

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
FOR THE COORDINATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**



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NEW DIRECTOR OCHA-GENEVA



Mr. Kasidis Rochanakorn has been appointed as the new Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva as from 1 September 2006.

Mr. Kasidis Rochanakorn started his career in UNHCR in 1979 in his native city Bangkok, Thailand.

Later he worked in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, was UNHCR Chief of Mission in China and Regional Representative in Japan and the Republic of Korea. He served twice at the UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, the last time, from 1996 until 1999, he was the Chief of Emergency and Preparedness Section. Before joining OCHA he served as UNHCR Representative, as well as, designated Humanitarian Coordinator for the United Nations in the Russian Federation.

ASIA

**INDONESIA -CENTRAL JAVA AND
YOGYAKARTA – EARTHQUAKE AND MT
MERAPI VOLCANO**

On 27 May, an earthquake measuring 5.9 on Richter scale struck Yogyakarta Province. The epicentre was approximately 37.2 km south of Yogyakarta at a depth of 33 kilometres. The most affected districts were Bantul and Kulonprogo south of Yogyakarta. The death toll stands at 5,778. The number of injuries stands at 37,912. 205,888 homes have been completely destroyed. 406,166 additional houses have suffered earthquake damage.

Immediately after the earthquake, OCHA established an Information Center within the Government Office in Bantul, sent an UNDAC team and released an Emergency Cash Grant of USD 50,000.

On 14 July OCHA organized a “*Seminar on Transition from Emergency Phase to Recovery and Rehabilitation*” in Yogyakarta to increase the mutual understanding on policies and plans of the governments and international community in the transition from emergency to recovery and rehabilitation.



OCHA will facilitate further discussions among the governments and the organizations and agencies at different level as the follow-up activities.

INDONESIA – WEST JAVA - EARTHQUAKE

On 17 July, an earthquake measuring 7.2 on Richter scale with depth of 48.6 km occurred, followed by a 6- foot tsunami, struck Pangandaran in West Java province. The National Coordination Board for Disaster Management (BAKORNAS PB) reported that the death toll stands at 637 dead, 543 injured, and 165 missing.

On 18 July, two inter-agency assessment teams from Yogyakarta and Jakarta have been deployed to the affected areas. The first team, consisting of 16 members from WFP, UNICEF, IFRC, UNDSS, Oxfam and OCHA, undertook assessment in Cilacap and Kebumen districts of Central Java Province. The second team, consisting of nine members from OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO and UNDP, undertook assessments in Ciamis and Tasikmalaya District of West Java Province.

INDONESIA FLASH FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES IN SOUTH SULAWESI, GORONTALO AND SOUTH KALIMANTAN PROVINCE

On 18 June, torrential rains lasting a three-day period, triggered flash floods in South Sulawesi Province. Two districts, Gowa and Sidrap, were also hit by landslides. The worst affected area is Sinjai District. The floods and landslides have damaged hundreds of houses, inundated rice fields and caused fishponds to overflow.

INDONESISA FIRES HAZE

On 26 August, fires and haze worsened, especially in South Sumatera, West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan provinces. Thick haze has led to disruptions of flight schedules, boat accidents in Musi River (South Sumatera), as well as health

hazards in local communities and neighbouring countries.

In South Sumatera Province, local authorities have deployed 240 fire brigades personnel from Manggala Agni, 128 personnel from the Indonesian Military and Police, and also 2,340 community people from 197 villages who have been trained by experts deployed by the European Commission – Forest Fire South Sumatra Management Project. OCHA, through the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit, continue to monitor the situation and update key stakeholders.

NEPAL FLOODS



Photo IRIN

Towards the end of August, heavy monsoon rains have caused floods and landslides in the mid and far western regions of Nepal. At least 13 districts have been affected, the worst hit being Banke, Bardya and Achham. An estimated 9,000 families have been highly affected.

The government estimates that 750 hectares of crops and 10,000 metric tons of food grains have been destroyed due to floods in Bardiya district. The district will require food aid for the next three months. In Achham, WFP estimate that 40 hectares of agricultural land has been destroyed together with standing crops such as rice, maize, millet and potato.

