

CMDRR FORUM BULLETIN

Community Participation and implementation is what we mean to promote

3rd ISSUE: February 2011

Editorial

It is our colossal gratification that CMDRR Forum Bangladesh is publishing its 3rd edition of Bulletin. At present, CMDRR Forum is trying to well off its development approaches through intensive participation of its stakeholders. It has covered its networking arena at national and international level. It has some targeted and non targeted tasks to do. One of the significant tasks of Forum is publication of Bulletin.

CMDRR is a Community Driven Approach. The partners are working to establish sustainable approach of CMDRR at community level on cyclone, flood, salinity, river erosion, haor prone area in Bangladesh to build a hazard resilience community through hazard assessment, risk assessment, vulnerability assessment and analysis and finally develop a Development and Contingency Plan.

The 3rd issue mostly deals with Preparedness, Mitigation and Risk Reduction practices at community level; a number of capacity building initiatives, Advocacy, Lesson Learnt, International DRR/CCA news and change story.

We are hoping this issue will be more prolific and explore several important matters on DRR/CCA to its practitioners, actors and learners.

Shafiqul Islam
Adviser, CMDRR Forum Bangladesh
And
Director Programs
Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Exposure visit to Nepal

The issue of disaster risk reduction is becoming a cross border issue around the globe, as man-made geographical territory is unable to ensure the campaign for DRR preparedness. We had a wonderful chance to visit Nepal community managed disaster risk reduction program in this regard. This exposure visit was arranged by Concern Universal Bangladesh. We were a team that included different level NGO personnel and DRR practitioners guided by DRR specialists from CU.

Bangladesh is not far away from Nepal though it does not have direct border with it. Moreover, our geography and rivers have strong relationship with Nepal. The "Top of the world" Mount Everest is located in Nepal and we are concerned about the issue of ice melting due to "climate change" and rise of floodwater in Bangladesh.

Even different rivers of Bangladesh are coming through Nepal and these rivers are the lifeline of Bangladesh. Therefore, the issue of climatic impact and natural hazards on Bangladesh and Nepal are somehow directly intertwined.

The aim of the visit was twofold. Firstly, it focused on getting an overview of how the NGOs are dealing with government bodies for processing better policy for the community. These NGO's are working with grass root people and also functioning as partners of CU. We attended meetings with the honorable president of Nepal, media spokespersons and young hazard activists. The meetings addressed issues such as NGOs role in community involvement with DRR, advocacy, and the role of media to gear up disaster risk reduction with community involvement. Those meetings have enriched our knowledge on DRR and the media's involvement in this regard.

The second aim of this exposure visit was to explore the ways of reducing risk and get firsthand experience on local community involvement in mitigation and adaptation of DRR. We have seen the mountainside of Nepal where local communities are involved in reducing natural hazard risks. The country's hilly rural parts are still maintaining traditional egalitarian societies





rather than the modern state system. The growing trend of Maoism and the community ownership systems is elevating community managed resource exploitation. The government is only monitoring the system by providing their legal and other infrastructural support to the local people when it becomes necessary. This traditional system is giving them the privilege to have a better mechanism for having community innovation in disaster risk reduction.

Types of hazard in Nepal	
Natural	Man made
Earthquake	Fire
Floods and Landslide	Landslide
Windstorms, Hailstorms and Thunderbolts	Industrial Accident
Drought	Road Accident
Epidemic	

One of the prime hazards the inhabitants face here is landslides during the rainy season. It creates lot of turmoil to the community people. It destroys their cultivable land and causes severe injuries and deaths. Moreover, road collapses due to landslides creates obstacle to travel. In order to reduce vulnerability and mitigate risks a partner NGO facilitated the community and gathered them a platform to work together. The respective community has taken on a tree plantation strategy to reduce landslides. The tree plantation

strategy is best suited for them for two reasons. Firstly, those people live in the remotest part of Nepal where the inhabitants are unable to build huge infrastructure. Secondly, they have very limited access to money therefore; they will not be able to take any massive program for reducing disaster risk. However, the community has taken itself the initiatives by planting trees that is both cost effective and sustainable. The strong community integration has given them the privilege to do so without any external help.

