

NETHERLANDS DELEGATION TO THE YOKOHAMA CONFERENCE

***"DISASTER REDUCTION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION"***

DISCUSSION PAPER PREPARED FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
ON DISASTER REDUCTION IN YOKOHAMA, JAPAN FROM 23 - 27 MAY 1994

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR  
NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (IDNDR 1990 - 2000)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION*** (IDNDR 1990 - 2000)

This paper constitutes the Netherlands contribution for the IDNDR World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan. The IDNDR was launched by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, with the objective of reducing through concerted international action, especially in developing countries, the loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, windstorms, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, wildfire, grasshopper and locust infestations, drought and desertification and other calamities of natural origin. But conflicts can also result in natural disasters. For example conflicts are a major cause of refugees and of displacement of people. This leads to over-occupation of areas, beyond their carrying capacities, increased deforestation, and neglect of basic facilities such as water and irrigation provisions, and - as a result - prolonged food shortages and famine.

To make man and society less vulnerable to the forces of nature countries include in their socio-economic policy measures to prevent, prepare for and mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

It might involve activities aimed at ecologically sustainable socio-economic development, which are also intended to avoid negative environmental effects and therefore reduce vulnerability. Or it might be a more specific early warning mechanism or programme which aims to signal impending natural disasters. Other examples are activities aimed at rehabilitation and the first steps towards recovery in the aftermath of a natural disaster, which also seek to reduce vulnerability and lessen the risk of the same thing happening again. Finally, strengthening of local emergency aid capacity, particularly that of local governmental and non-governmental organisations which form the first line of defence in the event of a disaster can be mentioned.

## **PART ONE:     *DEFINITIONS AND PROBLEMS***

1       In recent decades the number of people affected by disasters has risen faster than might be expected on the basis of population growth. According to information provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the average number of victims (comprising dead, injured and otherwise affected) was around 50 million per year in the early seventies. By the early eighties this had risen to 125 million and by the early nineties to 250 million. These figures relate both to emergencies caused by man, such as civil wars and other internal conflicts, and to those with natural causes.

2       A primary reason for the increase in the number of victims is the greater vulnerability of people and societies to natural disasters. Research into the impact of comparable natural phenomena on communities at different stages of development shows a correlation between poverty and vulnerability, both in relation to the number of victims and the extent of the damage. People living under, or just above, the poverty line appear to be extremely vulnerable to prolonged drought, flooding, earthquakes, volcanic activity, storms etc. The fact that in recent decades the number of poor people in developing countries and elsewhere has increased does not in itself provide a sufficient explanation for the rise in the number of victims of natural disasters. The continuing deterioration of the environment, ranging from large-scale deforestation in South East Asia to the exhaustion and destruction of soil fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa, has made communities more vulnerable to flooding, earthquakes and drought.

3       A second reason can be discerned in the growth in the extent, duration and complexity of violent conflict in the world. Since the Second World War armed conflict has increasingly affected civilian populations, with a parallel growth in the number of "victims", including refugees and displaced persons. Conflicts have caused immense human suffering and material damage in the countries and communities affected. Natural disasters, war and other forms of violent conflict constitute a serious threat to sustainable development. Valuable resources are lost when the results of past investment are wiped out. Production of goods and services falls, thereby reducing income even further.

4       Such problems are often even more in evidence in conflicts where people are forced to flee their homes, where factories, offices and infrastructure are destroyed, where communities are divided, both physically and spiritually, and where increasingly depleted funds are devoted to the purchase of weapons and other military expenditure. Poverty, in turn, can help prolong seemingly interminable conflict, when young people who have no means of earning a living in society are recruited as soldiers and find a social and economic base in the armed struggle. The environment suffers serious damage in times of conflict, especially where the new phenomenon of environmental terrorism occurs, which was first reported during the Gulf War. Development activities can also be harmed by war, for example if investment projects have to be halted in order to release personnel and funds for acute emergency aid and rehabilitation.

