



International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction

Announcements

Call for contributions: Mapping initiatives for Hospitals Safe from Disaster
What is being done and where to make hospitals, health facilities and systems, and health workers safe from disasters? Does your organization have a project or initiative? For more information and a copy of the brief questionnaire, please visit: www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.php?id=2523
Please return questionnaires to Ms Tze Ming Mok (mokt@un.org) by 15 August 2008.



Students clutching their rescued books after a fire at the State Medical University, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Winner of the UN/ISDR and ECHO 'Disasters through a photo lens' competition in Central Asia. Photo by Qalandarov Nozim, photographer for Asia-Plus and Reuters.

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To submit an article or inform us of a new publication, web resource or event, please send your input to: isdhighlights@un.org by the 20th day of each month.

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Highlights

May 2008

WHO Director-General calls for better disaster preparedness

WHO Director-General Margaret Chan opened the World Health Assembly on 19 May in Geneva, Switzerland, by emphasizing the importance of making hospitals safe from disasters, and the vital role of early warning systems and preparedness plans for preventing humanitarian and health crises when natural hazards strike. Dr Chan paid tribute to the human cost of the recent disasters in Myanmar and China, noting that "[i]n China, I was especially touched by the images of a collapsed school and hospital... Every death is tragic, but the deaths of students and patients touch me most especially." In describing the pressing health concerns in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis, Dr Chan noted that the huge needs there now for health surveillance and response "demonstrate the vital importance of early warning systems, and preparedness to reduce risks in advance." Dr Chan highlighted the work of the WHO, particularly in the Americas, in promoting disaster resilient hospitals, and the cost-effectiveness of this approach. "In most cases, a very small increase in construction costs is sufficient to give health facilities this survival capacity, when their services and staff are most needed. AMRO [WHO Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Association], in particular, has pursued this approach. Unfortunately, as we look ahead, we must all brace ourselves for more humanitarian crises in the immediate and near future."

For more information, please contact Jonathan Abrahams (abrahamsj@who.int)

Local governments make start on DRR alliance

A Consultative Meeting for developing a Local Government Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction (LGA/DRR) was held in Barcelona, Spain, on 22-23 May 2008. The meeting was attended by some 15 representatives of local and regional authorities from Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States, as well as UN agencies, NGOs and the academia. The meeting served as a reality check and a brainstorming session to obtain preliminary feedback on a proposal to develop the LGA/DRR. Based on the draft Concept Note prepared by the UN/ISDR secretariat in consultation with the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the meeting stimulated a constructive debate around the potential scope, objectives and added value of the Alliance. As a result, substantive comments and observations on the LGA/DRR concept were put forward, and initial commitment to the Alliance reached. Next steps and follow-up actions were also discussed and agreed upon, in the lead-up to the next session of the GP/DRR in June 2009. A broader meeting will be organized in the coming months, to which additional partners – including a broader range of local governments and city associations – will be invited to participate. The meeting was co-organized by the UN/ISDR secretariat, the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Collaboration, and the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development of the Government of Catalonia.

For more information, please contact Michele Cocchiglia (cocchiglia@un.org)

Pakistan conference calls for more action on school safety

In the shadow of tragic events in China, where collapsed schools killed thousands of students during a massive earthquake, a three day International School Safety conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, recommended stronger support for building safe schools. The conference, held 16-18 May, delivered its recommendations to international and private stake-holders, and the Government of Pakistan. The conference recommended that governments develop mechanisms to provide technical, financial and capacity support to design and implement School Safety Action Plans. Communities, civil society and private organizations would play a critical role as partners in the implementation of these plans. The participants also observed a moment of silence in memory of those who have lost their lives in recent earthquakes. Organized by the Agha Khan Planning and Building Service, participants included UN Agencies, the World Bank, BASIN Network, ADPC, SDC, Austrian Development Association, Institute of Architects, Pakistan, and local, international and government agencies.

