

11 May 2009

Natural Disasters

8 May: Typhoon Chan-Hom kills 24 in northern Philippines

Landslides and flooding triggered by Typhoon Chan-hom left at least 24 people dead on the northern island of Luzon before it moved over the Philippine Sea to the northeast of the country in the afternoon. Chan-hom, known locally as Typhoon Emong, struck Pangasinan province on the western coast of Luzon at about 19:00 local time Thursday (May 7) with maximum sustained winds of 75 mph (125 kph). It came just one week after another typhoon, known internationally as Kujira and locally as Dante, killed 27 people and displaced around 55,000 across five provinces in the northeastern region of Bicol. Chan-hom weakened quickly into a tropical storm as it crossed the Cordillera mountains in the central part of Luzon, but the storm cut power to several areas, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP). Twelve people died in Pangasinan's Cape Bolinao, which bore the brunt of the storm's landfall. The Philippine president called for emergency aid of food, drinking water, medicine and temporary housing materials to be rushed to affected areas. The Philippines typically sees about 20 typhoons a year, most of them occurring after June.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/KERN-7RU7P3?OpenDocument>

<http://asia.news.yahoo.com/ap/20090508/tap-as-philippines-deadly-storm-1st-ld-w-fe2a5de.html>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/PSLG-7RUGA5?OpenDocument&RSS20&RSS20=FS>

http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2009/may/09/yehey/top_stories/20090509top5.html

5 May: Earthquake, Bangladesh

A mild earthquake was experienced in few places in Bangladesh. The quake lasted for few seconds.

Source: NIRAPAD, Bangladesh

4 May: Avalanche kills up to 28 in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir

Up to 28 people were killed by a snow avalanche high in the Bimla mountains of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK), near the line that separates the region from Indian-controlled Kashmir (IcK). According to Reuters, a group of 24 people believed to be searching for medicinal herbs in Neelum valley, about 40 miles (65 km) north of Muzaffarabad, the capital of PcK, were buried by the avalanche. The BBC reported, however, that officials were unsure why the group was in the area, which has at times served as a route for militants who infiltrate IcK. Both Pakistan and India claim the Kashmir valley in full but control it in parts. While PcK enjoys relative peace, about a dozen insurgent groups - some believed to be based in Pakistan - have been fighting for IcK's independence or a merge with Pakistan since 1989. Due to the remoteness of the area, it took two days for the news to travel to town. At least 12 or 13 bodies were dug out of the snow on Wednesday, but the BBC and Reuters both reported that a total of 24 people had been buried. Pakistan-based The News and the Press Trust of India both put the number at 28. According to the BBC, locals are helping police and soldiers search for the missing. Avalanches are common in the area, which is near the epicenter of the October 2005 earthquake that killed about 73,000 people in northern Pakistan, Reuters reported. In 2005, an avalanche in Neelum valley killed more than 40 people.

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=\\$ion=international&xfile=data/international/2009/May/international_May415.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=$ion=international&xfile=data/international/2009/May/international_May415.xml)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8035298.stm

3 May: Nor'wester, Kolkata-India

A strong Nor'wester in west Bengal (Kolkata) caused massive destruction with wind speed of 80km/hr. Household, cropland, electricity polls were destroyed.

Source: NIRAPAD, Bangladesh

Events

5 June 2009: World Environment Day

17 June: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 16-18 June 2009, Geneva

The second session of the Global Platform is scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 16, 17 and 18 June 2009 at the Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG). The venue will also be available for selected meetings and side events on Monday 15 June and on Friday 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 over 1100 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. <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/>

Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in Beijing, China: 20-22 April 2009

Building on the Third International Congress of Women in Politics that took place recently in Manila, Philippines, more than 200 participants, among them ministers and parliamentarians from 50 countries, gathered for a three day conference in Beijing, China to discuss how women and men can participate equally in driving early warning systems, risk assessments, preparedness exercises and national and local plans to implement disaster risk reduction policies. Co-organized by the All China Women's Federation and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and co-hosted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the UN system in China, the Conference reviewed the progress made and challenges faced in mainstreaming gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction. Special consideration was given to issues related to climate change adaptation, poverty reduction and community resilience which are all linked to reducing the impact of disasters. The Conference reached consensus on a set of nine achievable actions that are part of the "Beijing Declaration for Action" to be implemented by 2015. Addressing the closing session, UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes said that the Declaration: 'sets out guidance for practical action governments and international organizations to build gender-effective disaster resilience at the local and national levels'. www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=8961&pid:50