## **NATURAL DISASTERS     *Scale and causes***

5        Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, lengthy periods of drought, cyclones etc. often lead to social disruption. Some natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, occur suddenly, with little or no warning and rapidly destroy human life and the country's infrastructure. Other types of disaster, known as "creeping disasters", follow a certain pattern in terms of time and location and are therefore theoretically predictable. They include hurricanes and crop failure as a result of drought or plagues of insects. Although these natural phenomena develop gradually, adequate measures are seldom taken. The development of situations which eventually lead to a disaster often goes unnoticed. The third type of natural disaster is the "chronic disaster". These are events whose consequences are not immediately visible. They are often caused by environmental degradation (a structural decline in the natural environment), including deforestation, soil erosion, acid rain and pollution.

6.       Environmental disasters resulting from accidents at nuclear power stations, chemical plants, hazardous waste storage sites or during transportation of hazardous wastes are often caused by human error. Although they are essentially quite different from natural disasters, they are dealt with from the point of view of policy in more or less the same way.

7        The rise in the number of victims has occurred not so much because the natural events which can trigger disasters are happening more often or with greater intensity but because of population growth and the increasing fragility of social structures. A natural phenomenon becomes a disaster only if the society in which it occurs is unable to cope with its effects. Man can little do to hold back the forces of nature. However, he can make himself less vulnerable, by avoiding places which are prone to disaster or taking preventive measures, such as building houses which can withstand earthquakes. Scientific research to improve the reliability of predictions of natural events is important, since it allows people to take measures to prevent or prepare for the disaster and/or to mitigate its effects.

8        Socio-economic circumstances affect people's vulnerability to natural disasters. Developing countries are more vulnerable because of poverty, population growth and environmental degradation. These factors must not be viewed in isolation, since they are mutually reinforcing. Poor countries are unable to do much in the way of reducing their vulnerability, since the measures required are too expensive, both for the country itself (e.g. flood barriers) and for the individuals (e.g. adhering to building regulations). Poor people are likely to settle on marginal land, in mountains or low-lying areas by rivers, and therefore have a greater chance of finding themselves in a situation (e.g. bad health) which diminishes their ability to cope with setbacks, making them more vulnerable as individuals.

9.       Environmental degradation and population growth can increase people's vulnerability to the forces of nature in many ways. Social processes and population growth might, for instance, give rise to a shortage of land for farming or homes. It is the poorest who are then forced to settle on less safe land or live in sub-standard housing. Uncontrolled urbanisation and large-scale deforestation in rainforests or mountainous areas are other examples. Agricultural production systems, based on monoculture and over-exploitation can also make a society more vulnerable. It is not unlikely that large scale long-term environmental degradation will lead to climate change, which will give rise to new threats. A rise in sea

level caused by the melting of the polar ice caps due to higher temperatures would increase the risk of flooding in certain regions.

10. A country can reduce the vulnerability of its people and society by including in its socio-economic policy measures to prevent and prepare for natural disasters and to mitigate their effects. Since poor countries have little opportunity of doing this, donor countries and international agencies will be called upon to play a vital supporting role. For instance, a great international effort will be required to stop the large-scale deforestation of the Himalayan region. If this process continues, what with the relentless demographic pressure on rural areas and the continuing inequitable distribution of agricultural land, nothing will stop farmers from settling in marginal areas, where they are more susceptible to earthquakes and floods.

### ***TECHNOLOGICAL DISASTERS***

11. The dumping of obsolete technology, over-utilization of pesticides and medical supplies, as well as hazardous waste constraints efforts towards strategies for sustainable development

### ***RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMANITARIAN AID***

12. Humanitarian aid operations in the event of natural disasters have come in for a great deal of criticism in recent years. Many international aid agencies fail to respond to alarm signals, work slowly and are to a certain extent unpredictable in their response. Furthermore the effectiveness of international humanitarian assistance in emergencies is restricted by the complex structure of the international aid network, which includes numerous (inter) governmental organisations which do not adequately coordinate their activities.

13. Except in the case of particularly severe natural disasters, or in the event of several natural disasters occurring simultaneously, assistance operations are not generally hampered by a lack of aid capacity. The contrast with assistance in the case of conflict is largely due to political factors, which can present obstacles to the deployment of aid resources at both national and international level, particularly those of military and civil defence organisations. In the case of natural disasters, the consent of the country concerned to the aid operation being carried out is largely irrelevant: in acute emergencies, any international assistance is welcome, apart from in a few exceptional cases. If, however, there is no proper coordination structure, this can lead to predominantly supply-driven assistance operations, which are ineffective and have in the past given rise to the criticisms outlined above.

