



Aftershock: Earth tremors that occur after a notable earthquake, sharing the same cause.

Disaster: A disaster is the result of a hazard that has struck the community. The effects of a disaster depend on how vulnerable the community is to a particular hazard, or its inability to withstand it or respond to it.

Disaster prevention: Measures taken to prevent a hazard turning into a disaster.

Drought: Period of time (months or years) during which a part of the land suffers from lack of rain, causing severe damage to the soil, crops, animals, and even people, sometimes causing death.

Earthquake: Violent shaking or jolt of the earth's surface due to movements originating from deep underground.

El Niño-La Niña: A change in the weather that happens every few years. It starts when the surface waters of Pacific Ocean near to the Equator become warmer or colder than usual off the coasts of Peru and Ecuador. It can cause floods, drought and other extreme phenomena all over Latin America and in other parts of the world.

Emergency Kit: A bag or a box that every family should have ready prepared to take with them in case

of an emergency. It should contain non-perishable food, drinking water, clothes, flashlight and batteries, a portable radio, and a first-aid kit.

Erosion: The continual wearing away of the soil by heavy rain, wind and poor land use.

Fire: A chemical reaction which combines three elements: oxygen, heat, and a flammable substance.

Flood: The building up of large quantities of water, generally caused by heavy rains which the soil is unable to absorb.

Hazard: A phenomenon caused by natural or human forces which endangers a group of people, their belongings and their environment, when they have not taken precautions. For instance, if you live near a volcano, the eruptions are a hazard even though they may not occur for many years.

Hurricane: Strong winds that start over the sea, rotating in big whirling circles, bringing rain with them. They are also known as tropical cyclones and typhoons. Between 80 and 100 occur every year in the region of the Equator. The Atlantic hurricane season starts on June 1 and ends on November 30. In the Northeastern Pacific, it begins on May 15 and ends on November 30.

Landslides, mudslides: Soil, rocks and vegetal debris that are transported suddenly or slowly down a slope because the soil is not sufficiently stable. Landslides may happen when there is a lot of rain, or during earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. The risk is greater when people build their homes in the wrong place, or cut down trees so that there is nothing left to bind the soil when it rains heavily.

Mitigation: Measures to reduce vulnerability to hazards.

Plague: A widespread catastrophe that afflicts a whole town or a community caused by, for instance, huge numbers of insects or animals that destroy crops.



Risk: The probability of a hazard (earthquake, hurricane, etc) turning into a disaster, with serious economic, social and environmental consequences.

Risk Management: Ability developed by a community to handle hazards properly so that they do not necessarily become disasters.

Risk Map: A drawing or model that shows the key elements of a community, such as schools, hospitals, town hall, and other important buildings, as well as farm land and parks. It also shows potentially dangerous places or areas such as rivers and other sources of floods, landslides, dangerous volcanoes, etc. The map also indicates the degree to which those elements exposed to these hazards could be affected (for example, a little, a lot, totally destroyed).

Sustainable Development: A form of development that allows current needs to be met without endangering future generations. In other words, that does not turn nature into a hazard for human beings, nor human beings into a threat to nature.

Seismic activity: Vibrations in the earth's crust, which may sometimes result in phenomena such as earth tremors, earthquakes or tsunamis.

Tornado: Very violent gusts of whirling, funnel-shaped winds which spin along over the ground.

Tsunami: Gigantic wave, or series of waves, caused by an earthquake, volcanic eruptions or landslides under the sea.

Volcanic eruptions: Explosions or emissions of lava, ashes and toxic gases from deep inside the earth, through volcanoes.

Vulnerability: The inability of people and communities to withstand a hazardous phenomenon, or the inability to respond after a disaster has occurred.

Wildfire: Uncontrolled fire which destroys forest, jungle and vegetation as well as animal species. Such fires can get out of control and spread very easily over vast areas. Depending on the type of vegetation or material that is being burnt, they are called forest fires, bush fires, grass fires or peat fires.

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