

Vulnerability, development and disasters

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- Vulnerability: clear, predictive definition needed – to inform preparedness policies
- Problem of people's own priorities and risk culture
- How do we connect the local with disaster risk reduction (DRR) at the national & international level?
- How to 'scale up' from community
- Role of livelihoods and governance is crucial – if poverty is major determinant of vulnerability then “good” development & “good” governance has to be the most significant risk reduction process – against the grain...

Pressure and Release (PAR) model

National & International Political Economy

Power relations

Demographics

Conflicts & War

Environmental Trends

Debt Crises

Etc

Social Structures & Power Systems

Class

Gender

Ethnicity

Other power relationships

Vulnerability component

Livelihood & its resilience

Base-line status
Well-being

Self-protection

Social Protection

Governance

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Hazard

Flood

Cyclone

Earthquake

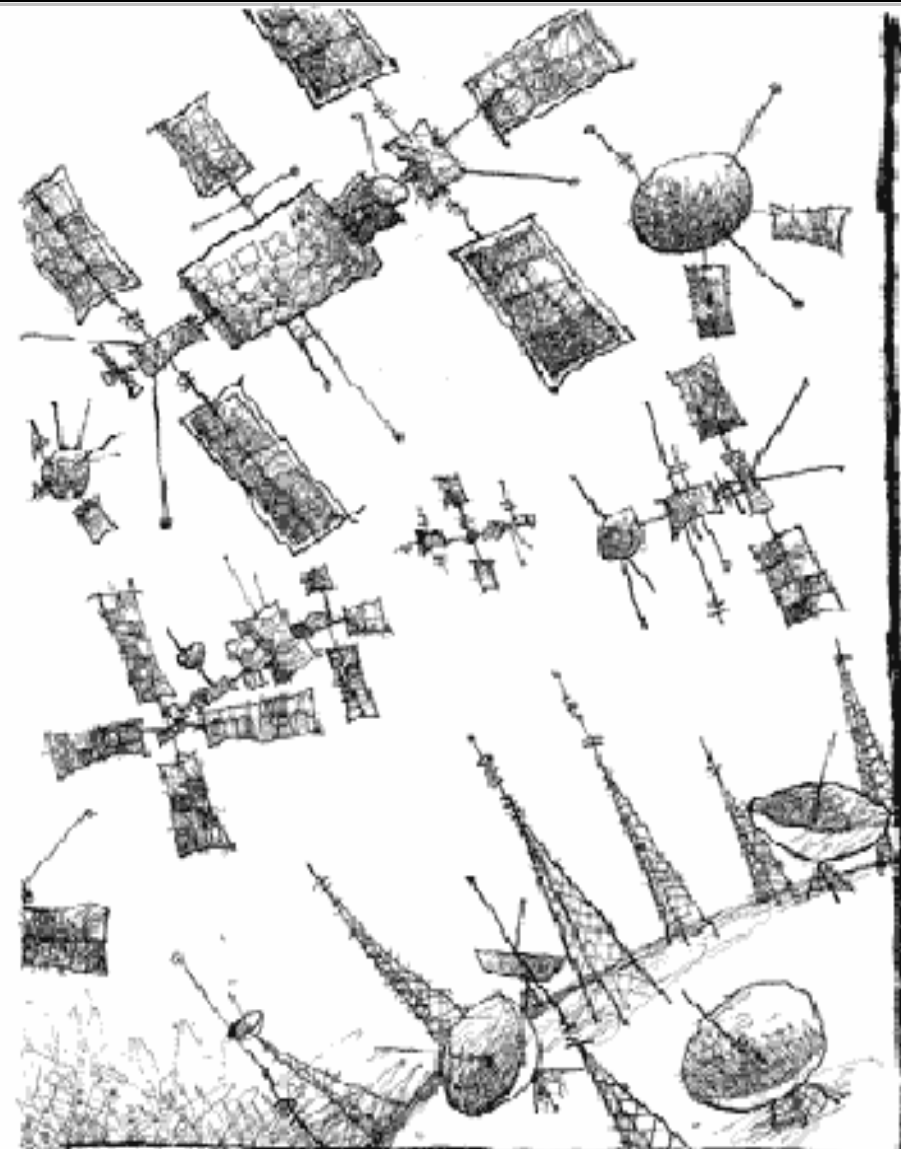
Tsunami

Volcanic eruption

Drought

Landslide

Biological



TECHNOLOGY USED TO BEAM HORRIFIC LIVE IMAGES OF SOUTH ASIAN TSUNAMI INTO OUR LIVING ROOMS.