Moreover, the community has interlinked DRR process with the livelihood support programs, which is familiar in Bangladesh. Interestingly enough, unlike Bangladesh the communities own intervention is directed in Makwanpur rather than NGOs directive attitude. For instance, in a very remote village, people are using the canal's water for wheat thrashing and flour making. They are not only getting their staple food but also controlling the canal water at the time of heavy rainfall in that way.

These type of innovative and community managed ideas can easily be replicated in Bangladesh.

Basic features in a myriad of Hazard in Nepal.

Nepal faces a myriad of natural hazards and vulnerabilities (Structural, non structural and developmental)

Nepal stands in 11th position to earthquake vulnerability and 30th in water-induced disaster.

Nepal has

- Three layered tectonic fault zone
- Unstable soil conditions due to young mountains.
- Deforestation and vegetation loss due to unscientific agro-farming and livestock farming.



Meeting with President of Nepal

On 1st of December 2010 Concern Universal, together with representatives from seven local NGOs from Bangladesh (Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Friendship, Fight for Hunger based in Chittagong, Integrated Development Association of Bangladesh (INDAB) based in Barisal, Palli Gono Unnayan Kendra (PGUK) based in Barisal, Pidim Foundation and Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD) based in Sylhet) and, five NGOs from Nepal (Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resources Management (HIMAWANTI), Hoste Haisne, Jagrati Child and Youth Concern Nepal, National Committee of Human Rights Education Club (HRELIC), Women and Children Development Forum) met with Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, the President of Nepal at Rastrapati Bhawan (the President's Palace) in Kathmandu, Nepal. The visiting team was led by Abdul Hamid, Head – Organisational Development and Education Unit of Concern Universal – Bangladesh.

During the one hour meeting the discussion topic was disaster risk reduction and changes to the climate as a result of global warming. The President of Nepal was very cordial and interested to discuss the effects of climate change which are already severe on the Himalayan Chain. The President ensured his support to the NGOs.

The meeting took place within the framework of the project “Capacity Strengthening on Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation”, funded by Cordaid (The Netherlands) working with 67 local NGOs in Bangladesh, India (Assam and Meghalaya), and Nepal.

Training on Climate Change, mainstreaming DRR and Popular theatre

Concern Universal–Bangladesh organised 5-day of training on climate change, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction (DRR) and popular theatre for its 15 partner NGOs. This training is the part of the capacity building project funded by Cordaid. The residential training was held on 23-27 January 2011 at Bogra UDPS training centre, Bangladesh with 31 participants attending this training course. The course was facilitated by Concern Universal – Bangladesh and PASS (Participatory Advancement Social Service).

PASS is an Bangladeshi based NGO with great experience and skills and knowledge of folk songs and popular theatre to raise the mass awareness in different development fields. PASS is technical partner of Concern Universal – Bangladesh for its capacity building project.

By CUB

We Mourned

The CMDRR Forum mourns the tragic loss of, Lokman Hakim, Executive Director of Pally Rakkha Sangstha (PARAS), who sadly passed away on 23rd January 2011. Mr Hakim was a renowned freedom fighter and leader of his community. As well as his amazing contributions to his community through his work for PARAS,

Mr Hakim also established a High School in Belkuchi Upazilla in the Sirajgonj District. Lokman Hakim's generosity and spirit will be sadly missed by all who were lucky enough to know him.



