Yerevan 2013
CONFERENCE
3·4 DECEMBER

PUBLIC AWARENESS

AS A CORNERSTONE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

THE ONE IS INFORMED, IS PROTECTED

WE ARE NEXT TO YOU
AT YOUR HARDEST MOMENTS

MINISTRY OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS OF ARMENIA

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ԱՌՆԱՊ
ARNAP
DRR NATIONAL PLATFORM

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EMERGENCY CHANNEL

OCHA

PPRD east

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

unicef

РОСГОССТРАХ
ROSGOSSTRAKH ARMENIA

VIVAcell MTS

ELITE GROUP

Oxfam

World Health Organization

Save the Children.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

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Towards the 25th anniversary of Spitak earthquake, Ministry of Emergency Situations of RA and "Emergency Channel" informative NGO within the framework of DRR National Platform of Armenia organized a 2-day International Conference on "Public Awareness as a Cornerstone for Disaster Risk Reduction", which was held on December 3-4, 2013 in Yerevan.

Head of EU Delegation to Armenia Traian Hristea, RA ES Minister Armen Yeritsyan, Deputy Director of OCHA Rudolph Müller, Deputy Director of RA MES Nikolay Grigoryan

OFFICIALS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INFORMATION RESPONSIBLE AND JOURNALISTS FOR RESILIENT PLANET EARTH

Towards the 25th anniversary of Spitak earthquake, Ministry of Emergency Situations of RA and "Emergency Channel" informative NGO within the framework of DRR National Platform of Armenia organized a 2-day International Conference on "Public Awareness as a Cornerstone for Disaster Risk Reduction", which was held on December 3-4, 2013 in Yerevan.

The aim of the conference was to bring together the world best practices and established values in the field of emergency communications and to discuss further developments.

The conference was participated by involved state officials, international organizations (UN OCHA, UN various agencies, NATO, European Union (EU), OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent(IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross(ICRC), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), OXFAM, Armenian Red Cross society, World Health Organization(WHO), etc.), experts from various countries (USA, Russia, Japan, Sweden, UK, Iran), information responsibles, well-known journalists with experience working in disaster zones, representatives from the world biggest information agencies (BBC, Reuters).

Armen Yeritsyan,
RA ES Minister

The conference began with welcoming remarks by **RA ES Minister Armen Yeritsyan:**
- Numerous analyzes have been done after the Spitak earthquake, many lessons have been learned, but we all know that there were earthquakes in this land and still will be. In 1988, 137 countries of the world were on our side and I would like to take this opportunity once again to express our gratitude to all those, who lent helping hand to us. Thanks to “Emergency Channel” for its activities. There are no large and small countries for disaster risk reduc-tion, there is information that should be available to everyone.

By ES Minister's suggestion, the participants of the conference kept one minute's silence in remembrance of the Spitak earthquake victims, after that Minister Armen Yeritsyan awarded the Deputy Director of OCHA's Coordination and Response Division, Geneva, Rudolph Müller and Lieutenant Governor of Kansas Dr. Jeff Colyer with medals “Valiant Rescuer” for active participation in rescue operations during the earthquake in Spitak, on the 7th of December, in 1988.

The conference participants were also welcomed by **Deputy Director of OCHA's Coordination and Response Division Geneva, Rudolph Müller:**
- I would like to express my sincere gratitude both for the award and for the invitation. This is a very important event, because if it is possible to say, Spitak earthquake changed the world. Many lessons have been derived, under governance of UN Office, Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams were established. These are the two key mechanisms, whose main task is to raise the readiness of the response forces, as well as the promotion of cooperation and coordination.

In his speech, the **Head of EU Delegation to Armenia Traian Hristea** mainly mentioned:

“Most of disasters overtook people, but all of them realize that prevention and preparedness can reduce the loss. Of course, there will be less damage, if timely and reliable information is provided. It is not accidental, that EU Humanitarian Office has opened its first branch in this region. I am sure that with the help of “Emergency Channel” this conference will achieve its goals.