The Red Cross, UN, international and national NGOs mobilized their resources to support the District Disaster Relief Committee to ensure that emerging needs are met.



THAILAND FLOODS

On 21 May, heavy rains caused severe flash floods and landslides in five provinces of Nan, Phrae, Lamphang, Uttaradit and Sukhothai in northern part of Thailand. 83 persons died, 33 were reported missing, 342,895 people affected, 697 houses completely destroyed and 11,601 people evacuated.

OCHA released an OCHA emergency cash grant of USD 25,000 and another emergency cash grant of USD 26,000 from the Norwegian Grant Reserve, administrated by OCHA for purchasing relief items and materials for temporary shelter.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA FLOODS

Torrential rain between 14 and 16 July caused severe floods and landslides in many parts of the country. South Pyongan, North Hwanghae, Kangwon and South Hamgyong provinces were most affected. On 21 July, North Korea official media told that hundreds of people were dead or missing by flash floods, but the exact number of casualties was not announced.

North Korea officials report that 151 people died, figures reported by media are significantly higher but they remain uncorroborated. In addition, landslides and flash floods totally or partially destroyed 23 400 houses with 16 900 families becoming homeless and resulting in extensive damage to crops and infrastructure.

The Ministry of Public Health has delivered UNICEF emergency health kits to eight county hospitals and 66 clinics. Kits distributed in county hospitals serve 10,000 people and those for clinics cover 5,000 people. WFP is delivering 150 tonnes of food aid to flood affected people in Songchon county, South Pyongan province. The food is sufficient for 13,000 people for 30 days.

A joint fact-finding mission (UN RC/HC's Office, United Nations Development

Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, IFRC and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) conducted a rapid assessment on 20 July. DPRK Red Cross and the Government arranged the assessment. According to the result of the assessment, floods and landslides killed at least 154 people, left 127 missing, destroyed or submerged 31,115 houses and left more than 17,559 families homeless. The mission report indicated that these figures only referred to the provinces visited by the team (South Pyongan, N. Hwanghae, Kangwon and S. Hangyon) and do not represent the total numbers of affected population.

PAKISTAN FLOODS

On 23 July, heavy monsoon rains caused flash floods and mudslides in areas affected by the South Asia Earthquake (08 October 2005) such as Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Mansehra. As a result, over one thousand persons had to be relocated in a rapid response supported by local governments, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and their partners.

The Country Team set up the inter-agency contingency planning for winter and the effects of monsoon, which will cover a six-month period

Hundreds of Pakistani families who had returned to their homes following last year's massive earthquake have been forced to relocate again by flooding. This year's monsoon season has brought severe flooding to quake-affected northern Pakistan, killing at least 200 people since the rains started in mid-July.

Water levels have been up to three times higher than last year in some places, according to reports. Houses, roads, railways tracks, water supplies, sewerage pipes and crops have been destroyed. It is a devastating blow following the 8 October quake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale that ripped through North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Pakistani-administered Kashmir, killing more than



75,000 people and leaving 3.5 million homeless.

PAKISTAN MUDSLIDES

On 3 July, a mudslide incurred by monsoon rains left 22 people dead, five seriously injured and seven still missing in a village called Ghaeel in Kalam valley, north of Peshawar. Mud and boulders buried three houses in the village where approximately 30 people are believed to be living. A heavy rain swollen canal in the area caused the mud and rocks to fall on the houses. The local government managed the situation OCHA is in close contact with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office as well as with the Government of Pakistan.

INDIA FLOODS

Beginning of August, heavy rains flooded a number of districts in states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the central and west part of the country.

In Andhra Pradesh State alone, 106 people have been reportedly killed, 56 people injured and more than 54,000 people evacuated. Local authorities and army are conducting rescue operation with boats and helicopters. A total of 445 relief camps have been opened.