Training on Advocacy



A two days long advocacy training session was held at Dhansagar Union Parisad complex of Sarankhola Upazila under Bagerhat district on 11- 12 January 2011. Chairman of Dhansagar Union Parisad and other community leaders were present at the inauguration session. Some 26 Self Help Group (SHG) leaders presented at this advocacy training. The objective of the training was to discuss and demonstrate disability focused advocacy at both government and non-government levels. The training content included an explanation of the role of advocacy, advocacy tools, role of different media outlets, media campaigns, and many other modules. This training is crucial as people with disabilities are often the most vulnerable in the case of disaster, and need assistance and understanding to ensure their safety. At the end the training session, SHG Leaders had prepared a yearly Advocacy Action Plan.

By ADD

No alternative to CMDRR Practice

Mrs. Nurun Nahar, Mrs. Khadija, Mr. Hasan, Mr. Mokbul and Mrs. Sahenur are all disaster vulnerable people of Rakudia village of Dehergoti Union of Barisal district where a CMDRR project is being implemented by INDAB. Almost every year they are affected by various types of natural hazards as they reside in very close proximity areas affected by river erosion. Though they have heard about the devastating consequences of cyclones and floods, they had never been experienced this type of situation first-hand before Cyclone Sidr in 2007, which completely destroyed their houses, crops and fisheries, along with all kinds of associated livelihood activities. In this distressed situation they had to pass their days having half a meal or sometimes no meals in a day and passed their nights under the open sky without shelter.

Gradually they had begun to restart their lives again when Cyclone AILA struck in 2009 and destroyed their livelihoods yet again. After AILA the disaster vulnerable people of Rakudia village came into the umbrella of CMDRR Project facilitated by INDAB. Through this project they enhanced their knowledge about community managed disaster risk reduction by participating in various training, workshops, courtyard meetings, CRA and simulations. Through these activities they have learned many DRR preparedness and mitigation practices such as plinth level



rising, preservation of portable oven and firewood and preservation of dry food and valuable documents under the floor of houses by digging holes.

During a recent storm surge on October 8, 2010 the water level rose to 6 or 7 feet. So they could not save their crops or pond fisheries but they were able to save their houses from falling down due to strong winds because they had tied their houses by rope with pillar/posts.

Now the villagers of Rakudia community are confident that they will be able to build up a disaster resilience community.

By INDAB

Effective use of Local Resources for Rescue

PGUK's CMDRR Project Training Team recently provided training on rescue methods for volunteers from Kalapara Upazila of Patuakhali district. The objective of the training was to build the capacity of selected volunteers through the learning by doing method, so that they can subsequently educate their own communities about rescue.

During the training volunteers learned a number of rescue techniques, such as how to make stretchers using local resources, how to rescue people from tree tops, how to prepare floating materials like used bottle, how to rescue floating patients, how to carry severely injured patients to hospital and how to rescue injured people. These rescue techniques were then demonstrated to the greater community by the trained volunteers courtyard session at community level, along with other preparedness and mitigation awareness messages. These sorts of tools and techniques may be managed easily by the community with their own local resources.

For example, a low cost stretcher can easily be made by using bamboo and jute bag, this type of stretcher is easy to make and use and can be used to carry injured people



following a disaster. These types of low cost techniques are very effective at community level, and communities were very happy to learn this kind of technique. Now they are confident they will be able to better respond to any future disaster events.

By CMDRR Project, PGUK

Climate Change Training held in Dhaka

A two-day long Capacity Building Training on Climate Change held on 29-30 December 2010. The training was organized by CMDRR Forum Bangladesh, DAM, assisted by CORDAID the Netherlands. The partners staff training program was organized mostly impacts of climate change in Agriculture, livestock, fisheries, water supply, health and Livelihood sector. Climate Change Adaptation linkage with Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Refugee, National and International NGO response and Roll of Bangladesh Govt. The experts from Bangladesh namely Dr. Atiq Rahman, Dr KS Huda, Pintu W Gomez and Abdul Hamid facilitated different sessions that held at NGO Forum Training venue, Lalmatia, Dhaka, Bangladesh.



