

3 Feb 2009

Natural Disasters:**2 Feb: At least 37 killed by heatwave in Australia**

Australian officials say that the heatwave mainly affecting the country's south has been linked to the deaths of at least 37 people, most of them elderly. The heatwave has also been blamed for bush fires across the country. According to the Guardian newspaper, firefighters in Victoria state were battling more than 600 separate fires Sunday (February 1) night. The heatwave is reportedly the worst in a century, with both states seeing six consecutive days of temperatures reaching 113 degrees Fahrenheit (45 degrees Celsius).

http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,,25000195-2702,00.html?from=public_rss

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/02/australia-heatwave-deaths>

[Australia heatwave claims 37 lives](#)

2 Feb: Floods, landslides, waves leave at least 18 dead across Indonesia

Flash floods, landslides and high waves have left at least 18 people dead on Indonesia's main island of Java and Sulawesi island. Rustam Pakaya, the head of the Health Ministry's crisis center, said landslides, triggered by heavy rains, killed at least seven people. Heavy rains caused the Bengawan Solo River to burst its banks, inundating thousands of homes in the East Java district of Bojonegoro. The floods had earlier swamped dozens of homes in the upper reaches of the river in Central Java's Solo regency over the weekend. Officials said that more than 4,201 acres (1,700 hectares) of rice fields in Bojonegoro were under up to 3.2 feet (1 meter) of water. Seasonal rains trigger landslides and flash floods annually in Indonesia. Millions of Indonesians live near fertile plains that are close to rivers and in mountainous regions of the country.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/FBUO-7NVE7F?OpenDocument&rc=3&cc=idn>

<http://asia.news.yahoo.com/090201/3/3vo3h.html>

2 Feb: Eight dead in Solomon Islands floods

Flooding in the South Pacific nation of Solomons Islands has killed eight people, left another eight missing, washed away bridges and destroyed houses. Since December, flooding has also hit the Pacific island nations of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, with tens of thousands of islanders abandoning homes. Heavy rain and flooding on the Solomons' main island of Guadalcanal and nearby Savo Island since last Thursday has caused widespread damage and forced the evacuation of more than 70 villagers to the capital Honiara, said officials in Honiara.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SYD398786.htm>

1 Feb: Tropical storm Ellie

Tropical storm Ellie struck Australia at about 06:00 GMT on 1 February. Data supplied by the US Navy and Air Force Joint Typhoon Warning Center suggest that the point of landfall was near 17.5 S, 146.9 E. Ellie brought 1-minute maximum sustained winds to the region of around 64 km/h (40 mph). Wind gusts in the area may have been considerably higher. <http://www.tropicalstormrisk.com>

News:

Disaster-related deaths and economic losses jump in 2008

The Center for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) released disaster figures for 2008. The figures showed a marked increase in deaths and economic losses in 2008 from disasters compared to the 2000-2007 yearly average. Disasters in 2008:

- Killed 235,816 people – three times more than the annual average of 66,812 for 2000-2007. The death toll is attributed to two major events: Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar (138,366 dead) and the Sichuan earthquake in China (87,476 dead).
- Affected 211 million people – below the 2000-2007 annual average of 231 million.
- Caused economic losses of US\$178 billion – double the annual average for 2000-2007 of US\$81 billion. The Sichuan earthquake alone caused half of the total damages (US\$85 billion).

Analysis of the disaster figures revealed that 2008 was the third costliest year in the last 20 years. 2008 also marked the first year in which middle income countries were the main contributors of economic loss. According to Professor Debarati Guha-Sapir, Director of CRED, "As countries move up the development ladder, their economic vulnerability tends to increase. Ideally, these countries need to invest more in disaster risk reduction measures if they want to better protect development gains."

For more information, contact Régina Below, regina.below@uclouvain.be

Philippine's new climate change committee to be tasked with DRR

On 17 December 2008, the Philippine Senate approved the creation of the Committee on Climate Change which will have an overall focus on "all matters related to policies, programs, strategies, technologies and other innovations addressing global warming and climate change impacts." The nine-member committee will also be tasked with "climate and disaster risks management to reduce vulnerability associated with climate-sensitive areas and sectors." Senator Loren Legarda, UNISDR's regional disaster risk reduction champion for Asia Pacific, proposed the committee's creation in Resolution No. 772 in November. In the Resolution, Legarda cited findings by the IPCC that global warming will lead to more frequent heat waves and more intense tropical cyclones. Legarda warned in the Resolution that the Philippines is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, sea level rise and extreme weather events due to its archipelagic nature and its location within the Pacific typhoon belt.

