N1 bird flu, India's state of Orissa imposed a ban on the inflow of poultry from neighboring states. While India has no reported human cases of bird flu, World Health Organization figures show that the H5N1 bird flu has infected 390 people in 15 countries and killed 246 of them since the deadly virus resurfaced in Asia in 2003. Scientists fear the disease could mutate into a form that could be easily transmitted between humans and could lead to a worldwide pandemic.

2,000 chickens culled in Orissa over flu fear

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=RSSFeed-India&id=748ed6a7-e2bc-4545-b396-63ff5ebb3ea3&MatchID1=4873&TeamID1=1&TeamID2=3&MatchType1=1&SeriesID1=1229&PrimaryID=4873&Headline=Bird+flu+spreads>

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Govt_to_set_up_six_more_bird_flu_testing_labs_/articleshow/3847564.cms

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=&id=a8570a7b-5baf-4b11-bf6d-7fd6d6b347f6&MatchID1=4873&TeamID1=1&TeamID2=3&MatchType1=1&SeriesID1=1229&PrimaryID=4873&Headline=Culling+continues+in+Meghalaya>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7784947.stm

<http://in.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idINSP42137920081215>

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=&id=7544f364-be9d-4e58-8b3e-b9cfc4b8be5&MatchID1=4873&TeamID1=1&TeamID2=3&MatchType1=1&SeriesID1=1229&PrimaryID=4873&Headline=9%2c000+birds+culled+in+bird-flu>

18 Dec: East India increases bird flu cull, more testing

Kolkata State authorities in east India stepped up poultry culling amid fears the latest outbreak of the H5N1 bird flu virus had spread to new areas. Veterinary workers in protective suits have killed 9,373 birds in the Malda district of West Bengal state since Tuesday despite resistance from villagers who want more compensation. Malda authorities have sent more samples for testing after hundreds of chickens died in the past two days in a different area of the district, about 10 km (6 miles) away from the village regarded as the centre of the latest outbreak. Authorities also increased the number of birds they plan to kill in West Bengal by 3,500 to 20,000 after discovering that there were more poultry farms in the area than first thought. <http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/DEL415506.htm>

17 Dec: Zambia sees more flooding as hunger hits country

More floods will hit parts of Zambia, where some people are already surviving on wild fruits after excessive rains caused crop failure earlier this year, Vice President George Kunda said. Kunda said a weather forecast had shown that 34 of the southern African country's 73 districts would again be hit by floods, reducing the country's white maize output to 1.2 million tonnes in the 2007/08 season from 1.3 million tonnes the previous season. <http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LH537717.htm>

13 Dec: Rome on flood alert as rain batters Italy

Rome declared a state of emergency yesterday as the Tiber river threatened to overflow and heavy rain battering much of Italy caused three more deaths. <http://news.scotsman.com/world/Rome-on-flood-alert-as.4790390.jp>

12 Dec: Tens of thousands affected by huge waves in Papua New Guinea

Tens of thousands of people on Papua New Guinea's (PNG) northern coast and outer islands have been displaced due to unusually high tides over the past few days. Floods caused by the high tides have inundated houses and destroyed vegetable gardens along the northern coast of PNG. So far the PNG government estimates that 50,000-80,000 people have been affected. According to PNG's Disaster Management Center, the worst hit areas are New Ireland island, where some 20,000-30,000 people have been affected, and East Sepik province, especially the area around Wewak town. PNG's National Weather Service, the high-sea level around the Solomon and Bismarck Seas is caused by an area of low pressure off Guam and New Caledonia. According to local officials, tidal surges were continuing and no change in the weather is expected over the next few days. The UN says that no state of emergency has been declared, but PNG's National Disaster Center (NDC) has declared the situation a national disaster. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MCOT-7M9KBZ?OpenDocument&rc=5&cc=png>
<http://www.pidp.org/pireport/2008/December/12-12-05.htm>
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MCOT-7M9DSV?OpenDocument&rc=5&cc=png>