Some 26 participants were participated on that training, out of them male 22 and female 4. Technicians, Manager, Trainer, Program Officer were participated form 13 CMDRR Forum Partner Organization as participant. Participants felt that they have acquired considerable knowledge on Climate Change, and further stressed that they are now confident in implementing climate change interventions.

By CMDRR Forum Bangladesh, DAM

Newly developed submergence tolerant rice variety can save rice from flash floods

RDRS Bangladesh has been implementing a project entitled “Stress Tolerant Rice for Poor Farmers in Africa and South Asia (STRASA)” since 2009 in the northwest region of Bangladesh in partnership with International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) under the financial support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). IRRI along with Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) recently developed some submergence tolerant rice varieties, which can easily survive for up to 17 days under water. Existing rice varieties survive under the same conditions for a period of 3-5 days only. The submergence tolerant rice contains the submergence1 (Sub1) gene that allows it to survive 10-17 days of complete submergence and to renew growth, when the water subsides. However, the duration of survival is also influenced by environmental factors such as water turbidity, temperature, light and other factors such as seedling age. It was observed that such plants were more tolerant as they got older. Four rice varieties were invented through introducing gene sub1 by marker aided selection, a molecular breeding method at IRRI into Indian mega variety Swarna, Samba Mahsuri and Bangladesh mega variety BR11 and Philippines variety IR64. The National Seed Board of Bangladesh has officially released the Swarna-Sub1 as BRRI dhan51 and BR11-Sub1 as BRRI dhan52 this year to enable farmers to cultivate at a large scale from the next season. Government and private sector seed production agencies can produce seeds of these rice varieties to meet the national demand.

Since the start of this project, RDRS along with its



local partner NGOs has been demonstrating cultivation of flood tolerant aman rice, considering geographical vulnerability i.e. yearly flash flood, soil erosion, etc. In 2009, RDRS established 88 plots with submergence tolerant rice varieties involving 88 farmers in 5 flood-prone northwest districts of Rangpur, Lalmonihat, Nilphamari, Kurigram and Gaibandha. Most of the plots were established in the areas where flash floods occurred annually. RDRS organized the training programme at Rangpur and Kurigram district, where Dr. U. S. Singh, South Asia Regional Project Coordinator of STRASA project provided training to the farmers and field staff of RDRS and partner NGOs as well as field staff of government agencies like Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). RDRS also distributed rice seeds of four submergence varieties among the 88 trained farmers of five flood-affected districts. These new rice varieties have been very effective and are very popular with local farmers.

By RDRS Bangladesh

Workshop on Community Capacity Building towards Effective Response to Natural Hazards and associated Risks

Pidim, a national NGO that works areas in Sherpur, organized a workshop focusing on Community Capacity Building towards effective Response to Natural Hazards and associated Risks at Sherpur Shilpokola Academy on December 07, 2010. The objective of the workshop was to share its DRR program activities with GOB Officials, LEB Representatives, Civil Society Members, NGOs executives, Journalists and primary Stakeholders (StakeNet members).

During the workshop Mr. Advin Barun Banerjee, ED Pidim explained that it was very difficult to achieve sustained development for long time due to recurrent problems of natural hazards such as floods and droughts. Achievements made after hard and relentless work go in vain due to a sudden spate of flashfloods, causing Pidim to realize that the development of the people cannot be sustained unless they are safe from natural hazards. In view of this Pidim started a CMDRR (Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction) program under the ongoing SIDEP (Strategic Initiatives for Development of Extreme Poor) project funded by Cordaid in 2007. Pidim helped prepare a short, mid and long term plan for protection of life and livelihood of the people through the identification of natural hazards and assessment of vulnerability and risks with active participation of the community to develop the Community Risk Assessment (CRA). CRA was performed in 6 unions (5 from Jehnaigati and 1 from Nalitabari Upazila) and all relevant issues of CRA reports and Plan of action were presented.

Deputy Commissioner of Sherpur district graced the occasion as Chief Guest with Mr. Md. Iddris Ali Bhuiyan, Assistant Superintendent of Police, HQ.