For more information, contact Manny de Guzman, manny_de_guzman@yahoo.com

UNISDR opens office in the Pacific

In December 2008, UNISDR established a permanent regional presence in the Pacific by opening up a sub-regional office in Suva, Fiji. The Pacific office will facilitate UNISDR's efforts in the region to:

- Advise regional partners and Pacific island countries on implementing and monitoring the Hyogo Framework for Action in line with the Pacific Regional Disaster Risk Management Framework for Action;
- Support the documentation and exchange of lessons learned;
- Support the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development policy and programming;
- Maintain strategic partnerships with the disaster risk management and climate change communities; and
- Strengthen regional linkages with the core mechanisms of the ISDR System, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

UNISDR would like to take this opportunity to commend the recent endorsement of the Pacific Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Management, and looks forward to supporting the Platform in close collaboration with the Pacific Applied Geo-Science Commission and members of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network. For more information, contact Angelika Planitz, planitz@un.org

Updated DRR terminology released

In 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action requested UNISDR to "update and widely disseminate international standard terminology related to disaster risk reduction (DRR) . . . for use in programme and institutions development, operations, research, training curricula and public information programmes." The first DRR terminology document, *Terminology: Basic terms of disaster risk reduction*, had been drafted by UNISDR in 2004 to promote common understanding and common usage of DRR concepts and to assist the DRR efforts of authorities, practitioners and the public. Now, UNISDR has released an updated version titled *2009 UNISDR terminology on DRR*. The new version is the result of a process of ongoing review by UNISDR in consultation with a broad range of experts and practitioners in various international venues, regional discussions and national settings. Revisions include the addition of words that are central to the contemporary understanding and evolving practice of DRR and the exclusion of words that have a common dictionary usage. A number of emerging new concepts that are not yet in widespread use but are of growing professional relevance have also been included.

To read the new terminology, visit <http://unisdr.org/eng/library/libterminology-eng.htm>

30 Jan: Kenya-Drought exacerbating conflict among pastoralists

Clashes over water and pasture have significantly increased in the drought-affected pastoralist areas of north-eastern Kenya. "The conflicts surround access to water and pasture," Titus Mung'ou, acting Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) communications manager, told IRIN. "The conflicts have increased with the drought." Dozens of people, he said, had died in clashes over water in Mandera since September 2008.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/983ba99ab03655fe67c808540092f7e6.htm>

Lebanon: Climate change and politics threaten water wars in Bekaa

In the shadow of Black Peak Mountain in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, an historic feud over irrigation is being slowly re-ignited, illustrating how increased water scarcity is triggering social conflict in Lebanon. "Nothing's profitable to grow here. Twenty thousand dunums [nearly 5,000 acres] of farmland is unused," said Abdel-Wahab Amhaz, head of a Shia Muslim clan in Nabha, in northern Bekaa, home to some 11,000 people. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=82682>

Events:

- **Radio for Survival - a Vibgyor workshop**
There will be a community radio workshop as a parallel event with the Vibgyor Film Festival in Thrissur, Kerala, India on 7 February 2009
Leading practitioners like Deccan Development Society, Dhan Foundation and Nomad, various Government and UN agencies and local groups will share notes at the workshop. The focus will be communication for safer, sustainable and more productive traditional livelihood options like farming and fishing. There will be discussions on using radio for disaster preparedness and a display of broadcast equipment. Contact: Leenus Kannothe <leenuskannothe@yahoo.com>, Cell: +91 9447708592
- **Hydrological risks and climate change, 9 - 13 February 2009, Newcastle University, UK**
- **Australian disasters conference 2009: Surviving future risks 10 – 13 February 2009, Canberra, Emergency Management Australia**
- **3rd international conference on community-based adaptation to climate change, 22 - 26 February 2009, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies**

- **ICESE 2009: International conference on earthquake and structural engineering 25 - 27 February 2009, World Academy of Science Engineering and Technology, Penang, Malaysia**
- **India Asia megacities forum Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, 4 – 6 March, Mumbai**
- **Denmark International scientific conference on climate change University of Copenhagen, 10 - 12 March 2009**
- **Turkey 5th world water forum, 16 - 22 March 2009, Istanbul, World Water Council**
- **Norway Scoping meeting on extreme events and disasters: Managing the risk, 23 - 26 March 2009, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Oslo**
- **Germany UNESCO world conference on education for sustainable Development, 31 - 2 April 2009, Bonn**
- **Ravage of the Planet II**
15-17 Dec 2009, Western Cape, South Africa
Topics covered: The re-encounter, political and social issues, planning and development, safety, health risks, new technologies, learning from nature, ecology, energy, water resources, air, soil & training and information. Submit an abstract via the conference website:
<http://www.wessex.ac.uk/ravage2009rem2.html>

Information Resources:

Publication: Convergence of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

So far there has been limited integration of DRR and adaptation despite the two agendas sharing similar goals and conceptual overlaps, and both struggling to be mainstreamed into regular development planning. This paper develops a series of recommendations on how the UK Department for International Development can promote the convergence of DRR and climate change adaptation.

www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=7853

Guide: Policy and institutional reforms to support climate change adaptation and mitigation in development programs

Climate change regarding adaptation is increasingly important in most developing countries. Building up resilience to increasing climate variability is the most significant climate challenge facing these countries. Although poor developing countries contribute the least to GHG emissions, some development programs—such as expanding access to clean energy (including through regional projects), as well as financing improved land management and forest management programs—can offer true win-win opportunities in terms of both supporting good development and reducing global GHG emissions.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXT/EEI/Resources/DCCToolkitCRAlores.pdf>

