

Changing International trends in disasters and the role of Christian agencies

Global Connections

October 2014

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Purpose

- To encourage discussion on the best way to address the increasing intensity and frequency of natural and man-made disasters
- Zero draft for other agencies to comment on and help evolve
- Leading to a collective position to inform and influence disaster response

Content

- Tearfund's theological perspective
- Trends in natural disaster & conflict
- Trends of disaster response
- Highlight significance of changes to Christian agencies
- Highlight vital contributions of Christian agencies

Link between Integral Mission and Disasters

- Seeking to restore relationships between God, humanity and the world, is the work of the church in contributing to the positive physical, spiritual, economic, psychological & social transformation of people.
- Integral mission is answering God's call to love one another, in every way we can.
- Our proclamation has social consequences... & our social involvement has evangelistic consequences

Tearfund's response to disasters includes:

- Disaster response, risk reduction, climate change adaptation and conflict prevention

Because:

- Disasters keep millions trapped in poverty
- People's disaster vulnerability results from injustice, oppression and the degradation of creation,
- All things which Scripture calls us to remedy.

Key Principle 1: Created for worship

- As Christians we believe that humans, along with the rest of creation, are created to worship God. Worship and intimacy develop our expression of the image of God in us and transform the way we live in the world.

Key Principle 2: Restoration of relationships

- We believe that as Christians we are called to be part of God's restorative work in the world; restoring 3 key relationships: 1) between God and humankind, 2) between humankind itself (across race, gender, language, ability etc) and 3) humankind with the rest of creation.

Key Principle 3: Care of Creation

- Humans are unique in our call to be stewards of creation. The way we live and treat creation impacts all people, including ourselves, and we are called to care for it, as a part of our expression of God's image in us.

Key Principle 4: Knowing God through serving the poor

- Practical love for our neighbours is one of the ways in which we come to know God better: if we do not love our neighbour in practice, we are missing out on knowing God in full.

Analysis of trends & approaches

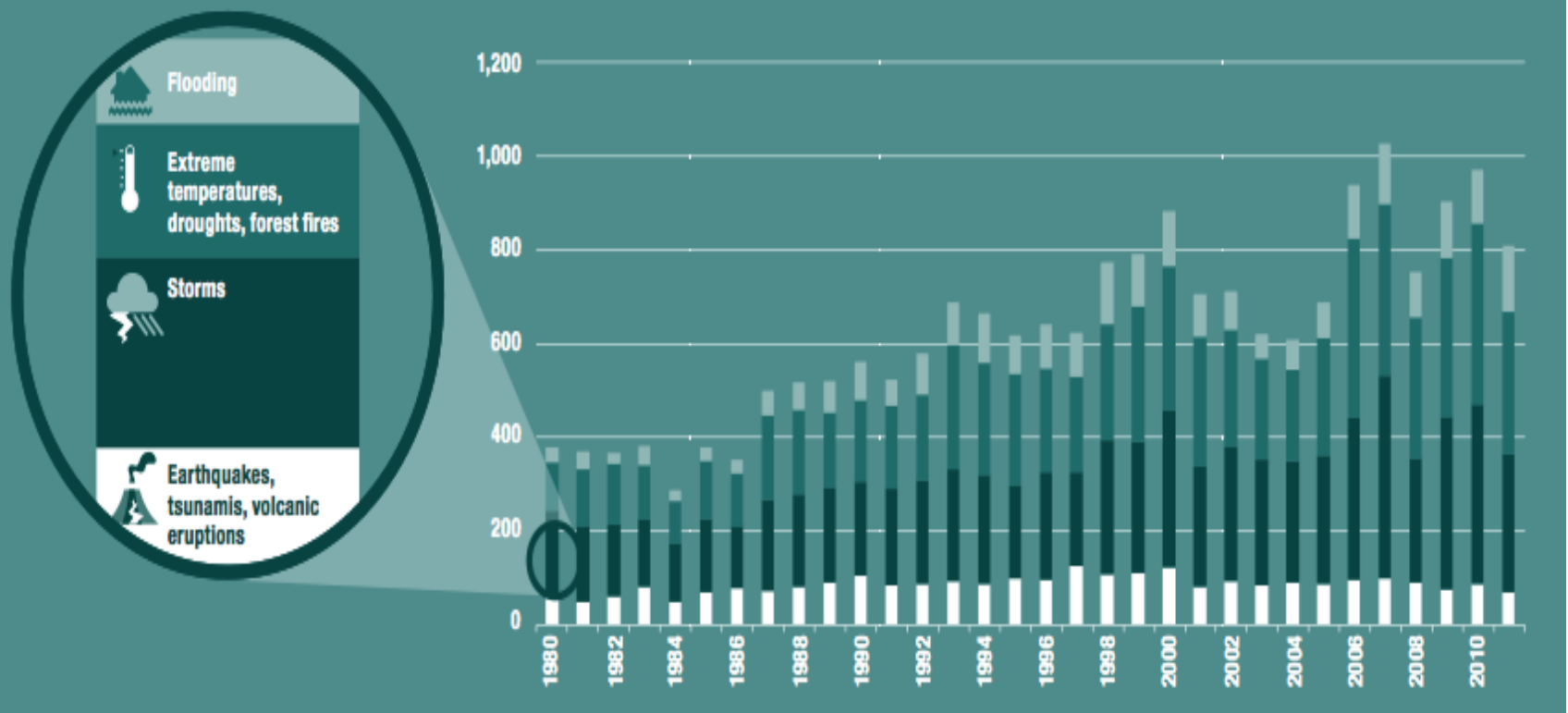
CHANGING TRENDS – THE NEW NORM?

