CAMPBELL SCIENTIFIC
WHEN MEASUREMENTS MATTER

SAVING LIVES & SAFEGUARDING LIVELIHOODS

Early Warning Project in Myanmar

Summary:

Problem: Extreme weather events have disastrous effects on quality of life and food production in Myanmar

Solution: Early Warning Systems to provide decision aid to vulnerable communities

Benefits: Improved agriculture and fishing practise, increased food security and a protected population

Implemented by: UNOPS and Campbell Scientific

UNOPS

PEOPLE CENTRED EARLY WARNINGS - PROTECTING THE POPULATION OF MYANMAR

Climate Challenges

In recent years, Myanmar has felt the devastating effects of natural disasters – placing it as the 12th most disaster-prone country in 2018. The tsunami in 2004, the catastrophic cyclones of 2006 and 2008 and regular small-scale hazards have had severe economic and social costs.

In a country where agriculture and fishing account for 38% of the GDP and employ 70% of the working population, weather conditions are vital for personal and professional security. Yet with changing weather patterns and extreme weather events, the national response capacity has been overwhelmed. Food production, income and human safety has suffered as a consequence.

The Solution

UNOPS launched a project to build Myanmar's resilience by improving Early Warning capabilities. The aim: to create an efficient and sustainable weather service that delivers warnings to vulnerable people at the right time.

Campbell Scientific provided a single solution to supply low-tech, effective warnings for both experts and the public. The system links the existing and newly installed weather, water-level and agrometeorological stations network. It then collects and centralizes data, providing experts with the means to make accurate forecasts for current and future conditions.

Communication systems have been introduced to alert the public and contribute to risk informed decision making for farmers and fishermen.

The Early Warning communications were designed to be easy-to-read and easily accessible. In Myanmar, this was achieved with a dashboard containing a colour scale system to visually communicate the risk: red (high risk) to green (low risk). If the threat becomes high, an alert is triggered and a message is delivered.

In a country where wired internet connectivity is not developed, but mobile data is common – the information is sent through the simplest format: SMS notification or an alert on the online dashboard.

Benefits

- Myanmar's Department of Meteorology & Hydrology now has an effective and reliable service to inform the public of weather conditions and issuing warnings
- Communities have time to prepare and protect in advance against incoming hazards
- Farmers and fishermen can now adopt strategies i.e.) herd migration, change fishing location
- Adaptation improves food security and income - supporting the country's overall economy
- Timely warnings prevent working in unsafe conditions and loss of life

Importance of Early Warning Projects

The project in Myanmar is an example of what can and should happen around the world with improved Early Warning capabilities. The results will save lives, foster economic development and help break the poverty cycle.

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