Regional and in-country awareness raising workshops for broadcasters and other stakeholders in the Asia Pacific Region

Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami (December 2004), which claimed thousands of lives and devastated coastal communities in 12 countries, UNISDR together with Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU) and the Japanese broadcasting corporation Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) have coordinated several forums to discuss the preparedness of national and local broadcasting services in alerting the public of natural disaster and other emergencies. At a regional media workshop in Kuala Lumpur (December 2008), three in-country workshops were planned – for Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. The workshops were successfully concluded, in close collaboration with UNDP in Indonesia (10-11 March 2009), Sri Lanka (23-24 March 2009) and India (March 30-31, 2009). leonib@un.org

News

8 May: Sharp spike in US H1N1 flu cases raises worldwide count to 3,243

Influenza A (H1N1), commonly known as swine flu, infections sharply increased as the global count hit 3,243 cases, according to numbers from the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The UN agency's death toll for Mexico went up to 44, bringing the number of worldwide casualties to 46. Brazil is the latest country to confirm H1N1 flu cases, increasing the number of laboratory-confirmed countries to 25 – Mexico (1,112), US (896), Canada (201), Spain (81), the UK (32), Germany (10), Israel (6), France (5), Italy (5), New Zealand (5), Brazil (4), Republic of Korea (3), El Salvador (2), Netherlands (2), Austria (1), Switzerland (1), Denmark (1), Ireland (1), China, Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region (1), Costa Rica (1), Colombia (1), Portugal (1), Guatemala (1), Poland (1) and Sweden (1). Argentina officials have confirmed an H1N1 flu case, but it has yet to be reported by the WHO. The WHO today is monitoring and awaiting test results in 12 other countries possibly having the virus – Australia, Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, Chile, Japan, Belize, South Africa, Benin, Finland, Norway and Kosovo. On Friday, the WHO said it was keeping its global pandemic alert level at Phase 5 as no evidence of community transmission was apparent. According to the CDC, the number of laboratory-confirmed cases in the US on Friday surpassed the number of cases in Mexico as the total bumped up to 1,639 people from Thursday's 896 cases. The H1N1 flu death toll in the US remains at two, with both victims dying in Texas. States confirming infections increased to 43 as the District of Columbia, which is being counted as a state, and South Dakota each confirmed one case. Among the affected states, 26 - Illinois (392), Wisconsin (240), New York (174), Arizona (138), California (107), Texas (93), Massachusetts (83), Michigan (49), Delaware (39), Tennessee (36), Washington (33), South Carolina (29), Indiana (29), Colorado (25), Utah (24), Virginia (14), Kansas (12), Missouri (9), Nevada (8), Rhode Island (7), Florida (6), Ohio (6), Hawaii (5), Oklahoma (4), Kentucky (3) and New Hampshire (3) - confirmed additional cases, with Wisconsin increasing the most with 214 new infections. Seventeen states – Oregon (15), New Mexico (8), Louisiana (7), New Jersey (7), North Carolina (7), Iowa (5), Alabama (4), Connecticut (4), Maine (4), Maryland (4), Nebraska, Pennsylvania (2), Idaho (1), Minnesota (1), South Dakota (1) and Washington DC (1) – reported the same number of infections as Thursday. The surge in the case count on Friday can be attributed to a backlog of likely cases that needed to be confirmed through additional testing. As scientists continue to analyze thousands of specimens suspected of having the H1N1 flu, Mexico's confirmed case count is now less than the US' tally, reporting 1,204 cases on Friday, up from 1,112 on Thursday. The death toll increased to 44, according to the WHO, but the situation seems to be slowing. Late on Wednesday (May 6), Mexican officials lowered the alert level for the flu in Mexico City, the epicenter of the outbreak, from orange, indicating elevated risk, to yellow, indicating medium risk. On Monday (May 4), officials had declared the epidemic was waning, decreasing the nation's health alert from red, or "high," to orange. Health Minister Jose Angel Cordova stressed that the country must remain vigilant against the outbreak despite the slowing of the epidemic.

