

1 Jul 2009

Natural Hazard/Disaster Update:

1 Jul: Quake reported south of Greece

Cairo - An earthquake of at least 5.9 magnitude struck in the Mediterranean Sea off southern Greece on 1 Jul and was felt as far away as Cairo in Egypt, but there were no immediate reports of injuries, officials said. The Athens Geodynamic Institute said the quake struck at 0930 GMT, 170 km south of the island of Crete, and 450 km south-east of Athens. Egypt's Helwan Earthquake Monitoring Centre confirmed the quake at the same magnitude and location, but the website of the U.S. Geological Survey gave the magnitude as 6.7, at a depth of 38 km. Greek police said they had received no reports of casualties or damage.

http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?from=rss_News&set_id=1&click_id=79&art_id=nw20090701125208576C677745

25 Jun: Tropical storm kills at least 8 in Philippines

A tropical storm whipped up tornadoes, triggered landslides and overturned boats as it cut across the central Philippines, leaving at least eight dead and eight more missing amid widespread flooding, officials said Thursday. Tropical storm Nangka, with winds of 65 km/h and gusts of up to 80 km/h, blew into the South China Sea west of Manila overnight and was expected to track northwest toward the Taiwan Strait this weekend, forecasters said. Nearly 10,000 people were stranded aboard hundreds of ferries and motorboats, which were ordered to stay docked for safety Wednesday. As the weather began to clear Thursday, ships began leaving ports and only about 1,800 passengers remained stranded in 21 ports, officials said. Two people died when a landslide buried their house in southern Cagayan de Oro city after days of heavy rain. A farmer died Wednesday when a live electrical wire hit him as he was driving a tractor along a flooded street in central Romblon province, the national disaster agency and police reported. <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/06/25/tropical-storm-philippines025.html>

24 Jun: Heat wave leaves 17 dead in India's Jharkhand

A heat wave has left at least 17 people dead in Jharkhand state over the last three days. According to the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS), the rising temperatures have broken all previous records in the state. The heat has claimed the lives of five people in Gumla and four in Jamshedpur. Other deaths have been reported in Bokaro, Palamau, West Singhum and other parts of the state. On Tuesday (June 23) the maximum temperature reached 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46.2 degrees Celsius) in Deoghar district. In Ranchi, the maximum temperature on Tuesday was 106 degrees Fahrenheit (41.3 degrees Celsius). In comparison to last year, according to the meteorological department, maximum temperatures in the second and third week of June 2008 in Palamau was 89.6 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius). The monsoon season, which normally hits Jharkhand by the second week of June, has not yet arrived, according to reports. Farmers have reportedly been unable to sow seeds in the absence of rain.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=India&id=00ec98da-a4e9-445c-a1d7-61e87076bd4a&Headline=Heat+wave+claims+17+lives+in+Jharkhand+in+three+days>

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8116377.stm

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

1 Jul: More than 77,201 H1N1 flu cases confirmed worldwide

Since Monday's (June 29) update by the UN's World Health Organization (WHO), there have been 6,308 new influenza A (H1N1) virus infections and 21 new deaths. More commonly known as swine flu, the new virus has now afflicted 77,201 people, including 332 deaths across 120 countries, the UN agency reported on Wednesday (July 1). New Caledonia, Kenya, Mauritius, Myanmar and Saint Lucia are the latest countries to be added to the WHO's list of affected countries. The US figure has remained at 27,717 infections across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, including 127 deaths, due to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention only updating country totals on Fridays. The US continues to report the most infections and deaths worldwide, while Mexico, the epicenter of the outbreak, has 116 deaths among 8,680 infections. According to the WHO, the United Kingdom endured the largest increase in caseload, reporting 2,288 new infections, including two casualties, since Monday's count. The UK's case total now stands at 6,538 with three deaths. The WHO noted that figures could not be considered reliable due to some countries no longer keeping track of cases and other poor countries not having the means available to reliably detect H1N1 infections. On June 11, the WHO declared a global H1N1 flu pandemic, raising its alert level to Phase 6. The UN agency deemed the H1N1 flu a "moderate" pandemic that would likely persist for one to two more years, and advised governments to prepare for a long-term battle against the virus.