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The number, intensity and complexity of natural disasters is on the increase

The impacts of climate-related disasters are increasing¹²⁷

Trends in types of disaster event, 1980–2011



Those most affected by disasters are the world's poorest.

The poorest suffer disproportionately from disasters



NEPAL 1993

GDP PER CAPITA \$608

The homes of poor people were more than

5 times

as likely to wash away as the homes of the rich; those whose homes were swept away were 57 times more likely to die.⁴⁴



THE PHILIPPINES, LUZON
TYPHOON 2004

The majority of the

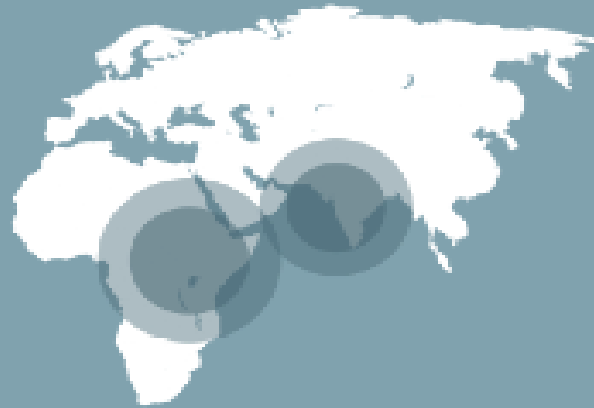
1,000 people

who died in landslides and floods were formerly lowlands farmers, who had migrated to high-risk land to secure livelihoods.⁴⁵

Millions live in poverty and with disaster risk

Up to 325m

extremely poor people will be living in the 49 most hazard-prone countries in 2030, the majority in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.³⁷



Some of the countries with the highest hazard risks also have the largest numbers of people living below the

\$1.25 -a-day threshold.³⁸

Developing countries compared to rich ones:

4 times
the population.

150 times
more likely to be affected
by disaster.³⁹

Vulnerability to hazards increasing, from conflict, climate change, urbanisation & population density, migration, food insecurity & food price spikes.

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Poverty expected to become increasingly concentrated in fragile & conflict-affected states.

Conflict & fragility increase impact of natural disasters & natural disasters exacerbate pre-existing conflicts.

