

Mercy Global Concern: Briefing Paper June 2009

Risk and Poverty in a Changing World.

The working group on Poverty and Climate Change are using this document in preparation for the High Level Dialogue to be held at the UN in October 2009.

The Document has several key findings.

Developments efforts are increasingly at risk. A faltering global economy, food and energy insecurity, conflict, global climate change, declining ecosystems, extreme poverty and the threat of epidemics seriously challenge progress toward improving social welfare and economic growth in many developing countries.

In 2008, the deaths of approximately 140,000 people in Myanmar cyclone and the collapse of more than five million buildings and damage to 21 million more in the China earthquakes were stark reminders that disaster risks associated with tropical cyclones, floods, earthquakes, droughts and other natural hazards are a key part of this interlocked set of threats.

The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction focuses attention on that challenge. It identifies disaster risk, analyses its causes, shows that these causes can be addressed and recommends the need to do so. The overriding message of the Report is that reducing disaster can also help in reducing poverty, safeguarding development and adapting to climate change, with beneficial effects on broader global security, stability and sustainability. Given the urgency posed by Climate Change, the Report forcefully argues the case for taking action NOW.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

- Global Disaster risk is highly concentrated in poorer countries with weaker governance. Particularly in low and middle-income countries with rapid economic growth, the exposure of people and assets to natural hazards is growing at a faster rate than risk-reducing capacities are being strengthened, leading to increasing disaster risk.
- Countries with small vulnerable economies, such as small-island developing states and land-locked developing countries, have the highest economic vulnerability to natural hazards.
- Most disaster mortality and asset destruction is intensively concentrated in very small areas exposed to infrequent but extreme hazards. Damage to housing, local infrastructure, crops and livestock, which interrupts and erodes livelihoods, is extensively spread within many countries.
- Poorer communities suffer a disproportionate share of disaster loss. Poor households are usually less resilient to loss and are rarely covered by insurance and disaster loss.

- Weather related disaster risk is expanding rapidly in terms of territories affected, the losses reported and the frequency of events.
- Progress towards reducing disaster risk is mixed. A failure to address the underlying drivers will result in dramatic increases in disaster risk and associated poverty outcomes. In contrast, if addressing these drivers is given priority, risk can be reduced, human development protected and adaptation to climate change facilitated. Rather than a cost, this should be seen as an investment.

To access full Report go to

[www.Risk and Poverty in a changing tomorrow.](#)