In Maharashtra State, at least 52 people have been killed. The worst affected district in Gujarat state is Surat. The rainfall in a number of districts recorded this year has already been above the average rainfall in last ten years. At least 3 persons have been killed and about 6 million people have been affected. A total of 205 relief camps have been set up housing about 19,000 people. Special Flood Rescue teams have already been deployed and eight helicopters also have been deployed to drop food. The Indian Red Cross Society has been very active since the floods initiated and has been coordinating at various levels with the authorities and other agencies. OCHA is in close contact with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Delhi.

CHINA FLOODS

On 3 August, Typhoon Prapiroon, which means Rain God in Thai, landed at Guangdong Province. The typhoon, the sixth tropical storm to hit China this season, affected to various degrees more than 10 million people in Guangdong and Hainan Provinces and Guangxi Autonomous Region. At least 80 people have died, nine are missing and more than 844,000 people were evacuated to safety. About 29,000 houses have collapsed and 139,000 others damaged. The direct economic loss is estimated to reach at least CNY 7.23 billion (approximately USD 900 million¹)

TAJIKISTAN EARTHQUAKE

On 29 July 2006, two earthquakes of magnitude between 4.5 and 5.5 on Richter scale struck seven villages in Kumsangir district; about 180 kilometres (110 miles) south of the capital Dushanbe, near the Afghan border. Tajikistan's President appealed for international aid.

The country is the poorest in Central Asia and is shaken by dozens of earth tremors every year. WHO has provided Emergency Health Kits for 10,000 people for a period of 3 months. UNICEF has distributed 5,000 kg of chlorine, hygiene kits, 20,000 water purification tablets as well as 40 boxes of high protein biscuits. OCHA has released a USD 20,000 grant to cover immediate relief needs. The United Nations agencies, Tajik Red Crescent Society, and other humanitarian partners working in Tajikistan appealed for \$1 million to cover the remaining urgent needs of the population

TAJIKISTAN FLOODS AND MUDSLIDES

During the first days of May, heavy rain, hail and wind caused several mudslides and floods in southern Tajikistan. Farmlands, over 3,000 ha of cotton plantations and infrastructure such as roads and bridges



were damaged. The Government has not requested international assistance. The Ministry of Emergency Situations conducted assessment missions in the affected areas and pointed out the need for construction material

AFRICA

ETHIOPIA - DIRE DAWA AND SOUTH OMO VALLEY – FLOODS



Photo: IRIN

During the night 5 to 6 August very heavy rains caused flooding in the region of Dire Dawa, 525 kms east of the Capital Addis Ababa. More than 640 died, while about 290 people are still missing.

Across the country at least 357,000 people have been affected, 136,000 made homeless, by the worst floods in Ethiopia's history.

The flood damage has increased in recent years due to increased populations that have settled near the riverbanks as well as to deforestation of natural catchments. The recurrence of such events suggests the need for longer-term disaster prevention and vulnerability reduction activities.



Photo: Dusan Zupka



Photo: Dusan Zupka

The South Omo Valley floods followed the disastrous floods in Dire Dawa where more than 260 people perished.

Following unusually intense and continued rainfall, reports of flash flooding and overflowing of rivers have been received from all regions except Harari and Beneshangul Gumuz.

On 16 August, the Government of Ethiopia confirmed that 364 people have been killed and severe flooding in Kurez District, South Omo, has displaced approximately 6000 - 10,000. Nearly 3000 livestock has also reportedly perished.

Members of the national army have been deployed to assist in the search and rescue efforts. Fifteen boats and 2 helicopters were on site. More than 1300 people have been rescued.



The water level now started receding in the North, one of the most heavily affected areas. The displaced from these areas have been advised to return to their villages by the local authorities.

As the excess water has receded, farmers have started preparing their land for new planting but many depend on the provision of seeds by humanitarian agencies after most were washed away. Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, floods are still affecting thousands of people in Gambella, where up to 31,000 people are still affected.

The international community has responded generously to the Flash Floods Appeal, with about USD 18 millions - more than 65 percent of the requested USD 27 million – secured.

NIGER FLOODS



Photo: IRIN

In August, excessive rains were reported in the regions of Agadez, Zinder, Tahoua, Dosso and Tillaberi. Some 15,610 persons were affected in 2,760 households. The first estimation of emergency needs indicated 1,050 tons of food, 15,610 blankets and 15,610 mosquito nets. The three localities most affected are: Ingall, Bilma and Tabelot.

Following the first calls for assistance by the local authorities, several initial missions were conducted by humanitarian organizations to evaluate the damages caused by the floods. Schools and administrative buildings have been used as temporary shelters. WFP distributed 285 metric tons for 13,321 persons.

The government distributed 3,500 impregnated mosquito nets. The French Red

Cross in Ingall has distributed 100 kits of kitchen utensils and water. UNDP allocated 50,000 USD .

OCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, FAO, NGO and government representatives will participate in joint field assessment missions.

SUDAN FLOODS

Torrential rainfall in Sudan since the beginning of August has caused extensive flooding in most of the parts of Sudan. The main affected areas are located in the North, East and Centre of the country.

Thousands of buildings, homes, houses, schools, roads, bridges and agricultural assets - have either been washed away or heavily damaged. Early estimates speak of 30,000 households affected. The enormous amount of stagnant water makes flood victims highly vulnerable to malaria, diarrhea and respiratory infections.

It was difficult to assess the number of fatalities. A large number of people have been displaced. On 26 August, an aerial reconnaissance of the Blue Nile River from Khartoum to El Damazin was conducted to gain a better understanding of the nature of the potential threat from flooding. The mission comprised OCHA, UNICEF, UNMIS, and government officials.

IFRC launched an Appeal for 600,000 CHF to meet the emergency needs of 15,000 victims in 4 regions: Khartoum, Sinnar, Kassala and Hamadab. Islamic Relief is launching an appeal to support 1000 households in Senga.

UNICEF provided 2000 mosquito nets. Some villages lack clean water and electricity, and sanitation is a priority. Health - anti-venin, anti malarial are required



AMERICA

MEXICO HURRICANE JOHN

Category 3 Hurricane John – which briefly achieved category 4 status during the night of 30 August - brought torrential rain and hurricane force winds of up to 215km/hour to communities along the west coast of Mexico. Authorities evacuated at least 15,000 people living in low-lying areas near the Los Cabos beach resort. Authorities also ordered the evacuation of 8,000 people in the state of Jalisco and urged others to board up their homes.

According to the Mexican Red Cross there has been relatively little damage. However, it is important to note that the area covered is fairly large, with a number of small, relatively isolated communities – and assessments are therefore on going. Some not serious flooding has occurred in Acapulco and the surrounding area.

THE CARIBBEAN HURRICANE ERNESTO

Tropical storm Ernesto passed over Haiti and Cuba on 28 and 29 August, bringing more than 15 cm of rain. Ernesto left Cuba causing heavy rains in the Eastern portion of the island especially in Maisi, in the most Eastern province and Guantánamo.

On 29 August, Ernesto continued towards Florida bringing heavy rains to Ragged Island, Great Exuma in the Central Bahamas, Andros Island, the Berry Islands, the Biminis and Grand Bahama Island in the Northwestern Bahamas and Florida Keys.

In Haiti, 4 people died, 492 people had to evacuate, 520 houses were damaged and 93 houses and 1 school were destroyed. Several localities, Martissant, Gressier and Mariani, along southbound roads were flooded.

COLOMBIA RAINFALL/WINTER SEASON



On 1 May, heavy rainfall affected in Antioquia, Santander, Nariño, and Cauca departments and along the plains and Amazon foothills, increasing the risk of landslides and floods in a large part of the Andean region.

According to the Colombian Red Cross, so far this year the rainy season has affected 21 of 33 departments and 128 municipalities. A total of 82 persons have lost their lives, 14 are missing, 179 injured, and 12,069 families (61,295 people) affected. In addition, 729 homes have been destroyed and 4,605 damaged. The Colombian Government has not requested international assistance.

