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The VOICE of YOUTH is NEEDED!

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics
Disaster Reduction and Climate Change
Flash floods in Southern Africa.

Flash floods in Southern Africa

Southern Africa is expecting more rains into next week. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Malawi and Angola hve been facing storms since the past month and cholera cases increased up to 1,700 aproximately.

There is a river called Punge which is one the mjor river of Zimbabwe, is threatening people from Mozambique, who were displaced and their houses destroyed by flash floodings. The history of floodings in Mozambique tell us that in 2000 at least 800 people died and in 2008 more than 300,000 people were displaced.



People who live in coastal areas are the most vulnerable when the river banks threat to collapse.

Farms and homes in Malawi were damaged by floodings, and 2,000 families were displaced because the river banks collapsed. The loss of crops could aggravate existing food security concerns. The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee estimated in October last year that at least 1.5 million people could face food shortages into 2009.

The good news is that NGOs and aid agencies are collaborating to help communities and speed up reaction times. At the end of the actual situation, the affected people of Mozambique could be able to support themselves by working on income-generating programs.

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Many roads were obstructed and bridges are very dangerous to cross. Aid supplies have to be transported by helicopter to the remote areas.

On 4 January a terrible earthquake shocked people in Indonesia. This disaster devastated Papua province killing 4 people and destroying more than 6,000 houses, 70 schools and several hospitals. At least 10,000 people are staying in camps in Manokwari and Sorong districts, where people are in danger of diseases such as malaria and also fever and cough because of the harsh weather.

People still feel very scared further aftershocks and a tsunami is expected by them, following the quakes that measured 7.2 and 7.6 on the Richter scale on 4 January. They started leaving camps but there are some who think everything will get worst, so they don't want to leave.

Now some agencies are delivering aid supplies but some had not reached to all the survivors, especially those in more remote areas. Talking about the slow distribution process, agencies blame strong rains. The amount of u\$s 199,000 will be designated for the reconstruction efforts and relief. Also the Central Government will give u\$s 100.000 for the same cause.

Some aid groups like HOPE and World Vision had been distributing non-food items such as plastic sheeting. Oxfam is still doing the assessment and UN agencies have offered assistance to the government. The OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) head said the government had the capacity to handle the situation without international intervention.

It is kind of luck what these people had, because the tremors happened on Sunday, but nobody was working that day and also the low density of population is another factor that decreased the casualties.

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Good news for Nepal.

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There is a plan which is going to be executed with the intervention of the UN's International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) in April, which consists on testing earthquake response and improve coordination between local, international and regional search and rescue organizations.

INSARAG is a global network of more than 80 countries and disaster response organizations which deal with urban search and rescue related issues. The INSARAG exercise will take place in Kathmandu, which is considered to be one of the world's most at-risk cities. Government officials say they are involved in an active way with this plan.



The density of population and lack of preparedness are things to consider for having a successful plan.

The UN doesn't have doubts about investing on such exercise. Nepal will be the first country in its area to hold the exercise. This country has many things to improve, talking about disaster preparedness, because of its poor preparedness, weak structures and also because it is a seismically zone. These entire things make the place particularly vulnerable, according to what NSET (National Society for Earthquake Technology) said.

One of the first things to do is implement the country's National Strategy for Disaster Management, said expert Amod Dixit, an expert of the NSET. This society was frustrated by government inaction, but they believe the INSARAG exercise will help galvanize fresh government efforts to boost preparedness. But neither the UN nor the government would confirm whether the exercise would on the scale of the last one (in the Philippines in April 2008). That was the world's largest INSARAG exercise - with 18 countries 52 organizations and 270 individuals participating, according to OCHA.



Comments: I wish my best to the people of the south part of Africa, because they are suffering a lot with this situation, but I worry principally for kids. They will find peace in their homes.

I believe that people from Indonesia will defeat their fear and return to their homes, that maybe are not the same because of the disaster, but they will be strong enough to rebuild them.

I feel anxious to know more about the exercise of Nepal. I think this a great opportunity to show the world that natural disasters impact can be mitigated.

The last thing I want to say is that this is **the first year of Newsletter!** I want to thank the opportunity that IEARN gave us. I will continue working with my partners in this project so the entire world will know what is happening with itself.

■ **For more information please contact** ■

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