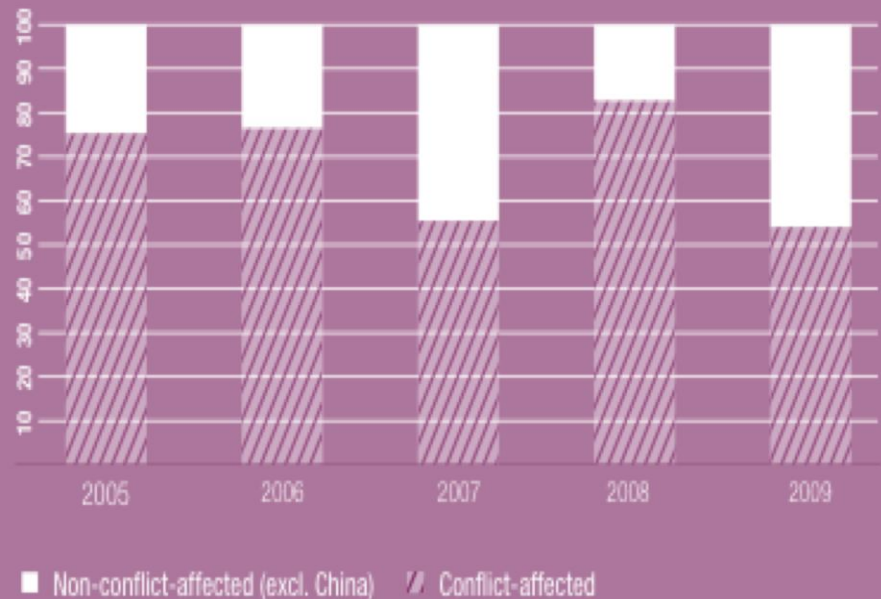
Many disasters occur in fragile and conflict-affected states, accounting for a high proportion of disaster-affected populations each year¹²⁹

50%

Between 2005 and 2009, more than 50% of people impacted by natural hazard-related disasters lived in fragile and conflict-affected states.

80%

In some years the figure was more than 80%.



Climate related disaster vulnerability increasing & likely to be felt most in fragile & conflict-affected states.

Future projections show that climate-related disaster vulnerability will be felt most in fragile and conflict-affected states¹³³

The latest IPCC report tells us that:



The future will almost certainly see an increase in climate-related disasters.



Countries experiencing conflict or governance difficulties are least likely to be able to support communities to manage vulnerability to climate impacts or adapt to climate change.¹³⁴



Poorly designed risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation strategies can increase the risk of conflict.¹³⁵

Governments & agencies still prefer to spend their money on response rather than risk reduction, including preparedness, prevention & mitigation

Evidence consistently shows that investing in DRM saves lives and money in the long run

FINANCE



MASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

The \$3 billion that China spent on combating floods between 1960 and 2000 is estimated to have averted economic losses of about \$12 billion.¹⁹



LOCALISED POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

An integrated water management and flood protection scheme for Semarang (Indonesia) reduced both direct and indirect impacts, saving an estimated \$45 million.²⁰



MULTI-HAZARD RISK REDUCTION

In the US, investment of \$3.5 billion to reduce the risk of disaster from floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes in the decade from 1993 to 2003 had a net benefit of \$14 billion.²¹

Stressors increase vulnerability

- Conflict & fragility
- Climate change
- Migration
- Population growth
- Urbanisation
- Food insecurity

SHIFTING OF POWER – THE CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT

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- **Greater sovereignty exercised by nation states =less interventions, harder to gain access and legitimacy**
- **New power-holders in International development sphere – China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, the Gulf states**
- **New partners changing the nature of NGO relationships with developing countries and respective governments.**

- **Donor governments cutting Overseas Development Aid & expecting more evidence of impact & cost-effectiveness.**
- **Private sector is partner for long-term development & disaster response.**
- **New technologies, media and social media playing an ever-developing role in disasters.**

FROM DISASTER TO DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RESILIENCE?

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Resilience is the ability to deal with **shocks**, **stresses** and **uncertainty**.

Shock examples:

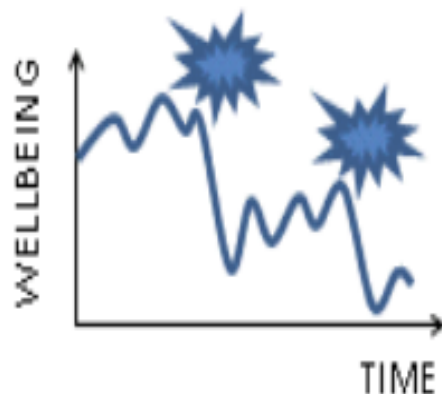
- Earthquake
- Drought
- Armed violence
- Food price spike
- Disease outbreak

Stress examples:

