

Overview

The year 2008 saw two deadliest disasters: Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and Sichuan Earthquake in China, which both hit Asia in May, causing devastating impact on people's lives and properties.

ADRC Natural Disasters Data Book 2008 provides the statistical perspectives in figures and tables for 2008 as well as for the period 1975-2008 based on data obtained by EM-DAT.

According to EM-DAT, 389 natural disasters occurred in 2008 worldwide, killed more than 238,000 people and affected over 214 million people. The estimated amount of economic damage exceeded USD190 billion.

By region, Asia is the highest in all the indices: in disaster occurrences, Asia accounts for 37.5 percent; number of people killed, 97.4 percent; number of total affected people, 82.9 percent; and amount of economic damage, 62.1 percent.

Most of these results are attributed to the abovementioned two catastrophes. The fatalities from the two disaster events themselves account for about 94.7 percent of death toll worldwide. Also, they constitute 46.8 percent of the total amount of economic damage and 22.6 percent of total affected people.

Worldwide disaster trends in composition of indices and top shares of impacts vary by disaster type. For instance, flood made up the largest share of 42.7 percent of all disaster occurrences; storm, 59.6 percent of total number of people killed; extreme temperature, 36.9 percent of total affected people; and earthquake, 45.1 percent of total amount of economic damage. Within Asia, the indices show similar trends.

Similarly, during the period 1975-2008, Asia stands

out from all the other regions in terms of disaster occurrences, number of people killed and total affected, and amount of economic damage.

Trends of world disaster occurrences by fatality size during the same period show that the occurrences of disasters with less than 100 fatalities are high and significantly increasing particularly since the late 1990s, while those with 100-999 and 1000 or more fatalities remain relatively low and unchanged.

Data Book 2008 also contains tables of the 25 worst disaster occurrences by number of people killed and total affected, economic damage, and their respective ratios to population and gross domestic product. It also includes tables of 2008 disasters in ADRC-member and other Asian countries sorted by country and disaster type.

[Note]

Source: All the data are based on EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database – www.emdat.be, Université Catholique de Louvain, Brussels (Belgium), unless otherwise stated.

EM-DAT Criteria:

For a disaster to be entered into the database at least one of the following criteria must be fulfilled:

- Ten (10) or more people reported killed.
- Hundred (100) or more people reported affected.
- Declaration of a state of emergency.
- Call for international assistance.

Data:

“0” (zero) in tables

Zeros in tables reflect the EM-DAT database, which originally records them as zeros.

“Total Affected People”

“Total affected people” are the sum of injured, homeless, and affected. EM-DAT defines affected people as people requiring immediate assistance during a period of emergency; it can also include displaced or evacuated people.

For inquiries regarding ADRC Natural Disaster Data Book 2008, please contact rep@adrc.asia.