14. Most of the criticisms were addressed in December 1991, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". This resolution, which was submitted to the General Assembly at the instigation of the EC during the Dutch Presidency, contains policy proposals and institutional measures which aim to improve the effectiveness and coordination of all humanitarian assistance, in response to both natural disasters and conflicts. As far as

the former are concerned, the resolution emphasises that preventive measures must be coupled with a coherent policy on economic growth and sustainable development. For a sustained and effective approach to natural disasters, developing countries must have enough capacity to prevent and prepare for natural disasters and mitigate their effects. Since developing countries are unable to acquire this capacity independently, assistance from donor countries and international agencies is essential.

15. The adoption of UN Resolution 46/182 led to the establishment in 1992 of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs with offices in New York and Geneva. DHA has taken over the mandate of the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) for international assistance in the event of natural disasters, but that it has more coordinating powers. DHA Geneva now has the explicit task of strengthening the capacity of developing countries to cope with natural disasters, as discussed above, preferably by incorporating humanitarian aid into long-term development programmes. Specific problems to be addressed include guidance and development of high-risk scenarios for specific disaster types.

16. The above developments suggest that the necessary steps have been taken to improve coordination, assessment of the need for assistance and involvement on the part of the target group. It is still too early to say whether the policy intentions and organisational measures will have the desired effect. Indeed, shortcomings would appear to be an inherent feature of emergency aid, which calls for swift decisions and sometimes over-hasty action to get to the affected area on time.

### ***NATURAL DISASTERS AS A RESULT OF CONFLICTS***

17. 'Conflict situations' as defined in this paper include war, civil strife and the effects from these conflict situations such as refugees, famine and the consequent environmental degradation. Natural disasters can be serious consequences from conflicts. But conflicts are also a major cause of refugees and of displacement of people, leading to over-occupation of areas, beyond their carrying capacities, increased deforestation and neglect of basic facilities such as water and irrigation provisions, and - as a result - prolonged food shortages and famine.

18. Environmental problems such as droughts can lead to scarcity and famine, which again may be one of the underlying factors to conflicts. This has been the case in many countries. During conflict situations the maintenance of irrigations systems, road and transport facilities will lead to neglect of the land and consequently to more soil erosion, drought, famine and again more refugees.

19. A large scale influx of refugees or displaced persons will lead to increased pressure on the environment through increased deforestation, pollution, soil erosion, increased development of settlement on disaster-prone land etc. Examples are the environmental damages in the Horn of Africa as a result of the recent conflicts in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia - and in addition in the countries providing host-facilities to refugees from these countries such as Kenya - and aggravated by the effects from a series of droughts. The combined effects from conflict situations and natural disasters seriously affect the

environmental balance. Combined strategies for conflict resolution, poverty eradication, and environmentally sustainable development will be the only option for stabilization in such region.

20. In various African and Asian countries millions of mines have been planted since World War II. There is a clear connection between land mines and environmental degradation. If there is no conscious effort to assist the people of these countries to remove mines from the arable land, people cannot return to their farms, to continue with productive work. Moreover the lack of such effort would result into continued degradation of the fertile land, which means a total loss of their basic capital.

21. Droughts may lead to extensive rural and urban migration and - as a consequence - excessive urban expansion as a result of droughts on rural/urban migration and overpopulation of primate cities, (i.e. Harare, Zimbabwe). Policies and strategies need to be further developed which will facilitate the drought-stricken rural population to return to their land. This will also relief the burden for the affected capital city.

22. Only 5-10% of the disaster-effects in Africa are caused by fast-impact disasters such as earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, landslides, cyclones. Around forty five percent are caused by long onset disasters such as drought, desertification, and soil erosion. The other forty five percent are a direct or indirect result of wars and civil strife.

23. Linkages between conflict management and sustainable development are not part of this Conference and the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. However in the African Humanitarian Initiative for Sustainable Development (1993) and the African Common Position for Disaster Reduction (1994), the link with conflict resolution is very well understood as a "condition to create an enabling environment for systematic disaster reduction sustainable development.