June 2006 -Although the first rainfall season officially ended on 1 June, intense rain showers occurred on the beginning of June in 12 departments of the country.

Preparedness was encouraged to face the coming hurricane season, which has started on 1 June and will last until late November. This season could possibly affect the Atlantic coast of Colombia, in particular the islands of San Andres and Providencia. Providencia was directly affected by hurricane Beta in 2005.

On 8 June, OCHA held a meeting with seven main donors, including ECHO and USAID, to mobilize resources for the damages caused by the rainy season.



SURINAM FLOODS

Torrential rains started on 1 May 2006, flooded the entire South and parts of the Central Amazonian Lowlands of Suriname. The districts of Sipaliwini and Brokopondo are the hardest hit. Disaster preparedness and response mechanisms are reportedly extremely limited.

Approximately 22,141 people have been severely affected. They have been displaced to nearby villages on higher grounds by the military. The Suriname Red Cross has reported 3 deaths. OCHA has released an USD 30,000 Emergency cash Grant.

The UN Resident Coordinator for Suriname requested the assistance of a 7 member UNDAC Team to support the coordination of response.

EUROPE

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA FLOODS

The Government of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has requested international support to assist people affected by recent floods and mudflows in that country.

In early August 2006, heavy rains caused floods and mudflows in the two poorest suburbs of Skopje, the capital. The floods damaged two suburbs, Cento and Singelic, which were built after the earthquake of 1963. The affected areas are northeast of the capital in the municipality of GaziBaba, as well as in the rural community of Ingikovo. Approximately 1,500 people have been affected and have been evacuated to their friends' or relatives' houses in other districts.

While no deaths have been reported, extensive damage to homes has been registered, and most of the infrastructure in Cento and Singelic has collapsed. The floods also destroyed household vegetable

gardens, and the population is reportedly in need of food. Because of the combination of water, mud and high temperatures, the possible outbreak of diseases is one of the authorities' major concerns.

VOLCANIC ACTIVITY WORLDWIDE

VANUATA VOLCANIC ERUPTION

On May 9, Lopevi Volcano erupted. While the island of Lopevi is uninhabited, the nearby islands of Paama and Ambrym have had heavy ash fall affecting the water supplies and crops of communities in South-East Ambrym and Paama. The total population of Paama is 1572, comprised of 23 villages and 511 households.

On the island of Paama, the two main cash crops of vanilla and pepper have been damaged badly and are no longer likely to provide a source of income. The UN Disaster Management Team had a meeting on 9 June and decided to offer the support of sending an assessment team, medical staff and relief items to the National Disaster Management Office.

ECUADOR TUNGURAHUA VOLCANO

The activity of Tungurahua volcano continues to be high, but slightly decreased; the volcano is producing explosions. Heavy rains have been reported in the area. There is now a danger of possible mudslides with volcanic material.

Vulcanologists said 8,000 tonnes of incandescent material rained down on villages including Bilbao, Palitahua and Manzano after 17 August eruption. Hundreds of farm animals were killed and crops destroyed in these areas, and thousands of people were evacuated.

As a result, 5 people were killed, 13 injured and seven villages devastated. Cases of respiratory, ocular and dermatological



problems are of concern. The Ministry of Health's mobile brigades cover health assistance needs in the affected areas. The Government requested international assistance. OCHA has released a USD 30,000 emergency grant for immediate relief needs through the UN Resident Coordinator.

indicates a likelihood of an eruption in days or weeks). The population living in at-risk areas totals: 7,935 inhabitants, principally located in three municipalities within the department of Nariño; Pasto, La Florida and Nariño.

The Galeras crisis is now into its seventh month and despite efforts of the local government to encourage evacuation to safer areas an unknown number of people are still living in at-risk areas. Approximately 30-40% of the population has not left their homes.



On Friday 14 July, the volcanic activity of the Tungurahua Volcano increased alarmingly. The volcano is located 135 km southeast of Quito with an altitude of 5,106 meters. The last major eruption occurred in October 1999.

