

24 March 2009

**Natural Disasters:****19 Mar: 7.9-magnitude earthquake near Tonga prompts tsunami warnings**

A 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck southeast of the island nation of Tonga, leading authorities to issue tsunami warnings across the South Pacific that were quickly withdrawn. According to the US Geological Survey, the quake struck at about 06:17 local time (1817 GMT) centered about 130 miles (210 km) southeast of Nuku'alofa, the capital of the 170-island country that is located about halfway between Australia and Tahiti. The quake occurred about six miles (10 km) below the ocean and was followed by an aftershock measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale about two hours later, the Associated Press (AP) reported. No damage or casualties have been reported in Tonga or neighboring island countries, but the US Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) said a tsunami had been generated that had the potential to cause damage along coastlines in the region and issued tsunami warnings for Tonga, Niue, the Kermadec Islands, American Samoa and Fiji. The center lifted the warnings about two hours after the earthquake, according to the AP. Fiji authorities warned people in coastal areas to move to higher ground and closed schools along the coast in light of the warning, the AP reported.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29769097/>

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iGMhoGRa54p5-0dbBVchp2-664eA>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7953858.stm>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/20/2521299.htm?section=world>

**18 Mar: At least four killed by landslide in Indonesia's Papua province**

A landslide triggered by heavy rains left at least four people dead in Indonesia's westernmost Papua province. The incident occurred in the district of North Jayapura, north of the provincial capital, Jayapura. According to the Jakarta Globe, Rustam Pakaya, the chief of the Health Ministry's Crisis Center, said that the landslide occurred at around 05:00 local time, when most residents were asleep. According to the Globe, another landslide occurred at around the same time in the neighboring subdistrict of Gurobesi, but no casualties were reported. "The situation is under control as the local crisis centers in the affected areas were already prepared," the Globe quoted Pakaya as saying. He added that several other provinces across the country had experienced heavy flooding due to heavy rains, including the provinces of Gorontalo and Central Sulawesi. Indonesia's rainy season, which typically runs from November to March and peaks from December to February, has a history of triggering landslides and flash floods annually.

<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/national/article/13511.html>

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/landslide-kills-four-in-indonesian-papua-20090318-922e.html>

**12 Mar: Four killed by landslide on Indonesia's West Java**

Indonesian officials say that at least four people were killed in a landslide in West Java, while across the Indonesian archipelago, hundreds of homes in South Sumatra were inundated by floodwaters due to heavy rains. The Environmental Study Center (PPLH) at Palembang's Sriwijaya University (Unsri) head Zaidan P. Negara said that recurring floods in Palembang were due to poor drainage systems and poor swamp management, the Post said. The center noted that the recurrent flooding in the area was proof that the municipality was not serious about addressing the problem, the Post reported. "In the short term, additional retention pools, better drainage maintenance and the normalization of river systems are

pressing issues to resolve," the Post quoted Negara as saying. Local officials have distributed three tons of rice, boxes of instant noodles, bread and canned food to flood survivors, along with medical supplies, tents and rubber boats, according to the Post. Indonesia's rainy season, which typically runs from November to March and peaks from December to February, has a history of triggering landslides and flash floods annually. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/MUMA-7Q34LA?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=idn>

## **Events & Training:**

### **World Meteorological Day 2009: Weather, climate and the air we breathe**

Each year, on 23 March, the World Meteorological Organization, its 188 Members and the worldwide meteorological community celebrate World Meteorological Day around a chosen theme. This Day commemorates the entry into force, on that date in 1950, of the WMO Convention creating the Organization. Subsequently, in 1951, WMO was designated a specialized agency of the United Nations System. This year, the theme is "Weather, climate and the air we breathe". <http://www.wmo.ch/wmd/>

**3rd Global Warming and Climate Change Conference & Industry Exposition (GWCCN 09), 8-12 May 2009, London:** Conference Theme: "Bringing Sustainable Development Down to Earth" Entitled "Bringing Sustainable Development Down to Earth", the GWCCN 09 conference will highlight the role of individuals groups and grassroots efforts in "green-building" initiatives. The conference will explore what we can do as ordinary citizens in addressing the adverse effects of Global Warming and Climate Change. [gwccn@uku.co.uk](mailto:gwccn@uku.co.uk)