http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_07_01a/en/

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Europe/Swine-flu-cases-over-77000-worldwide-WHO/articleshow/4726093.cms>

1 Jul: Laboratory-confirmed cases of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 as officially reported to WHO by States Parties to the International Health Regulations (2005). The breakdown of the number of laboratory-confirmed cases can be found at http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_07_01a/en/index.html

News:

26 Jun: Thailand's first Umbrella Clean Development Mechanism Program allows smaller pig farms to benefit from Carbon market

Thailand's first umbrella Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) program will allow owners of pig farms of all sizes to benefit from the global carbon market and will help the country reduce its carbon footprint. The new program allows many small clean energy projects to come together under the umbrella of a single broader program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The first such program in Thailand is expected to reduce emissions of up to 234,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year – almost two percent of the national emission reductions at present.

The World Bank will purchase up to 500,000 tons of "carbon credits" from this program over the next four years. The Energy Research and Development Institute (ERDI), of Chiang Mai University, will manage and report progress on the program. This new CDM program is also the first of its kind for Southeast Asia. Significantly, it affords an opportunity for smaller pig farms to tap into the carbon market as well as for larger-scale producers.

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/0,,contentMDK:2227181~menuPK:2246553~pagePK:2865106~piPK:2865128~theSitePK:226301,00.html?cid=ISG_E_WBWeeklyUpdate_NL

Information Resources:

EU heads of state to agree on climate-saving deal

"India turns it back on the carbon economy. [...] In a radical departure from the status quo and stated policy, India's re-appointed Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh used his first nationally televised address to announce an end to a century of dependence on fossil fuels." A major focus of the articles was civil society pressure having forced politicians to respond to public protests around the globe and to agree on a global climate change deal. This deal includes ambitious cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions, an end to nuclear power and deforestation, and an agreement on a climate change adaptation fund for developing countries. http://www.csr-asia.com/weekly_detail.php?id=11733

25 Jun: Bangladesh introduces SMS cyclone alert system

DHAKA: Bangladesh is trialling a text message service to warn people of natural disasters, including floods and cyclones. Disaster Management Bureau spokesman Syed Ashraf said the service would be piloted for six months in the southeastern districts of Cox's Bazar, where cyclones frequently hit, and Sirajganj in the north, prone to flooding. "The SMS messages will be sent warning people of floods or cyclones. They'll be told whether to go to shelters and what to do," he said.

Climate Change Challenges for Hong Kong

An Agenda for Adaptation Climate change is inevitable and therefore there is a need to examine adaptation measures that can manage the challenges presented by changes in the climate that will be experienced in Hong Kong. Climate change will mean that Hong Kong will experience a warmer climate, at times with significantly more rainfall but will also face the risk of seasonal water shortages. Hong Kong will also experience a significant increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heat waves, tidal surges, typhoons and very heavy rainfall. Sea levels will continue to rise for decades. The impacts of these changes on Hong Kong will be increased risks of flooding, droughts and dangerously hot weather. There will also be secondary and indirect impacts, including an increased risk of infrastructure damage, ground instability and landslides, and further increases in dangerously poor air quality periods. This will all impact on human health and quality of life and pose significant risks for the economy of Hong Kong. It is important that Hong Kong begins to recognize the risks of climate change and puts into place both mitigation and adaptation measures now. Early anticipatory adaptation will be more effective and less costly than retrospective, emergency action. Although the scale of climate change risk is uncertain, it is increasingly clear that like many of the world's leading cities, Hong Kong faces huge changes as a result of climate change and that adaptation measures must become a strategic priority. http://www.csr-asia.com/report/report_cc_challenges_hk.pdf

Publication: The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes—And Why: Getting to Know Your Disaster Personality

Half of Americans have been affected by a disaster of some kind. In big disasters, regular people are the first and most important rescuers on the scene. But very few of us know what to expect until it is too late. By combining the stories of survivors with research into how the brain works under extreme duress, THE UNTHINKABLE tries to bring light into civilization's darkest moments. Why do we freeze in the middle of a fire? How can we override this instinct? Why do our senses of sight and hearing change during a terrorist attack? Why are most heroes men? In this inspiring mix of narrative, science and participatory journalism, award-winning TIME Magazine contributor Amanda Ripley reveals how human fear circuits and crowd dynamics work, why our instincts sometimes misfire in modern calamities, and how we can do much, much better.

