

NEW DISASTER STATISTICS STANDARDS SET FOR ASIA-PACIFIC



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- More than 1.2 million people have died in disasters in Asia-Pacific
- The expert group includes statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts
- Common standards aim to improve policymaking, programming, monitoring, reporting

[MANILA] The UN has launched a new initiative setting common standards for “timely, reliable and comparable” disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific, the region most prone in the world to natural disasters.

The Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific has established “core principles”

for a common basic range of statistics to enable countries in the region to better monitor targets and benchmark progress in terms of disaster risk management.

The standards are expected to be instrumental in the aggregation and analysis of disaster-related statistics at the regional and global levels to monitor and evaluate progress against targets in the post-2015 development agenda.

In Asia and the Pacific, more than 1.2 million people lost their lives in natural disasters in the past three decades.

Kilaparti Ramakrishna, director of the East and North-East Asia Office of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) says: “With climate change, the frequency and severity of extreme weather events are expected to rise. This means, there is a tremendous need for better disaster risk management for society and the environment.”

Last September, countries in the region established the expert group composed of statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to develop a common set of disaster-related statistics. The group held its first meeting on 27-29 October in Sendai, Japan.

“The absence of standards makes it difficult for countries to capture disaster information systematically, accurately and consistently across areas, sectors and over time,” Puji Pujiono, head of the UN ESCAP’s Disaster Risk Reduction Section, tells SciDev.Net.

He says the expert group agreed on key statistical elements such as the definition, criteria and classification of disaster events; what constitute the direct impacts of disasters, including the concept of “affected people” and how to account for damages in both physical and monetary values; and the basic procedures and responsibilities relating to data collection, analysis and reporting.

“A more systematic standard on statistics is expected to facilitate more meaningful conversations between disaster risk management and the rest of the development sectors in the context of policy making, programming, monitoring and reporting,” Pujiono adds.

Source : <http://www.scidev.net/asia-pacific/data/news/new-disaster-statistics-standards-set-for-asia-pacific.html>