## **PART TWO DUTCH POLICIES AND STRATEGIES ON HUMANITARIAN AID AND DISASTER REDUCTION**

### **POLICIES**

24. The humanitarian aid provided by national and international organisations can be divided into three phases:

- prevention of, preparation for and mitigation of the effects of natural events. This includes specialist advice on the structure of buildings in earthquake zones, shelters for the public, information campaigns, dams and dikes in areas subject to flooding, houses built on stilts, careful town planning which ensures that homes are not built on slopes which can be washed away by torrential rain, etc ;
- acute emergency aid immediately after a natural disaster (disaster relief), the most important element of which is the provision of food, emergency housing, clothing, blankets, cooking equipment etc., but which also includes technical assistance and logistical support;
- rehabilitation and initial steps towards recovery after a natural disaster. Countries require support to enable them to resume everyday life, such as help with repairing the physical infrastructure (roads, houses, public amenities) and the agricultural infrastructure, curative and preventive medical care and education. rehabilitation aid aims mainly to enable the affected country to stand on its own two feet once again.

25. Larger numbers of people are being affected by natural disasters also therefore the need for emergency aid grew. The Netherlands development cooperation is already active in the fields of:

- acute emergency aid for victims; and
- reducing certain population groups' vulnerability to the forces of nature and strengthening local emergency aid capacity.

26. To make man and society less vulnerable to the forces of nature poorer countries should (depending on the likelihood of a natural disaster occurring in their territory) include in their socio-economic policy measures to prevent, prepare for and mitigate the effects of natural disasters. The Netherlands can support these efforts in countries with which it has a regular development relationship and in countries with which it has signed or plans to sign a sustainable development agreement. Help in coping with natural disasters takes many forms.

27. It might involve activities aimed at ecologically sustainable socio-economic development, which are also intended to avoid negative environmental effects and therefore reduce vulnerability. Or it might be a more specific early warning mechanism or programme which aims to signal impending natural disasters. Other examples are activities aimed at rehabilitation and the first steps towards recovery in the aftermath of a natural disaster, which also seek to reduce vulnerability and lessen the risk of the same thing happening again. Finally, help is provided to strengthen local emergency aid capacity, particularly that of local governmental and non-governmental organisations which form the first line of defence in the event of a disaster. Both intergovernmental and foreign non-governmental organisations can act as channels for Dutch aid.



28. The following aspects are considered imperative in an integrated strategy to deal with natural disasters and humanitarian assistance:

- Lack of communication between government bodies, the private sector and NGOs negatively affects integration of risk reduction efforts. It should be realised that disaster occurrence is a dynamic and uncertain process. The governmental framework for disaster management should therefore exhibit potential for change and growth. As knowledge of disaster management grows, competence improves, and provincial and local communities develop self-reliance

- Through its institutional arrangements, the essential task of government is to recognize the above potential, respond to initiatives, allocate responsibilities, and coordinate effort where necessary. It is also important for governments to provide a lead by setting an example of disaster management in all that they do.

- Disaster management is widely ranging in scope, and complex in its relationship with government ministries and agencies. For effective disaster preparedness and risk reduction planning, a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities is essential. Such a definition of tasks is needed between central, provincial and local government, and between sector agencies, to facilitate the necessary cooperation, coordination and efficient use of scarce resources. Plans for risk reduction have to be realistic and be designed in close cooperation with the affected communities to operate within the current political and socio-economic situation, rather than against it.

- Relevant social mechanisms are found in traditional emergency survival customs, individual or group savings and investment systems, divisions of labour, property relations, building of material reserves which allow taking risks, aptitudes towards change or continuity as shaped in family systems, perceptions of nature, subconscious determinants of behaviour, religious beliefs and institutions, cultivation of ideals in life, styles of social pressure and lobbying, structured applications of violence, formal and informal arenas of power struggle, chains of patron-client relationships, personal networks, and channels of communication.

- In these constellations external actors may be careful and well-informed while intervening and attempting to minimize cultural bias. Relevant techniques are intensive interaction, methods to bridge cultural gaps, sample survey, and combinations of these techniques. Local NGOs should play an important role in the above efforts, to ensure proper and community-oriented implementation of disaster reduction measures.