While Mr. Nazmul Karim, Coordinator (Program & Plan) moderated the program.

At the end of plenary session Mr. Nasiruzzaman, Deputy Commissioner took the floor to sum up the discussion and also gave his own opinion on the issues discussed in the workshop. He thanked Pidim for organizing an exceptional workshop to deliberate on the issue of DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) involving all the concerned parties. He requested Pidim to extend its DRR program to cover all other unions along the Indian border, an area stretching 30 km. He also suggested NGOs working in the area work together in a common umbrella by forming a forum to discuss emerging DRR issues especially emphasizing climate change adaptation issues in the area. Finally issues around Setting up of dams to regulate flood water and dredging of river was discussed Mr Nasiruzzaman mentioned that the decision on this matter lies with higher government authority.

By Pidim Foundation

National Seminar on “GO- NGOs Role and Responsibility for Reduction of Haor People’s Suffering”



Natural disaster is a routine phenomenon in haor areas, they are affected by devastating floods about once every other year. In April 2010 there was a severe flash flood in the Haor area that washed out thousands of hectares of crops. People of this area are also highly vulnerable to river erosion because of strong waves that break down land masses. For Haor people there needs to be some effective strategies to reduce risk of natural disaster and climate change, and to aid this process the Government needs to form Haor friendly policy with effective interventions.

To explore this issue with key policy makers, POPI with the support of Oxfam HK and Cordaid Netherlands organized a National Seminar titled "GO-NGO role and responsibility for reduction of Haor People's sufferings" at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel Dhaka on December 28, 2010.

Honourable Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Md Abdul Hamid Advocate MP attended the seminar as chief guest, while honourable Chairman, Committee on Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, State Minister of Water Resources Ministry, and Mr. Rojer E. Ricafort, Director, Oxfam Hong Kong attended as special guests. MPs, DCs, UNOs, Upazila Chairman from Haor Districts, representatives from LNGO, INGOs, UN Organizations, civil society members, private sector members and DG, Bangladesh Haor Development Board participated in the seminar. Renowned Economist Dr. Kazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad presented the key note paper.

During the Seminar, Special guest Mr. Shuronjit Sen Gupta, MP assured the participants that this government's would provide all possible support to strengthening the Haor friendly policies. State minister Alhaj Mahbubur

Rahman MP then described the government commitment and policy stand to uplift the conditions of Haor communities. Mr. Rahman assured the audience that all the practical recommendations for possible solutions will be taken by this government as soon as possible.

Chief guest Mr. Abdul Hamid, Advocate, MP showed solidarity with the haor people for their sufferings, he agreed that the Haor people were often overlooked and thanked the presenters for opening his eyes to these issues. He also called for national unity on haor issues and committed to ensuring that any bill on haor issues will get preference for elaborate discussion within the national parliament session where he will also contribute with his newfound knowledge and understanding of these issues.

By Mizanur Rahman and Md. Jahangir Alam
POPI

Community Initiative at Islampur



Islampur is name of a small village; it is located alongside Sunamganj town under Laxmansree Union of Sunamganj sadar upazila. From the very beginning of 1970 people had started to live in this village. At present around 1000 people has been living here. Agriculture is main livelihood and incoming source for these villagers. It is a haor basin low lying land area. This village is most vulnerable due to flash flood, seasonal flood, waves etc for its geographical location. The people of this village are not so educated to mitigate and cope with hazard. The villagers always depend on nature. The community people don't know, what should they do in the period of any kind of hazard. Almost every year, they lost their main crops paddy by flash flood. Both flood and wave as well affect them in every year. The development activities of the community people become hampering. Consequently, they pass their time with unhappiness, owing to losses their only one crop paddy.

In the year of 2009, VARD started with some activities under CMDRR project in this said village. At primary level, community people are going to organize thorough this project.