THE UNTHINKABLE is being published in 15 countries including the United States, the UK, Brazil, and China. It was selected by Hudson Booksellers as one of the Top 10 Nonfiction Books of 2008. <http://www.amandaripley.com/book>

BBC World Debate 'Prevent or React' to be aired in July

As a special media event at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) recorded a one-hour 'as live' BBC World Debate titled *Prevent or React*. The airing times of the debate are as follows: Sat 4th July 07.10 GMT, 15.10 GMT, 19.10 GMT, Sun 5th July 00.10 GMT, 07.10 GMT, 15.10 GMT

Nik Gowing, a senior BBC World presenter, anchored the event, sparking a lively dialogue between the panellists and the audience. The panellists were Arjun Kartoch, Emergency Services Branch, UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Senator Loren Legarda, Philippine Senator and the ISDR's champion of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Asia Pacific region, Guido Bertolaso, Head of Italy's civil protection agency and Edward Borodzicz, Professor of risk management.

Indonesia National Platform announced

At a recent meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia's National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was presented to the general public with an invitation to use this body as a forum to promote greater public participation in DRR. Indonesian disaster risk reduction (DRR) stakeholders had declared their commitment to establish a national platform in November 2008. Subsequent to that, several focus-group discussions and public consultations involving the national DRR multi-stakeholders were conducted and permitted to finalise the structure and organizational arrangement of the platform. The public launch was followed by a seminar on indigenous knowledge in DRR drawing from Indonesian experiences. It is expected that the findings and recommendations from the seminar will lead to the development of a strategy for invigorating indigenous knowledge in DRR, particularly with regards to traditional early warning systems and local coping mechanisms in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). www.planasprb.net

Web Resource: Disaster Reduction Hyperbase-Asian Application (DRH-Asia)

The Disaster Reduction Hyperbase-Asian Application (DRH-Asia) is a facility disseminating disaster reduction technology and knowledge. It has been designed for potential use by policy makers, community leaders, practitioners, and motivated researchers who wish to have access to appropriate technical know-how that can help them establish practical disaster management plans. The DRH offers open and interactive access and participation. Its major components consist of the DRH Database, the DRH Forum and DRH Links. It also provides access to all records of the DRH Project activities. <http://drh.edm.bosai.go.jp/>

Web Resource: Pacific Disaster Net

The Pacific Disaster Net is the 'Virtual Centre of Excellence' for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Pacific Region. It is a live collection and growing DRM information resource for government agencies, regional bodies, non-government organizations and international agencies. It also supports National Action Planning, Decision Making and provides in-country information for distribution within the region. The website offers multiple access entries with a range of retrieval and display options. Inexperienced and expert users can access their information and documents without difficulty and within a range of formats. www.pacificdisaster.net

Climate Change and AIDS: a joint Working Paper AIDS and climate change (CC) are two of the most important "long wave" global issues of the recent past, the present and the future. They share similarities, interactions, and present possibilities for a more united response. Yet these links have received little analysis.

This paper seeks to address that gap. It first focuses on scientific issues, identifying major, minor, and speculative pathways by which AIDS and CC are likely to interact. These interactions are, here, called the HIV and Climate Change Complex (HACC). The maximum impact of CC is in the future, likely to occur decades after the peak incidence of HIV. The severity of the HACC will largely be determined by the temporal overlap of these ranges. The HACC will also have an uneven spatial distribution, modified by the regional impact of CC and the regional epidemiology of AIDS, each of which varies by physical and social elements. Populations with currently high rates of HIV are the most vulnerable to a worsening or prolongation of the epidemic due to CC. This places the people of SSA at the greatest risk of the HACC, though outside Africa populations in north east India and New Guinea may also be significantly impacted. Odile Bulten bulten@un.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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