



*Risk reduction. Early warning systems can save lives and cut costs by monitoring years of deepening drought or giving people in a cyclone's path a few hours to prepare. Early warning must be timely, to be useful, and accurate, to be believed. Earthquakes offer little warning, but an assessment of risk can improve building standards, and allow people the choice not to live over fault lines in wooden homes with heavy roof tiles that collapse, burn and kill. Warning systems are also being developed to predict instability, conflict and population movements.*

Damaged homes, Japan, 1995. Philip Jones Griffiths/Magnum

## *Early warning systems: A selective guide*

**I**nternational early warning systems now exist for many types of disasters: famines, earthquakes, tsunami, conflict. This chapter lists some of the more established ones, where possible giving details of what they do, who runs them and how to access them. It is our intention to update this list and we would welcome comments on the usefulness of the systems included here and notification of any important systems we have neglected to list. (Telephone: (+41 22) 7304222; fax: (+41 22) 7330395, e-mail WALKER@IFRC.ORG.)

### **Agriculture and food**

#### **AGHRYMET**

**Parent Organisation:** Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

**Purpose:** Serve CILSS member countries and partners in training and information in food security and natural resources management

**Process:** Collection, analysis, dissemination of data on agrometeorology and natural resources for CILSS countries and regionally.

**Products:** Agronometeorological periodic bulletins, specific cartographic products integrating remote sensing and other data (Geographical Information Systems (GIS)), workshops, training courses.

**Coverage:** CILSS countries.

**Contact:** World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Technical Cooperation Department, CP 2300, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: (+41 22) 730 8111; fax: (+41 22) 734 2326, tx: 23 260. AGRHYMET Centre, BP 11011, Niamey, Niger. Tel (+227) 73 3113/73 2436, fax: (+227) 73 2435; tx: 5448 NI

#### **Emergency Prevention Systems (EMPRES) for Desert Locust**

**Parent Organisation:** Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO.)

**Purpose:** Reduce risk of desert locust upsurges through long-term management and research. Strengthening locust control organisations, improving early warning, communications, control methods and contingency arrangements.

**Process:** Data collection and communication between controls units, early intervention.

**Products:** Various, including early information on locust upsurges.

**Coverage:** Initial focus areas bordering Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Other areas which have been origin of locust upsurges in past.

**Contact:** Migratory Pest Group, Plant Protection Service, AGPP, FAO, Rome, Italy. Tel: (+39 6) 522 54021; fax: (+39 6) 522 55271;

e-mail: Abderrahmane Hafraoui@fao.org.

#### **Famine Early Warning System (FEWS)**

**Parent Organisation:** United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

**Purpose:** Provide decision-makers (chiefly within USAID) with current and potential nutritional emergency situations.

**Process:** Systematic collection and analysis of social and physical data. rainfall, GDP growth, soils, prices, migration patterns. Use of satellite imagery and GIS

**Products:** Statistical, analytical and predictive reports

**Coverage:** Chad, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sudan

**Contact:** Mr Greg Gottlieb, FEWS Project, Tulane/Pragma Group, 1611 North Kent Street, Suite 511, Arlington VA 22202, USA. Tel (+1 703) 243 1070, fax (+1 703) 243 1358

#### **Food Availability Status Reports (FASREP)**

**Parent Organisation:** World Food Programme (WFP).

**Purpose:** Monitor and track commodity movements for emergency feeding operations (refugees and displaced persons) to

reflect actual food situation and give early warning of food pipeline.

**Products:** *Monthly Food Availability Status Report for Refugees and Displaced Persons Feeding Operation and Projects*

**Coverage:** WFP emergency feeding operation countries

**Contact:** Mr Jamie Wickens, Chief Emergency Support Service, Emergency Division (ODE), WFP, 426 via Cristoforo Colombo, 00145 Rome, Italy. Tel. (+39 6) 522 821, fax (+39 6) 512 7400.

### **Food and Nutritional Surveillance Programme**

**Parent Organisation:** Jointly UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), FAO.

**Purpose:** Analyse existing information on trends in specified indicators on food and nutrition at national and subnational levels; promote prompt use of information for national and international advocacy.

**Products:** Ad hoc reports

**Contact:** Dr Mercedes De Onis, Nutritional Unit, Division of Food and Nutrition, WHO, Case postale, avenue Appia 20, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. Tel: (+41 22) 791 3320, fax: (+41 22) 791 4156.

### **Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS)**

**Parent Organisation:** FAO.

**Purpose:** Monitor continuously crop and food supply/demand conditions worldwide to assist governments take timely and appropriate measures in fast-changing situations; identify countries and regions where serious food shortages and worsening nutritional conditions are imminent and make an early assessment of possible emergency food requirements, including food imports and food-aid needs, including emergency needs.

