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## OCHA - GENEVA NATURAL DISASTERS HIGHLIGHTS

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June-July-August 2005  
**No.2 - August 2005**

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



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The mission was intended to show solidarity with the people and Government of Niger and also to help focus international attention on the special developmental challenges faced by the countries of the Sahel, such as Niger.

The revised Flash Appeal, launched on 8 August 2005, seeks US\$ 80.9 million for an extended period up till December 2005. As of 17 August, the appeal is 36% funded with US\$ 29.1 million received, thus leaving a new shortfall of US\$ 51.1 million. Three appealing agencies represent 94% of total Appeal namely; WFP (US\$ 57.6 million), UNICEF (US\$ 14.6 million) and FAO (3.9 million).

The Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director of OCHA-Geneva, Yvette Stevens, was invited to accompany the Secretary-General to Niger.

### Secretary-General's visit to Niger



Source: IRIN



Source: IRIN

The Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, visited Niger from 22 to 25 August to see first-hand United Nations efforts to help the people of one of the world's poorest countries face the challenges of drought, desertification and the recent locust plague that have caused severe food shortages and put nearly 3 million people at risk.

## Sierra Leone Floods 22 August:



Source: Reliefweb

Heavy rainfall in southern Sierra Leone from 13 to 14 August has led to flooding in nine of twelve chiefdoms in the country's Pujehun district. Preliminary reports show that some 3000 individuals have been affected. However, continued inaccessibility of many villages has made it difficult to provide an exact assessment of the number affected. The United Nations country team dispatched an inter-agency assessment mission to six of the most affected areas. The Government has requested international assistance. OCHA continues to closely monitor the situation.

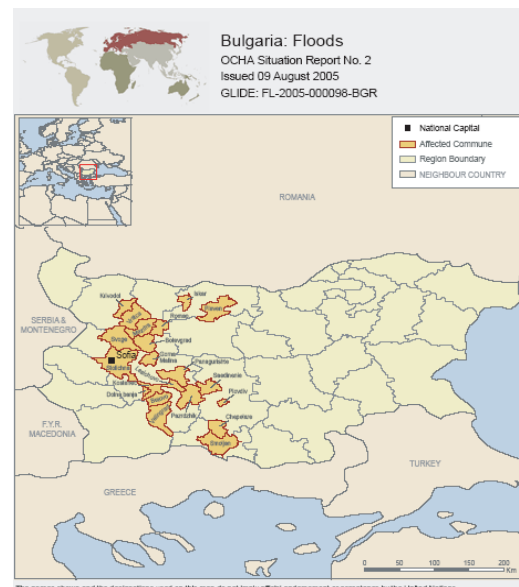
## Central African Republic Floods 19 August:



Source: OCHA field office

Torrential rains that fell from 6 to 7 August have prompted flooding in southern Central African Republic, affecting more than 9000 people in the capital city of Bangui. The flooding, which affected the poorest and most heavily populated districts of the city, destroyed over 600 homes and damaged 800 more. The Government has requested assistance. Inter-agency assessment missions on 11, 12 and 13 August gained only limited access to affected areas. 34,500 water purification tablets, 25,880 jerry cans, 350 cartons of therapeutic biscuits, and 480 petrol lamps, made available by the UN prior to the floods, were distributed to those in need.

## Bulgaria Floods 18 August:



Source: Reliefweb

Ongoing flooding in Bulgaria has affected more than one-quarter of the country's population, led to 20 deaths, and caused an estimated \$633 million in damage. The Government has declared a state of disaster in 22 municipalities.



Source: UNDP field office

The Government has mobilized all national capacities, including relevant ministries, the armed forces, non-governmental organizations, and private and public companies. OCHA has released a \$30,000 emergency grant for emergency response coordination. UNDP also provided an emergency cash grant, and UNICEF has provided household items.

### Indonesia fires 17 August:



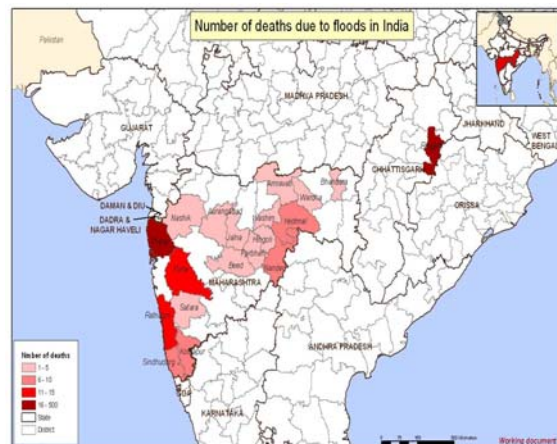
Source: Reliefweb

Numerous peat conversion fires and wildfires in Riau Province on the **Indonesian island of Sumatra** have been causing serious haze problems since the beginning of August 2005. The haze has also affected areas in Malaysia and Thailand. Most fires were set by farmers to clear the land. Reports on the health impact of the haze on populations in the affected areas are under preparation. **OCHA** is in close contact with Government authorities and the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Jakarta.