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_05_08a/en/index.html

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/08/content_11334297.htm

<http://www.philstar.com/Article.aspx?articleId=465850&publicationSubCategoryId=200>

5 May: ASEAN set to adopt response to H1N1

MEMBER-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), including dialogue partners China, Japan and South Korea, are set to adopt a collective and regional response to the Influenza A (H1N1) virus that has affected 18 countries around the world, including Mexico, its epicenter, and the US. The Asean Health Ministers' Meeting will be held in Bangkok on May 8 to assess the situation after two cases were confirmed in the Asian countries of Hong Kong and South Korea. Mexico has reported 473 confirmed human cases of infection with 19 deaths. The US has

recorded 160 cases with one reported death. Countries with confirmed cases of infection with no deaths are Austria, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Korea, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Philippines, led by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, will preside over the meeting as the current chairman of the Asean Health Ministers Meeting framework.

<http://aseanplus3-eid.info/newsread.php?nid=404&gid=10>

Indigenous Peoples Demand Greater Role in Climate Debate

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, Apr 20 (Tierramérica) - While indigenous peoples from around the world are meeting in this Alaskan city to seek a greater role in global climate negotiations, the rapidly warming Arctic is forcing some Inuit villages to be relocated. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46561>

Pollution gets to groundwater, Bangladesh

River pollution around Dhaka city has reached such a level that the groundwater system where the aquifers are recharged from the riverbeds is being contaminated, a recent study shows. In the seven months from November to April, virtually no water but only stinky mucky liquid flows in the gradually narrowing rivers - the Buriganga, Shitalakshya, Turag and Balu - as no governments could stop discharge of liquid waste into them. A recent study jointly done by the World Bank and the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) says: "The groundwater system is being contaminated in areas where aquifers are recharged from the riverbeds. The pollution is creeping towards the central part of the city with time." <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=85624>

BUET Research on river pollution

A recent research by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) shows the pollution level in the Buriganga, Shitalakshya, Balu and most parts of the Turag so high that simply no living organism can survive in their waters. A three-year research finds that some invertebrates and small organisms come to life in these rivers when water flow increases in the rains. But these life forms completely disappear in the dry season, the researchers add.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=85624>

Information Resources

IPCC to undertake a special report on risk reduction and management

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agreed at its 30th session in Antalya, Turkey, 21-23 April, to undertake the preparation of a special report entitled "Management of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation", which was proposed by the UNISDR, on behalf of the ISDR partnership, and the Government of Norway. The IPCC special report will feature nine chapters including one dedicated to case studies and three to assessing risk management policies and practices at community, national and international levels. The draft outline of the report was developed at a scoping workshop hosted by Norway in Oslo and contained in the report of the workshop. The IPCC will produce the report in collaboration with the secretariat of the UNISDR, which will facilitate access to information from the disaster risk reduction community www.ipcc.ch

Report: Tsunami Global Lessons Learnt Event in New York

A report on The Tsunami Legacy, consisting of lessons learnt from the global recovery response to the tsunami, and best practices to help prevent and prepare for disasters, was launched at a major UN gathering in New York on 24 April, including high level attendance and interventions from severely affected countries: Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand. In his remarks, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: "Humanity is not the helpless victim of nature. Our capacity to cope with natural disasters is much greater than we realize. We cannot prevent such events, but we can diminish their potential for disaster. Doing so requires foresight and advanced planning, not just emergency relief. He added: "Experience has shown that good building designs, proper land-use

planning, public education, community preparedness and effective early warning systems can reduce the impact of severe weather events. Many countries have shown the way by investing in flood control measures, hurricane-proof building design and protection of coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and coral reefs. We have learned the importance of building local capacity, focusing on the needs of women and the poorest, community participation, and accountability and transparency." <http://www.undp.org/asia/the-tsunami-legacy.pdf>

Report: Integrated Solutions to the Water, Agriculture and Climate Crises

Report investigates the role of agriculture in addressing global challenges related to climate, water and food. Based on three international events over 2009: the World Water Forum, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the dramatic convergence of multiple crises—global warming, hunger and depletion of natural resources such as water—compels us to shift from the dominant industrial agriculture model and consider a new way forward. Because agriculture is multifunctional, it could play a critical role in addressing global challenges related to climate, water, social justice and food. The time is ripe to identify the interconnections between the three crises and develop complementary policy options and action steps.