- The development of land, (flat land, mountains, coastal regions), water and air beyond their carrying capacities will lead to increased disaster proneness of various regions. Examples include high density squatting on unstable slopes, uncontrolled deforestation, overgrazing of semi-arid and arid land, and development of flood-and earthquake-prone land, excessive fishing, excessive use of sweet water resources for irrigation, water pollution. Systematic and focused hazard, vulnerability and risk studies can significantly contribute to land- and water use policies and planning as a major risk reduction option, provided proper legislation and permanent institutional arrangements are developed simultaneously. Land- and water use regulations should be established, with proper legislation for risk zonation, realistic control, incentives and enforcement mechanisms

- Risk reduction measures should therefore be placed in the context of short, medium and longer term economic development. On shorter term through the strengthening of constructions and infrastructural lines, and through, for example, re-forestation programmes as investment and employment generating-programmes. On medium term the focus should probably be placed on programmes such as those stimulating forestry and water development for production purposes. On longer term successful energy saving programmes will lead to a decrease in capital needs.

## **ANNEX I    MAIN SOURCES USED:**

1.     Humanitarian aid between conflict and development 1993
2.     DHA/UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme
3.     African Common Position for Disaster Reduction  
(paper prepared for the UN/IDNDR World Conference in Yokohama)
4.     WB project: "Post UNCED Strategy for Environmentally Sustainable Development  
in sub-Saharan Africa"
5.     UNDRO/Netherlands Manual "Mitigating Natural Disasters".Geneva 1991
6.     Internationale Samenwerking "Conflict and Development" March 1994

## **ANNEX II    EXAMPLES OF DISASTER REDUCTION PROGRAMMES AS PART OF        NETHERLANDS    DEVELOPMENT    COOPERATION PROGRAMME**

### **LATIN AMERICA**

#### **Example 1: MILIEU-EFFECTENRAPPORTAGE VOOR ECUADOR**

The 1993 landslides in La Josefina caused damage to the environment. La Josefina is situated in the valley of the river Paute in Ecuador, south of Cuenca. Early in 1994 the Environment Programme started up a strategic Environmental Impact Assessment regarding possible remedial action and development of this area, on request of CREA Ecuador. The first step took place already, being the scoping process for the Environmental for the Environmental Impact Statement to be prepared.

The scoping process will result in the TOR for this statement. It is expected that during the course of 1994 the preparation of the statement will start. The request from Ecuador included not only EIA at the strategic level, but included several alternative proposals to solve the most urgent problems in the area.

An important aspect is to what extent the landslides can be prevented in the future through careful choices in and planning of development. Institutional context and participation of stakeholders are important features.

### **AFRICA**

#### **Example 2: PROJECT SADC**

Development of Regional Food Security and Nutrition Information System (SADC) met FAO

##### **Objective:**

Timely nutrition and socio-economic information on vulnerable population groups provided on a regular basis to, and utilised by decision makers for emergency/ relief operations, action programmes, local level interventions and sectoral planning to enhance household food security and improve nutrition status.

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of SADC member states to incorporate gender based socio-economic and nutritional data into their food security information systems and to analyse and interpret these data for determining relative vulnerabilities to food insecurity of population groups. Vulnerability profiles or maps constructed using these types of data will help policy planners to target resources to the most vulnerable areas and population groups.

Information generated by this project will assist in the identification of emergency/ relief needs as well as in the design and monitoring of short and medium term targeted cost-effective action programmes to alleviate food insecurity. In addition, the information will serve to assess the size and distribution of the benefits and costs of these actions on the poor food insecure households.

## AFRICA

### Example 3: THE SAHEL

A good example of an integrated approach to humanitarian and structural aid is afforded by the Sahel countries, the governments of which decided in 1985, with the support of donor countries, multilateral organizations and NGO's, to set up a regional network for the prevention of food crises.