They form committee and sub committees to execute planned activities. They also oriented the community how to reduce risk of disaster, preparing of both plan (development & contingency), through analysis of hazard. VARD as well provided some food, cash and alternative livelihood supports through this project.

Now the communities are able to prepare development and contingency plan considering hazard. Last year, they raised around 5 km long submersible ring dam surrounding the paddy land of this said village. For that they saved their paddy crops from flash flood. They as well raised 10 homesteads to mitigate of seasonal floods. To protect their homestead from waves they made protection wall by bamboo and chailla (local name of one kinds of grass).

Now they are happy as they can reduce the hazard risk to their own community and always ready to face any sort of hazard.



By VARD

Transplantation of Koroch Tree to Protect Mound Erosion

Haor (water body) is a wetland ecosystem physically is a bowl or saucer in the north eastern part of Bangladesh covering 2145 Sq. Km. It remains under water for more than six months of the year with 10-15 meters water depth. People of haor area are highly vulnerable for river bank and village mound erosion because of strong wave. To protect soil erosion people introduced Koroch tree (Pongamia Pinnata is called as Koroch in Bangladesh). This tree can survive in 1.5 meters deep water submergence/inundation for five to six months duration at a stretch). By this time, community found Koroch as a sustainable/low-cost mitigation measures in Haor and flood plain area to protect soil erosion.



By POPI

CBDRR Vs CMDRR

There are basic difference between CBDRR and CMDRR. Below are sentences or phrases that characterize either CBDRR or CMDRR:

CBDRR	CMDRR
Centralized	Decentralized
Target oriented	Process oriented
Low trust in people's ability	High trust in people's ability
Top-down	Bottom-up
Rigid	Flexible
Staff implement directly	Facilitating the people to implement
External guide and subsidy	Cost sharing
Technology first	Community first
Supply-driven	Demand-driven
Process owned by outsiders	Process owned by the community
External agency as key player	Community-based organization as key player
Incorporate expert's knowledge into project design and implementation	Incorporate local people's knowledge into project design and implementation
Planning by project staff	Flexible local planning
Control is in the hand of external partner agency	Control is held by the partnership of the community and facilitators
Monitoring and evaluation by professionals	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
Central control	Local control
Dependency	Self-reliance
Managed by external agency	Community management
Functional participation	Interactive participation

Courtesy: CMDRR Forum

New agreements to reduce public health risks in New Caledonia

The Government of New Caledonia and SPC, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, have signed three agreements to fund interventions to reduce public health risks resulting from contaminated drinking water, inadequate sanitation and drought.

The secretariat's Deputy Director-General Richard Mann says the deals are important to New Caledonia's ongoing development and address the French territories own priorities.

The agreements are worth more than one and half million Euros and will support New Caledonia in water safety planning, sanitation, and integrated water resource management.

Date:22 Feb 2011

Source(s):Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

A Ten-point checklist for local governments - Ten essentials for making cities resilient

The campaign proposes a Ten-point checklist of Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient to serve as a guide for commitment by Mayors.

Have your City Council and local government sign up to this!

Ten-point Checklist - Essentials for Making Cities Resilient¹

1. Put in place **organization and coordination** to understand and reduce disaster risk, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society. Build local alliances. Ensure that all departments understand their role to disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
2. **Assign a budget** for disaster risk reduction and provide incentives for homeowners, low-income families, communities, businesses and public sector to invest in reducing the risks they face.
3. Maintain up-to-date data on hazards and vulnerabilities, **prepare risk assessments** and use these as the basis for urban development plans and decisions. Ensure that this information and the plans for your city's resilience are readily available to the public and fully discussed with them.
4. Invest in and maintain **critical infrastructure that reduces risk**, such as flood drainage, adjusted where needed to cope with climate change.
5. Assess the **safety of all schools and health facilities** and upgrade these as necessary.
6. Apply and enforce **realistic, risk-compliant building regulations and land use planning principles**. Identify safe land for low-income citizens and develop upgrading of informal settlements, wherever feasible.
7. Ensure **education programmes and training** on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and local communities.
8. **Protect ecosystems and natural buffers** to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices.
9. Install **early warning systems and emergency management** capacities in your city and hold regular public preparedness drills.
10. After any disaster, ensure that the **needs of the survivors are placed at the centre of reconstruction** with support for them and their community organizations to design and help implement responses, including rebuilding homes and livelihoods.

