The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world, with frequently occurring natural disasters including earthquakes, tsunami, tropical storms, flooding, landslides and volcanic eruptions affecting millions of people every year.

Although countries in the region have developed varying capacities to reduce risk and respond to disasters, many communities are still vulnerable. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provides support to governments, the United Nations system and other partners in Asia-Pacific through a network of offices which collectively cover 35 UN member countries and an additional 16 countries and territories totaling over 3 billion people.

Mandated by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, OCHA aims to facilitate national disaster preparedness, advocate for policy change in favor of vulnerable communities, strengthen (UNMAS) agency coordination and capacity, and promote regional cooperation for enhanced emergency response.

Since 2000, the OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) has provided support and assistance in response to major emergencies (including the Pakistan earthquake, Indonesia (Yogyakarta & Padang earthquakes), Timor-Leste political unrest, Philippines typhoons (Ketsana & Haiyan) and the Solomon Islands tsunami).

ROAP ROAP is also working with key partners to support the implementation of the Cluster approach, roll out the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP), facilitate use of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), support Humanitarian Coordinators and build partnerships (including the Regional IASC Humanitarian Network).

OCHA ROAP offers a wide range of technical expertise including disaster response coordination, humanitarian reporting, funding mobilization, civil-military coordination, communication with communities, information management, public information and advocacy coordination. For more information on OCHA ROAP or to see more reports and maps, the office maintains a regionally-focused website (http://www.unocha.org/roap).

This map shows areas at risk from earthquake activity, volcanic eruptions, tropical storms and wave surge, according to established risk scales.

Earthquake intensity risk is shown using the Modified Mercalli Scale (MII). The areas shaded in dark red are at risk of experiencing more severe earthquakes than those shaded in lighter red. Pacific Islands and countries too small to be easily visible are represented by boxes giving an approximate level of risk based on data from Munich Reinsurance Company’s NATPRO system.

Tropical storm risk is taken from the Munich Reinsurance Company’s World Map of Natural Hazards. Those locations in shaded in dark blue are exposed to more severe storms than those shaded in lighter blue.

Volcanic risk is indicated by the location of Holocene volcanoes. These are volcanoes that have shown activity in the last 11,500 years according to the Smithsonian Institution’s Global Volcanism Program.

Wave surge risk is taken from the Munich Reinsurance Company’s Geo Risk Atlas and shows coastal areas vulnerable to tsunami and storm surge.

MAJOR NATURAL HAZARDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC