

NTS Bulletin September 2012

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NTS VIEWPOINT

Disaster preparedness: Still lacking in ASEAN?

By Gianna Gayle H. Amul

Apart from being prone to seasonal floods and storms, most ASEAN member states straddle the Pacific Ring of Fire, an area susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. However, compared to the relentless onslaught of natural calamities in the region, the development of ASEAN's disaster mitigation mechanisms has been sluggish, if not long overdue.

Over the past year alone, ASEAN countries have reeled from multiple natural disasters – floods and drought in Thailand, monsoon floods in Myanmar, monsoon floods and typhoons in Vietnam and the Philippines, as well as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and flash floods in Indonesia.

In August, floods caused by monsoon rains followed by two typhoons brought Manila to a standstill, affecting more than 3 million people. In Indonesia, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake rocked Sulawesi island, isolating victims as landslides blocked land transportation routes in the mountainous areas. Downed communication lines made evacuation, rescue and even damage assessment difficult. Affected villages were further devastated by flash floods not long after the earthquake.

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) was thus a welcome initiative. However, progress was initially slow. The AADMER entered into force only in 2009 – six years after it was signed. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), part of the AADMER's stipulations, was finally launched in 2011.

Recent developments, however, give cause for cautious optimism. The AHA Centre, which serves as the coordination, mobilisation and resource hub for disaster-affected areas, currently maintains the ASEAN Disaster Information network, an interactive, community-based platform supplying situation updates on disasters in the region. It also set up a Disaster Monitoring and Response System in April this year.

With natural disasters raising concerns about adequate shelter, food and basic healthcare for affected and displaced communities, the AHA Centre's performance in developing ASEAN's strategies and actions for disaster risk and response management needs to be stepped up.

In this regard, learning the critical value of collaboration on disaster management among ASEAN, national governments and international humanitarian agencies is not enough. A legal framework is being negotiated by ASEAN's defence ministers and its dialogue partners to allow the region to efficiently use the pooled resources of their security sectors for regional disaster risk and response management. The AHA Centre must be the focal point of this framework.

The AHA Centre could also promote greater community-level resiliency through adaptation mechanisms such as innovations in financing, architecture and engineering technology. It could harness social media to disseminate information, as well as raise awareness, on disaster preparedness mechanisms such as early warning and monitoring systems. This is where public-private partnerships can be valuable in furthering the objectives of the AHA Centre.

Overall, then, while developments such as the AADMER and the AHA Centre suggest that ASEAN is on track to becoming more strategic in preparing for disasters, the region still has a long, challenging route ahead when it comes to enhancing the region's capacity for disaster preparedness, response and management.

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Additional Info:

- 'China, ASEAN, US offer sympathies, aid to monsoon flood victims', *GMA*, 8 August 2012.
- 'Vietnam hosts regional meeting on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief', *Xinhua*, 8 August 2012.
- 'Asian storms leave hundreds dead, millions displaced', *Environment News Service*, 13 August 2012.
- 'New storm hits north Philippines; at least 2 dead', *AP*, 15 August 2012.
- 'Architects offer solutions for Thailand disasters', *ASEANAffairs*, 19 August 2012
- Mari, Abdy, 'Search for Indonesian quake victims hampered', *AP*, 20 August 2012.
- 'Philippines sets up climate change fund', *AFP*, 21 August 2012.
- 'Helicopters drop emergency supplies for Indonesian quake victims', *BNO News*, 22 August 2012.
- Sangadji, Ruslan, 'Central Sulawesi hit by major flooding', *The Jakarta Post*, 27 August 2012.