¹ The Checklist builds on the priorities identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters - www.unisdr.org/hfa

13 Metro mayors join UN anti-disaster campaign

MANILA, Philippines - Thirteen mayors from Metro Manila and Rizal have joined the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) campaign to make their respective cities and municipalities more resilient to disasters.

Accompanied by the Senate committee on climate change chairwoman Loren Legarda, the 13 mayors signed the commitment to the UN's 10 Essential Actions to Reduce Disaster Risks.

Present during the commitment signing ceremony at the East Rembo Elementary School in Makati City on Thursday were Makati Mayor Jejomar Erwin Binay Jr., Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, Pasay Mayor Antonino Calixto, San Juan Mayor Guia Gomez, Valenzuela Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian and Taguig Mayor Maria Laarni Cayetano. Also present were Quezon City Mayor Herbert Bautista, Marikina Mayor Del de Guzman, Antipolo Mayor Danilo Leyble, Cainta Mayor Ramon Ilagan, Rodriguez Mayor Cecilio

Hernandez and San Mateo Mayor Jose Rafael Diaz.

"These local chief executives are one against risk. They have set aside their political affiliations and have chosen to be united in making the metropolis and their respective cities or municipalities disaster-resilient," Legarda said.

The 10 Essentials of the UNISDR include investing more in disaster risk reduction, preparing and sharing risk assessments, ensuring that early warning systems are in place, and protecting ecosystems to reduce the impact of floods, cyclones, and storm surges, among other natural hazards.

As the UNISDR's Asia-Pacific Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, Legarda noted that while the event is about making cities disaster-resilient, a special concern is ensuring that schools and hospitals, where the most vulnerable are situated, are safe from hazards.

By Marvin Sy

(The Philippine Star) Updated February 14, 2011

Australia urged to use catastrophe bonds as disaster risk rises

(Reuters) - Global reinsurance giant Swiss Re said Australia's natural disaster risk was increasing and urged its governments to cover the rising damages bill using insurance instruments like "catastrophe bonds" as opposed to one-off disaster levies.

"Mounting exposure in Australia to catastrophes...we feel requires a pre-emptive approach to financing disaster relief, particularly with government assets," Mark Senkevics, head of Swiss Re in Australia and New Zealand, said on Thursday.

"We would like to see some form of insurance from government rather than a levy after the event," Senkevics said on Thursday.

The Australian government introduced legislation into parliament to create a flood levy to cover a \$10 billion damages bill from recent record flooding in eastern states and a massive cyclone.

But the government is struggling to gain support for the levy, with one influential senator demanding state governments take out disaster insurance.

Catastrophe bonds, known as cat bonds, transfer the risk of natural disasters to investors, who receive a yield in return for agreeing to cover damages they consider unlikely, and lock in funds for disaster relief before storms strike.

"Cat bonds are...just a means to take what is a fairly high risk...away from the government to an insurer and reinsurer or capital market investor," Senkevics told local radio.

GLOBAL DISASTER BILL RISING

Worldwide, insurers suffered at least \$36 billion in catastrophe losses in 2010, according to Swiss Re -- the fourth-highest total of the last decade, and the highest if years with major U.S. hurricane landfalls are excluded.

Catastrophe bond issuance passed the \$5 billion mark at the end of 2010, making last year the third strongest to date in the 20-year history of the cat bond market.