### Floods in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - 15 August:

In response to flooding in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, OCHA has allocated \$10,000 for the local purchase of relief supplies and logistical support to assist the affected population. Some 2000 individuals, primarily members of the Roma community, have been affected, and initial damage assessments amount to several million dollars.

### India Floods 25 July:



Source: WHO

Continuous monsoon rains since the beginning of July, and unprecedented flash floods, have caused more than 500 deaths in the Indian states of Maharashtra and Goa. The Government of India has called in its Army, Navy and Air Forces to carry out search and rescue operations; Air Force helicopters are being deployed

to airdrop food packages where roads are impassable.

Approximately 10,000 people have been evacuated to safer areas. There has been no request by the Government of India for relief support from United Nations agencies. However, WHO and UNDP assisted the Government's emergency relief teams.

### Pakistan Floods 29 July:

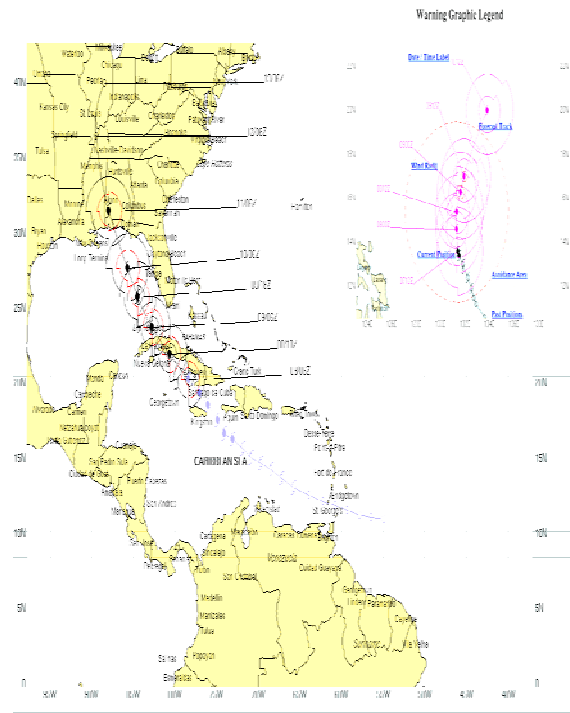


Source: IRIN

Responding to heavy floods that have hit Punjab and Sindh provinces since June 2005, the United Nations Disaster Management Team in Pakistan has released a report based on needs assessments. Among the main findings, the Team highlighted the need for immediate food support for a one-month period for nearly 40,000 individuals in the Northwest Frontier Province; food support is also needed for 5000 people, for a similar period, in the Northern Areas.



### Hurricane Dennis 8 July:



Source: Naval Research Laboratory Marine Meteorology Division

Hurricane Dennis has passed through Jamaica and Haiti, and Cuba. Ahead of the hurricane's approach, OCHA alerted and pre-positioned UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Teams in areas that could be affected. OCHA has also taken preparatory measures to mitigate the storm's impact in Jamaica, Haiti and Cuba.

In Haiti, some 300 persons were evacuated to temporary shelters. OCHA, in conjunction with MINUSTAH, the UN Country Team and Government authorities, had conducted two simulation exercises in early-June 2005, which covered evacuation procedures among other preparedness measures.

## Kyrgyzstan floods 7 July:



Source: IRIN

OCHA has provided an emergency grant of \$20,000 to assist those affected by floods and mudflows in the provinces of Osh, Batken, and Jalalabat. 3,996 dwellings have been flooded, with 200 houses and 565 household buildings completely destroyed. More than 400 families have been temporarily accommodated in tents. Crops have been severely damaged. A total of 2886 hectares have been completely destroyed. In total, 268,500 tons of grains are lacking to supply the population.

## Afghanistan Floods 20 June:



Source: IRIN

Severe storms, including hailstorms, commencing on 16 June have led to heavy flooding in parts of northeastern and eastern Afghanistan. 29 persons were killed and 40 injured. An allocation of US\$ 30,000 from the Norway Emergency Grant and US\$ 20,000 from the OCHA Emergency Reserve Fund were released in order to procure 1,000 tents for displaced persons.