Study: Research identifies risk factors that affected world trade center evacuation

Researchers at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health have released findings identifying factors that affected evacuation from the World Trade Center (WTC) Towers on September 11. A research methodology known as participatory action research (PAR) was used to identify individual, organizational, and structural (environmental) barriers to safe and rapid evacuation. PAR is a research

approach in which the researchers actively engage and collaborate with members of the study population on all phases of the project -- from study design to the presentation of results and discussion of implications. According to Robyn Gershon, DrPh, professor of clinical Sociomedical Sciences at the Mailman School of Public Health and principal investigator for this study, "PAR has been used extensively in occupational health research but not, to our knowledge, in disaster research."

<http://www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu/>

Paper: Community Health Centers: The untapped resource for public health and medical preparedness
Web link for abstract: <http://www.hsaj.org/?article=5.1.8>

Briefing note: Climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and social protection

By exploring the relationship between climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and social protection, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) researchers have developed the concept of "adaptive social protection". Adaptive social protection involves examining the role of social protection in strengthening adaptation, for example, in developing more climate-resilient livelihoods. The paper outlines linkages between the three fields and assesses good practice within current social protection mechanisms.

https://cms.ids.ac.uk/UserFiles/file/poverty_team/publications/IDS%20Adaptive%20Social%20Protection%20Briefing%20Note%2011%20December%202008.pdf

Report: Evaluation of adaptation to climate change from a development perspective

The aim is to present an overview of approaches relevant to or used for the evaluation of interventions intended to support adaptation to climate change and to identify main gaps in evaluation of adaptation interventions. The report sought answers for the following questions:

- What types of interventions can already be considered for evaluation with an 'adaptation lens'?
- What additional questions should be asked when applying an 'adaptation lens' to evaluate such interventions?
- What indicators of success relating to adaptation have been used in different types of projects and programmes?

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/browse-by-subject/climate-change>

Article: Disaster preparedness for persons with chronic diseases. University Hospital, Louisville, Kentucky <http://www.chronicdiseasepreparedness.org/>

Compendium of web references for WMD and emergency planning located at:

<http://www.ynhhs.org/emergency/links/EMandMedicalWebSites.pdf>

Award: Seed Awards 2009 for entrepreneurship in sustainable development

The deadline for applications is 16th March 2009. More at SEED Initiative website at www.seedinit.org

Viewpoint: Is military planning the answer to climate uncertainty?

Pretty much everyone working on climate change wants certainty - they want certain science, and they want certainty around what the impacts are going to look like and how they are going to be experienced. Unfortunately, at this stage, science can't provide the information and the answers planners want. We need, therefore, to work with scientific uncertainty for the foreseeable future.

<http://www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/54445/2009/00/30-155422-1.htm>

Viewpoint: Why humanitarians and climate scientists don't talk

At a recent seminar bringing climate scientists and aid workers together in London, organised by the Humanitarian Futures Programme, a research initiative based at King's College that helps aid agencies tackle major challenges to their work, participants agreed they didn't communicate enough.

http://www.alertnet.org/db/an_art/20316/2009/00/30-171854-1.htm

Profile: Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB)

The Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB) was convened at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in response to increasing calls for action from corporations and financial markets to address global warming and the associated growth of climate change information collection and reporting initiatives. CDSB's mission is to promote and advance climate change related disclosure in mainstream reports through the development of a global framework for corporate reporting on climate change. By working with preparers and users of information, their advisors, regulators and public interest groups, CDSB aims to develop a framework that will elicit comprehensive, consistent and comparable information for investors, offer greater certainty on disclosure requirements for corporations, and thereby provide useful guidance for standard setting by national regulators.

<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/ghg/ClimateDisclosureStandardsBoard/index.htm>

Website: International Recovery Platform launches new website

The International Recovery Platform (IRP) launched a new website on 26 January during the International Recovery Forum 2009 in Kobe, Japan, to share information about disaster recovery experiences and practices. The initiative is part of IRP's advocacy activities to promote the recovery phase as an essential process for rebuilding communities in a safer and better manner after they have been struck by disaster. The IRP website contains publications, tools, guidelines and data that will be useful to practitioners and policy makers in post-disaster situations. There is also an online forum where people can discuss disaster recovery issues. The website will be regularly updated with content provided by IRP partners and is expected to greatly increase information sharing on post-disaster recovery practices and policies. The IRP is a joint initiative between international organizations and governments. It is based in Kobe and is supported by UNISDR as one of the thematic platforms of the ISDR System. The major roles of IRP are to identify gaps and constraints currently experienced in the context of disaster recovery and to serve as a catalyst for the development of tools, resources and capacity for resilient recovery.

Visit IRP's new website at <http://recoveryplatform.org>

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, the information reported here are topical and are subject to change.

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