
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Seventieth session

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Item 3(f) of the provisional agenda*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure
of the Commission, including the work of the regional
institutions: disaster risk reduction**

Report of the Typhoon Committee**

I. Introduction

1. The ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee is an inter-governmental body organized under the joint auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1968 in order to promote and coordinate the planning and implementation of measures required for minimizing the loss of life and material damage caused by typhoons in Asia and the Pacific. The Typhoon Committee develops activities under three substantive components: meteorology, hydrology, and disaster risk reduction (DRR), as well as in training and research. The mission of the Typhoon Committee is to reduce the loss of lives and minimize social, economic and environmental impacts caused by typhoon-related disasters through integrated and enhanced regional collaboration.

II. Forty-sixth session of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee

2. The forty-sixth session of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee (Typhoon Committee) was held at the Maple Hotel, Bangkok, from 10 to 13 February 2014. The Session was attended by 72 participants from 10 of the 14 Members of the Typhoon Committee, namely: China; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Malaysia; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Singapore; Thailand; United States of America; and Viet Nam. It was also attended by nine observers from Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) and Tohoku University. Representatives of ESCAP, WMO and the Typhoon Committee Secretariat also attended the session.

III. Executive summary of the forty-sixth session of the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee

3. At the opening ceremony on 10 February 2014, the Dr Roman L. Kintanar Award, presented every year to institutes and organizations for their

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** The late submission of the present report is due to the late arrival of inputs from the Typhoon Committee Secretariat. The present document has been issued without formal editing.

dedicated effort in mitigating the impact and risks of disasters caused by tropical cyclones, was awarded to the Shanghai Typhoon Institute in recognition of their commitment and outstanding contribution, particularly through the publication “Tropical Cyclone Research and Review” and the assessment on the impacts of climate change on tropical cyclones in Typhoon Committee region.

4. In the western North Pacific and South China Sea, 31 named tropical cyclones formed in 2013, exceeding 30 for the first time since 1994, 13 of which reached typhoon intensity. The impact caused by tropical cyclones on Typhoon Committee Members was significant. The catastrophic effect of Haiyan (also called Yolanda in the Philippines) and storm surges, which killed over 6,000 people and affected over 16 million people in the central Philippines in November 2013, produced devastating and tragic scenes that made headlines across the globe.

5. The Typhoon Committee approved the nomination of representatives of the Typhoon Committee Secretariat and National Disaster Management Institute (NDMI) of the Republic of Korea to join the expert mission on Typhoon Haiyan organized by WMO and ESCAP. One of the main purposes of this mission is to obtain valuable insights for hazards monitoring and early warning systems, processes and products in the context of Typhoon Haiyan.

6. In contrast to what happened in the Philippines, no deaths were reported when Haiyan subsequently made landfall in November 2013 in Viet Nam; however, ten people were said to have been killed in the country during the preparation phase leading up to Haiyan’s passage. Also reported but lesser known was a serious aviation incident at an airport in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in which 49 people were killed as a result of a downburst associated with the tropical cyclone Nari. Apart from these exceptional disasters, the perennial threat of heavy rain brought by tropical cyclones led to flooding and landslides and continued to affect many Members. While there was a lot of discussion about whether Haiyan was the most intense typhoon ever, we should bear in mind that prolonged intense rain brought by a couple of unnamed weaker cyclones also managed to wreak havoc in low-latitude countries. In particular, there were significant casualties in Viet Nam in September 2013 following the passage of a tropical depression, which also brought record-breaking rain and floods to Thailand and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

7. One intriguing aspect in the case of Haiyan was that despite the availability of fairly reliable forecasts and warnings, both in terms of cyclone motion and storm surge threat, the casualty figures were still in the thousands, a stark reminder of the need for more efforts in ensuring effective responses. Although the critical factors in the case of Haiyan are yet to be ascertained, the importance for the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, in collaboration with other emergency response authorities, to go the last mile in effectively delivering and communicating the warnings to the vulnerable communities, the media and other stakeholders for timely response actions is made abundantly clear.

8. Upon Viet Nam’s urgent request to Typhoon Committee Members, WMO, RSMC Tokyo, and ADPC for technical support and advice in operational forecasting and warning of Haiyan, the international collaboration that followed pointed to the need for DRR efforts made through well-orchestrated and synergized actions. An expert mission to Viet Nam for a full analysis of the response, including whether the international support made a

difference and how the response might be improved for similar situations in the future, will be undertaken and documented.

