



International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction

Announcements

Last call for contributions for Disaster Reduction in Asia & Pacific publication

UNISDR Asia & Pacific is looking for contributions for its annual publication on DRR in the region. This year's edition will have a special focus on achievements, innovative approaches, projects and activities focusing on building resilience to tsunamis. Descriptions of relevant projects, good practices, lessons learned and articles are welcome. If you would like to contribute, email Phong Tran at tranp@un.org asap.



Deadline for Sasakawa Award nominations approaching

The March 18 deadline for nominations for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction is fast approaching. The biennial prize, worth US\$ 50,000, is awarded in recognition of significant achievements in DRR that have made real change at the community and institutional levels.

To find out more, visit <http://unisdr.org/eng/sasakawa/sasakawa.html> or email isdr-sasakawa@un.org.

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

The information and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the policies of UNISDR

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Highlights

January 2009

Disaster-related deaths and economic losses jump in 2008

The Center for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) released disaster figures for 2008 at a joint press conference with UNISDR in Geneva on 22 January. 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."

*The 2008 disasters in numbers fact sheet is available at <http://unisdr.org>
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

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>

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

Safe hospitals campaign going strong in the Americas

The 2008-2009 World Disaster Reduction Campaign: *Hospitals Safe from Disasters* received an energy boost in the Americas recently with the launch of a photo and article contest. The contest is a joint initiative between UNISDR, the Pan-American Health Organization, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Moon Societies, UNICEF and Plan International, with support from the World Bank. Participation is open to people from countries in the Americas who have

WEB RESOURCES

EM-DAT: emergency events database

www.emdat.be

The Centre for Research on Epidemics



and Disasters (CRED) has been maintaining EM-DAT, a global emergency events database, since 1988. EM-DAT contains essential core data on the occurrence and effects of over 17,000 disasters from 1900 to the present. The database provides geographical, temporal, human and economic information on disasters at the country level. EM-DAT is compiled from various sources, including UN agencies, NGOs, insurance companies, research institutes and press agencies.

World Vision research fact sheets

<http://wvasiapacific.org/latest/the-world-is-changing-planet-prepare.html>

A new series of research fact sheets commissioned by World Vision warns of the vulnerability of developing countries in the face of climate change.

While the devastation of major disasters is



impossible to avoid, the fact sheets show how effective an approach of preparedness and awareness can be for communities at risk. The fact sheets examine five countries in a disaster context: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

Disaster Prevention for Schools presentations

http://gfdrr.org/docs/BBL_Marla_Petal_Jan909.pdf

On January 9, Marla Petal, PhD, gave a presentation organized by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery that covered the broad scope of safe schools with examples drawn from international sources. Topics included: disaster impacts and disaster prevention for schools, creating safe learning environments, teaching disaster prevention and preparedness, and developing a culture of safety. The powerpoint presentations used for the event are available online and offer a wealth of information on safe schools.



SCHOOL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION:
think globally, act locally

taken photos or written articles during 2008-2009 that are relevant to the Campaign. The contest deadline is 1 August.

For more information about the contest, visit www.eird.org/contest

For more information about the Campaign, visit www.safehospitals.info

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/lib-terminology-eng.htm>

Global Platform preparations well underway

Preparations for the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, scheduled 16-19 June 2009 in Geneva, are well underway. ISDR System members are now holding meetings to prepare

and ensure their contributions to this multi-stakeholder event. The agenda is taking shape and will include high level meetings, technical workshops, a progress review on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the identification of critical actions to take over the next two years. Invitations to the Global Platform will be sent out in early February.

