

16 October 2008

Natural Hazard Update:**14 Oct: Offshore quake rocks central Greece, no casualties**

An earthquake of 5.1 magnitude struck in the Aegean Sea north of the Greek island of Evia on Tuesday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties. The Athens Geodynamic Institute said the quake, which struck at 5:06 a.m. (0206 GMT), had its epicentre in the Aegean Sea about 40 km (25 miles) north of Evia, off the coast of central Greece. Officials said there were no reports of injuries or damage to buildings, but that emergency services were on alert. <http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LE635676.htm>

10 Oct: Timor Leste: Tens of thousands of IDPs prepare for more flooding

Tens of thousands of people are preparing for their third bout of flooding since 2006 in camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) as the rainy season once again descends on Timor-Leste. The government has so far helped over 7,500 families return home in 2008 and is planning to close more camps soon, but many IDPs will face heavy flooding once again and in some cases landslides in the coming months.

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/d512eab9a44ba492990956928b194b4f.htm>

News:**8 October 2008: International Day for Disaster Reduction**

The United Nations observes a promotional event on and around the second Wednesday of each October, designated as the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

Ban Ki-Moon**The Secretary-General of United Nations****Message on the International Day for Disaster Reduction: 8 October 2008**

The World Disaster Reduction Campaign for 2008-2009 focuses on making "Hospitals Safe from Disasters". When health facilities are damaged, so, too, is our ability to improve maternal and child health and to provide other essential health services. But in resilient communities, health systems are better able to withstand natural hazards. We need to mobilize society at every level to reduce risk and protect health facilities. http://www.unisdr.org/eng/public_aware/world_camp/2008-2009/iddr-2008/2008-iddr.htm

United Nations and ASEAN raise awareness of need for safer communities amid Natural Disasters - Observance included announcement of winners of regional school drawing competition

Bangkok (UN/ESCAP Information Services) – Raising awareness of the need for safer communities in the Asia-Pacific region was the aim of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) during their joint observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction and the ASEAN Day for Disaster Management held in Bangkok on Wednesday, 8 October 2008.

The observance ceremony also marked the conclusion of an ASEAN Regional Drawing Competition on "Safer Community: Hospital, School and House of My Dream." Aiming to increase awareness among school children in ASEAN Member Countries on their communities' vulnerabilities to disasters and the importance of building safe hospitals, schools and houses, the competition was jointly organised by the ASEAN Committee on

Disaster Management and UNISDR. Children aged 8-15 years of age from ASEAN Member States were invited to express – through drawings and paintings – how safe hospitals, schools and houses can contribute to realizing ASEAN’s vision of a disaster resilient and safer community.

The award ceremony was followed by a discussion on the subject of "Community safety and disaster resilient infrastructures in the Asia Pacific region." The session was moderated by the UNISDR’s Senior Regional Coordinator, Dr. German Velasquez. Representatives from the World Health Organization, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) and Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health led the discussions and emphasised the role resilient infrastructures play not only in saving lives but also in the continuation of provision of life-saving services in the face of a disaster.

Wednesday’s observance of the International Day for Disaster Reduction and the ASEAN Day for Disaster Management was the third time that ASEAN and UNISDR have partnered in marking the Days. <http://www.unescap.org/unis/press/2008/oct/g49.asp>

The Secretary-General called Members States to use disaster risk reduction for climate change adaptation

To help Member States find solutions to cope with climatic disasters, BAN Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary-General, convened a ministerial meeting in New York on Monday 29th of September. The Secretary-General called on ministers to lead the way at Poznan, Poland, in championing disaster risk reduction as a core element of climate change adaptation. He urged Governments to give high priority to implementing disaster risk reduction measures, in order to achieve the goals set by the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/media-room.htm>

Papua New Guinea: Seismic monitoring gets a boost

Because Papua New Guinea lies within the "Pacific ring of fire" - an arc of intense seismic activity due to shifting tectonic plates stretching from the eastern edge of Asia to the coast of North and South America - it is prone to natural disasters, especially earthquakes. One of the most significant recent ones was a 7.0 earthquake in 1998, which triggered a tsunami that killed 2,183 people, injured thousands and left 500 missing.

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/5fe73031a35beff0f3e9f867c5fab51b.htm>

Insecurity, slow rebuilding hamper Pakistan quake recovery

Three years after a deadly earthquake devastated Pakistan's mountainous north, recovery is being hampered by poor security and slow reconstruction of public buildings, aid agencies say. The 7.6 magnitude quake, which struck Kashmir and Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) on Oct. 8 2005, killed around 75,000 people and left as many as 3.5 million homeless. After the quake, international relief interventions were generally welcomed by local populations. But rising militancy and violence in Pakistan's northwest are making it harder for aid agencies to complete their programmes.

http://members.alertnet.org/db/an_art/20316/2008/09/7-170124-1.htm

UN humanitarian chief stresses role of reinforced hospitals in disaster mitigation

7 October 2008 – With natural disasters claiming 230,000 lives in the first six months of this year alone, the same toll as the massive Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, much more must be invested in disaster reduction and the reinforcement of hospitals should be a top priority, the United Nations relief chief said today. “Making hospitals safe from disasters is highly cost-

effective,” Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes told a news conference in New York on the eve of International Disaster Reduction Day.