The **2009 Summer Institute for Advanced Study of Disaster and Risk (SIASDR)** at Beijing Normal university theme for this summer's institute will be "Theory and Concept of Disaster and Risk: the Essentials". SIASDR invites junior faculty, post-docs and qualified PhD candidates who have an interdisciplinary focus and are working on dissertations related to natural disaster, risk management, social vulnerability and resilience to apply by 30 April 2009. For accepted international participants, we cover travel cost (economic class) and accommodation in Beijing. There is no registration fee. For more information please see: <http://adrem.org.cn/111/index.html>.

The **Global Environmental Change and Human Security Synthesis Conference** is taking place 22-24 June 2009 in Oslo, Norway. The organization Children in a Changing Climate is coordinating a session on 'Children and Future Generations', under the theme 'How to Increase Human Security in the Context of Global Environmental Change'. <http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org/>

A '**Preventing disasters: understanding social and structural vulnerability**' course will be taught at University College London on Tuesday, March 31, 2009. <http://www.cege.ucl.ac.uk/shortcourses/preventingdisasters>.

The **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** will gather from June 15, 2009 at 9pm to June 19, 2009 at 12pm at CIGC, Geneva.

The **International Disaster and Risk Conference**, Chengdu, China will be held from July 13, 2009 at 6am to July 15, 2009, organized by IDRC.

## News:

### Earth Hour 2009 – What will you be doing?

At 8:30pm on Saturday 28 March, people from all corners of the world will turn off their lights for one hour - Earth Hour - and cast their vote for action on climate change. Anybody can participate and join together with millions of people across the globe celebrating Earth Hour. Earth Hour is about taking simple steps everyday that collectively reduce carbon emissions – from businesses turning off their lights when their offices are empty to households turning off appliances rather than leaving them on standby.

Here are 10 different ways to spend Earth Hour and reduce your carbon footprint:

1. Attend a local Earth Hour event or organise your own by throwing an Earth Hour street party with your neighbours
2. Gather family & friends for a night picnic in your local park and look at the stars
3. Enjoy a family dinner by candlelight
4. Organise a treasure hunt in the dark
5. Take the dog for a night walk
6. Have a candle-lit bath
7. Sit in the dark and share stories
8. Organise a family night playing board games
9. Share a romantic night in with your loved one
10. Upload your 'on the night' photos and videos to flickr and YouTube respectively, and then add them to the [Earth Hour flickr group](#) and the global [YouTube Group](#).

Earth Hour Executive Director, Andy Ridley, is encouraging people to participate in whatever way they choose and to think beyond the hour. "There are no hard and fast rules surrounding participation in Earth Hour. We only ask that you flick that switch and have fun doing whatever you choose to do during that time. Make Earth Hour work for you. Families with young children should feel free to turn their lights off earlier than 8:30pm and for those having too much fun in the dark during the hour, don't feel you have to limit yourself to one hour and switch back on at 9:30pm."

To find out more about Earth Hour, visit the official website [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org), sign up and join millions of people in more than 1,400 cities and towns in 80 countries throughout the world by turning off your lights for one hour at 8:30pm on Saturday 28 March.

**Surveyors blamed for hurricane losses:** Land is worth lots of money. Most people will spend more on securing land than anything else. Hence issues around security of title plague people everywhere, and developing a secure and transparent titling system is one of the most significant jobs land administrators face. But security of title is not just a third world problem. It can confound people in even the biggest economies. <http://www.asmmag.com/news/1552>

**Disaster Management: UN-SPIDER call for abstracts:** The Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) are inviting contributions to a best practises booklet on Geoinformation for Risk and Disaster Management. <http://www.asmmag.com/news/1568>

Mar 4: UNICEF has opened its **200th earthquake-resistant and child-friendly school in Indonesia**. A further 146 schools are under construction and scheduled to be completed by September. More information can be found at: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0903/S00082.htm>

World Bank is supporting development of a **National Action Plan for Safe schools**, along with a build back better approach to reconstruction.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2009/03/06/business/CB-Haiti-World-Bank->  
[http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090306/bs\\_afp/worldbankhaitiaideducation](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090306/bs_afp/worldbankhaitiaideducation)

**Climate Change and Arctic Sustainable Development: scientific, social, cultural and educational challenges:** Climate change is accelerating the transformation of environmental, social and cultural landscapes across the Arctic and Subarctic. UNESCO is organizing an international experts' meeting in Monaco from 3 to 6 March, "Climate Change and Arctic Sustainable Development: scientific, social, cultural and educational challenges."