For more information, please visit: www.schoolsafetyconference.org

Partnership needed to reduce drought and desertification risk

The Chair's summary of the 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (5-16 May) noted that drought management, resilience building, early warning systems, and adaptation measures were even more urgently required, given current climate change projections. A side event was held on 'Building partnerships to reduce risk of drought and desertification' on 8 May, where, against the backdrop of the international crisis over food security, participants drew attention to the need to build effective partnerships at all levels to reduce drought risk. WFP and FAO presenters made the link between drought and food security, while the UN/ISDR secretariat Director Salvano Briceno emphasised the need "not to wait until a drought becomes a famine." High level speakers included USG Cheick Sidi Diarra, Special Adviser for Africa and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, and Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD. The event built on preparations for a Global Drought Risk Reduction and Preparedness Network, which is expected to assist in identifying drought risk reduction priorities, coordinating global support initiatives, developing guidance, and supporting regional drought risk reduction networks.

For more information, please contact Yoko Hagiwara (yoko.hagiwara@un.org)

Asian NGOs build on regional DRR collaboration

Asian NGOs have agreed to set up Steering Group to take forward a proposal for a regional collaboration mechanism for NGOs working on disaster risk reduction. The Steering Group will initially focus on drafting the Terms of Reference for a regional collaboration mechanism, and conduct a mapping exercise of existing national and regional NGO networks working on DRR in Asia. This agreement was an outcome of a Regional NGO Consultative Meeting held in Bangkok on 27-28 May, organized by OXFAM HK in collaboration with the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and the UN/ISDR secretariat. The meeting brought together some 30 representatives of NGOs and NGO networks from Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia and covered: 1) Extreme events and climate change adaptation; 2). Urban risk; 3). Conflict and migration; 4). Training and learning on DRR.

For more information, please contact Michele Cocchiglia (cocchiglia@un.org)

WEB RESOURCES

Online lecture on Sichuan earthquake

www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec32381/index.htm

Supercourse is a global repository of lectures on public health and prevention targeting educators



across the world, run by the University of Pittsburgh. The 'lecture of the week' is an overview of the Sichuan earthquake from a disaster management perspective, which is currently available online in English and Chinese as long and short powerpoint presentations. The lecture describes the key elements of the Sichuan earthquake, what risk factors and vulnerabilities were present, what secondary hazards may be arising, and how disaster risk reduction can contribute.

Center for Disaster Risk Policy

www.cdpr.net

The Center for Disaster Risk Policy (CDRP) of the College of Social Sciences at Florida State University provides technical assistance, emergency management programmes, and information system development to government, especially in Florida. The website includes descriptions of their emergency management tools, links to a risk assessment database, and to professional networks.

PAHO's new Caribbean Wind Hazard Maps

www.paho.org/english/dd/ped/caribbeanwindhazardmaps.htm

PAHO/WHO, through Applied Research Associates, has developed new state-of-the-art wind hazard maps for Caribbean islands and nearby coastal areas of Central and South America. The maps use the most up-to-date meteorological records and methods and are intended to replace older maps currently in use for structural design and risk assessment. They are an important aid for engineers, developers, and others whose work requires knowledge of wind hazards.

Do you know what to do in case of an earthquake? An online flash quiz.

www.nwcn.com/sharedcontent/features/flash/quake/during.html



Asian Ministers bring DRR into the city

Asia-Pacific Government Ministers agreed on a range of actions to develop sustainable urbanization with a focus on natural hazards at the second Asia-Pacific Ministerial conference on housing and Urban Development held in Tehran from 12-14 May 2008. Around 39 government representatives from across the region attended. The action plan called for countries to improve mechanisms for knowledge sharing on DRR, expand insurance coverage, design and improve the use of sports facilities as disaster shelters, base all city development plans on natural hazard risk assessments, carry out voluntary technical assessments and studies for retrofitting key infrastructure within two years, in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action, undertake feasibility studies for a disaster loan fund, use Iran and Japan as knowledge sources on seismic risk mitigation, implement training in safe construction, establish an Asian Disaster Mitigation Centre in Tehran to run training courses for the region, and establish a city twinning programme for support and knowledge sharing. UN/ISDR secretariat and UN-Habitat also attended the conference.