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CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS



News & Commentaries

- Goldberg, Tasha, 'Reflections of Rio+20: Being there and looking back while seeing a way forward', *International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Commentary*, August 2012.
- 'Global film fest on disaster risk reduction', *IBN Live*, 4 August 2012.
- 'Asia's booming cities must go green or risk disaster – ADB study', Press release, *Asian Development Bank*, 15 August 2012.
- Kinver, Mark, 'Asian nations "face greatest natural disaster risk"', *BBC*, 15 August 2012.
- 'In-depth: Gathering storm – The humanitarian impact of climate change', *IRIN*, 20 August 2012.
- See, Sharon, 'IMH spearheads programme for disaster-prone communities in Asia', *Channel NewsAsia*, 22 August 2012.
- 'Second typhoon to hit storm-ravaged North and South Korea', *Guardian*, 29 August 2012.
- Pramudatama, Rabby, 'Govt agencies to meet, settle mining disputes', *The Jakarta Post*, 30 August 2012.

Selected Publications

- Ewing, J. Jackson and Tarun Gopalakrishnan, 2012, 'Rio 20+ Incorporated? Assessing diplomatic outcomes and private sector actions on sustainable development', *NTS Insight*, August, Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.

This article builds on the earlier May 2012 *NTS Alert* entitled 'Back to the future: Is Rio+20 a 1992 redux or is there cause for optimism?' that highlights the value of non-state channels in climate change negotiations. The article argues that the private sector is emerging as a significant driver of innovation and action on sustainability, but notes that caution is warranted due to the varied motivations of private sector actors.

- Zhang, Qingfeng and Robert Crooks, 2012, *Toward an environmentally sustainable future: Country environmental analysis of the People's Republic of China*, Mandaluyong City: Asian Development Bank.

This report highlights China's progress over the past five years on environmental issues such as water pollution, water scarcity and solid waste. Proposed solutions for dealing with the country's environmental issues include a green taxation system, monetary and legal reforms as well as a national regulatory framework whereby the government or private sector would bear the costs of providing ecological services for households, communities or local governments.

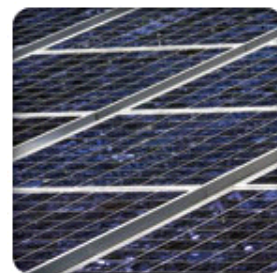
- Dinshaw, Ayesha, Aarjan Dixit and Heather McGray, 2012, *Information for climate change adaptation: Lessons and needs in South Asia*, Working paper, Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

Governments, businesses and citizens in South Asia all need access to good information to make decisions. It is argued, however, that uncertainties relating to potential climate change impacts and vulnerabilities make the 'adaptation information agenda' unclear. Avenues for further research are identified and discussed.

Events & Announcements

- 'ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Forum 2012: Biodiversity and Regional Green Development', 17–18 September 2012, Beijing, China.
- 'ASEAN, ASEAN Plus Three and East Asia Summit ministerial meetings on the environment', 24–28 September 2012, Bangkok,

ENERGY AND HUMAN SECURITY



News & Commentaries

- Winterbottom, Jo, 'Off-grid power shines in India solar village', *Reuters*, 1 August 2012.
- Mills, Robin, 'Why India's blackout illuminates the path to energy security', *The National*, 7 August 2012.
- Kakuchi, Suvendrini, 'Activists score in fight against nuclear power', *IPS*, 9 August 2012.
- Yergin, Daniel, 'Innovation, diversification, cooperation vital to energy security', *The Asahi Shimbun*, 12 August 2012.
- Viboonchart, Nalin and Rupert Han, 'Asia's real power struggle', *Bangkok Post*, 14 August 2012.
- Changplayngam, Pisit and Khettiya Jittapong, 'Work restarts at Xayaburi dam in Laos – Project leader', *Reuters*, 16 August 2012.
- Dahl, Fredrik, 'IAEA sees strong interest in nuclear power despite Fukushima', *Reuters*, 16 August 2012.
- 'China's energy use down 2% in 2011', *China Daily*, 17 August 2012.
- Evora, Robert A., 'Mindoro wind farm dwarfs Ilocos plant', *Manila Standard Today*, 20 August 2012.
- Remo, Amy R., 'Difficult road ahead for renewable energy sector', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 20 August 2012.
- Sreeraman, Hermant, '(South China) Sea of problems: A question of energy security', *Foreign Policy Journal*, 22 August 2012.
- Daiss, Tim, 'China's strategic petroleum reserves become an oil game changer', *Energy Tribune*, 28 August 2012.

