



NDYS in Action, Newsletter

Natural Disaster Youth Summit Monthly News

<http://ndys.jearn.jp/> ndys@jearn.jp

Vol # 34
May 31, 2009

The VOICE of YOUTH is NEEDED!

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction
What about aid agencies?

What about aid agencies?



Aid agencies are more accountable now than ten years ago, this was a necessary improving.

Aid agencies are far more accountable to disaster affected people than they were a decade ago, says the latest Humanitarian Accountability Report, but problems remain in transparency about interventions, communication with aid recipients, monitoring and reporting on sexual abuse and eliminating corruption.

Aid practitioners say there has been a change in mindset. "Recognition of the importance of accountability is the biggest system-wide shift," said Meri Ghorkmazyan, Emergencies Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser at Save the Children. "And the understanding that it goes beyond one person or department to take a commitment at all levels, including leaders, to champion it."

Numerous aid agencies have developed tools to improve their accountability to beneficiaries, say agency staff. More and more agencies have set up complaints-handling systems, and are putting accountability at the heart of project evaluations, which they increasingly make publicly available.

Particularly pertinent, said Ghorkmazyan, emergency-led accountability drives, such as the Myanmar Accountability and Learning Working Group (ALWG), or schemes in Pakistan, India and the Philippines to certify accountable NGOs. "The overall impression gained is of a widening and deepening of accountability within the humanitarian system during 2008," John Borton, author of the annual report, produced by the Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP-I).



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction
What about aid agencies?

In 2008 nine agencies became HAP-I members, bringing the total to 28; two became certified making five in all; and a further 14 enrolled in the certification scheme.

While many agencies are attempting to be more transparent about their operations, information often flows more freely upwards to donors, than downwards to beneficiaries, noted the report. "The Listening Project", an extensive consultation, with aid beneficiaries in 13 countries revealed confusion over who is responsible for what in aid delivery, particularly with international non-profits increasingly sub-contracting to local organizations. "People in recipient communities find this confusing and distancing – they often do not know who is really behind the assistance...and do not therefore know who to hold accountable or how to do so," the consultation said. Accountability and high-quality programming still does not necessarily determine an agency's financial success, said Stockton. "Instead, high quality professional marketing capacities play a huge part in the fortunes of major humanitarian agencies."

Separate reports by HAP-I and Save the Children revealed that much of the sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries – by aid workers, security forces, community members and others – goes unreported because of lack of information about where to report and fear of aid being cut. Though progress on joint monitoring has been slow, HAP-I member agencies are now discussing how to set up shared monitoring and reporting mechanisms on sexual exploitation and abuse, Ghorkmazyan said. On the whole, communities are speaking out more, said Tearfund's Bainbridge. "Good participation is the backbone of relief...Communities are requesting more information from aid agencies, and are learning to manage the international community better and keep them accountable for the commitments they make." In all field sites Tearfund now sets up signboards in the local language stating who they are, what they are doing and how to give feedback.

Save the Children increasingly charts beneficiary feedback, but acting on it can take time and it costs – factors that donors must take into account, Ghorkmazyan said. "We need to create more flexible communication systems [among] agencies, beneficiaries and donors to aid this process. HAP-I's message is spreading, partly evidenced by the number of accountability initiatives. Competition around accountability is a good thing, said Stockton. "I have no doubts about healthy competition. That's the way the market, when it's working with a degree of regulation around it, will be good for beneficiaries." The UN Refugee agency, UNHCR, has just undergone its first HAP-I accountability audit; and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) set up its own accountability drive in 2007. Three donors – Sweden, Denmark and the United Kingdom – are now associate members of HAP-I.

Increasingly accountability-evaluators are teaming up: Sphere, which outlines minimum standards in humanitarian programming, and People in Aid, which pushes accountability in human resources, are discussing ways to collaborate with HAP-I to create one-stop-shop accountability tools. But ultimately accountability will improve only if leaders across all organizations champion it, Bainbridge said. "We need a fundamental culture change from one where we have the resources and "do help to" [impose help on] people to one where we exist to serve and support those affected by disasters on their terms...this [change] needs to come from the top of an organization and be shared by all serving individuals."

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction
Climate change new studies.

Climate change new studies

Ronald Prinn, director of MIT's Center for Global Change Science, and his group have revised their model that shows how much hotter the Earth's climate will get in this century without substantial policy change. They obtained very interesting results, here is the resume.

The most comprehensive modeling yet carried out on the likelihood of how much hotter the Earth's climate will get in this century shows that without rapid and massive action, the problem will be about twice as severe as previously estimated six years ago - and could be even worse than that.