12 Dec: Two more dead as Philippines warns of further flooding

At least 11 people have been killed since December 7 in severe flooding on the eastern Philippine island of Samar that is expected to continue over the weekend as heavy rains from a lingering cold front and approaching tropical storm affect the area. The Philippine Inquirer reported on December 12 that authorities declared a state of calamity across Northern Samar province and in at least one town in Eastern Samar, where two more people drowned Friday. In Northern Samar, the poorest province in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines, floods have caused severe damage in 10 towns, destroying property and crops worth an estimated US\$2.1 million (100 million pesos) and affecting at least 103,000 people, the Inquirer reported. The heavy rains that triggered the flooding were brought on by a cold front that is still lingering over the Eastern Visayas and is expected to bring scattered showers over the main island, Luzon, over the weekend, the Inquirer attributed the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) as saying. Separately, PAGASA warned that a tropical depression is expected to enter the Philippines' area of responsibility early Saturday (December 13) and

warned residents in low-lying areas and along mountain slopes to prepare for flashfloods and landslides. According to the Inquirer, the storm will likely bring widespread rainfall to the Bicol and Eastern Visayas regions by late Monday (December 15). This will be the Philippines' twentieth typhoon of 2008, making this an average year for the archipelago nation that has two monsoon seasons and is typically hit by typhoons that trigger landslides and floods during the latter half of the year. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view/20081212-177673/State-of-calamity-in-Samar-areas>
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/regions/view/20081212-177587/Pagasa-Expect-rainshowers-this-weekend>
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20081212-177686/Storm-expected-to-enter-RP-says-PAGASA>

Events:

Poznań Communique on Climate Change, 1-12 Dec 2008, Poznań, Poland

The business leaders of over 140 global companies called for an adaptation strategy and funding solution to assist the poorest countries which are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. At the Climate Change Conference in Poznań, Poland early this month, disaster issues were highlighted at a special plenary workshop on Risk Management and Insurance. Following an invited UNISDR briefing, many states reiterated that disaster risk reduction and the use of the Hyogo Framework were important elements of adaptation to climate change. This was accompanied by strong advocacy efforts from OCHA and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, reflecting a newly galvanized humanitarian sector focus on disaster prevention - which is providing opportunities for stronger engagement in ISDR System partnerships. Climate risk insurance and risk transfer attracted strong state party interest but are nonetheless the subject of widely divergent views on the kinds of benefits that would result. A notable advance during the talks was the agreement that the climate change Adaptation Fund would be a legal entity granting direct funding access to developing countries. This agreement will allow the Fund, set up in December 2007 at the Bali talks, to actually begin operation. However, developing country representatives were disappointed that there would be no increase in the size of the Fund, which currently contains about US\$80 million. The purpose of the Fund is to help reduce the negative effects of climate change on vulnerable states, including through disaster risk reduction.

www.poznancommunique.com

Killing the Messenger in Asia-Pacific: Media in the firing line - Building a culture of safety in media in Asia-Pacific, 15-16 Dec 2008, Jakarta, Indonesia

The International News Safety Institute, dedicated to the safety of news media staff working in dangerous environments held the first ever regional media conference focusing on the risks of the working conditions of journalists in Asia Pacific. At least 125 journalists and media staff have been killed in Asia Pacific since 1996 until the present day. The Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand not only have the highest numbers of journalists killed and are in the top 20 most dangerous countries for journalists globally, the region also faces an unacceptable culture of impunity, kidnappings, threats, intimidations, conflict, violent civil unrest, and natural disasters. <http://www.newssafety.com/programmes/safetyzone.htm>

DRR covered in Asian development forum

The 9th Assembly of Asia Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development was held on 13-14 December, 2008 in Hanoi, Vietnam. UNISDR representatives made links with parliamentarians from Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Vietnam, New Zealand, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal and the Philippines. Parliamentarians shared their experiences and underlined that more action is urgently required from both developed and developing countries, and that gender perspectives in climate change mitigation and adaptation should be seriously addressed.