Selected Publications

- Basrur, Rajesh and Koh Swee Lean Collin (eds), 2012, *Nuclear power and energy security in Asia*, London and New York: Routledge.

This book brings together both advocates and critics of nuclear power, with a focus on the economic, environmental and security implications of harnessing nuclear energy in Asia in light of increasing demands for energy and the rising economic and environmental costs of traditional energy sources. It also looks at engaging civil society in the politics of nuclear energy and on the prospects for nuclear energy in the post-Fukushima era.

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), 2012, *IAEA Annual Report 2011*, Vienna.

This report provides an overview of the IAEA programmes and activities that address nuclear technology-related challenges such as energy security; human health and food security; water resources management; and nuclear safety and non-proliferation. The report also details the agency's response to the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

- Tazaki, Makiko and Yusuke Kuno, 2012, 'The contribution of multilateral nuclear approaches (MNAs) to the sustainability of nuclear energy', *Sustainability*, Vol. 4, No. 9, pp. 1755–75.

This article reviews proposals for multilateral nuclear approaches (MNAs) that had been made from the 1940s to the present, and offers a set of criteria on sustainable nuclear energy use that could be applied to new MNAs. It highlights nuclear non-proliferation and assurance of supply as the most critical and challenging of those criteria, followed by access to technology, multilateral involvement, sites of MNA facilities, legal arrangements, political and public acceptance, economics, nuclear safety, nuclear liability, transportation and geopolitics.

Events & Announcements

- 'Conference on Renewable Energy – Policy, Regulation, Technology and Finance', 25–26 September, Mumbai, India.
- 'Renewable Energy World Asia 2012', 3–5 October 2012, Bangkok, Thailand.
- 'Singapore International Energy Week', 22–25 October 2012, Singapore.

FOOD AND HEALTH SECURITY



News & Commentaries

- Marchal, Nahéma, 'Zimbabwe food shortages could leave 1.6 million in need of aid in 2013', *Guardian*, 1 August 2012.
- Horton, Amy, 'We are teetering on the brink of another global food crisis', *Guardian*, 2 August 2012.
- 'OPT: Is greater food security an illusion?', *IRIN*, 2 August 2012.
- 'Food: How bad is the crisis?', *IRIN*, 16 August 2012.
- Islam, Syful, 'Bangladesh to trial weather index-based crop insurance', *AlertNet*, 21 August 2012.
- Fan, Shenggen, 'How to secure food for the world', *China Daily*, 22 August 2012.
- Sarmiento, Prime, 'Climate change "may boost South-east Asian agriculture"', *SciDev.Net*, 24 August 2012.
- Vidal, John, 'Food shortages could force world into vegetarianism, warn scientists', *Guardian*, 26 August 2012.
- Gopal, Priyamvada, 'Turning vegetarian will not solve the food crisis', *Guardian*, 28 August 2012.

Selected Publications

- Linn, Johannes F. (ed.), 2012, *Scaling up in agriculture, rural development, and nutrition*, Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

This collection of policy briefs outlines developments and setbacks in efforts to scale up development interventions in agriculture, rural development, and nutrition. 'Scaling up' refers to expansion, replication and adaptation efforts to improve productivity and address food insecurity and poverty. The publication also provides lessons for the future under the broad headings of rural community engagement, the importance of value chains, the intricacies of scaling up nutrition interventions, the lessons learned from institutional approaches, and the experience of international aid donors.

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), 2012, *The state of world fisheries and aquaculture – 2012*, Rome: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department.

This annual publication gives an overview of the environmental and economic challenges faced by fisheries and the aquaculture sector. The 2012 edition outlines strategies to address these challenges, which threaten not only the sustainability of the fisheries and aquaculture industries, but also the food security of millions who rely on fish and other seafood for nourishment. The report examines a wide range of concerns including the mainstreaming of gender issues in fisheries and aquaculture, disaster preparedness, and food safety.