Senkevics said developed nations like Australia have historically not been big users of cat bonds as their budgets can cover disaster relief. Swiss Re issued its first Australian cat bond in 2006.

But as natural disasters become more costly, cat bonds may become an option for rich nations.

In the 1980s, the economic cost of global natural disasters totaled about \$25 billion, in the 1990s costs rose to \$95 billion a year, and in the last decade economic damage has reached an annual average of \$130 billion, said Swiss Re, the world's second-biggest reinsurer.

This was mainly due to economic development, population growth and a higher concentration of assets in exposed areas, as well as climate change.

Yet the gap between economic losses and insured losses remains large. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina, which slammed into New Orleans, cost \$140 billion in damages, but only \$65 billion of losses were insured, said Swiss Re.

Date:10 Feb 2011

Source(s): Reuters Alertnet, Thomson Reuters

Migration due to climate change demands attention - ADB

Manila - Governments in Asia and the Pacific need to prepare for a large increase in climate-induced migration in the coming years, says a forthcoming report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Typhoons, cyclones, floods and drought are forcing more and more people to migrate. In the past year alone, extreme weather in Malaysia, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka has caused temporary or longer term dislocation of millions. This process is set to accelerate in coming decades as climate change leads to more extreme weather.

"No international cooperation mechanism has been set up to manage these migration flows, and protection and assistance schemes remain inadequate, poorly coordinated, and scattered," the report states. "National governments and the international community must urgently address this issue in a proactive manner."

ADB expects to issue the report, Climate Change and Migration in Asia and the Pacific, in early March as part of a broader ADB project aimed at increasing awareness of, and enhancing regional preparedness for, migration driven by changing weather patterns.

The report highlights specific risks confronting climate change "hotspots", including megacities in coastal areas of

Asia. These hotspots of climate-induced migration face pressure from swelling populations as rural people seek new lives in cities. The problem is compounded by greater dislocation of people caused by flooding and tropical storms.

Climate-induced migration will affect poor and vulnerable people more than others," said Bart W. Édes, Director of ADB's Poverty Reduction, Gender, and Social Development Division. "In many places, those least capable of coping with severe weather and environmental degradation will be compelled to move with few assets to an uncertain future. Those who stay in their communities will struggle to maintain livelihoods in risk-prone settings at the mercy of nature's whims."

On the positive side, the report says that if properly managed, climate-induced migration could actually facilitate human adaptation, creating new opportunities for displaced populations in less vulnerable environments.

The ADB project, Policy Options to Support Climate-induced Migration, is the first international initiative that aims to generate policy and financing recommendations to address climate-induced migration in Asia and the Pacific.

Date:7 Feb 2011

Source(s):Asian Development Bank (ADB)

'Nepal's vulnerability to disaster magnified'

KATHMANDU: Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal today said due to weak building structures the country is not sufficiently prepared to cope with natural disasters like earthquake.

"Many poorly planned constructions and infrastructure of the past decade have made Kathmandu Valley vulnerable," said the PM Khanal in his inaugural speech of the High Level Symposium on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

"Various geological and hydro-meteorological phenomena coupled with environmental degradation and rapid population growth have challenged DRR in Nepal", PM Khanal added.

He underscored the need for preparedness to effectively respond and mitigate loss of life and property during emergency.

Chief Guest at the Symposium Maria Otero, the visiting Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs said Nepal can reduce the risk of disaster by strengthening regional engagement

"India and China will play important roles when a major disaster strikes Nepal — both as first responders and as potential victims themselves. Nepal should establish mechanisms for meaningful dialogue and cooperation with these countries and others. The United States will continue to support such critical efforts through the diplomatic community," she said.

Noting the use of technology and innovations, she said, "Disaster risk reduction must be internalised throughout government operations, from planning at all levels to budgeting and beyond."

She also expressed commitment of US support for DRR in Nepal.

Date:15 Feb 2011

Source(s):Himalayan Times, the; International Media Network Nepal Pvt. Ltd.

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