Global Platform to push for more DRR investment

The next Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is aiming for high levels of representation from governments and developing countries, in order to increase commitment and action to support the Hyogo Framework for Action. The second biennial session of the Global Platform will be emphasising increased investment in financing DRR at all levels, especially in the face of the escalating effect of climate change on poverty and vulnerability. The event will take place 16-19 June 2009 at the Geneva International Conference Centre. Plenary sessions will be informed by the results of the first Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, which is to be released in May 2009 by UNISDR. Side events and a 'Disaster Risk Reduction Marketplace' area will provide opportunities for stakeholders to further promote their causes, share experiences and link with the work of others.

<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/>

Climate Game Change: Innovations and solutions for Climate Change Adaptation in South East Asia, 22 Jan 2009, Bangkok

<http://www.climategamechange.org/>

3rd International conference on community-based adaptation to climate change, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, 22-26 Jan 2009, Dhaka, Bangladesh

The primary aim of the conference is to:

- Share the latest developments in adaptation planning and practices, priority sectors and measures at different levels and disseminate knowledge among stakeholders and actors.
- Bring different stakeholders and practitioners to share and discuss knowledge of Community Based Adaptation (CBA) planning and practices from different parts of the developing world;
- Capture the latest experiences and learning from CBA planning and practices around the developing world;
- Enhance capacity of the practitioners to help the most vulnerable groups and people in improving livelihoods in developing countries;
- Share lessons learnt to facilitate integration of climate change into national and international development programmes;
- Disseminate lessons learnt at the conference through conference proceedings and immediate conference summary.

<http://www.bcas.net/UpcomingEvents/CBA2009-FinalAnnouncement.pdf>

International conference on earthquake and structural engineering ICESE 2009 - World Academy of Science Engineering and Technology, 25-27 Jan 2009, Penang, Malaysia

The International Conference on Earthquake and Structural Engineering (ICESE 2009) aims to bring together researchers, scientists, engineers, and scholar students to exchange and share their experiences, new ideas, and research results about all aspects of Earthquake and Structural Engineering, and discuss the practical challenges encountered and the solutions adopted.

<http://www.waset.org/wcset09/penang/icese/>

News:

Loren Legarda named Asian regional DRR champion

Senator Loren Legarda of the Philippines Senate has been named Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Asia Pacific by UNISDR. She will help UNISDR promote the benefits of disaster risk reduction policies in Asia, which is the region most vulnerable to disasters. Senator Legarda, who represents one of the world's most disaster-prone countries, accepted her new official engagement during

the Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She has already been a spearhead of the parliamentarians' initiative on DRR and Climate Change Adaptation, the Manila Call for Action, which she has promoted in a range of global forums since it was issued in October.

Sasakawa Award Nomination closing date 18 March 2009

The Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction will be awarded in June 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland at the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction, and nominations close on March 18. The biennial prize is worth approximately US\$40-50,000, and is awarded in recognition of significant achievements in DRR that have made real change at community and institutional levels. Applicants can be nominated by any ISDR System partner. isdr-sasakawa@un.org

Call for good practices: Safe hospitals good practices deadline 30 May 2009

UNISDR and WHO are inviting submissions from all stakeholders on good practices and lessons learned on making Hospitals Safe from Disasters: including health authorities, health facilities, governments, international agencies, health professionals, NGOs, architects, engineers, critical infrastructure, private sector, professional associations and academic institutions. The WHO and UNISDR Secretariat will also be publishing a collection of **good practices** by International Day for Disaster Reduction October 2009. If you think that your initiative is an example of a good practice that should be replicated, and email it to the address specified. http://safehospitals.info/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=53&Itemid=190

Information Resources:

Publications:

Weathering the storm: Participatory risk assessment for informal settlements

Field research over ten sites during the Training, Education, Awareness and Marketing (TEAM) project, combined with extensive previous community risk assessment experience in the Western Cape made it possible to produce a facilitator's guide that is useful in informal settlements.

Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (DIMP), 2009

www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=4163&pid:50

NDMA Monsoon contingency plan

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) emphasizes the contingency process as a preparedness measure for response to natural hazards. Following contingency planning for winter hazards, this exercise focuses on planning for the oncoming monsoon season to identify and analyze related risks for their humanitarian impact, and to define roles and responsibilities of diverse national stakeholders for preparedness and response.

www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=5498&pid:50

Tsunami Flash Appeal report: Evaluation and Strengthening of Early Warning Systems in Countries Affected by the 26 December 2004 Tsunami

The publication is an overall integrated framework for strengthening early warning systems in the Indian Ocean region by building on the existing systems and to facilitate coordination among various specialized and technical institutions. www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=5535

Features & Analysis: Kathmandu hospitals could collapse in an earthquake - experts

Most of Kathmandu's 50 hospitals are poorly built and would collapse if there were a major earthquake, experts warn. They also note that health institutions lack emergency response plans and are generally ill-prepared. Kathmandu valley lies in a high risk earthquake zone; poorly constructed buildings [see: <http://www.IRINnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81632>] and lack of preparedness could significantly increase the casualty rate if there were another big earthquake.

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/e14f1636c1a042b1cb299e877d289995.htm>

Madagascar: Living in the cyclone belt is not easy

Every year the rains flood large parts of Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, displacing thousands of its poorest inhabitants. Now a combination of rapid urbanisation and increasingly violent cyclones as a result of climate change may threaten to bring increasing devastation to the city, say experts. "Last year 20,000 people were displaced, which was more than in the 2007 cyclone season - every year the number increases," Dia Styvanly Soa, of the government's Office for National Disaster Management (BNGRC), told IRIN. "More and more people are moving to the city, and they are building their homes on the floodplain because they have nowhere else to go."

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/54a2315f16f60a1ca382e63d0abfc093.htm>

Article: Climate change in Hong Kong and the role of the private sector

Greenhouse gases emitted in the last century is still present in today's atmosphere and is unlikely to be reabsorbed into oceans and forests until the middle of the 21st century. Yet we continue to add carbon dioxide to our environment at an increasing and alarming rate. Even if all emissions stopped today, carbon dioxide levels could take 50 to 150 years to reduce, during which time we will continue to experience the impacts of climate change. Since emissions are set to increase for some time yet we are clearly going to see accelerations in climate change trends requiring ongoing mitigation and adaptation measures. http://www.csr-asia.com/weekly_detail.php?id=11573

Research: The Chinese tourism sector response to Climate Change

Research by the World Travel & Tourism Council and Oxford Economics expects that China will expand its expenditure on personal travel & tourism, business travel, government and capital investment between 2008 and 2017. On the other hand, the growth of China's carbon emissions seems to stay one step ahead. China has replaced the US as the world's biggest carbon emitter since 2007. The Davos Declaration (October 2007) on climate change and tourism in responding to global challenges, agreed that climate is a key resource in the industry and that the sector is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and global warming. It is estimated to contribute some 5% of global CO₂ emissions. This article will provide a simple picture on how the tourism sector in China is starting to respond to climate change.

http://www.csr-asia.com/weekly_detail.php?id=11569

New initiative: The recently launched Climate and Disaster Governance (CDG) programme is a new initiative from the Institute of Development Studies and Christian Aid. The programme aims to investigate climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction governance at national and sub-national levels. The key research themes are:

- Citizen engagement and accountability
- What role for social protection?
- Institution building in fragile states
- Implications of international policy frameworks

To find out more, please visit the CDG Website - <http://www.climategovernance.org/>

For archived DRM updates:

ADPC Website:

<http://www.adpc.net/v2007/IKM/EVENTS%20AND%20NEWS/DISASTER/2008/DISASTER-NEWS-2008.asp>

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