

# Improved Regional Cooperation in Disaster Management

ITU/ESCAP Workshop: Disaster Communications

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# ESCAP activities in Disaster Mgmt

- Supported the creation of the Mekong River Commission
- Co-founder of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones
- Working on GEF and other approaches to drylands and desertification.
- Promoting improved regional cooperative mechanisms in disaster management, including on floods and drought.
- Supporting human resources development through training & TC projects

# RESAP — Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

- Basis: 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Conferences (1994 & 1999) – 3<sup>rd</sup> MC is scheduled for Feb. 2007 in Kuala Lumpur
  - <http://www.unescap.org/icstd/SPACE/3MC> <= note the “upper case”
- RESAP I promoted awareness & training
- RESAP II has promoted networking toward improved regional cooperation mechanisms, & training
- RESAP has had several meetings/projects toward improved regional cooperation mechanisms in disaster management.
- June 2005 High Level EGM on Technical Options for Disaster Management Systems called for additional support on disaster management communications.
- Same EGM called for the development of “Standard Operating Procedures” in appropriate fields of DM
- ITU has compatible interests. **Thus we are here.**

# For Regional Cooperation

- Many aspects of disaster management are trans-border. Your neighbours may be able to provide valuable help in evaluating risk, mitigating, forecasting, developing and communicating early warnings, and responding to disasters.
- When an area is hit by a disaster, it becomes “least developed” even if it is the capital area of a “rich” country. Neighbours, who may be less affected, may be able to help even if they would normally be considered “poorer.”
- Some (arguably “all”) national disaster management authorities may be strengthened by the diverse peer review and support that can be offered by regional cooperation – even authorities in “rich” countries. Some NDMAs in small or developing economies may be unable to accomplish certain tasks anytime soon, without such regional cooperation/help.

# Background

- Many countries have national disaster management policies and programmes
- Most are partially complete, but may lack some components of
  - Risk assessment, including maps & discussions
  - Risk mitigation
  - Forecasting
  - Early warning generation, where possible
  - Early warning dissemination
  - Response
  - Human resources development
  - MDG: results-driven approaches

# Existing International Cooperation Mechanisms

- **Disaster Risk Assessment:** Many bilateral efforts have occurred toward capacity-building in disaster risk assessment, and in performing geographically and thematically limited assessments. An example is the Pacific Disaster Center. But these are largely technical – not policy-oriented or widely operational.
- **Disaster Risk Mitigation:** Similarly
- **Disaster Forecasting:** Weather-related: WMO, Typhoon Committee (SW Pacific), Panel on Tropical Cyclones (North Indian), Tropical Cyclone Committee (SW Pacific, SE Indian), Sentinel Asia, UNESCO/GLOSS, etc. Again, these are largely technical . .

# Existing International Cooperation Mechanisms

- **Disaster Early Warning Generation:** WMO & UNESCO/IOC, FDSN, IOTWS, “DART consortium”, etc.
- **Disaster Early Warning Communication:** Use of existing infrastructure, such as TELEX, fax, phone, email, secure military communication systems, GTS (WMO). But no “secure Internet”, or fully coordinated high-capability system.
- **Disaster Response:** IFRC, OCHA, International Charter: Space and Major Disasters; Inmarsat (satellite phones – ITU); Intelsat (deployable communication systems – ESCAP)
  - **Also Tampere Convention – but few countries are parties to this yet – why?**

# Regional Cooperation Mechanism

## Components to Success?

- **Policy:** Not “merely” technical developments and cooperation, but also “policy” development and cooperation are needed for sharing commonly beneficial systems, information, and services.
- **Institutional:** A regional institution, linked to national institutions for the common good.
- **Financial:** There needs to be a commitment for success. The United Nations is not a rich financier.
- **Development-Oriented**
- “Everyone a donor of diverse ideas”
- “Everyone a beneficiary of other’s ingenuity”



An example?

## ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee

- **Policy:** State of the TC, Rules of Procedure of the TC.
- **Institution:** Established in 1968 as the ECAFE/WMO Joint Unit on Typhoons. Originally assisted by UNDP, and located in BKK, transferred to Manila in 1971 in response to an invitation from the Philippines.
- **Finances:** Secretariat hosted by the Philippines. Sometimes staff were also seconded by Japan and RoKorea. Trust fund created with annual \$12,000 from each Member. There is also a Typhoon Committee Foundation, Inc., initially funded from a cash award in 1998 accompanying the Sasakawa/UNDRO Disaster Prevention Award.
- Every participant is a stakeholder in its success.

# Is it time?

- For a regional cooperative mechanism in disaster management communications?