**Process:** Central unit in FAO HQ operates system. Monthly reports received from GIEWS member countries through FAO representatives. Additional information from NGOs, WFP, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WMO, press agencies and through staff visits to vulnerable countries and special missions (jointly with WFP) to assess crop and food supply/demand outlook. Satellite data used extensively to monitor crop conditions. Data stored in custom-made computer workstation.

**Products:** Food Outlook (monthly); Food Supply Situations and Crop Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa (quarterly), Sahel Weather and Crop Situation Reports (10-day intervals in cropping season), Food-crops and Shortages Report (monthly), Special Reports (in sustained regional food shortages); Special Country Alerts (if rapid deterioration in country's food security prospects).

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Office of the Chief, ESCG, FAO, via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy. Tel: (+39 6) 522 53737; fax (+39 6) 522 54495; e-mail: GIEWS1@fao.org

### **IGADD Regional Food Information System**

**Parent Organisation:** Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development

**Purpose:** Monitor crop and food situation in subregion and keep decision-makers within and outside IGADD abreast of developments.

**Products:** Reports on food situation and prospects in subregion.

**Coverage:** Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda

**Contact:** Mr D. Muduuhi, Executive Secretary, IGADD, PO Box 2653, Djibouti. Telex: 5978 DJ, fax (+253) 356 284

### **SADC Regional and National Early Warning System**

**Parent Organisation:** Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

**Purpose:** Monitor crop and food situation in subregion and alert on impending food crises.

**Process:** Harare Regional Unit receives and processes monthly reports prepared by national units and produces region-wide crop and food assessment reports. Remotely sensed and agrometeorological data extensively used for crop conditions monitoring.

**Products:** Information bulletins crop and food supply/demand situation and prospects at regional and national level

**Coverage:** Southern Africa countries

**Contact:** Mr R T Mugwara, Food Security Sector Coordinator, SADC, PO Box 4046, Harare, Zimbabwe. Tel (+263 4) 751 612; fax (+263 4) 751 613

## **Radiation and atomic**

### **WMO/IAEA Convention of Early Notification of Nuclear Accidents**

**Parent Organisation:** WMO/International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA).

**Purpose:** International exchange of information and data following major nuclear accident, radiological emergency, major environmental pollutant release. Provide models for transport of pollutants after confirmation of significant event

**Process:** Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMC) designated by WMO provide atmospheric transport model products to National Meteorological Service concerned and to IAEA when requested by designated competent authority of any country in its region(s) of responsibility or by IAEA following radiological emergencies or other major environmental discharge.

**Products:** Transport model products, such as radiation plume trajectories in three dimensions, pollutant concentration and total deposition (wet and dry).

**Coverage:** Regional coverage with global capability

**Contact:** WMO Secretariat, Director For Basic Systems, World Weather Watch, CP 2300, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Tel. (+41 22) 730 8369, fax: (+41 22) 733 0242; tx: 23 260

## Environment

### UN System-wide Earthwatch

**Parent Organisation:** UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

**Purpose:** Coordinate, harmonise and integrate observing, assessment and reporting activities across UN system to provide environmental and appropriate socio-economic information for national and international decision-making on sustainable development and for early warning of emergency problems requiring international action. Timely information on pressures on, status of and trends in key global resources, variables and processes in both natural and human systems and on response to problems

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Mr Arthur Dahl, Coordinator, UN System-wide Earthwatch, UNEP, PO Box 356, 1219 Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: (+41 22) 979 9207; fax: (+41 22) 797 3471; e-mail: adahl@unep.ch.

## Geophysical

### Global Volcanism Network

**Parent Organisation:** Smithsonian Institution.

**Products:** Ad hoc and monthly bulletins on volcanic activity (including pre-eruption).

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Museum of Natural History, MRC 129, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D C 20560, USA. Tel: (+1 202) 357 4795; fax: (+1 202) 786 2557; tx: 3771814.

### International Tsunami Warning System (ITWS)

**Parent Organisation:** UNESCO

**Purpose:** Tsunami information/warnings Pacific region populations

**Coverage:** Pacific Region.

**Contact:** Dr. D Sigrist, PO Box 50027, Honolulu HI 96850, USA. Tel: (+1 808) 541 1657/541 1678.

### Seismic Alert Bulletins

**Parent Organisation:** Natural Earthquake Information Center, US Geological Service (USGS).

**Products:** Fax, e-mail, telexed alerts of potentially damaging earthquakes

**Coverage:** Worldwide

**Contact:** National Earthquake Information Center, Box 25046, Denver Federal Center, MS 967, Denver, CO 80225-0046, USA. Tel: (+1 303) 273 8501. 24-hour Earthquake Information Line: (+1 303) 273 8516 Internet: quake@gldfs.cr usgs.gov; sedas@neis.cr usgs.gov; sedas@gldfs.cr usgs.gov, SPAN. ISDMNL::NEIS::SEDAS.

