



CRED CRUNCH

“Disaster Data: A Balanced Perspective”

September 2006

Natural disasters in the first semester of 2006: Summary

	2006 1 st Semester	1996-2005 1 st semester average
No. of disasters	174	155
No. of countries affected	68	75
No. of people killed	9,273	27,389
No. of people affected	28 million	139 million
Economic damages (US\$)	6.2 billion	15.2 billion

South-East Asia once again topped the list of disaster impacts over the first 6 months of 2006, with 85% of worldwide deaths from natural disaster over this period occurring in South-East Asia.

An interesting point to note about the first semester of 2006 is the significant number of recorded flood disasters, with a total of 113 floods representing all-time high of 65% of all natural disasters. The first semester average for the preceding 10 years was of 58 floods, representing an average of only 36.5% of all natural disasters. In fact, floods constitute an increasingly large proportion of all disasters recorded in the EM-DAT database over the last 50 years.

Greater variations in precipitation due to climate change, together with an increase in the vulnerability of populations, highlights the need to shift our emphasis from disaster response to risk management.

Among extreme events, floods increasingly affect the livelihoods of rural people, setting back improvements in development in these areas by years. The upside of this situation is that floods are one of the disasters most amenable to prevention and mitigation. Time tested engineering techniques, many of which are low cost mechanisms and culturally appropriate, exist.

This is an issue that the disaster and development community can tackle. We hope that our warning calls will be picked up by the agencies most competent to address the prevention and mitigation of floods.

Dr. Debarati Guha-Sapir
Director

Top 10 natural disasters - first semester of 2006

By the number of people reported killed

Disaster	Month	Country	No. of people Killed
Earthquake	May	Indonesia	5,778
Landslide	February	Philippines	1,112
Windstorm	May	Vietnam	241
Flood	June	Indonesia	236
Flood	January	Colombia	150
Flood	May/June	Thailand	116
Flood	May/June	China	104
Heat Wave	May	Pakistan	84
Landslide	January	Indonesia	75
Earthquake	March	Iran	63

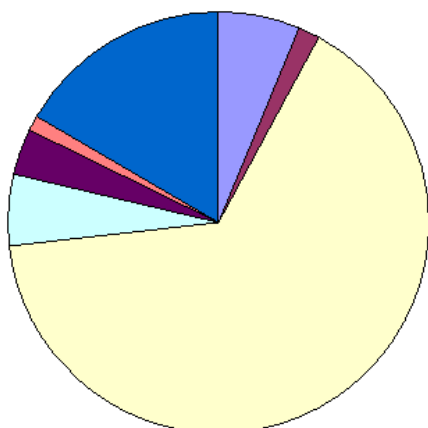
By the number of people reported affected

Disaster	Month	Country	No. of people Affected
Flood	May/June	China	12 million
Flood	June	China	4.1 million
Earthquake	May	Indonesia	3.2 million
Flood	June	China	2.4 million
Flood	June	China	1.4 million
Windstorm	May	China	905,000
Flood	June	Bangladesh	500,000
Windstorm	June	Philippines	476,027
Flood	May	China	350,000
Flood	May/June	Thailand	342,895

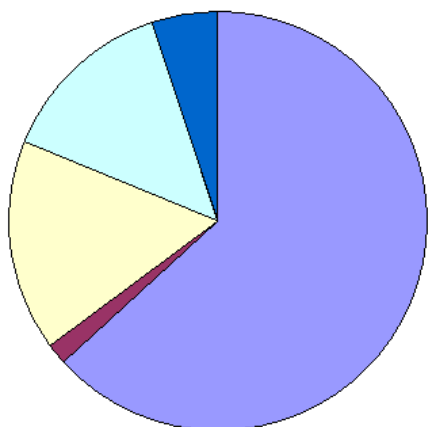
By estimated economic damages

Disaster	Month	Country	Economic damages (US\$)
Earthquake	May	Indonesia	3.1 billion
Flood	May/June	China	957 million
Windstorm	June	Philippines	645 million
Flood	April	U.S.A.	259 million
Windstorm	March	Australia	200 million
Flood	January	Guyana	165 million
Flood	June	China	130 million
Flood	June	Russia	125 million
Flood	June	Taiwan	116 million
Flood	April	China	100 million

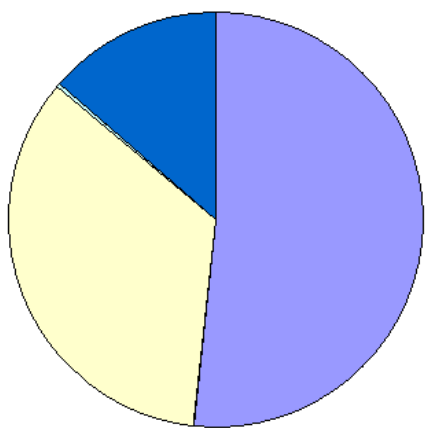
**Occurrence by disaster-type
First semester of 2006**



**Mortality by disaster-type
First semester of 2006**



**Economic damages by disaster-type
First semester of 2006**



Disaster data: An essential component to understanding risk

Development and response agencies have long recognized the importance of disaster planning and preparation in protecting vulnerable populations from the effects of natural disasters.

The systematic collection of information related to the frequency and impact of disasters provides an invaluable tool to governments and institutions in charge relief and recovery activities, for the analysis of the cumulative impacts on development, and for the integration of risk analyses in disaster reduction initiatives.

As shown below, the desired evolution and use of disaster datasets is divided into three stages:

Stage I, during which data is compiled to assess losses, with the objectives being limited to relief, recovery and reconstruction.

Stage II, during which historical losses are systematically collected and detailed data compilation occurs within disaster management agencies. At this stage, the loss databases document cumulative losses to development and help assess impacts on poverty.

Stage III is reached when disaster datasets are included institutionally within the Disaster Risk Reduction national initiatives. Data analyses allow for the assessment of risks, hazard exposure and vulnerabilities that can then be used for contingency planning, risk reduction and risk transfer.

Though a number of national or regional disaster databases exist, very few of them have a transparent and systematic approach, and are fully integrated within the institutional disaster-risk reduction initiatives.

There is an urgent need for governments and other policy-makers to embrace institutional and legislative systems for disaster reduction, including the methodical collection of data on disaster occurrence and impacts.

A list of existing disaster databases is available through our website: <http://www.em-dat.net/links/disasterdbs.html>

CRED News

- Expert consultation on "**Improving Outcome Research on Mental Health and Psychosocial Programs in Post-Disaster and (Post-)Conflict Settings**", October 26 & 27, 2006 – Bangkok.

- A new **Regional Disaster Information Management System (RE-DAT)** provides resources on disaster management and prevention in South and Southeast Asia (www.cred.be/redat).

Please note that disaster data are subject to change as validation and cross-referencing of the sources is undertaken and as new information becomes available. For any enquiries, please contact cred-crunch@em-dat.net