To analyse the multilayered and multiform interactions currently affecting the circumpolar North, an international and interdisciplinary approach is needed. The meeting will bring together 45 natural scientists, social and human scientists, environmental ethicists, education development specialists, NGOs and representatives of circumpolar indigenous peoples.

[http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL\\_ID=44636&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/es/ev.php-URL_ID=44636&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

#### **Public health updates:**

##### **10 Mar: Outbreak Notice - Meningococcal Disease in India**

Meningococcal disease (commonly referred to as meningitis or epidemic meningitis) is a serious, sometimes fatal bacterial infection that occurs worldwide. Since January 2009, local health officials in India have reported 230 deaths and 2,000 possible cases of meningitis in the northeastern states of Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram. These states are in the part of India bordered by Bangladesh to the west and Myanmar (Burma) to the east. <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentMeningococcalIndia.aspx>

##### **Mar 12: Simian Malaria Can Jump to Humans; May Cause Misdiagnosis**

Travelers to forested areas of Southeast Asia and South America have gotten malaria caused by a malaria parasite species—*Plasmodium knowlesi*—normally found only in monkeys. This species can cause severe illness and death in people, but under the microscope, the parasite looks similar to a more benign human malaria species. Physicians should take special care in diagnosis and treatment. [http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/features/simian\\_misdiagnosis.html](http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/features/simian_misdiagnosis.html)

**12 Mar: Avian Influenza outbreak in Mandalay, Myanmar:** Dangerous bacteria "Pseudomonas" found in bottled water, 3 plants closed in Vietnam:

- a. Aquaphar bottled water produced by the Tam Dang Company in Ho Chi Minh City
- b. Thuan Huy bottled water "Aguavida Brand"
- c. Tan Tan Duc Company "Golf Brand"

#### **PSEUDOMONAS INFORMATION:**

- Pseudomonas aeruginosa bacteria are not allowed to be present in foods and beverages at any concentration level.

- an extremely dangerous type of bacteria which usually exists in wastewater released from hospitals.
- The bacteria could cause serious lung inflammation if human beings were infected through blood.
- The bacteria may infect the body through an open cut, if people washed it with contaminated water

<http://www.promedmail.org>

<http://www.isid.org>

### **Information Resources:**

**Manual:** IDLO released the Manual on International Law and Standards Applicable in Natural Disaster Situations. The Manual is the result of field and desk research conducted over two years, and contributions of case studies and chapters by numerous partner agencies. It aims to assist relief workers, particularly non-lawyers, in developing human rights-based responses to natural disaster situations, and also serves as a tool for state authorities and relief organizations to develop or reform domestic legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. [eharper@idlo.int](mailto:eharper@idlo.int). Hardcopies can be obtained by contacting the IDLO communications department. [disaster-response@idlo.int](mailto:disaster-response@idlo.int)

### **Manual: Integrating Environmental Safeguards into Disaster Management: a field manual**

Environmental facets are essential components of human well-being and contribute positively to human security, providing basic materials for good life, good health and good social relations. Yet, these are being damaged and overexploited, ultimately to the detriment of humans. In addition, increasing incidence and intensity of natural disasters and climate change are having over-arching impacts on the environment. Sustainable development, often of the most vulnerable sectors of society, is thus being undermined. One of the key reasons why this damage continues is that an integrated approach is adopted rarely in disaster risk management. For example, relief organisations may focus on damage to life and property while others examine impacts on livelihoods. Very often, ecological services and their indirect economic values are omitted completely from assessments. Adaptation to climate change is ignored. Mainstreaming ecosystem concerns – both ecological and economical – into the development agenda and integrating them into disaster management, therefore, becomes essential. This manual attempts to provide background information and guidance for integrating environmental concerns into disaster management.