The study uses the MIT Integrated Global Systems Model, a detailed computer simulation of global economic activity and climate processes that has been developed and refined by the Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change since the early 1990s. The new research involved 400 runs of the model with each run using slight variations in input parameters, selected so that each run has about an equal probability of being correct based on present observations and knowledge.



Here is the team of the report. They will continue investigating till they can get more usual information. By now this has been an important beginning with hope of progress.

Other research groups have estimated the probabilities of various outcomes, based on variations in the physical response of the climate system itself. But the MIT model is the only one that interactively includes detailed treatment of possible changes in human activities as well - such as the degree of economic growth, with its associated energy use, in different countries.

Study co-author Ronald Prinn, the co-director of the Joint Program and director of MIT's Center for Global Change Science, says that, regarding global warming, it is important "to base our opinions and policies on the peer-reviewed science," he says. And in the peer-reviewed literature, the MIT model, unlike any other, looks in great detail at the effects of economic activity coupled with the effects of atmospheric, oceanic and biological systems. "In that sense, our work is unique," he says.

The new projections, published this month in the American Meteorological Society's Journal of Climate, indicate a median probability of surface warming of 5.2 degrees Celsius by 2100, with a 90% probability range of 3.5 to 7.4 degrees. This can be compared to a median projected increase in the 2003 study of just 2.4 degrees. The difference is caused by several factors rather than any single big change. Among these are improved economic modeling and newer economic data showing less chance of low emissions than had been projected in the earlier scenarios. Other changes include accounting for the past masking of underlying warming by the cooling induced by 20th century volcanoes, and for emissions of soot, which can add to the warming effect. In addition, measurements of deep ocean temperature rises, which enable estimates of how fast heat and carbon dioxide are removed from the atmosphere and transferred to the



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction
Climate change new studies.

ocean depths, imply lower transfer rates than previously estimated.

Prinn says these and a variety of other changes based on new measurements and new analyses changed the odds on what could be expected in this century in the "no policy" scenarios - that is, where there are no policies in place that specifically induce reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, the changes "unfortunately largely summed up all in the same direction," he says. "Overall, they stacked up so they caused more projected global warming."

While the outcomes in the "no policy" projections now look much worse than before, there is less change from previous work in the projected outcomes if strong policies are put in place now to drastically curb greenhouse gas emissions. Without action, "there is significantly more risk than we previously estimated," Prinn says. "This increases the urgency for significant policy action."

To illustrate the range of probabilities revealed by the 400 simulations, Prinn and the team produced a "roulette wheel" that reflects the latest relative odds of various levels of temperature rise. The wheel provides a very graphic representation of just how serious the potential climate impacts are.

"There's no way the world can or should take these risks," Prinn says. And the odds indicated by this modeling may actually understate the problem, because the model does not fully incorporate other positive feedbacks that can occur, for example, if increased temperatures caused a large-scale melting of permafrost in arctic regions and subsequent release of large quantities of methane, a very potent greenhouse gas. Including that feedback "is just going to make it worse," Prinn says.

The lead author of the paper describing the new projections is Andrei Sokolov, research scientist in the Joint Program. Other authors, besides Sokolov and Prinn, include Peter H. Stone, Chris E. Forest, Sergey Paltsev, Adam Schlosser, Stephanie Dutkiewicz, John Reilly, Marcus Sarofim, Chien Wang and Henry D. Jacoby, all of the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change, as well as Mort Webster of MIT's Engineering Systems Division and D. Kicklighter, B. Felzer and J. Melillo of the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole.

Prinn stresses that the computer models are built to match the known conditions, processes and past history of the relevant human and natural systems, and the researchers are therefore dependent on the accuracy of this current knowledge. Beyond this, "we do the research, and let the results fall where they may," he says. Since there are so many uncertainties, especially with regard to what human beings will choose to do and how large the climate response will be, "we don't pretend we can do it accurately. Instead, we do these 400 runs and look at the spread of the odds."

Because vehicles last for years, and buildings and powerplants last for decades, it is essential to start making major changes through adoption of significant national and international policies as soon as possible, Prinn says. "The least-cost option to lower the risk is to start now and steadily transform the global energy system over the coming decades to low or zero greenhouse gas-emitting technologies."

This work was supported in part by grants from the Office of Science of the U.S. Dept. of Energy, and by the industrial and foundation sponsors of the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change.

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics

Climate Change and disaster reduction
Yemen, seven months before.

Yemen, seven months before



Many IDPs are living with family members and others in NGO's rented places.

Among the victims of the [October 2008 floods](#) in southeastern Yemen who have received aid from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) are a marginalised community known as Akhdam ("servants").

About 100 Akhdam families (700 individuals) were among the most vulnerable people affected by the floods, according to Andrew Knight, UNHCR Yemen's external relations officer. They have received durable shelters from UNHCR.