This year’s theme for the Day is hospital safety, with the warning that climate change is also clearly increasing the number and intensity of natural disasters around the world.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=28469&Cr=&Cr1=>

Disasters kill more in 2008 than in tsunami: UN

GENEVA (AFP) — More people died from natural disasters in the first six months of 2008 than in the Asian tsunami of 2004 due mainly to the earthquake in China and cyclone in Myanmar, the United Nations said Wednesday. "2008 is a terrible year. There have already been more victims than in the tsunami," said Salvator Briceno, head of the UN's disaster management agency (ISDR). More than 230,000 people lost their lives from disasters and another 130 million were affected, he said on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction. Cyclone Nargis which hit Myanmar in May is estimated to have killed around 138,000 people while the earthquake in south-west China's Sichuan province left a death toll of 87,500. Record floods in India as well as a devastating hurricane season in the Caribbeans also all contributed to the grim statistics.

<http://afp.google.com:80/article/ALeqM5ivb3HdCqbeKf0esp2a-JwirdhVsg>

Rising seas and powerful storms threaten global security

Standing before the United Nations General Assembly in October 1987, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives, made an appeal representing “an endangered nation.” That year for the first time, “unusual high waves” in the Indian Ocean inundated a quarter of the urban area on the capital island of Male’, flooded farms, and washed away reclaimed land. Gayoom cited scientific evidence that human activities were releasing greenhouse gases that warm the planet, ultimately raising global sea level as glaciers melt and warmer water expands. The trouble extended beyond small islands; studies showed that rising seas would wreak havoc on the U.S. Gulf Coast, the Netherlands, and the river deltas of Egypt and Bangladesh. <http://www.earthpolicy.org/Updates/2008/Update76.htm>

Mystery S. Africa killer disease may be Congo fever

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 7 (Reuters) - A mystery disease that has killed three people in South Africa and put medical authorities on high alert may be Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, a health official said on Tuesday. "We suspect that it may be Congo hemorrhagic fever but we have not made a diagnosis yet," Frew Benson, the South African Health Department's deputy director of communicable diseases, told Reuters. South African health officials said on Monday they were closely monitoring the illness, which causes external and internal bleeding, but called on the public not to panic. There were no signs it was airborne.

<http://members.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L7701914.htm>

Events

33rd International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE)

May 4-8, 2009

Stresa, Italy

Theme: Use of Earth Observation systems and airborne techniques for understanding and managing the Earth environment and natural resources.

<http://isrse-33.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.php?page=home>

The second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Geneva, Switzerland, 15 - 19 June 2009 The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is the main global forum on disaster risk reduction. At its first session in June 2007, it brought together representatives of governments, UN agencies, regional bodies, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and the scientific and academic communities to raise awareness on disaster risk, to share experience and to guide the ISDR system with a view to supporting countries to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform

19th World Conference on Disaster Management

21-24 June 2009

Toronto, Canada

Emergency Management and Business Continuity Working Together

(<http://www.wcdm.org/>)

The Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness (CCEP) is calling for presentations for the 19th World Conference on Disaster Management (WCDM). The Conference will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. WCDM is the premier annual event that addresses issues common to all aspects of disaster management. The conference program includes speakers from many parts of the world and provides excellent opportunities for training and networking among those in the fields of Emergency Planning/Management, Business Continuity, Emergency Response, Risk Management, IT Disaster Recovery, Disaster Management Research, Emergency Communications, Emergency Health, Security, HR, Environmental, Community Planning, as well as for the organizations which supply and service these professions. The 2009 Conference is expected to attract over 2,000 attendees from Canada, the United States, and from around the globe. The Conference theme will be: **A Climate for Change - Communication, Collaboration and Co-operation**

Information Resources:

Publication: Social Research: Disasters: Recipes and Remedies- By drawing together leading experts from angles as varied as psychology, economics, insurance, sociology, business, medicine, and politics, this special issue represents a landmark event for all those concerned with the impact of disasters on the human community. While both natural and man-made disasters have always been a part of human history, there has been a recent surge in the interest and urgency concerning the question of preparation and response to these devastating events. The increased concentration of risk-laden urban infrastructures, economic inequities within communities, slow government response, and global warming have all been cited as reasons why we live in an age in which the damage and death caused by disasters has reached unprecedented proportions. Such a scenario calls for an unprecedented response, requiring new and innovative perspectives on disasters. socres@newschool.edu

Publication: Gender Perspectives: Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation – 2008- Good Practices and Lessons Learned