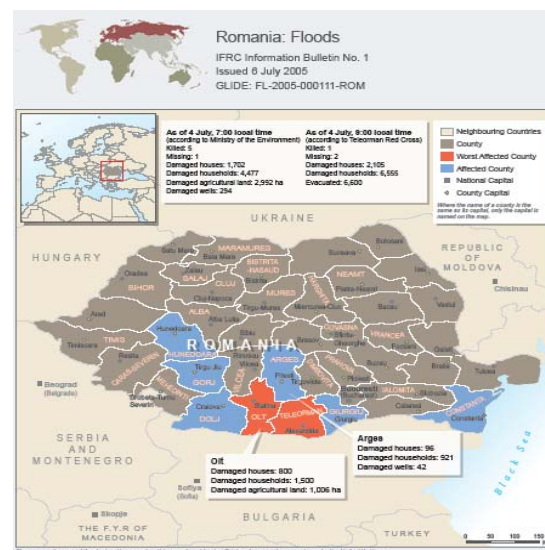
## Chile Earthquake 13 June:



Source: Reliefweb

The strong 7.9 magnitude earthquake that occurred on 13 June in the northern Region of Chile caused 11 deaths, more than 200 injured, and disrupted the lives of more than 11,900 people. The housing sector was particularly affected with more than 9,350 dwellings damage, of which 550 were completely destroyed. OCHA has released an Emergency Cash Grant of \$ 30,000.

## Romania Floods 1 June 2005:



Responding to the worst flooding in 50 years, OCHA has released an Emergency Grant of \$30,000 to the Government of Romania to procure additional motorized boats and life jackets to aid future evacuation efforts. Romania's western region was struck by severe flooding during the first two weeks of May, prompting the evacuation of 3400 individuals. 2623 houses in 22 towns have been damaged in central and northern Romania. 1805 bridges and 1600 km of roads have been damaged and more than 11'000 wells clogged. A total of 9300 persons including 7600 specialists are involved in rebuilding operations. The estimated damage is evaluated of 670 million to 1.15 billion euros. As of 26 August, the total number of deaths since the beginning of the floods has risen to 28 with six, including a four year old, further missing. The ten latest victims were swept away by the flood on 23 August.

### **Somalia Floods May and June:**



Source: IRIN

Thousands of households were affected during the flooding that occurred due to high flows along the Shabelle and Juba rivers during May and June. Aid agencies mobilised an effective response, yet, the unusual Gu flows once again highlights the need for well-developed Flood Early Warning systems and emergency preparedness plans.

In this regard, a workshop on Community Flood Preparedness and Traditional Early Warning Systems took place in Jowhar in July to feed into the continued development of the 'Inter-Agency Action Plan for Flood Forecasting, Preparedness

and Response for the Juba and Shabelle Rivers in Somalia.

A similar workshop is planned for the Juba Valley in September and it is anticipated the Inter-Agency Action Plan will be updated in time for the 2005 Deyr season, when flooding usually occurs.

### **Philippines: UNDAC 18 May – 1 June to evaluate the national disaster management system**

The Philippine archipelago is vulnerable to natural disasters: volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, droughts and typhoons are among the host of natural disasters that may affect the Philippines. To this end, the main purpose of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC) deployed to the Philippines on 18 May – 1 June 2005, was to evaluate the capacity of the national disaster management system in the areas of disaster preparedness and response.

During this two-week mission, it became evident that disaster preparedness and response is not new to the Philippines. This was evident from the wealth of knowledge, commitment, and experience the team interacted with. Indeed, several good working models on disaster response and preparedness exist in the Philippines. The success of Marikina City in integrating disaster management principles in the development of the metropolis is a striking example.

It is acknowledged that the Philippines is capable of dealing with the day-to-day emergencies with which they are faced. However in the event of a major disaster, existing disaster response systems and personnel would soon be overwhelmed. To improve the Philippines preparedness for such events, the streamlining of current disaster management systems, practices and coordination mechanisms by NDCC is essential. This will not necessarily involve major changes – it could be achieved by building on current systems and initiatives already being undertaken by NDCC member agencies;

Initiatives focused on building community disaster preparedness and response capacity are particularly important. Efforts directed at this level do not necessarily involve great expense, particularly if all stakeholders (government and non-government alike) work together with clear goals, roles and designated responsibilities.

Partnerships and linkages with the international community should be pursued to ensure a rapid and substantive response in the event of a major disaster that overwhelms the Philippines' capacity.