Events & Announcements

- 'Near East Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Food Security and Nutrition', 17–18 September 2012, Khartoum, Sudan.
- '1st Regional Conference on Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Utilization (RAC-1)', 25–27 September 2012, Langkawi, Malaysia.

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INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT



News & Commentaries

- 'Thailand mulls curfew in unrest hotspots: Minister', *AFP*, 1 August 2012.
- 'Bangladesh orders charities to stop aid to Rohingyas', *BBC*, 2 August 2012.
- Tran, Mark, 'Cambodian soldiers accused of land rights abuse in Prey Trolach forest', *Guardian*, 3 August 2012.
- 'Serious human rights challenges remain in Myanmar, says UN expert', *UN News Centre*, 5 August 2012.
- Dewi, Sita W. and Yohanna Ririhena, 'ASEAN reiterates commitments to community, peacebuilding', *The Jakarta Post*, 9 August 2012.
- 'UN agencies concerned about Australia refugee plan', *Reuters*, 17 August 2012.
- Fuller, Thomas, 'Myanmar to curb censorship of media', *The New York Times*, 20 August 2012.
- 'Australia to increase refugee intake to 20,000 annually', *BBC*, 23 August 2012.
- Yardley, Jim, 'Export powerhouse feels pangs of labor strife', *The New York Times*, 23 August 2012.

Selected Publications

- Abiew, Francis Kofi, 2012, 'Humanitarian action under fire: Reflections on the role of NGOs in conflict and post-conflict situations', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 203–16.

This article argues that the politicisation of humanitarian action by Western governments has contributed to increasing attacks on humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A return to traditional principles of humanitarianism, that is, neutrality, impartiality and independence, is necessary as it separates humanitarian action from political agendas and thus protects NGOs.

- Kyaw, Yin Hlaing, 2012, 'Understanding recent political changes in Myanmar', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 197–216.

The recent political changes in Myanmar are a result of shifts in the internal power structure of the government and pressure from domestic economic problems. Positive international response and the cooperation of the opposition camp have also led to the reform process moving forward. However, there are still many uncertainties over political reforms, such as the division between the government and the opposition over how reforms should be paced.

Events & Announcements

- 'International Day of Peace', 21 September 2012.
- 'Advanced Course on Crisis, Recovery And Transitions', 16–23 November 2012, Beijing, China.

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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

News & Commentaries

- Vulliamy, Ed, 'Global banks are the financial services wing of the drug cartels', *Guardian*, 21 July 2012.
- Hummel, Peter, 'Kidneys on special offer', *Deutsche Welle*, 31 July 2012.
- 'China, Malaysia ink agreement on transnational crime crackdown', *Xinhua*, 2 August 2012.
- 'Millionaires unveil Pakistan's artefact smuggling secrets', *AFP*, 9 August 2012.
- Kirkpatrick, Melanie, 'North Korea: Human traffickers and the Chinese market for brides', *The Daily Beast*, 20 August 2012.
- Francisco, Rosemarie, 'Special report: Philippines' black market is China's golden connection', *Reuters*, 22 August 2012.
- 'Uzbekistan & Kyrgyzstan: Smugglers own the night', *Eurasianet*, 22 August 2012.
- 'Singapore, Vietnam to sign new transnational crime cooperation agreement', *Channel NewsAsia*, 27 August 2012.
- Bowman, Andrew, 'Scratching out Africa's counterfeit medicines', *Financial Times*, 28 August 2012.



Selected Publications

- Quayson, Ato and Antonela Arhin (eds), 2012, *Labour migration, human trafficking and multinational corporations: The commodification of illicit flows*, London and New York: Routledge.