More than 3,600 people have been evacuated from the highest risk areas near the volcano. The United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) coordinated with provincial authorities, the Civil Defense, and the Red Cross.

COLOMBIE GALERAS VOLCANO



Photo: IRIN

Since 28 March 2006, the Colombian Institute of Geology and Mining (INGEOMINAS) has maintained alert level II for the Galeras Volcano (alert level II

INDONESIA - CENTRAL JAVA PROVINCE – MOUNT MERAPI ERUPTION

On 4 May, lava spilled out from Merapi's new lava dome spreading a distance of 200 meters on the southern flank. A static burning point was also spotted from Deles Sub Village of Sidorejo Village in Klaten District. Lava outflows and the emergence of static burning points are signs of imminent eruption. There was also a shallow volcanic tremor, 102 multi phase tremors, and 84 events of rock falls.

A team of four volcanic hazard specialists from the U.S. Geological Service has been assisting the Indonesian Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation at Merapi. Many IDPs have decided to return to their sub-village homes. Only 1,934 persons remain in 3 IDPs shelters.

MOUNT MERAPI WORKSHOP

A workshop on Mount Merapi Management Strategy (3-4 August) was jointly organized by Oxfam, the Government and the UN. This was to encourage collaboration amongst the provincial and district authorities, the UN, international and national NGOs and the community, and to establish a better coordination mechanism between these actors. Other activities include the creation of action plans by sub-districts, the establishment of a unified information centre, and follow-up meetings between local NGOs and the community.



PHILIPPINES MOUNT MAYON VOLCANO

The discharge of lava flow from Mt. Mayon started to increase in mid July and on 4 August, lava flows extended 30 m beyond the 6-km radius region designated as the Permanent Danger Zone. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology raised the alert level from 3 to 4 (Alert Level 5 being the highest) for Mayon Volcano, located at 340 km SE of Manila. The 6-km danger zone was expanded to an 8-km radius, affecting 25 villages in three cities and five municipalities of the Province of Albay. Mt. Mayon is the most active volcano in the country, and the two last eruptions occurred in 1997 and 2000-2001.

Over 39,000 people were evacuated from 25 villages near the volcano and are currently staying in 20 evacuation centers (mostly schools).

OCHA is in close contact with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Manila

Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters: knowledge management, education and risk awareness. Its purpose is to provide the background and basis for two initiatives: "Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School" a two-year campaign launched by the ISDR secretariat in collaboration with the thematic cluster/platform and the ActionAid schools project: "Disaster Risk Reduction Through Schools".

For more information please visit:

http://www.unisdr.org/eng/task_force/working_groups/knowledge-education/docs/Let-our-Children-Teach-Us.pdf

October 11 2006 is the International Day for Disaster Reduction. The theme of this year's International Day, "Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School", calls on Governments, teachers, communities, businesses and individuals to make disaster risk education a key component of national school curricula and to invest in making school buildings strong enough to withstand the forces of nature. Events are being organized in countries across the globe to promote disaster risk awareness and safer schools. More information and a full list of activities will be available in October on: <http://www.unisdr.org/wdrc-2006-2007>

ISDR



SNAPSHOT

A new report, "*Let Our Children Teach Us! - A review of the Role of Education and Knowledge in Disaster Risk Reduction*", was launched by the ISDR and its partners during the International Disaster Reduction Conference in Davos, Switzerland (27 August-01 September). This review, prepared by Professor Ben Wisner, examines good practices to reduce disaster risk through education, knowledge and innovation. It looks critically and strategically at current activities in order to identify gaps, opportunities in the form of synergism and partnerships.

The review addresses activities related to Priority 3 of the Hyogo Framework for

OCHA NATURAL DISASTER INVOLVEMENT IN 2006:

Total number of disasters:	24
Total number of Appeals:	12
Total number of Situation Reports:	164

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More information can be found on relief Web, OCHA on line, and IRIN websites;

www.reliefweb.int
<http://ochaonline.un.org>
www.irinnews.org