### **OCHA Field Coordination Support**

The Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) ran a Familiarization Course and Technical Meeting, for the newly formed Asia/Pacific Humanitarian Partnership in Singapore, on 30 May - 3 June 2005. The event, attended by officials from Australia, China, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and Singapore, was aimed at (a) bringing together technical experts to discuss and finalize equipment specifications, based upon UNDAC standards and (b) familiarize identified support staff with the relationship between deployed UNDAC Teams and support staff while on mission

The UNDAC Team undertook a two-week mission to Georgia from 4 - 17 June 2005, where it carried out an analysis of Georgia's disaster response and coordination capacities. The Team presented its report, including recommendations on actions to restructure and strengthen these capacities, to the Government, to the UN Resident Coordinator and to the Country Team. In the second week of the mission, a UNDP UNDAC Team member, who assisted the UNRC with planning the implementation of the recommendations, joined the Team.

Jointly with the Government of Armenia, FCSS organized and directed a regional INSARAG Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) command-post exercise, which was held in Yerevan, Armenia, from 11 to 15 June 2005. A 5 person UNDAC team practiced the establishment and

management of a Reception Centre and On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) in cooperation with Armenian national and local authorities, as well as facilitating cooperation with international USAR teams in the OSOCC.

FCSS carried out a pilot Training of Trainers course in Rosersberg, Sweden from 4 - 8 July 2005, hosted by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency. The course is designed to create a pool of trainers to assist FCSS to conduct FCSS-related training courses worldwide. Participants coming from Bolivia, Brazil, Estonia, Germany, Jordan, Montserrat, Norway, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom completed the course.

FCSS chaired a Technical Workshop on the Global Disaster Alert and Response Coordination System (GDACS) on 14 July in Geneva. The participants from the United States, ECHO, the European Commission, WMO and OCHA discussed the current status of the system and the future strategy. The aim of GDACS is to improve disaster alert notification upon the occurrence of natural disasters, as well as to enhance information exchange and coordination during the relief phase of a disaster, using the latest internet and communications technologies. A functioning first version of the tool will be presented at the GDACS stakeholders meeting in October 2005.

### **Cuba: OCHA mission, 1-3 June**

At the request of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) the OCHA team undertook a mission to Cuba. The main purpose of the mission was:

- To prepare and implement the joint ACS/OCHA/UNDP **Seminar for National Authorities: Risk Management Policies, Systems and Successful Experiences in the Caribbean Region**

- To participate in the ACS 10th Meeting of the Special Committee on Natural Disasters, and
- To support the Emergency Relief Coordinator during his mission in Havana.

In addition, the mission had extensive discussions with senior officials of Governments from the region, key UN partners, IFRC, ACS secretariat and donors. All these activities targeted an overarching goal of the strengthening of the UN system, regional and national capacities in the Caribbean region to respond to major disasters, in particular to hurricanes in 2005 season in a timely and effective manner.

Participants adopted a draft document entitled **HAVANA CONSENSUS** containing recommendations to strengthen the regional and national capacities.

**UNDP/OCHA Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop, Caribbean Regional Cluster  
14-16 June Jamaica**

The 2004 hurricane season proved to be one of the worst in recent Caribbean history. The effects of these disasters, particularly in small island developing countries, are of increasing concern. In late 2004 a Caribbean Sub-Regional Cluster meeting was held in Santo Domingo to review the UN's response and recovery efforts throughout the region in the affected countries. The discussions also focused on the work plan of the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative (CRMI) as well as how to systematize the lessons learned from the 2004 hurricane season, how to build on the recommendations adopted as the **HAVANA CONSENSUS** document during a 2005 Cuba workshop in development of country specific action plans, and how to strengthen the risk management capacities of the UN Country Offices in light of the lessons learnt for the upcoming hurricane season.

Participants were trained how to outline key actions for 2005 to initiate a process to integrate DRR (Disaster Risk reduction) into emergency response, disaster recovery, and development programming, in particular for hurricanes, using principles, tools and resources within the context of the UN mandate for DRR. Participants developed a concrete hurricane preparedness action plans for their respective offices.

**OCHA Organize workshops in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Thailand:**

In May and early June 2005 OCHA organized a series of workshops on lessons learned and best practices in the tsunami disaster, with the participation of affected governments, UN agencies, Red Cross representatives, NGOs, donors, and other actors. Four national workshops were held in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and a regional workshop was held in Indonesia in June 2005.