Although much of the literature on human trafficking focuses on the sex trade, a great deal of such trafficking involves migrant workers compelled to seek better life opportunities abroad, especially in agriculture, construction and domestic work. This volume addresses issues of labour exploitation in relation to these migrant workers. It also looks at the extent to which large multinational corporations are involved, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in human trafficking.

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2012, *Migrant smuggling in Asia: A thematic review of literature*, Bangkok.

This review aims to identify gaps in what is known about the smuggling of migrants around and from outside Asia. It observes that the available literature on irregular migration only contributes in a limited way to increasing the understanding of migrant smuggling, largely due to a lack of clarity on terminology. It further notes that migrant smuggling has not attracted a critical amount of attention within the research community and that accurate data on the extent of migrant smuggling either rarely exists or cannot be accessed by researchers.

Events & Announcements

- 'Transitioning to Transparency: Advancing Financial Integrity in the Middle East and North Africa', 17–18 October 2012, Tunis, Tunisia.
- 'U.S. Department of Defense Cyber Crime Conference 2013', 29 January – 1 February 2013, Louisville, KY, USA.

WATER SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Deen, Thalif, 'Human right to water and sanitation remains a political mirage', *IPS*, 1 August 2012.
- 'Prepare to face shocks', *IRIN*, 1 August 2012.
- Wickham, Chris, 'World over-using underground water reserves for agriculture', *Reuters*, 10 August 2012.
- Lian, Ruby and Fayen Wong, 'China's coal expansion may spark water crisis – Greenpeace', *Reuters*, 14 August 2012.
- Posel, Susanne, 'The groundwater footprint: The privatization of the world's water resources', *GlobalResearch*, 14 August 2012.
- Crow, Ben, 'Harnessing South Asia's rivers', *thethirdpole.net*, 15 August 2012.
- Bhattacharjee, R.B., 'Restart the water talks on a fresh slate', *The Edge Malaysia*, 16 August 2012.
- Mollins, Julie, 'Experts mull global system to monitor water resources', *AlertNet*, 16 August 2012.
- Kelly, Rachel, 'Sustainable water solutions provide investment opportunities: Experts', *Channel NewsAsia*, 17 August 2012.
- Thu Hai, 'Canal bounces back from pollution', *Viet Nam News*, 20 August 2012.
- 'UN food agency launches water management framework to combat food insecurity', *UN News Centre*, 27 August 2012.



Selected Publications

- Lindström, Andreas and Jakob Granit, 2012, *Large-scale water storage in the water, energy and food nexus: Perspectives on benefits, risks and best practices*, SIWI Paper No. 21, Stockholm: Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

This paper looks at a variety of large-scale water storage schemes and explores the risks and trade-offs involved. It analyses the potential benefits for agricultural and energy production, as well as for water supply and economic development; and assesses the environmental and social impacts. It also discusses best practices, and identifies trends, such as the growth of cities and rising demand for renewable energy, that would create opportunities for the development of large-scale water storage facilities.

- Jägerskorg, Anders and Torkil Jønch Clausen (eds), 2012, *Feeding a thirsty world: Challenges and opportunities for a water and food secure future*, Report No. 31, Stockholm: Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

This report reviews links between water and food security as part of the thematic scope of the 2012 World Water Week. It provides insights into new research, perspectives and approaches on food and water security challenges. Issues covered include water and food linkages, gender aspects of agricultural water management, food waste, water consumption, early warning systems for water in agriculture, and the land-food-water nexus of land acquisitions.

Events & Announcements

- 'International Waters Science Conference 2012', 24–26 September 2012, Bangkok, Thailand.
- 'National Conference on Water Crisis Management under Changing Climate', 16–17 November 2012, Bhubaneswar, India.

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The Centre for NTS Studies, based in the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Climate Change, Food Security, Energy Security, Health Security, as well as Internal and Cross Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

The Centre is the Coordinator of the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership (2012–2015) supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. It also serves as the Secretariat of the initiative.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for its three-year Asia Security Initiative (2009–2012), to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific. It is

also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia).

More information on the Centre can be found at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts.

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