The provision of such shelters for flood-victims in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah governorates, southeastern Yemen, began about seven months after the floods, which left 80 dead and 25,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), mostly in Hadhramaut Governorate, according to the government and a UN rapid assessment mission.

"The Akhdam were living in houses made of mud, sticks, stones, cardboard and plastic. But they were destroyed by the floods," said Knight and also that the 100 two-room shelters had been built away from the flood path. They had also been equipped with appropriate sanitation facilities. The project was funded by the Japanese government at a cost of US\$300,224 and implemented by a local NGO known as al-Dumir.

"The tragedy of the floods provided UNHCR with an opportunity to help and assist the people of Yemen in their hour of need which, in light of all the support that Yemenis have given to refugees over the years, is really the least the UNHCR can do," Knight said.

Knight said a few of the 25,000 IDPs were living in tents provided by UNHCR, but most were living either with their relatives or in accommodation rented by local NGOs. Funded by the Canadian government and implemented by Oxfam (UK), UNHCR has also begun a livestock project for flood victims in Hadhramaut, targeting 400 women heads of household in the most affected areas. Families were provided with cash grants to help them buy goats, according to Knight.

Meanwhile, government relief efforts are also under way: On 18 May some flood victims in Tarim District received government compensation payments. Abdul-Qader Baharoon, executive director of the government's reconstruction fund, said that around 1,800 new houses would be constructed in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah. Of these, 1,000 would be built by the United Arab Emirates, he said, adding that a further 5,270 houses would be repaired. According to an initial assessment by the World Bank, the floods in Hadhramaut and al-Mahrah caused US\$1 billion worth of damage.

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction
Information and its meaning.

Information and its meaning

Millions, possibly even billions of people will be affected by the impact of climate change, some reports say; gloomy ones tell you it is already happening, and more optimistic ones say it will happen by the end of the century.

"The numbers are scary but what does it mean to an ordinary person who is more concerned about the price of a loaf of bread?" asked Mike Shanahan, press officer for the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), who warned there was a "danger of all us drowning in the amount of information being produced."

As the next big UN climate change meeting, to be held in Copenhagen in December, draws closer, reports on the impact of climate change have been proliferating.



We receiving tons of news and get information from many ways, and the question is...How do we have to process it?

The media are supposed to turn these numbers, reports, predictions and projections into "meaningful information" for the people who will be affected by the unfolding impact of climate change.

The Geneva-based Global Humanitarian Forum in its climate change report, *The Anatomy of a Silent Crisis*, released on 29 May, attempts to do this: "The impact of climate change today affects 13 times the number injured in traffic accidents globally every year, and more people than the number of people who contract malaria annually."

The more reports produced on climate change, the better for creating awareness, argued Michael Rubinstein, head of media relations at the US-based think-tank, International Food Policy Research Institute. "Each report reinforces the message that there is a progressive drumbeat on the issue; that there is now a global consensus on the extent of the impact of climate change." He said this was particularly important because until recently there had been "false equivalency": reports tended to produce views from both sides of the climate change debate, from people who believed in it and those who did not. The steady flow of numbers on those likely to be affected, or the amount of money needed, reinforced the message that climate change was a reality, Rubinstein said. Several hundred reports and briefing papers have already been produced since the beginning of 2009.

Howard Cambridge, research associate at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), a Swedish research institute that produced more than 100 reports in the run-up to the UN climate change meeting in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008, said the ability to sift through reports to identify those based on original research - "the definitive texts" - had to be learnt.



Topics

Wisdom in the world on Disaster Reduction

Information and its meaning.

IIED and SEI have run workshops and courses to help those in the media disseminate scientific data. But is the message getting to the people out there, Shanahan asked. "I think most people tend to glaze over - how would they know what US\$50 million or \$50 billion is?"

He said there was a need for governments to run massive public awareness campaigns, similar to the ones about HIV/AIDS in the 1980s. "If that does not happen, I think people are going to think this will happen to people somewhere far away."



Comments: We can see the world's moving, conferences, reports...the truth is appearing, we just have to see it. Aid agencies play a very important role as you could read; the life of affected people depends in a high percentage on supplies and food given by them. So we note how important is to support and control them to make them more efficient.

Other thing to note is that there are many and many informs and many researches about the actual situation of the planet, so to summarize, we need to get the information but have to interpret it in the right form, because global warming will affect all of us and young people will be in charge of everything in a near future.

■ **For more information please contact** ■

ndys@jearn.jp <http://ndys.jearn.jp>

NDYS Committee Office: c/o JEARN Office / NGO support center/ Hyogo International Plaza 5-1, 1-chome,
Wakinohamakaigan-dori Chuo-ku, Kobe, Hyogo 651-0073, JAPAN



"Communication saves lives!"