9. Works are in progress to compile a manual of Standard Operating Procedures for coastal multi-hazards early warning systems under the Synergized Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) project, funded by the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster, and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries. With a concentration of rapid economic and population growth in coastal areas, vulnerability to typhoon-related hazards, such as extreme winds, torrential rain, flash flood and storm surge has substantially increased, this manual is intended to contribute to promoting community resilience and to improve the policy and institutional arrangements at the national, district, and community levels through integrated, effective standard operating procedures for multi-hazard early warning systems.

10. The Typhoon Committee has published *Guidelines on Urban Flood Risk Management*¹ and is making plans to launch another cross-cutting project, Experiment on Typhoon Intensity Change in Coastal Area (EXOTICA), with the implementation of field experiments and observations in the next few years to study intensity changes of landfalling typhoons.

11. For the development of impact-based forecasting and warning, operational methodology such as Common Alert Protocol (CAP) to facilitate the effective communication of warnings should be considered and further developed by Members. More effective and prudent use of online resources and crowd-sourced material should be explored with a view to promoting real-time or near real-time information exchanges among Members, especially under emergency response situations.

12. A WMO-led Severe Weather Forecast Demonstration Project for Southeast Asia is another relevant initiative that deserves the attention and support of the Typhoon Committee community in the coming years. To enhance capability in forecasting as well as DRR aspects, Members are urged to actively support or take advantage of these capacity-building opportunities where possible.

13. The Committee is currently implementing its long-term Strategic Plan in the 5-year cycle of 2012 – 2016, with short-term action plans reviewed and developed at its annual sessions.

14. Looking forward, given the ever-increasing constraints and competition in human and financial resources from different priority areas, Members and other stakeholders are invited to fully consider the above ideas and proposals in formulating plans and programmes in meeting specific challenges and in delivering clear, tangible and effective results for optimal benefits.

IV. Overview summary of Members' reports 2013

15. This overview summary is based on reports submitted by all 14 Members of the Typhoon Committee at the 8th Integrated Workshop/2nd Training and Research Coordination Group Forum in Macao, China, from 2 to 6 December 2013, details of which can be found at http://www.typhooncommittee.org/8IWS_2TRCG/Members.html.

¹ http://www.typhooncommittee.org/46th/Docs/item%2010%20Publications/UFRM_FINAL.pdf.

16. The objectives of this Overview Summary are to extract the key aspects of typhoon impact and related topical issues of regional interest in Members' countries or territories, and to consolidate the information and observations for: (a) the attention of Members' governments with a view to allocating the necessary resources strategically for the purposes of operational effectiveness and readiness, disaster mitigation and risk reduction, or leveraging available resources and support for technology transfer and capacity-building through regional cooperation initiatives; and (b) reference by sponsoring agencies with a view to coordinating and synergizing effort in the planning of relevant projects and programmes for such purposes, as well as channelling resources and aids into identified areas of gaps or needs.

17. This overview summarizes the initiatives pursued by Members under the relevant Key Results Areas (KRAs) against not only the three main components of the Typhoon Committee (Meteorology, Hydrology and DRR) but also training and research and resources mobilization, as stated in the table below. The overview summary was based on input from nine Members. Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam only provided qualitative input with no detailed breakdown, and their effort was as such not reflected in the summary table here. Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic were also not included as such information was not provided in their Members' reports.

	KRA =						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Meteorology	24	21	5	20	10	22	9
Hydrology	12	4	0	6	5	3	0
DRR	9	10	4	12	9	4	4
Training and research	8	3	1	4	2	12	4
Resource mobilization or regional collaboration	4	3	2	3	2	4	4

The KRAs are critical, overarching, priority areas of special interest for Typhoon Committee Members:

- KRA 1: Reduced Loss of Life from Typhoon-related Disasters
- KRA 2: Minimized Typhoon-related Social and Economic Impacts
- KRA 3: Enhanced Beneficial Typhoon-related Effects for the Betterment of Quality of Life
- KRA 4: Improved Typhoon-related Disaster Risk Management in Various Sectors
- KRA 5: Strengthened Resilience of Communities to Typhoon-related Disaster
- KRA 6: Improved Capacity to Generate and Provide Accurate, Timely and Understandable Information on Typhoon-related Threats
- KRA 7: Enhanced Typhoon Committee's Effectiveness, Efficiency and International Collaboration

Other news and further information in connection with the 46th Session of the UNESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee can be found at: <http://www.typhooncommittee.org>.