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Photo: preventionweb.net

continue the process of establishing a Central Asian Regional Centre for response and risk reduction of emergencies. Furthermore it was agreed to cooperate on regional risk assessment, early warning information exchange and regional contingency planning. OCHA was requested to support a review of the agreement of 1998, which governs regional cooperation in the area of disaster management between four Central Asian nations, to ensure it is in accordance with current practice and thinking and possibly expand it to other interested nations.

More detailed information of the 2nd Session of the Global Platform can be found in the following website <http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/>

HIGH-LEVEL FORUM STRESSES NEED TO TACKLE RADIOACTIVE WASTE IN CENTRAL ASIA

A high-level forum organized by the UN Resident Coordinator for Kyrgyzstan wrapped up in Geneva on June 29 with the adoption of a joint declaration stressing the need to tackle the challenge of radioactive waste in Central Asia. The meeting brought together over 100 representatives from the region, international organizations, donors and others to discuss the problems associated with the uranium tailing deposits - left over from mining during the Cold War in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan - which contain more than 800 million tons of radioactive and toxic waste. These countries have not been able to deal with the problem adequately due to lack of resources and capacity. UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said the legacy of nuclear waste and related environmental management issues has a direct impact on human development in the region. Neal Walker,

REGIONAL NEWS

THE THIRD HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATION ON REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR DISASTER RESPONSE AND RISK REDUCTION IN CENTRAL ASIA TOOK PLACE IN GENEVA

OCHA participated in the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction which was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 15-19 June 2009. The Session with participants from approximately 300 organizations and governments concluded urging political leaders to implement measures to halve the number of deaths from natural hazard by 2015. OCHA co-organized with partner organizations a pre-session event on Central Asia cooperation. The Third High Level Consultation on Central Asia brought government officials together to develop partnerships and regional cooperation for disaster response and risk reduction. Deputy Ministers and senior officials participated at the meeting. A protocol on further cooperation in preparedness and response to disasters between Central Asian countries was signed by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It was agreed to

UNDP Resident Representative, said these tailings are not only highly toxic and dangerous to human health, but they are extremely vulnerable to, for examples, earthquakes or landslides, which could in turn contaminate nearby waterways. Among the outcomes of the forum were strengthening of regulatory frameworks and national capacity to address the problem, as well as a call for public-private partnerships to bring in investments and to explore opportunities to further exploit the tailings for economic gain.

WATER LEVELS IN NURAK AND TOKTOGUL IMPROVING



Photo: OCHA Almaty

Over the last two seasons, due to low inflow and a high utilization rate, water levels in two major hydro-power stations in Central Asia - Nurak (Tajikistan) and Toktogul (Kyrgyzstan) have been below normal, leading to energy shortages in both countries. During the February - June period of 2009 higher than normal precipitation has helped to bring water levels in Nurak above target and significantly narrow the gap in Toktogul (though water levels in this reservoir remain considerably below norm).

COUNTRY NEWS

TAJIKISTAN: SDC AND UNDP JOINTLY WITH THE COMMITTEE OF EMERGENCIES LAUNCH A PROJECT TO SUPPORT DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN TAJIKISTAN

A project agreement was signed on June 8, 2009 between the Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan and UNDP-Tajikistan to support the Committee of Emergencies. The overall budget of the two-year project amounts to USD 1.19 million, of which SDC and UNDP as main donors contribute

USD 572,000 and USD 600,000 respectively. This is the 3rd phase of the project "Capacity building of the Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES) and Civil Defence to reduce the risk of natural disasters in Tajikistan" that started in 2004. The project will be implemented by the UNDP Disaster Reduction Management Program and will focus on further support to the Information Management and Analytical network and the nationwide emergency management training system of the CoES, as well as supporting its Operations Departments in Dushanbe and in the regions and the Department of Protection of Population and Territories, uniting these four core components of the CoES into a harmonised and effective emergency management mechanism. The project also aims at mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into development initiatives. REACT network will be used as a coordination platform to bring together both state and non-governmental actors, active in DRR and development field. The project follows an integrated approach uniting the different Disaster Management stakeholders at different levels to tackle the issues of the whole Disaster Risk Management Cycle - from Prevention and Preparedness to Response and Recovery - to counter the challenges of disaster risk reduction in Tajikistan.

For more information please see <http://www.swisscoop.tj/>

CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATED FOR TURKMENISTAN

The OCHA Office in Almaty has supported the UNCT in Turkmenistan to update their inter-agency contingency plan. The Head of OCHA Office, Ms. Gabriella Waaijman further met with the Deputy Minister of Defence, who has been tasked to set up a new department for emergency response. The Deputy-Minister requested further information on response standards, policies and guidelines. In this respect, Ms. Waaijman discussed the possibility of an UNDAC preparedness mission and has provided further information on this support mechanism.

DUSHANBE HOSTED REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR SEISMIC RISK REDUCTION ON JULY 9-11

On July 9-11, Dushanbe hosted experts and government representatives from Central Asian and other countries to discuss seismic risk reduction. The organizers of the conference include the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat for Central Asia. Dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Hoit earthquake, the conference aimed to discuss the existing problems in the field of seismic risk reduction in Central Asia and proposed concrete steps to address them based on existing best practices. It also discussed proposals on how to improve regional cooperation and the role of state institutions responsible for disaster

management in the sphere of seismic safety. To this effect, the conference developed a "road map" representing a list of proposed projects/programs/initiatives for the coming few years. Participants included national government representatives from the Central Asian countries, leading experts and representatives from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) as well as international organizations such as International Commission for High Dams (IGOLD), UNDP, other UN agencies, international and local NGO's active in this field.

REGIONAL NEWS FROM PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON "THE STUDY ON EARTHQUAKE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FOR ALMATY CITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN", ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN



Photo: alatoday.info

On June 11 Almaty hosted an international seminar "The Study on Earthquake Disaster Risk Management for Almaty city", where Japanese experts shared experiences with Kazakh counterparts how to prepare for a large scale earthquake. The seminar aimed at the development of an earthquake management plan at local communities (schools, enterprises and institutions). Over the past year, Japanese experts studied the seismic situation in the city, its houses, soil, water pipelines and gas-distributing systems. Following the study they devised a plan of quake risk management and a forecast of damage in case of a large scale earthquake. The Japanese government earmarked US \$2 ml for these studies. The JICA research group stated that a situation similar to the Verny earthquake, which destroyed the city more than a century ago, is most dangerous for Almaty. "The suggested earthquake intensity in Almaty in line with the Verny model is around 7.4 on the Richter scale. An earthquake of that magnitude, they calculated, could lead to the collapse of some 10% of the buildings, some 25,000 casualties and more than 30,000 wounded. According to the research, houses from reed fiber mats and brick houses with wooden boards are least earthquake resistant, whereas monolithic multistorey buildings are most resistant.

The Japanese experts indicated that Almaty has 9,000 high-rise apartment buildings that house almost 1.2 million people and 74,000 private houses with 260,000 people. Meanwhile, 33,000 wood buildings can catch fire in case of a natural disaster.

Special observances and events

11 July World Population Day
18-19 August Regional contingency planning exercise for complex emergency scenario, Almaty, Kazakhstan
19 August World Humanitarian Day

- International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)
- Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (2001-2010)
- Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)
- International Decade for Action: Water for Life (2005-2015)
- Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions (relating to the Chernobyl disaster) (2006-2016)
- Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)
- United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)

Useful Links

<http://www.ocha.kz>

<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009>

<http://www.swisscoop.tj>