We are well aware that emergency information should be free and precise, operational and objective, neutral, impartial and complete, concrete and polite, trustworthy, reliable, human and humane

Deputy director of R/S, Major-General **Nikolay Grigoryan** presented the conference agenda, the goals and key lessons learned from the earthquake in Spitak.
-The first and the main lesson, that I learned from the earthquake in Spitak, was the problem of awareness, people did not know how to protect themselves from the simplest everyday cases, let alone natural disasters and man-made accident. After long debates and thoughts, the major case- purpose of my life was formed - to inform people about the hazards and code of conduct to protect themselves from threats, to help them to be aware of positive thinking (mindset), kindness, compassion and the most irresistible force, to be psychologically ready to overcome all kinds of difficulties, to have endurance, will, to be able to smile through tears, to have the ability of giving light and warmth to the surrounding and about the space boomerang. No international organization was interested in running public awareness, only humanitarian aid was shown. But today there is no international organization that will not be engaged in emergency situations, in DRR public awareness. The Ministry of Emergency Situations is also a leader in this sphere. It conducts an open, transparent and proactive media policy. We do not expect that we were asked, we don't hide to be sought. The information received in the Crisis Management Center is immediately processed and posted on MES website, and is delivered to all media e-mail addresses. We are well aware that emergency information should be free and precise, operational and objective, neutral, impartial and complete, concrete and polite, trustworthy, reliable, human and humane". .

The reports presented at the conference summarized the best practices and knowledge of the international humanitarian organizations, various emergency response agencies, information experts.
Lieutenant Governor of Kansas, Dr. Jeff Colyer, who took part in rescue works in 1988 in Spitak earthquake, as a doctor, read the message of Kansas Senate, on the 25-year anniversary of the earthquake in Spitak. In his speech the Lieutenant Governor told about his and his colleagues' experience, which had crucial importance in their outlook, further activities, international, American and particularly in the development and improvement of emergency situations management planning in Kansas state, making to think about such issues, which previously had not been given any importance. - Seeing Armenian people's will and contrivance, I began to harbor a deep respect for Armenian people, -noted Dr. Colyer. .
Civil expert of NATO Civil Protection Group, Ian Cameron, who had also worked at BBC agency for many years, spoke about NATO information policy and guidelines, the peculiarities of provision of information about disasters, the role of mass media and the latest technologies in providing information, particularly the application of social networking. Public awareness new creative solutions and tools, new information technologies were presented by EU PPRD East Program, Communication expert Volodymyr Kuznietsov. During his speech a video-clip and a video- film was shown about conduct operations during fire and earthquake, information and other educational materialswere also been presented.

Dr. Jeff Colyer,
Lieutenant Governor of Kansas

The Japan representative had a special surprise for the participants- he presented his report on natural disasters prevention of his country in Armenian.
During the conference a documentary film “Living with earthquakes” prepared by “Emergency Channel” was shown. During the working days of the Conference, there were also presented reports about RF MES modern information technologies used for public awareness, UK civil-military coordination in emergency situations, information policy and guidelines, safety culture, the challenge of communicating risks to the public, as well as journalistic code of ethics. Summing up the works, the participants of the conference presentedrecommendations on further development of HFA 3rd priority.

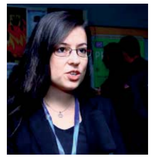
Parallel to the conference, in the neighbor hall, Thomas Reuters Foundation and “Emergency Channel” had organized a 5-day workshop on “Crisis and emergency situations elucidation”, which was attended by journalists from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Chechnya. The workshop organized by Reuters' specialists was intended for journalists elucidating emergency situations and aimed to improve ES elucidation capacity, as well as to identify existing problems and possible ways to solve them.

SOME OF THE GUESTS SHARED THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE

Rudolf Müller,
Deputy Director OCHA Geneva

-The conference was very interesting, not only from the point of view of meeting interesting people and communicating with them, but also for important and urgent topic. Here is a summary of 25 years of experience, and public awareness is one of the important components of disaster management. It was double pleasure for me to come here, because the first time I was in Armenia during the earthquake in Spitak. I was here as a deputy commander of the Austrian rescue squad and participated in rescue operations. Of course, there are many memories associated with it. Especially impressive was the Armenian people's devotion and unity. A group of students were working with us, who were performing the role of interpreters and helping to communicate with local residents. There were truck drivers, who were working in a dairy plant, but they had left everything, they came and tried to help us. We managed to escape 14 people, but unfortunately, many victims were taken out from the ruins.

While searching, I found a woman in the building ruins. I came back to the camp and brought rescuers. The woman had not been damaged almost, but she was under several bulk concrete panels. She was pregnant. We suffered for about 5-6 hours, to help her to come out from the ruins. Just at that time her baby was born…. The woman was rescued, but the child was, alas, no ... After that, anyway, her husband looked for me, found me, came to hug me and to thank me for saving his wife's life. I had also been a witness of my colleagues' excitement and tears, when an ambulance doctor, who had seen much in his life, could not hold back emotions after each salvation story. Many analyzes have been done, but perhaps the main conclusion is that we must be aware and prepared, and assistance will be timely and coordinated.