For more information, visit <http://www.preventionweb.net/global-platform/index-second.html?pid:47>

Get involved in the next World Water Week

The Stockholm International Water Institute is inviting individuals and organizations to get involved in the 2009 World Water Week. The conference will be held 16-22 August in Stockholm under the theme "Accessing water for the common good" with a special focus on transboundary waters. The agenda will include a diverse range of topics related to agriculture, biodiversity, sanitation, climate change, drinking water, finance, governance, poverty reduction, technology and water resources management. Individuals, organizations and government agencies concerned with water issues can convene a seminar or side event, or submit an abstract for presentation during a workshop. Two workshops will specifically focus on disaster risk reduction. *Workshop 2: Securing water in coastal zones* will explore disaster risk issues for shore and coastal communities. *Workshop 5: Safe water services in post-conflict and post-disaster contexts* will discuss how to reduce disaster risks, mitigate disaster impacts, and deal with water and sanitation issues after disaster strikes.

For more information, visit www.worldwaterweek.org and download the first announcement for the event.

Asia Disaster Preparedness Center offers wide range of training courses in 2009

The 2009 training schedule for the Asia Disaster Preparedness Center is now available and includes a wide range of disaster risk management and preparedness courses. Examples of courses include: Hospital Emergency Preparedness and Response, Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Local Governance, End-to-End Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems, and Climate Risk Management. The majority of courses are two weeks in duration and cost approximately US\$ 2,000.

For more information, visit <http://www.adpc.net/v2007/TRG/Default.asp>

REGIONAL NEWS

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

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Conferences, Trainings and Events
February 2009 - March 2009

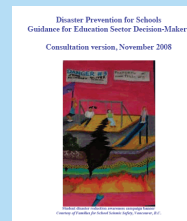
DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
February		
1	Ouagadougou, Burkino-Faso	International workshop on adaptation to climate change in West African agriculture World Meteorological Organization
4 - 6	New Delhi, India	2nd India disaster management congress National Institute of Disaster Management
9 - 13	Reno, Nevada, USA	IECA annual conference: Environmental connection International Erosion Control Association
9 - 13	Newcastle, UK	Hydrological risks and climate change Newcastle University
10 - 13	Canberra, Australia	Australian disasters conference 2009: Surviving future risks Emergency Management Australia
19 - 22	Orlando, USA	2009 international disaster management conference Emergency Medicine Learning and Resource Center
22 - 26	Dhaka, Bangladesh	3rd international conference on community based adaptation to climate change Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
25 - 27	Penang, Malaysia	ICESE 2009: International conference on earthquake and structural engineering World Academy of Science Engineering and Technology
March		
4 - 6	Mumbai, India	Asia megacities forum Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative
4 - 6	Washington, DC, USA	3rd national emergency management summit International Association of Emergency Managers
10 - 12	Copenhagen, Denmark	International scientific conference on climate change University of Copenhagen
16 - 22	Istanbul, Turkey	5th world water forum World Water Council
17 - 19	Panama City, Panama	1st session of the regional platform for disaster risk reduction in the Americas UNISDR - The Americas
23 - 26	Oslo, Norway	Scoping meeting on extreme events and disasters: Managing the risk Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
20 - 3 Apr	Geneva, Switzerland	Training course on earthquake disasters: From rapid response toward mitigation University of Geneva
31 - 2 Apr	Bonn, Germany	UNESCO world conference on education for sustainable development UNESCO & German Federal Ministry of Education and Research

For more details, please see www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/trainings-events/events

Library Corner

Disaster prevention for schools: Guidance for education sector decision-makers

UNISDR, 2008, 58 p.
www.preventionweb.net/files/7344_DPforSchoolssm.pdf



This guidance document asks school administrators, teachers, education authorities and school safety committees the important question "Are your schools safe?" Then, it details an approach to safeguarding the rights of all children to both education and safety. This document was published by UNISDR as part of the Thematic Platform for Knowledge and Education.

Convergence of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation

DFID, 2008, 22 p.
www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=7853
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.

Planet prepare: Preparing coastal communities in Asia for future catastrophes

World Vision, 2008, 126 p.
www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=3641
As a joint publication by regional World Vision stakeholders, this report explores and highlights opportunities to better protect development gains, research priorities, empower communities, partner and network together, advocate for justice, reinforce disaster defences and educate children to be better prepared for an uncertain future.