<http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/integrated-solutions-water-agriculture-and-climate-crises>

Report: Our climate, our children, our responsibility: The implications of climate change for the world's children

'This report aims to draw the attention of the international community to the specific risks faced by children in developing countries due to climate variability and extremes, thus making it harder to achieve the child – related MDGs. It analyses the impacts of climate change upon children, and their role in mitigation and adaptation strategies. The report argues that children need to be mainstreamed into larger debates on climate change, hazards and vulnerabilities.

It begins with an overview of the linkages between climate change and sustainable development, which is threatened by the increasing frequency of hazardous weather and the inability of the poor and most vulnerable to adapt to climate variability and extremes. Secondly, it documents and analyses the adverse effects of climate change with particular emphasis on MDGs relating to children: child health and survival, education and gender equality, emergencies and child protection. In tackling the drivers and impacts of climate change, it argues that there is unique collective responsibility towards children who have been born into a world created by adults.'

<http://www.unicef.org.uk/campaigns/publications/pdf/climate-change.pdf>

Slide Show: Bangladesh: the frontline of climate change

Behind the politics and science, climate change is a story about people. And in flood-prone Bangladesh, it's happening here and now.

It's the story of families uprooted, driven from their homes and land by increasingly extreme weather and changes beyond their control. Rubia came here with her family five years ago, after floods wiped out their home and land. It was an 'indescribable pain' to leave all they had worked for, she tells us. And it's happening all over again. Floods are a fact of life here that people have learnt to live with over generations. But they're getting deeper, longer-lasting and increasingly widespread. And regular cyclones compound the problem.

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/climate_change/bangladesh-audio-slideshow.html

Paper: Water, Energy and Climate Change

Recently, there has been increased understanding of the links between water, energy and climate change. Research and knowledge have expanded and discussion progressed within technical circles.

Some places in the world have successfully integrated both water and energy into planning, from investment to institutional decision-making. If we truly want to find sustainable solutions, we must ensure that we address all three - water, energy and climate change in a holistic way. They are pieces of the same puzzle and therefore it is not practical to look at them in isolation. This paper is only a first step in fitting some of the pieces of that puzzle together. The search for solutions is complicated because water, energy and climate change are each complex.

<http://www.wbcsd.org/DocRoot/Dg6GYWJq7xuaL00OwZOi/WaterEnergyandClimateChange.pdf>

Paper: Developing Country Interests in Climate Change Action and the Implications for a Post-2012 Climate Change Regime

This paper will focus on that cross-cutting objective: advancing development goals in a sustainable way, making the case that there are strategic interests for developing countries in addressing climate change while simultaneously addressing nationally defined development priorities. In doing so, the paper first frames the terms of discussion, arguing for international support for such efforts. This sort of framing has not yet happened at the international level, though there is clearly broad agreement among the parties on the need for such an approach. The paper will then suggest a number of elements that might feature in an international approach to climate change that focuses on advancing development goals in a sustainable way, noting in each case the relationship to and implications for the Bali mandate. The paper finishes by speculating on what those sorts of elements might mean for the shape of a post-2012 climate regime and the carbon market that might accompany it. http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/ditcbcc20092_en.pdf

Opinion: Can good communications help combat swine flu?

Flu shots, quarantine measures and hospital care alone cannot counter the current flu outbreak. While medical doctors and researchers spearhead the public health response, we need the mass media and other communicators to mount the public awareness response. Ideally, they should reinforce each other. For the first time in history, we now have the technological means to quickly reach out to most of humanity. More than four billion mobile phones are in use, a majority of them in the developing world. Nearly a quarter of the world population (over 1.5 billion people) have access to the web, even if at varying levels of bandwidth. Thousands of radio and TV channels saturate the airwaves – these still are the primary source of news and information for billions. Can these information and communication technologies (ICTs) help disseminate the right kind of flu awareness? How fast can we mobilise 24/7 media outlets and telecom networks to inspire preventive and curative action? What can the blogging, texting and twittering new media activists do in such efforts? <http://www.mediachannel.org/wordpress/2009/05/05/good-communications-to-combat-swine-flu/>

For archived DRM updates:

ADPC Website:

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

Note: The information has been collated from publicly available information. Although the sources are deemed reliable, request cross checking before referencing.

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