Marieta Koleva,
Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection(ECHO)

- I am glad to have been invited to participate in this conference, because in my opinion this is a very impressive event. For me, the main result is to unite the representatives of international organizations and experts in one place and get acquainted with each other's experience and achievements. This is exactly what the European Commission is trying to do, to unite countries and promote cooperation. .

Sergey Anagnosti,
EU program "Prevention, preparedness and response to man-made and natural disasters" PPRD East Program Team Leader

-It's great honor for us to participate in this conference, though the occasion is the tragedy, that took place 25 years ago, and due to it the Armenian people gained experience in a very hard way. From the point of view of our program, I can say, that it was entirely consistent with the goals of our program and completed all, that ES Ministry and the "Emergency Channel" Information Center do. Once again thank you for the invitation, we heard a lot of interesting reports, met interesting people, and I am sure, that our cooperation with MES will be continuous and more effective.

Volodymyr Kuznietsov,
EU "Prevention, Preparedness and Response to man-made and natural Disasters", PPRD East Program, Communication expert:

-I attach great importance to this event and think it's a significant event for all participating countries. I think, that the conference served its purpose, raised a number of issues associated with public awareness, exchange of experience were done and necessary connections between different countries were established, which enabled the best and most effective ways to carry out public awareness. I think tremendous work has been done to orga-nize the conference and confidently I consider it a success. I also highly appreciate the "Emergency Channel" Information Center noble activities.

Ian Cameron,
NATO Civil Protection Group(CPG), Civil Expert:

-Here, I heard a very interesting phrase: "Armenia has got over 2000 years of historical disasters archive, but a very short memory". This is probably true for many countries. Often we reveal the lessons, but we don't rep them. Similar conferences are able to change people's mind-set and behavior. During the conference, I had watched an interesting film about earthquakes, which taught people how to act before and after the earthquake. It was interesting to learn, that a person had 12 seconds to do any protective step. Informing people in advance, we can make them be better protected.

Lieutenant Colonel James Culp,
Kansas National Guard:

-The conference was very effective, as it provided a good environment for interaction and learning, combining experience of different countries. It once again proved the saying: "Who is aware, he is protected", which proves the biblical story of Noah's ark.
From the experience of my country, I can say that, for instance, in 2007 a strong tornado passed through one of Kansas cities, but only 10 became victims of the tornado, because people were informed in advance about the approaching tornado and were aware of how to protect themselves.

Hiroki Kanda,
representative from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies:

-I am glad that I had opportunity to introduce Japan's disaster risk reduction practices. Due to this event, I obtained new skills and experience, that will represent my country. I'd like also to mention about the high professionalism, competence and goodwill of the staff working in the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

SUMMING UP THE WORKS, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE PRESENTED RECOMMENDATIONS ON FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF HFA 3RD PRIORITY.

“Information of emergency situations has vital importance since people must be aware of hazards and risks around them, what are doing governmental bodies, what kind of plans and programs they have. And finally, people have to know what they must do, how to behave during emergency situations. In this case, accurate, full and on time information prevents panic and chaos, saves lives and promotes trustful dialogue with society.”

Armen Yeritsyan,
Minister of Emergency Situations, RA

APPEAL AND MOTTO OF THE CONFERENCE

If there was awareness in Babylon…

Officials, international organizations, information practitioners and journalists for resilient planet Earth.

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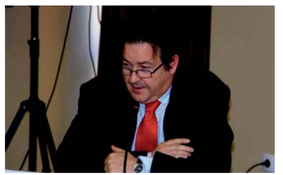
TOPICS DISCUSSED:

1. Emergency and crisis information management guidelines of inter-governmental and international organizations;
2. Public awareness new creative solutions and tools: disaster risk reduction public awareness and social networks, and new information technologies;
3. World-known journalist's memories, impressions and suggestions;
4. Safety culture and kids: kids as main target group;
5. Experiences, suggestions and recommendations on information exchange from emergency response agencies, risk reduction experts and journalists



RESULTS:

- Reports and materials presented during the conference, as well as photo and video materials will be published in one package;
- An “emergency” network of journalists and specialists to be created. The network will be used for forums, discussions, exchange of opinions and ideas, experience and expertise;
- Emergency web portal to be created to collect information on emergency management and public awareness best programs and initiatives (for example national plans, guidelines, and video-audio-electronic materials);
- Suggestions for further work based on the analysis and experiences of experts.