For more information, please visit: <http://apmchud.com/>

Gender Capacity ready for deployment

The IASC Sub-working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action completed a week-long preparatory workshop for gender advisors in humanitarian action as a part of the IASC Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), 19-23 May. The IASC Gender Standby Capacity is a pool of approximately 20 technical experts on gender equality programming in humanitarian action. The GenCap Advisers are deployed for up to 6 months to support the Humanitarian Coordinator and cluster leads. The IASC Gender Handbook and the IASC GBV Guidelines form the standards and norms for the work of the GenCap Advisers. The workshop therefore focused on practical ways to apply these tools in the different areas of work of humanitarian action (shelter, food, water and sanitation, etc). The GenCap is an inter-agency resource: The request for a GenCap Adviser should be the result of inter-agency consultations and must be endorsed and signed by the Humanitarian Coordinator HC. 11 new GenCap Advisers are available for deployment as of the last day of the preparatory workshop, 23 May.

For more information, please email gencap@un.org

UNDP tightens GRIP on risk

UNDP launched the Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP) in Mozambique on 7 May. GRIP is the ISDR System's Official Thematic Platform for Risk Identification, focusing on one of the five priority actions of the Hyogo Framework for Action. UNDP launched the initiative in 2007 when highlighting the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The launch of GRIP is a starting point for implementing the Joint Program for Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness, recently signed between the Government of Mozambique and the UN System, in support of the National Master Plan for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Naomi Kitahara noted at the launch, that the floods and cyclones which again affected the country earlier this year have demonstrated that a coordinated and timely efforts of the government, with the support of the international community, is key to minimize the impact of disasters. GRIP's supporting partners include the World Bank, the Government of Norway, DFID, USAID, the Inter American Development Bank, UN/ISDR secretariat, the Government of Japan, the SDC, the IFRC, and the ProVention Consortium.

For more information, please contact Carlos Villacis (carlos.villacis@undp.org)

Central Asian countries build resilience, literally

A regional conference on Ensuring Seismic Safety of Buildings and Structures made from Local Materials in Central Asia was held in Biskek, Kyrgyzstan from 22-23 May. The conference discussed perspectives of regional cooperation on seismic safety, and put forth recommendations to ensure seismic resistance of buildings and structures using local materials. Participants discussed resources in development, including a proposed training manual on safer construction practices called the 'Tenant Builder's Guidelines for Construction Using Local Materials' and another resource called 'Effects of earthquakes on buildings made of local materials'. They also discussed developing provisional regulations, and an atlas of strong earthquakes for the Central Asian countries. Participants included earthquake engineering experts, seismologists, university professors and researchers from academic institutions, governments and international organizations. The conference was organized by the UN/ISDR West-Asia/ North Africa Office, along with Kyrgyz State University of Construction, Transport and Architecture, with the financial support of European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).

For more information, please contact Goulsara Pulatova (goulsara.pulatova@unisdr-wana.org)

REGIONAL NEWS

For more information about disaster risk reduction activities at the regional level please visit these weblinks:

Africa: www.unisdr.org/africa
 Asia & the Pacific: www.unisdr.org/asiapacific
 Europe: www.unisdr.org/europe
 Latin America & the Caribbean: www.eird.org
 West Asia and North Africa: www.unisdr-wana.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

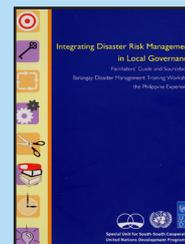
Conferences, Trainings and Events
May 2008 - June 2008