## Health

### Epidemiological Early Warning System (EEWS)

**Parent Organisation:** WHO

**Products:** Bulletins, alerts on significant epidemiological problems.

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Comments:** In development

**Contact:** Emergency and Humanitarian Action Division, WHO, Case postale, avenue Appia 20, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland. Tel: (+41 22) 791 2111; fax: (+41 22) 791 4844

## Humanitarian

### Humanitarian Early Warning Systems (HEWS)

**Parent Organisation:** DHA.

**Purpose:** Identify potential complex emergencies and crises with humanitarian implications, covering socio-economic, environmental and human rights fields

**Process:** Creation and maintenance of information database from relevant organisations to support DHA in coordination activities. Use of indicators for monitoring and for computerised analysis.

**Products:** Detailed and updated country profiles, general situation reports, early warning signals; follow-up reports; up-to-the-minute mass media reports (HEWS Flashes); maps.

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Comments:** Pilot project underway

**Contact:** Mr Jiro Mizuno, Senior Adviser on Early Warning, DHA, UN, New York NY 10017, USA. Tel: (+1 212) 963 1597; fax: (+1 212) 963 3115.

## Meteorological

### African Centre for Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD)

**Parent Organisation:** WMO, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

**Purpose:** Contribute to socio-economic development of African countries through use of meteorological / climatological products and assistance systems for sustainable development.

**Process:** Establish ACMAD Centre, Niamey, Niger.

**Products:** Medium-range forecasts and technical bulletins, publication multidisciplinary climate impact studies, training in interpretation of numerical weather prediction

**Coverage:** Africa

**Contact:** WMO, Technical Cooperation Department, CP 2300, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Tel: (+41 22) 730 8111 fax: (+41 22) 734 2326; tx: 23 260. ACMAD Centre, BP 13184, Niamey, Niger. Tel: (+227) 72 3160; fax: (+227) 73 4992, tx: 5562 NJ.

### **Drought Monitoring in Eastern and Southern Africa**

**Parent Organisation:** WMO

**Purpose:** Develop drought monitoring capabilities at subregional and national levels

**Process:** Establish drought monitoring centres in Harare and Nairobi.

**Products:** Assessments of environmental and climatic conditions in region and providing countries timely indication of possible occurrences of drought and other adverse weather conditions (periodic and specific bulletins).

**Coverage:** Eastern and southern Africa countries.

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### **Tropical Cyclone Programme (TCP)**

**Parent Organisation:** WMO

**Purpose:** Provide early warning systems to mitigate effects of tropical cyclone disasters, through internationally coordinated action of meteorological services in cyclone-prone regions.

**Process:** Six ocean basins affected by cyclones. Five WMO regional tropical cyclone bodies handle activities in these basins. Tropical cyclone warnings produced by national meteorological services, based on scientific guidance provided by regional/specialised meteorological centre (RSMC) specialising in tropical cyclones

**Products:** Tropical cyclone advisories and warnings.

**Coverage:** Cyclone regions. Information available worldwide.

**Contact:** RSMS Tokyo-Typhoon Center, c/o Japanese Meteorological Agency, 1-3-4 Ote-Machi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan. 24-hour tel: (+81 3) 3211 7617, fax: (+81 3) 3212 2453.

### **World Weather Watch (WWW) Programme**

**Parent Organisation:** WMO.

**Purpose:** Global cooperation in measuring, analysing and forecasting weather using member-operated systems in meteorology, hydrology and climate to reduce loss of life and property

**Process:** Information/data collection analysis and dissemination, three components: (1) Global Observation System (GOS) land, sea, air, space observation and measurement of meteorological element to provide alphanumeric observation data regionally and globally; (2) Global Telecommunications System (GTS), worldwide system for rapid exchange of observational information, (3) Global Data Processing System (GDPS), network of world and regional computerised data processing centres to produce daily analyses and forecasts

**Products:** Weather analyses, forecasts and warnings, hydrological products and research.

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Dr Robert Landis, Director, WWW, 41 avenue Giuseppe-Motta, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Tel: (+41 22) 730 8216; fax: (+41 22) 733 0242

## **Population movements**

### **ACC Ad hoc Working Group on Early Warning regarding New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons**

**Parent Organisation:** ACC.

**Members:** FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, EHO, WFP, IOM, ICRC (observer), UN Centre for Human Rights, UN-DPA and UN-DHA (chair).

