

JP Humanitarian Affairs report (October 2010)

The world continues to experience the hardship caused by natural disasters including earthquake, storms, hunger and flood.

According to OCHA ,the following are the most affected countries that need the urgent international humanitarian support : Pakistan Floods, Haiti Earthquakes, DR Congo(rape crisis as identifies by UN), Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia, West African floods ,Sahel, Sudan, Afghanistan and Guatemala

Natural disasters keep on destroying many lives in the World. The demand of Humanitarian support and disaster relief has considerably increased. The Challenge of meeting the Millennium development Goals in 2015 continues to be one of the top issues in United Nations. ACHA mentions that the office of United Nations High commissions is very concerned of the hardships caused by natural disaster that have displaced millions of people and refugees. The UNHCR is also requesting the members if UN to look at the Asylum seekers who flee their country because of gender concerns especially homosexuals refugee claims.

Last few months have been characterized by ongoing discussions about achieving the MDGs. In speech delivered by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark (Former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark), appealed the developed countries to fulfil their promises and requested them to support poorest countries in order to achieve the basic standards of life such: eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development. During her speech ,Ms Clark reminded all the delegates that the words should go with actions.

Although the developed countries understand the need of sustaining the poorest countries, some request the accountability and leadership

from grassroots. Advancement of the MDGs in the Pacific region for instance is directly related to government effectiveness. Weak accountability mechanisms and high levels of corruption are major contributors to the lack of effective and transparent public expenditure and service delivery across most the poor countries. “Money alone is not enough – aid-effectiveness and donor coordination are vital. Progress will also rely on good governance in the region”; Murray McCully’s speech in UN (New Zealand Foreign Minister of New Zealand)

Certainly many countries believe there is a need of the effectiveness of UN and better cooperation between nations to overcome a number of challenges that the World face in 21st century. The past has shown some problems would not be solved by individual countries. Indeed it has been noticed that some of natural disasters continue to cause huge devastation and destruction. In July 2010, Pakistan Flood; for example, has been considered as first ever flood in Human history. Humanitarian organisations such Red Cross, Oxfam along with OCHA have appealed 2 billion dollars for flood disaster relief. United Nations estimates, over 21 million people have been injured or displaced as a result of the devastative flood.

In the real facts, the natural disaster can strike anywhere and anytime. September 2010 has been characterised by Canterbury earthquake that devastated many homes in the city of Christchurch. It was good news to hear the support given by Kiwis and NZ government. So far there were no deaths caused by this disaster. Thanks to kiwis that have showed spirit of support, the good coordination of Humanitarian donations and commitment of New Zealanders to tackle natural disaster problems together. Given the powerful of Earthquake magnitude 7.1, many people believed New Zealand were blessed there were no loss of lives. The organisations that provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief onsite have been posted to UNANZ website

Despite this natural disaster, New Zealand Government is committed to support people who are humanitarian challenge. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) has respectively announced: \$1 million contribution to the World Food Programme's response to serious food shortages in the Sahel region of West Africa, The \$2m donated by New Zealand shared between the Red Cross, United Nations and non-governmental organisations already in Pakistan.

New Zealand is also praised on the way kiwis coped and dealt with the earthquake recovery. UNDP Administrator Helen Clark advised other countries to learn from New Zealand blue print on the Emergency management and experience especial civil engineers who built/designed the houses that resisted to the earthquake.

Similarly the August 2010 has also been characterised by UNDP/NGOs conference in regards of MDGs. International and experts speakers shared the experience and how they can achieved the MDGs especially in health sector. The reduction mortality was one of key issues discussed in UN DPI –NGOs conference Melbourne from 30th September 2010 to 1st September 2010. The United Nations Associations of New Zealand was delighted to send our representatives in the conference UN DPI in Australia.