This publication points out the vital nexus between women's experiences of natural resource management, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and how they can come together to make whole communities strong and sustainable. It also provides inspirational case studies of grassroots women's leadership, and of ways to support and encourage women's full participation as citizens in risk reduction, climate change adaptation, development, and disaster preparedness. The case studies also point to practical tools for implementing gender equality and mainstreaming gender perspectives.

http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/17-Gender_Perspectives_Integrating_DRR_CC/Gender_Perspectives_Integrating_DRR_CC_Good%20Practices.pdf

Publication: Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction: Good Practices and lessons Learned from Experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region 2008

Even before we came up with high technology based early warning systems, or standard operating procedures for response, numerous local communities worldwide have prepared, operated, acted, and responded to natural disasters using indigenous methods passed on from one generation to the next. 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/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/19-Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR/Indigenous_Knowledge-DRR.pdf

Publications: Towards National Resilience -2008 Good practices of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction"

Governments increasingly recognize the need for comprehensive multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral national coordinating mechanisms – National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction - to reduce, prevent and manage the impact of natural hazards. 45 countries have already launched National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. Several other countries are in a process of establishing them. In an effort to inspire and support the birth of new National Platforms, and also to strengthen existing ones, the UN/ISDR secretariat launches its new publication featuring nine National Platform case studies.

http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/16-Towards-National-Resilience/Towards-National-Resilience.pdf

Training Kit: UNEP and UNESCO Release Youth Training Kit to Keep the Planet "Cool"

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have released an updated version of the YouthXchange Training Kit, which seeks to promote sustainable consumption among youth worldwide. The joint initiative aims to change purchasing patterns by reducing waste from discarded products such as mobile phones and outdated fashion, while engaging youth in the fight against climate change. The new version of the training kit, revised from the previous 2002 version, includes a new chapter on how to balance aspirations of dressing fashionably while being aware of the impact of consumption on global warming. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner expressed the hope that youth can influence world politics and back the climate change agreement for the post-2012 period, which is currently under negotiation and is expected to be concluded in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009.

<http://www.climate-l.org:80/2008/10/unep-and-unesco.html>

Study- to assess impact of climate change on rice cultivation

The impact of climate change on rice cultivation, and its yield, is being researched by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, India and two international institutions. Studies indicate that a four degree increase in temperature will reduce the yield by 10 per cent. The research, carried out under the project 'Clima Rice,' is aimed at developing technologies to sustain production, in the face of climate change. Talking to *The Hindu* here on Tuesday, TNAU Vice-Chancellor C. Ramasamy said the project had reached the stage of experiment on

the field, and the university was keen on coming out with a solution to withstand the impact of climate change on rice cultivation. <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/08/stories/2008100854160600.htm>

Paper: Why the *First Mile* and not the Last?

For many years, people working to enhance telecommunication infrastructure and applications have referred to rural communities as being at the "last mile of connectivity." The concept of the "last mile" carries a lot of negative connotations and compels us to assume the perspective of an urbanite looking down at the rural margins. Titus Moetsabi was the first to turn this statement on its head and help us think instead of rural communities as being at the "first mile of connectivity." This term expresses a more equitable and far less urban-centric view of the challenge of providing everyone with the option of connecting themselves to the rest of the world and all it has to offer.

<http://www.fao.org:80/docrep/x0295e/x0295e03.htm>

Cyclones in the Indian Ocean: Facts and figures

'Tropical cyclone' is the general term for low-pressure atmospheric circulations in the tropics. These have anticlockwise rotating winds in the northern hemisphere and clockwise rotating winds in the southern hemisphere. Low to moderate intensity tropical cyclones bring much needed rain for agriculture around the northern Indian Ocean. But, when tropical cyclones strengthen, they can bring great loss of life and property to the region.

<http://www.scidev.net/en/features/cyclones-in-the-indian-ocean-facts-and-figures.html>

Website: ReliefWeb has created a Special Focus Page on the Humanitarian Implications of Climate Change, in order to provide the humanitarian community with resources on the issue and to raise awareness.

www.reliefweb.int/climatechange

Manuals & Tool Kits: Document: Community-based worker systems: guidelines for practitioners- Making the most of community based worker systems for effective service delivery

Many communities in Africa are largely dependent on services provided by local people rather than by external agencies, including government. Such services include traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, farmer to farmer extension, home-based carers, paralegals and water pump attendants. [adapted from author]. These services are collectively known as community based worker systems (CBW). The concept of community based worker systems is defined as a wide range of social and community activities or arrangements designed for the mutual well being of community members.

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/manuals-and-toolkits&id=39563&type=Document&em=081008&sub=wnew>

Case study review: Climate change and displacement- Planning and managing the impacts of climate change on human migration

In response to growing climate change pressures on landscapes and livelihoods, people are moving and adapting. Evidence points towards climate and environmentally induced migration becoming one of the major policy challenges of this century. This review, made of 31 articles, analyses a range of climate and migration related issues which focus on case studies in Central Asia, Kenya, Kiribati, Ghana, Alaska and Bangladesh, among others.

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR31/FMR31.pdf>

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ADPC Website:

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