**Purpose:** Help promote actions to alleviate causes of flight and prevent them, and help ensure adequate and timely relief assistance is provided if flow of refugees or displaced persons takes place

**Process:** Working group meets approx. every six weeks

**Products:** Situation summaries, analyses, action recommendations

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Mr Juergen Dedring, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, DHIA, UN, New York NY 10017, USA. Tel. (+1 212) 963 5120, fax: (+1 212) 963 1314

### **Global Early Warning System (GEWS) for Displaced Persons**

**Parent Organisation:** Institute of Systems Science, Soka University, Tokyo.

**Purpose:** Design global early warning system for displaced persons using Future of Global Interdependence global modelling (FUGI model) 7.0.

**Process:** FUGI model using indicators in four categories (1) destruction of environment, (2) failure of development (3) absence of peace and security, (4) violation of human rights

**Products:** Forecasts risks displaced persons; scenario forecasting.

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Contact:** Prof Akira Onishi, Director, Institute for Systems Science, Soka University, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo 192, Japan Tel: (+81 426) 919 420; fax: (+81 426) 919 431, e-mail: onishi@scc1.t.soka.ac.jp

### **International Refugee Electronic Network (IRENE)**

**Parent Organisation:** UNHCR / Association for Progressive Communications (APC).

**Purpose:** Assist UNHCR regional bureaux and senior management in planning for UNHCR protection activities and material assistance, ideally prior to actual flow of refugees

**Products:** Structured country bulletins

**Coverage:** Worldwide

**Comments:** Information for UNHCR internal consultation only.

**Contact:** Ms Sharon Russu, Chief, Centre for Documentation on Refugees, 62 rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel (+41 22) 739 8726; fax: (+41 22) 739 8682

## **Systems, programmes, projects and research related to early warning and alert information**

### **Computer-Aided System for Analysis of Conflicts (CASCON)**

**Parent Organisation:** Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Purpose:** Decision support system for officials concerned with early warning, conflict prevention, and crisis management

**Process:** System draws on historical data on 85 post-World War II conflicts, 573 specific factors which academic and government analysts consider influential in pushing situations over threshold. New cases can be erected by inputting data for new or emergency conflicts, allowing for detailed comparisons.

**Products:** Computer-generated comparisons between new or emergency conflicts and historical data

**Contact:** Prof. Lincoln Bloomfield, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA Tel: (+1 617) 253 5225; fax: (1+ 617) 258 6164; e-mail: cascon@mit.edu.

### **PIOOM – Risk of Political and Humanitarian Crises, on Econometric Models for Assessing Country Susceptibility to Conflict Escalation**

**Parent Organisation:** Leiden University, Netherlands.

**Purpose:** Alert international community about impending disasters, such as genocidal massacres, ethnic-based civil war, refugee flows.

**Products:** Model-driven forecast of risk of political and humanitarian crises

**Coverage:** Worldwide.

**Comments:** Project proposal stage.

**Contacts:** Mr Albert J. Jongman, Mr Alex Schmid, Mr Dipak K Gupta, PIOOM, Leiden University, 52 Wassenaarseweg, 2333 AK, Leiden, Netherlands Tel (+31 71) 272 727; fax: (+31 71) 273 788.

### **Conflict Alert System (CAS)**

**Parent Organisation:** Georgia Institute of Technology with funding support from United States Institute of Peace.

**Purpose:** Develop database and computer software to recognise pre-conflict situations heading for violence within six months to year.

**Process:** Developing new database of background conditions and trigger events indicators analysed via neutral network software for patterns that can serve as harbingers to violent conflicts

**Products:** If successful, database and software will be available as per parent organisation's rules

**Coverage:** Selected countries at this point; hopefully worldwide in the future

**Contact:** Mr Peter Brecke, Georgia Institute of Technology, School of International Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Tel: (+1 404) 894 5188; fax: (+1 404) 894 1900; Internet: peter.brecke@nta.gatech.edu

*Source: United Nations Department for Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA), Geneva.*



*Wherever need exists The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the permanent liaison body of National Societies and acts as their representative internationally. The International Federation coordinates global disaster response in support of the actions of National Societies. It encourages the creation of National Societies and assists in developing their structures and programmes through its Geneva secretariat, and regional and national delegations across the world, including one recently set up for Bosnia in the Croatian city of Split.*

Sniper barricade, Bosnia, 1994 Paul Lowe/Magnum

# *International Federation delegation network*

Contact details for regional and national delegations of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Information correct as of 1 March 1995. Please forward any corrections to International Federation Information Resource Centre in Geneva.

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