Although drought has afflicted the countries of the Sahel since time immemorial, it is only since the beginning of the 1970s that periods of drought have been accompanied by famine and large-scale food aid. The principal explanation for the increasing vulnerability of the people and the societies of the Sahel is the growing marginalisation and impoverishment of large sections of the population, caused by the complex relationship between population growth, environmental degradation and poverty which prevents agricultural production from keeping pace with the increased demand for food. An additional factor was that, without effective preventive and precautionary mechanisms in the region, it proved impossible to organise the distribution of the food aid being imported from Europe and North America in ever-greater quantities. Not only did such a food aid usually arrive far too late to alleviate the impact of famine effectively, it was often sold off cheap the following season by the government and/or dealers, with the result that local farmers either could not sell their produce or could command only unfairly low prices. In this way food aid, which by 1984 had become some 20% of total development aid to the region, had a negative impact on local food production, with the result that the Sahel countries became increasingly dependent on food aid. Undesirable as this development was, it assumed a permanent character, frustrating the simultaneous efforts of governments in the region and donors to step up agricultural production in the Sahel.

In 1985, the CILSS (Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel) and the Club du Sahel decided to establish a network for the prevention of food crises in the region. Its main aim is to improve the collection and exchange of information on overall agricultural production so that the network can be aware in good time of local shortages and surpluses and potential logistical difficulties which might stand in the way of effective distribution. To this end the network collects information and facilitates exchanges between what are often existing information systems, such as agricultural statistics, population statistics and various international and regional agricultural early warning systems. Together with the implementation of a structural food security policy designed to cover the entire region, the network makes it possible to make up for local food shortages in the first place by bringing in supplies from areas with surpluses or food security stocks elsewhere in the region. In the second place, efforts are made to import food from neighbouring African countries with the cash made available by donors for food. It is only in the last resort that food aid in kind is brought in from Europe or North America. Improved preparation and organization have made it possible for food aid measures of this kind to be taken in good time and without an adverse impact on local food production. By integrating an emergency prevention and precautionary mechanism in their structural development policy, the Sahel countries, with the assistance of donors, have succeeded in alleviating the effects of regular periods of drought. The Sahel therefore needs less acute emergency aid than it used to.

## ASIA

### Example 4 LANDSLIDES IN THE HIMALAYAS OF UPSTREAM GANGA, NORTHERN INDIA.

Landslides are found in many parts of the Himalayas, including the upstream area of the river Ganga and tributaries, situated in northern Uttar Pradesh. Landslides occur on eroded slopes during heavy rainfall. Sometimes complete hamlets or infrastructural works disappear in the event. The main cause, erosion, has a long history since the British for the purpose of building railways used contracted aristocratic rulers and entrepreneurs to cut trees. Local resistance arose and resulted in the so-called Chipko movement, which is often mentioned for its successful actions by village women. However, the resistance came late and insufficiently to prevent cutting. Local customs did not change enough to adequately take care of common lands; neither did behaviour of the Forest Department officials. Nowadays landslides occur especially on common land slopes, while private land is better protected by terracing the fertile soils.

Risks of landslides are enlarged through dynamite explosions for construction purposes. The local population largely consents with construction activities as they bring much needed employment opportunities.

## ASIA

### Example 5 FLOODS IN STEEP-FALL, HEAVY MONSOON KERALA, SOUTHERN INDIA.

Flooding in southwest India is disastrous where steep rivers flow from the mountain range to the west coast and when heavy monsoon water cannot be absorbed by the soil. In the densely populated state of Kerala physical effects are most severe. Mostly small rubber and pepper plantations and paddy fields are affected. Normally, small planters have a rather good income, and the disposal of material reserves and social networks to survive floods. However, the landless former outcastes, depending on employment in plantations and paddy growing, are more seriously affected.

Government relief measures are rather well implemented because of the state's much developed social orientation. This dates back to the forceful marxist movement of the forties and fifties, sometimes resulting in democratically elected marxist state governments. Nowadays even the centre-right governments have adopted many social welfare measures and, under pressure of citizen organization, implement them rather well. However, despite these improvements employment generation does not take off and remains a most serious problem in Kerala. Uphill landless households, already facing this situation, are all the more affected when employment shrinks because of floods.

## EASTERN EUROPE

### Example 6 GOMEL PROJECT

'Belarussian- Dutch Humanitarian Aid Project' in relation to Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster and the 'Belarussian- Dutch regional specialized dispensary'.

In 1990 the Netherlands have reacted upon an appeal of the former Soviet Union to offer relief to the victims of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. The Netherlands financed the set up of a clinic in Gomel and for the organization of medical courses in Minsk (White Russia). Dutch medical doctors have given courses for taking care of and guidance of the victims