THE CONFERENCE CONFIRMS THE OUTSTANDING ROLE OF PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Key messages of the Conference:

- Accurate information is the cornerstone of effective management of emergency situations.
- Information about emergency situations is for first pages and reports.
- Information during emergency situations is like a food. It must be given on time and in proper portion.
- A lack of information can be quickly filled with rumours and misinformation.
- In emergency situations people may respond to different beliefs and rumours and not always to the official information from Government bodies. It is necessary to gain the trust of population.
- Emergency information can save lives and health, neutralize negative impact on territories and panic.

THE CONFERENCE CONFIRMS ITS DEDICATION TO THE OBJECTIVE AND PRIORITIES OF THE HYOGO FRAMEWORK OF ACTION: BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES (2005-2015).

- Taking into account the importance of international cooperation andpartnerships, each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable developmentand for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection ofpeople on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters.

At the same time, in the context of increasing global interdependence, concertedinternational cooperation and an enabling international environment are required tostimulate and contribute to developing the knowledge, capacities and motivation needed to reduce risks of disaters at all levels;

- An integrated, multi-hazard approach to disaster risk reduction should befactored into policies, planning and programming related to sustainable development, relief,rehabilitation, and recovery activities in post-disaster and post-conflict situations indisaster-prone countries.

THE CONFERENCE UNDERLINED THAT INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION COOPERATION MUST BE EXPANDED THROUGH FOLLOWING:

- Transmission of disaster risk reduction experience, knowledge and technologies to help build capacities in-country.
- Exchange research results, lessons learnt and best practice.
- Collect data (for example on loss and damages) which helps to assess risks and inform on development policies to reduce risks of disasters.
- Identify hazards and vulnerability – physical, social, economical and environmental. Make steps for and plan for both a short-term and a long-term perspective.
- Reducing disater risk and building resilience is an investment in the future. For example, investing in risk assessments and early warning systems actually saves and protects lives, property and livelihoods. Such investments in the end save on the costs of disaster response and recovery.

THE CONFERENCE OUTCOMES DIRECTLY CONNECTS TO THE THE SECOND (”IDENTIFY, ASSESS, AND MONITOR DISASTER RISKS AND ENHANCE EARLY WARNING”) AND THIRD (“USE KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION, AND EDUCATION TO BUILD A CULTURE OF SAFETY AND RESILIENCE AT ALL LEVELS”) OF THEHYOGO FRAMEWORK OF ACTION. THE CONFERENCE ALSO WELCOMES THE CONSULTATIONS TOWARDS A NEW POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION.
THE AIM OF THE CONFERENCE WAS TO DEVELOP A VISION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF EFFECTIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.
THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE TO MEET THIS AIM:

- Use national risk atlas and databases to inform communities and to take disaster prevention measures and to develop local emergency response planning.
- Share and disseminate best practice and experience in terms of communicating with population.
- Activate works for using new technologies and new solutions/early warning systems, use of mobile phone and others.
- Involve NGOs in public awareness activities.
- Develop mechanisms for adapting international experience.
- Consider and communicate the needs of national minorities in public information on disasters.
- Focus on community-based disaster management.
- Encourage local knowledge; strengthen the capacity of locals to prepare, inform and respond to disasters; and learn from local people.
- Develop guidelines and training for the media to cover emergencies; and focus more on disaster risk reduction issues.
- Use more effectively the information from the emergency management teams.
- Identify information technologies and a means for communication “in one language”;
- Promote, adopt and implement measures that ensure citizens' participation in disaster risk management (e.g. including communities in the planning for building industrial establishments; and in the planning for emergency response).
- Establish more modes of communicating disaster information and public awareness (e.g. a TV channel, a social network “Savebook”, expansion of available e-libraries with new publications)
- Establish an award or “Life-saving media” medal.
- Establish a committee/body to oversee and build on the suggestions and recommendations.

PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Jeff Colyer, Lieutenant Governor of Kansas
Armenia and America 25 Years later, USA

Mr. Neil McFarlane, Chief, Regional Programmes and DRR Coordination, UNISDR/GenevaRisk Information and the Post-2015 Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

Ms. Marieta Koleva, Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection (ECHO)Risk and Emergency Information Management

Mr. Rudolf Muller, Deputy Director OCHA Geneva
UN Information Policy and Guidelines

Mr. Ian Cameron, Civil Protection Group (CPG) civil expert
NATO Information Policy and Guidelines

Ms. Mette Petersen, Senior Advisor to National Societies, FRC EuropeRed Cross Information Policy and Guidelines

Dr. Irina Papieva, World Health Organization
WHO Information Policy and Guidelines

LtCol James Culp, Kansas National Guard
National Guard Disaster Response

Lt Col Frank Andrzej, Civil Military Coordination in Emergency Situations

Mr. Dmitry Gromadin, Ministry of Emergency Situations of RF
Russian Comprehensive System for Population Warning and Awareness

Mr. Hassan Esfandiar, Iranian Red Crescent Society
Iranian Red Crescent Experience In Disaster Response and Information

Mr. Mohammad Hosseini, Iran, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Crisis Management DepartmentLifesaving Media Initiative

Mr. Volodymyr Kuznietsov, EU-funded PPRD East Programme, Communication Expert Public Awareness New Creative Solutions and Tools

Ms. Charlotta Nyman, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, Safety of the Individual SectionHow to Reduce Risk Through Practice and Education in SchoolMr. Hiroki Kanda, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Japan Experience: Prevention of Natural Disasters

Ms. Christina Andersson, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, Safety of the Individual SectionThe Challenge of Communicating Risks to the Public

Mr. Richard Meares, REUTERS
Experience, journalistic code of ethics

ABOUT “EMERGENCY CHANNEL”

Nikolay Grigoryan
Deputy Head of Rescue Service,
Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia, Major-General
Head of “Emergency Channel”
National Focal Point for Hyogo Framework of Actions (HFA)

More than 20 years of emergency manager experience and more than 30 years of journalist activity experience, as well as realization of Hyogo Framework for Actions priorities bring me to deep belief that countries and communities will be more disaster resilient, people will be more prepared and protected if public awareness as a cornerstone for disaster risk reduction is more focused, creative, targeted, consistent, competent and comprehensive; public awareness should involve the world best experience: the best examples of programs and plans; TV, radio, printed and electronic production, live ommunication. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for all the actors involved in public awareness field to bring together their expertise and experience, knowledge, skills and achievements, opinions and suggestions. Those actors are state bodies, prevention and responding organizations, civil society, international organizations and experts, crisis information managers, information responsible, mass media and information agencies. For this purpose, “Emergency Channel” Information Center of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Armenia, proposes to create an “emergency” network of all the actors involved in the field, as well as DRR public awareness best experience electronic library-depository.

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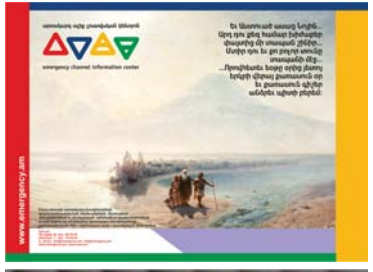

Emergency Channel Information Center Fo more than 15 years public awareness Emergency Channel Information Center operates in Armenia.

The Center develops and implements emergency information state policy through its information channels: information agency, TV/radio company, Emergency weekly, web-sites and Emergency Channel training center, where trainings are conducted for journalists and press-secretaries, response organizations such as fire-fighters, rescuers, police, medicals; governmental and self-governmental bodies, representatives of NGOs and religious organizations. .

Emergency Channel logo four elements – water, fire, air and earth – which emerge disasters and Emergency Channel Information Center as fifth element trying to prevent disasters, mitigate the consequences by informing people about possible risks and its reduction measures. “The one who is informed is protected” - motto of Emergency Channel Information Center is on famous artist Ayvazovsky's “Noah's descending from Ararat mountain” painting. The first informed human who saved himself, his family and the humankind in whole, whom God alarmed about the upcoming disaster – when the disaster will be, how long it will be, what consequences it will have, how to compose the salvation plan, how to form the evacuation commission, how to build the ark for salvation, how to preserve biodiversity and gender equality of those who are evacuating, how to organize air investigation and to select evacuation point.

Kids receive all the messages, stories and calls of Emergency Channel through Noah who saved humankind from disaster and hero of Armenian famous epos Sasna David at early age – Super David.

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Armen Yeritsyan
Minister of Emergency Situations, RA

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