The key areas requiring improvement were identified as being: (a) strengthening institutional and legal frameworks; (b) improving national disaster management plans; (c) enhancing coordination and information sharing; (d) promoting risk awareness among the population at large; (e) establishing multi-hazard early warning systems; and (f) cooperating at the regional level with a view to strengthening regional preparedness systems.



## ISDR

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### **Disaster risk reduction: an issue in the recent G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland**

The recent G8 Summit in Gleneagles specifically addressed the future of disaster risk reduction, and called for greater support for a more effective International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, with strong leadership from the United Nations. In calling for greater support for a more effective International Strategy, the leaders of the most industrialized countries have agreed to provide more resources to disaster reduction. You can find the communiqué of the Gleneagles summit on our website.

[www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2005/PostG8\\_Gleneagles\\_Tsunami.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/press-release/2005/PostG8_Gleneagles_Tsunami.pdf)

### **President Bill Clinton urged Governments to make progress on disaster risk reduction:**

President Bill Clinton, the UN Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery underlined the relevance of disaster risk reduction in his speech at the recent UN Economic and Social Council, on 14 July in New York. President Clinton recalled the importance of the Hyogo Framework and encouraged Governments and other stakeholders to make real progress on disaster risk reduction.

[www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/point-view/WJC-ECOSOC-transcript.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/media-room/point-view/WJC-ECOSOC-transcript.pdf)

### **Study Tour on National Tsunami Warning System Implementation for High Level Administrators Responsible for Tsunami Warning Activities:**

National experts from 26 Indian Ocean countries gathered in Tokyo and Hawaii in July for two Study tours organized by ISDR-PPEW and UNESCO-IOC. The study tours provided in-depth descriptions of the respective national systems, including visits to operation centers and tsunami-safe communities. During the tours, participants had the opportunity to discuss international coordination mechanisms and the new interim tsunami advisory information services provided by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and the Japan Meteorological Agency for the Indian Ocean implemented in April 2005.

### **ISDR events:**

- **Asian Conference on disaster reduction, Beijing, China 27-29 September**

The conference will be the first regional follow up of The Hyogo Framework for action in Asia after Kobe.

## Update on Funding

### Indian Ocean Earthquake-Tsunami Flash Appeal 2005: as of 22 August 2005

Donor	Contribution in US
Algeria	2,000,000
Australia	22,036,758
Azerbaijan	1,000,000
Belgium	6,279,899
Brunei Darussalam	3,658,537
Canada	42,149,097
China	20,349,980
Czech Republic	548,252
Denmark	15,476,621
ECHO (European Commission)	82,471,535
Equatorial Guinea	198,826
European Commission	18,995,929
Finland	19,861,558
France	17,159,926
Georgia	55,866
Germany	69,603,605
Greece	12,370,874
Guyana	50,000
Hungary	108,365
Iceland	480,194
Ireland	8,843,276
Israel	100,000
Italy	19,154,010
Jamaica	244,021
Japan	228,900,000
Kazakhstan	10,000
Korea, Republic of	5,000,000
Liechtenstein	106,549
Lithuania	133,414
Luxembourg	4,025,681
Madagascar	80,000
Mali	199,700
Mauritania	100,336
Mexico	4,900,000
Monaco	130,656
Netherlands	28,926,922
New Zealand	18,833,285
Niger	250,000

Nigeria	970,855
Norway	71,802,162
Palau	51,772
Poland	299,980
Portugal	2,788,475
Qatar	3,000,000
Romania	151,915
Russian Federation	22,000,000
Saudi Arabia	1,000,000
Senegal	198,560
Serbia and Montenegro	392,157
Slovakia	676,080
Slovenia	67,843
Spain	88,067
Sweden	25,494,755
Switzerland	4,820,602
Taiwan Province of China	250,000
Timor Leste	50,000
Trinidad and Tobago	1,933,176
Turkey	248,254
Tuvalu	10,000
United Arab Emirates	59,986
United Kingdom	73,477,070
United States	48,205,588
Allocations of unearmarked funds by UN agencies	5,397,551
Private	220,758,223
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,138,986,743</b>

### OCHA Emergency Grants

Since 1 June, OCHA has provided **Emergency grants** to the following countries which were affected by natural disasters:

1 June	Romania floods
14 June	Chile earthquake
20 June	Afghanistan floods
24 June	Kyrgyzstan floods
6 July	Tropical storm Dennis
15 July	Romania floods
12 August	Macedonia floods
19 August	Bulgaria floods

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More information can be found on Relief  
web, OCHA on line, and IRIN websites:

[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)  
<http://ochaonline.un.org>  
[www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

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