

## Editorial note

Indonesia, which is the largest archipelago in the world, is a *Asuper market* for natural disaster as well as man made disasters. The emerging disasters are: volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, floods, droughts, tsunamis, forest fires, agriculture pesticides, lava, floods, pollution, epidemics; amongst man-made disaster are: technology related (traffic accidents, fires, industrial accidents); behavior related (religious, ethnical, political conflicts); and terrorism.

The risk in several areas places from particular hazards are: (1) Geographic hazard: Volcano eruptions, earthquakes, landslides, floods, tsunamis, plant diseases, epidemics, droughts, forest fires, and natural toxic gases; (2) Universal climate: El Niño; (3) Man-made disaster: War, radiation accident, sanitation industrial, chemical and nuclear hazards, pollution, intoxication, injury (mental and physical), fire, civil strife, displacement, loss of property, loss of income breakdowns in security, damage to infrastructure, and breakdown in essential services (water, electricity etc.). In addition, there are several contributing factors related to disasters: pluralistic and heterogeneous community, as well as social, cultural, economic, and political difference. At present time, Indonesia is still searching a comprehensive disaster management strategy. It is virtually impossible to prevent disaster; nevertheless, it can be anticipated by having appropriate disaster management.

Thousand of people were killed and more than millions were reported as victims of natural and man made disasters in Indonesia. In 1999, a large number of people (estimated 300,000) fled East Timor for safety to western part of Timor, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province. Maluku and North Maluku Provinces were also experienced dramatic sectarian violence between Moslem and Christian communities. Furthermore, civil conflicts have displaced over a hundred thousand people in provinces of Maluku, North Maluku, Southeast and Central Sulawesi, Kalimantan, Aceh and West Timor. Over ten thousands people are displaced in nine other provinces.

Lesson learned from the undertaken response show that the Indonesian people and government had enough experiences to cope with the natural disasters, but in responding to non-natural disasters, such as a large number of internally displaced peoples (IDPs),

and multiple, widespread forest fires, the Indonesian barely have any experiences. Most likely, the Indonesian never expect it to happen. However, the Indonesian government and people can use the disaster management experiences to overcome the relatively emerging complex disasters.

Some industries used dangerous chemical substances, despite Indonesian industrial safety law and regulations. In reality, the response can be considered as an inappropriate one.

Another inexperience we encounter is on high building fire. Several capital cities have high buildings. However, the equipment and fire safety measures to cope with fires in high buildings are still lacking. Therefore, this weakness should be anticipated.

The way other countries coped with new complex disasters is an important lesson for us, Indonesian to accelerate disaster reliefs. The most important thing is to prevent these disasters. We and the government should pay more attention to these existing and routine disasters, and other emerging disasters such as industrial or nuclear disaster.

A World Health Organization and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) joint study in Assessment on Emergency Preparedness (AEP) in Disaster Situations in Indonesia (2002) reported a notable good will and efforts from Indonesian Government to build or reinforce their capacity and capability on emergency management (preparedness, readiness, response and rehabilitation). However, the coordination among public sectors are not sufficient at all levels due to ad hoc and informal meetings, inappropriate transfer of information and knowledge, and lack of sensitivity on preparedness, compared to response.

The other finding noted that community awareness on emergency management, comes from spontaneous knowledge acquired from the life experiences rather than from an official/technical way. The communities and some leaders are rarely involved in emergency preparedness or management. The level of knowledge in emergency management is also inappropriate. Communities must be involved and acknowledged in emergency preparedness and management program.

Furthermore, the Indonesian government have allocated funds from the national budget for routine and accidental emergency matters, but most of these funds were used to response the disasters rather than for anticipation strategies. Numerous trainings on emergency management have took place throughout the country. However, the criteria for the trainees selection and frequent staff turnover didn't yield sustainable and consistent benefit from the emergency anticipation trainings. Recent finding noted that several international donor agencies or governments are concerning on training for trainer only. Some of them were not interested in allocating budget for training key persons or community to increase awareness and preparation for emergency or disaster management.

Sustainability of emergency preparedness projects by the UN and other international donor community

should focus on more effective projects (horizontal programs) than efficient ones (vertical program). Coordination between National & International Institution on emergency management and humanitarian activities should be established at central level and other subordinate levels.

If disaster is defined as failure to cope with an emergency, then the aim of preparedness programs is to lengthen the period between disasters, and to reduce the impact of emergencies/disasters when they do occur. @

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