Volume I of the manual briefly describes the framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). The MA links clearly ecosystem well-being to human well-being, and presents the major threats imposed by human activities to the services that ecosystems provide. Volume 1 also gives a snapshot view of ecosystem well-being and human well-being in Asia and a brief overview of selected ecosystems in the region. Clarification of the difference between natural hazards and natural disasters and a discussion on risk and vulnerability are presented. Climate change and its impacts on natural disasters are also discussed. At the end of Volume 1 is a series of annexes that detail ecosystem services and the threats to ecosystems described in the text.

Volume II describes the disaster management cycle and its phases: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, relief, recovery and rebuilding. It introduces an integrated approach to assessments that examines biodiversity, ecosystem services, economic valuation and livelihoods. This volume goes on to discuss each of the phases of the disaster management cycle, lists steps and introduces questions that must be raised during each phase in order to integrate environmental concerns into disaster management. These

steps and questions are designed around the framework of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its identified threats.

In Volume III, an integrated summary worksheet is presented as a tool for use. Details of the techniques for each component of assessment are also presented in this volume, as well as a list of available web resources.

This document was produced and published with financial support through a grant made from the Autonomous Organisation for National Parks (Organismo Autónomo Parques Nacionales - OAPN) of the Ministry of Environment, Spain to IUCN.

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/integrating\\_environmental\\_safeguards\\_into\\_disaster\\_management\\_vol\\_1.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/integrating_environmental_safeguards_into_disaster_management_vol_1.pdf),

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/integrating\\_environmental\\_safeguards\\_into\\_disaster\\_management\\_vol\\_2.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/integrating_environmental_safeguards_into_disaster_management_vol_2.pdf)

The hard copies of the manual are available from the IUCN-ELG2 Office in Colombo and can be obtained by contacting Ms. Farlina Sariffodeen ([fss@iucnsl.org](mailto:fss@iucnsl.org)).

### **Report: Katrina and the women of New Orleans**

Katrina and the Women of New Orleans is a collaborative effort of the Gender and Disasters Research Group sponsored by the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women. The goal in writing this report was to analyze the ways the hurricanes of 2005 affected the lives of women and girls and to bring those findings to the attention of policy makers, community leaders, scholars, grant makers, and disaster managers.

The ten chapters of the report focus on the pre-storm vulnerability and post-storm resilience of New Orleans women, and tackle the dearth of qualitative data specific to women to report on housing, employment and earnings, women's physical and mental health, and domestic violence.

[http://gender.developmentgateway.org/index.php?id=10976&tx\\_dgcontent\\_pi1\[tt\\_news\]=491579&cHash=6360c450fb&MP=10976-8519](http://gender.developmentgateway.org/index.php?id=10976&tx_dgcontent_pi1[tt_news]=491579&cHash=6360c450fb&MP=10976-8519)

### **Film: Mekong: Watch that river!**

South East Asia's largest river, the Mekong, has withstood decades of pressure from rising human numbers, growing industrial activity and more demands for water and food. But scientists now caution that climate change could upset this balance in the coming years and decades. At risk are water, food and jobs for 65 million people living in Mekong River Basin. To minimise impact, the six Mekong countries need to better plan and coordinate how they share the river's resources and their impact on its flow. *Mekong: Watch that river!* is a new short film, produced by TVE Asia Pacific that captures highlights of recent study, *Vulnerability Assessment of Freshwater Resources to Environmental Change*, carried out by researchers at the Asian Institute Technology (AIT), Bangkok for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

<http://movingimages.wordpress.com/2009/03/21/mekong-a-river-to-watch-as-climate-change-impacts-asias-water-tower/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yprWQrP6SdU>

[www.tveap.org](http://www.tveap.org)

[www.roap.unep.org](http://www.roap.unep.org)

**Video:** A short advocacy video on empowering women in disaster risk reduction from UNISDR, 2009. **Empowering Women against Disasters, UNISDR 2009** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wPWmUNMOd0>

***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. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please drop a mail to [adpc@adpc.net](mailto:adpc@adpc.net).*

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