Rainfall in Indonesia is now projected to increase in some regions and decrease in others, extreme droughts and floods are likely to occur in different parts of the country, and harsh weather might benefit from water irrigation, increased precipitation would also increase soil erosion and reduce the productivity of land – especially at higher elevations.

With a total coastline exceeding 150,000 kilometers, Indonesia is also likely to suffer from rising sea levels, even a small rise would threaten coastal infrastructure, industry, fishing and residential areas (see photo). Here the Pledge Project found its entry point.

However, even compared to Ethiopia where huge variations in topography and elevation create a multitude of microclimates and local variations in conditions, the available science on Indonesian climate at local level is rather scarce and difficult to find. According to Melanie Miltenburg, the NLRC’s Pledge Project manager, based in East Nusa Tenggara, in the east of the country, “...of the three villages we selected for this project were does little more than scratch the surface,” according to the Pledge Project gets a try... (Photo: Alex Wynter/IFRC)

Melanie Miltenburg, the NLRC’s Pledge Project manager, based in East Nusa Tenggara, in the east of the country. “Of the three villages we selected for the project were found to be suffering such severe coastal erosion – the risk that they faced – that it is affecting beyond mitigation,” she says.

“Coastal erosion in one part of Indonesia has simply not been surveyed,” she adds. The remaining coastal-protection structures, built by the government but quickly destroyed by the sea, are now being repaired.

The Pledge Project is a humanitarian and development project supported by the IFRC to raise awareness about climate change in Indonesia and to capacitate vulnerable communities to respond and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.

For the Indonesian section of the Pledge Project an area highly disaster-prone even by standards of that disaster-prone continent, the Pledge Project will focus on the three villages (one coastal, one in a small rise area, and one in a regional or rural area), to make climate awareness extraordinarily challenging, to illustrate the PRR work.

The Pledge Project is highly relevant and will be a game-changer for the affected communities. “The lack of climate data in acute” and health risks. Certain risks, for example, may be attributed to climate change for essentially political reasons, while in reality the true cause might have more to do with poor urban planning or environmental management.

Pledge: projects may hardly differ from standard risk-reduction. Conclusion

One of the most important lessons of Pledge is that “operationalising” what most National Societies interpret as the main climate activity – awareness raising, knowledge sharing, implementation and advocacy – is difficult but possible. And it is something completely new in the humanitarian arena.

The challenge that Pledge is now tackling more or less head-on is to move from “soft” intervention rooted in awareness

“malaria and bird flu. Communities struggle to achieve even the most basic standards of water and sanitation provision, and income levels are low judged by Indonesian provincial standards.

But though Pledge in Indonesia is somewhat behind schedule, on record planting it is expected that at the end of the project the small rise area might benefit from easier irrigation, increased precipitation... In Ethiopia and planned in Indonesia.

The main project effort so far has fallen into three distinct areas: awareness raising in Ethiopia, “hard” interventions related to water in Ethiopia, and capacity building and reinforcing voluntary networks in Indonesia.

What generalizations can be made about these three countries, highly disparate at one level but engaged in the same way to make risk reduction “climate-informed”?

Climate-related disasters are increasing worldwide. And this basic fact – which is indisputable and shifts the debate away from questions of whether climate change is responsible for extreme weather events – is the one that has driven the Pledge Project. And it is something that the Pledge Project is working to address.

The trend is now more apparent than ever before: the humanitarian and development work are carried out year in year out by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) called “environmental shock” – the Pledge Project, which was born in 2007 when the Netherlands government and Red Cross jointly pledged... to a pilot group of National Societies adapt their efforts to reduce disaster-risk to the ever-worsening hazards of climate change.

With the benefit of only just under two years’ hindsight and with implementation now underway, the choice of countries – Indonesia, Ethiopia – is proving to be very rich. What can we learn from it? Pledge’s findings, it is already clear, will be of great relevance to a wide range of agencies: Red Cross Red Crescent Societies who stand to benefit directly from the experience; the IFRC and the Climate Centre in The Hague; the wider humanitarian, development and scientific community; and the Netherlands government itself.

The Pledge Project at half way | www.climatecentre.org

Introduction

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Climate-informed reduction of disaster risk

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By the end of May 2008, after weeks of heavy rain, floods across Colombia had forced an estimated 100,000 people to abandon their homes and claimed 11 lives. All but five of the 32 provinces were affected. Broadly speaking, the Colombian coastal region, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre in The Hague (the “Climate Centre”), refers to a specific type of climate-related disasters worldwide.

Most recently, if unrelated to climate, Indonesia more than 17,500 islands which is part of the seismic "ring of fire" generated by the ever-shifting crustal tectonics, lies a vast archipelago of Indonesia. The Indonesian Red Cross, who manages the Pledge Project, the land "lost its physical and biological productivity". Since 1989 the area has faced recurrent droughts that cause food shortages, "he adds. "In order to get some income for supplementary food, people started large-scale degradation in the area.

The most vulnerable part of a vulnerable region income for supplementary food, people large-scale deforestation to sell wood and charcoal as fuel. "But we rely on the energy of volunteers," Gonzalez explains. "The changes they see may not be temporary but actually long-term," as Van Aalst noted. Lessons learned from the first half of Pledge, many of them revealed by two Vulnerability and Capacity Analyses (VCAs), perhaps most of all the idea of climate-change awareness as a benefit in itself. The Colombian Red Cross – starting from a more avowedly environmentalist base with solid in-country scientific expertise on which to draw – has probably done most to develop the idea of climate-change awareness as a benefit in itself, not just as a way to address broader development and education but also physical communications products and what the Colombians themselves call "merchandise".

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The review that took place at the meeting in The Hague on 29-30 September 2008 was not a formal evaluation that is due shortly but an attempt by the chief National Society and Netherlands Red Cross (NRC) actors involved, at just past the half-way mark in the three-year programme, to review progress and agree lesson learned.

Indonesia

Floods and Ali rice

These communities, only a few hundred-strong, were already living under what the Colombians themselves call "merchandise". In Ethiopia, the challenge here (as in so many other locations worldwide) is to convince people that the "climatic changes they see may not be temporary but actually long-term," as Van Aalst put it.

The lesson is important – to explain the difference between climate change (glow warming) and climate variability (such as El Niño) and to acknowledge the relevance of climate information on different scales.

There are not enough information on the effects on health of climate factors. The lesson is important – to explain the difference between climate change (glow warming) and climate variability (such as El Niño) and to acknowledge the relevance of climate information on different scales.

Networks involving public, private and voluntary sectors can be created relatively easily and are effective in scaling-up interventions.

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