Our appreciation to all of our delegates who represent UNANZ; Special thanks to Mackay who got the opportunity to raise the question about youth contribution in MDGs (on the behalf of UNANZ). Lachlan wanted to know how young people could contribute to help poor countries to achieve MDGs

While supporting the victim of the earthquake, the council of Development Aid officer, Justin Kemp, have reminded members of the upcoming meeting that will take place in October ,Auckland. He also introduced CID members of new OCHA Pacific staff by the name of Stephanie: “She [Stephanie] joins us from the Middle East where she worked with OCHA and UNRWA (the UN Agency for Palestinian refugees) in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Stephanie also worked with OCHA Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake,

where she managed inter-cluster coordination for western Haiti. Initially for a period of 3 months, Stephanie will be taking up the humanitarian coordination functions of Minako Kakuma who recently left for OCHA-Sudan.”

One of UNANZ objectives is to teach New Zealand people the UN and motivate them to contribute with full of their capacity. On August 2010 UNANZ Tauranga Branch along with UNYNZ have organised a series of talks.

Jean-Paul Bizoza, UNANZ/ Special Officer of Humanitarian Affair, was privileged to present some of United Nations Conventions of the child and United Nations High commission for refugees. He also appealed both UNANZ and UNANYZ especially the youth to advocate on the behalf children in need in particular those who have separated from parents or left behind by the families in hardships. Thanks to Gray who have organised this event.

During the event, George valentine, the president of UNANZ Auckland Branch highlighted the achievement the Humanitarian Affairs in Auckland Branch and informed the good feedback UNANZ branch got in regards of support letter to Burundian refugees in Tanzania. He also mentioned the consultation he had made with Lotery, UNYANZ Auckland President and SGI officers. In his initiative he wanted to encourage them to work in partnership rather competing each other.

Below is the UNANZ achievement of Humanitarian Affairs in 2010

- 1 Taking part in various events relevant to refugees and other voiceless people, such as the World March for Peace and Nonviolence in September last year
- 2 Advocating for refugees and urging other members of UNANZ to do so on behalf of e.g. refugees in the Osire Camp in

Namibia and Burundian refugees in the Mtabila Camp in Tanzania

- 3 Speaking at the Model UN in Tauranga during the above visit
- 4 Writing a UNANZ statement for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (posted on the site on 24 June)
- 5 Giving strong support to a branch initiative for a statement on tobacco use in NZ
- 6 Successfully requesting information about the situation of asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka in Australia
- 7 Successfully requesting the UNANZ National Council provide information on the UNANZ website about how donations can be made for victims of the Pakistan floods
- 8 Attending the Refugee Day celebrations in Auckland in June.
- 9 Taking part in the associated public protest in June and reading from the statement
- 10 Drafting a UNANZ statement (posted on the UNANZ website on 4 June) entitled "UNANZ Statement on the Use of Force by Israel against Humanitarian Aid Workers"
- 11 Attending a number of talks on the topics of humanitarian affairs; rights and disarmament, organised by both UNANZ and other groups

At the end of conference, the UNANZ Northern region Branch was privileged to meet UNDPI Information Officer Ms Gail Senty in Auckland. The UN DPI communiqué is available on UNANZ website.

Thanks to Anthony (Former UNANZ president) who invited the New York based staff to our Auckland Branch. As she was returning to New York, Gail Senty expressed a warmly welcome she received from UNANZ members in Auckland. She indicated she would support our staff should we need the relevant information from UN DPI .Last month, UNANZ received a correspondence from UNHCR Canberra: External relation Officer M Ben Farrell who has requested the feedback on issues of interest to the NGOs communities in New Zealand mainly the stakeholders who deals with refugees.

The dialogue is being planned in regards of the UNHCR priorities and work plans. Our members have requested UNHCR Canberra their input to the concerns of refugees in regard of the family reunification cases as many refugees find hard the NGOs who advocate them on individual cases. The UNHCR consultations will take place in November 2011. Jean-Paul Bizoza along with other UNANZ officers will attend this event.

While concluding this report, I would like to acknowledge the great courage and commitment to United Nations Associations of New Zealand members to our daily activities. The UNANZ appreciates the New Zealand Government support to poor countries in regard of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and commitment to international humanitarian support in particular. My special thanks to Shannon, Lachlan, Audrey, Gray, People of Tauranga, George, Robin, Morgan and Michael for your support in Humanitarian Affairs. Remember “We hope their unprecedented mission to this region will help re-focus international attention on the suffering of millions of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees.””

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