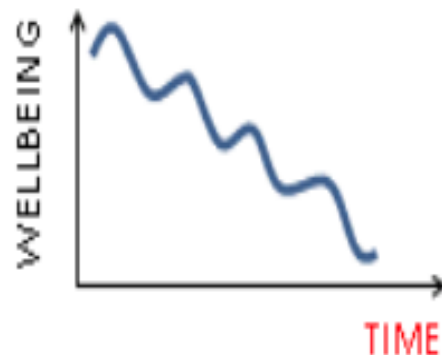
- Climate change
- Increasing soil salinity
- HIV
- Gradual food-price rise
- Chronic malnutrition

Uncertainty examples:

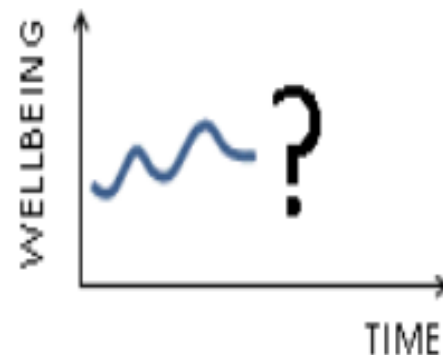
- Unforeseen changes and disruptions
- Unpredictable impacts of known shocks and stresses



Shocks cause sudden, steep drops in wellbeing.



Stresses cause a steady, difficult-to-reverse decline in wellbeing.



Uncertainty causes plans to fail and requires people to adapt rapidly to unforeseen changes.

What resilience actions look like

- strengthening early warning systems that lead to timely action (e.g. evacuation, sale of livestock, early provision of relief);
- raising plinths in villages with high flood risk;
- multi-purpose cyclone shelters and climate resilient crops;
- providing people with regular cash and food transfers that are not affected by a shock but can actually expand at times of disaster thus protecting the asset base of a household in a time of shock;
- disaster risk reduction education in schools and school safety plans.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN AGENCIES IN RESILIENCE, RESPONSE AND RISK REDUCTION

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- **Spiritual and emotional concerns part of resilience & can contribute to long-term transformational change.**
- **Resilience more likely to be achieved if disaster work recognises value of personal transformation.**

Strengths of the church & Christian agencies

- Long-established, representative of communities & able to respond fast
- Long term accompaniment/presence leading to longer lasting changes
- Local people = experts in local experience & context
- Living the gospel, not just preaching it.

Conclusions

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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Conflict and Fragility

- Recognise that conflict has a permanent dynamic in disaster management, requiring an increased competence in varied analysis methods, such as political economy analysis, risk assessment, conflict sensitivity and peace building.
- Share and model the message of forgiveness and non-violence in situations of conflict, modelling the call to love our enemies even in the midst of their conflict with us.
- Keep governments and authorities accountable for their treatment and policies regarding the poor and marginalised.

Resilience with emphasis on Risk Reduction and Climate Change

- Recognise the vulnerabilities of affected communities and work with them to identify strengths and capacities to increase their resilience, especially at times of disaster.
- Focus spending and programming on prevention, preparedness and mitigation, in the name of resilience, over response. This includes integrated Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation work.
- Recognise people's emotional and spiritual needs are key to their resilience and the churches' role in providing pastoral, prayerful contributions to personal and communal well-being.

- Use assets of church; church buildings, community centres, schools, social networks, methods of mass communication, volunteers for risk reduction & preparedness.
- Recognise software assets of church: trusted relationships, respect & authority in the community, pastoral & emotional support, prayer & spiritual guidance.
- Represent case of most vulnerable to responsible authorities.
- Teach & act on the theology of creation care as part of Christian calling with church leaders setting an example.

Partnership

- Establish new partnerships with private sector and affected country governments.
- Recognise changing partnership environment & create models & systems that can adapt to the ever-changing context.
- Reaffirm value of partnership with local groups & individuals as experts in their own experience & well-placed first responders and
- Find ways to reconcile such relationships with partnership with the private sector & new donor governments.

- Use churches' position in civil society to influence local governance & its representation of the needs of the most marginalised; mobilising others for protection of the poor.
- Work more with local networks & national level NGOs to help reduce risk of disaster for the most vulnerable

Join in the discussion...

- How can traditional missional or Christian relief and development agencies respond to the new norms of conflict, climate change, population growth, etc?
- Which of the ‘new norms’ in the context of disasters are hardest for Christian agencies to adapt to and why? Can you think of helpful ways forward?
- What are new ways we need to collaborate with and equip the church to respond to disasters and their effect on the most vulnerable.