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
June		
2-4	Bled, Slovenia	24th Conference of the Danubian countries on the hydrological forecasting and hydrological bases of water management, http://ksh.fgg.uni-lj.si/bled2008
2-5	Emmitsburg, USA	11th annual emergency management higher education conference, FEMA, www.fema.org
2-13	Bonn, Germany,	Twenty-eighth session of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC, www.unfccc.int
3-5	Rome, Italy	High-level conference on world food security and the challenges of climate change and bioenergy, FAO, www.fao.org
5-6	Kathmandu, Nepal	UK-South Asia young scientists and practitioners seminar on climate change and disaster impact reduction, Northumbria University, www.unn.ac.uk
9-20	Bangkok, Thailand	8th regional training course on earthquake vulnerability reduction for cities, ADPC, www.adpc.net
9-27	Enschede, Netherlands	Multi-hazard risk assessment training course, International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), www.itc.nl/education/courses/course_descriptions/C08-ESA-SCD-01.aspx#forwho
11-13	Toronto, Canada	Livelihoods based planning for disaster risk reduction, RedR, www.redr.ca
15-18	Toronto, Canada	18th World conference on disaster management, Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness, www.ccep.ca
18-20	Southampton, UK	2nd International conference on debris flow including all aspects of debris flow monitoring, modelling, hazard assesment, mitigation measures, case studies, and extreme events, erosion, slope instability and sediment transport, Wessex Institute of Technology, www.wessex.ac.uk
26-27	Bern, Switzerland	Gender equality and climate change: gender mainstreaming in natural resource management programmes - training course. SDC, contact: susanne.berger@deza.admin.ch
27-29	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	International conference on water related disaster reduction, Government of Tajikistan, www.icwrdr2008.tj/eng/
July		
7-9	Hokkaido Toyako, Japan	G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit 2008, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, www.g8summit.go.jp/eng/
8-11	St Michael, Barbados	United Nations regional UN-SPIDER workshop: building upon regional space-based solutions for disaster management and emergency response for the Caribbean
10-11	Cardiff, UK	Dealing with disasters 2008 international conference: putting resilience into response
7-18	Brussels, Belgium	Assessing public health in emergency situations: international CRED summer course 2008
28 Jul-1 Aug	Cambridge, UK	Summer course on natural and cultural heritage of coastal zones

Source: PreventionWeb.net

Library Corner

Integrating Disaster Risk Management in Local Governance: A Facilitators' Guide and a Sourcebook for Barangay Disaster Risk Management Training Workshop. The Philippine Experience. Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, UNDP, 2007



A step-by-step guide on how to facilitate sessions and modules on disaster risk management training, designed to help local government units to reduce risks at the community or local levels. The guide contains four modules: introduction to disaster risk management; barangay governance and disaster risk management; barangay risk assessment; and barangay risk reduction planning. It also includes the reference material or the required readings for each session in the four modules.

The Shakeout Scenario

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2008/1150/>
A new online U.S. Geological Survey report on a hypothetical scenario describes how a magnitude 7.8 Southern California earthquake - similar to the recent earthquake in China - would impact the region. Such an earthquake would kill 1800 people, injure 50,000, cause \$200 billion in damage, and have long-lasting social and economic consequences. It will form the scientific framework for what will be the largest earthquake preparedness drill in Californian history, scheduled for 13 November 2008.

Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector (CD-ROM), ADPC

A resource CD packed with reports on activities, advocacy products, research papers on disaster impact in the Philippines, Laos and Cambodia, and practical tools for teaching disaster risk reduction in schools - a teacher manual and full lesson plans, curricula, and textbooks in several languages.

The Snake and the River Don't Run Straight: Local knowledge on disaster preparedness in the Eastern Terai of Nepal, ICIMOD and ECHO, 2007



One of a series of publications on local knowledge, this publication presents findings from projects with rural communities living on riverbanks. Local communities had strengths in describing experience, identifying and interpreting early warning signals, identifying where and when to run, adopting various technical, structural, and non-structural measures to adapt to floods, and transmitting lessons through proverb and song.