TECHNOLOGY USED TO DETECT SOUTH ASIAN TSUNAMI.

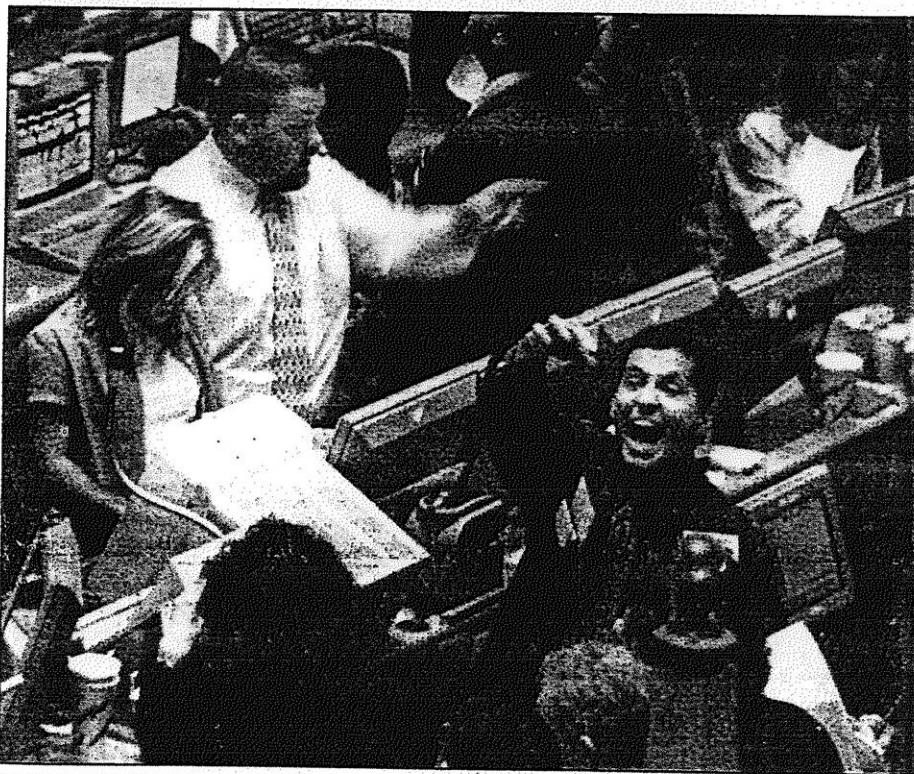
A tale of two catastrophes



CRISIS IN WALL STREET:
A hedge fund totters and the West organises a \$3.5bn rescue package



CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
At least 11,000 dead, millions are homeless and the West organises a \$100m rescue package



Traders on Wall Street buying and selling shares in September (left) while two-year-old Felix Silva cries at a shelter for evacuees in Nicaragua this week after the disastrous mudslide

PHOTOGRAPHS: left, MITCH JACOBSON and OSWALDO RIVAS

The Guardian 7 November 1998

After Hurricane Mitch: severe destruction in Central America

A were there on the night of Wednesday called "the biggest threat to the global financial system in 50 years". At least 11,000 dead, thousands more missing, 2 million homeless, Mr Clinton ordered people running LTCM had an exposure of \$900 billion — 250 times their capital base. ard Davies, had no sleep for 48 hours as he coped with the London end of the package. global community. The World Bank has sent \$15 million to Honduras and Nicaragua for



<http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2004/49307/index.html>

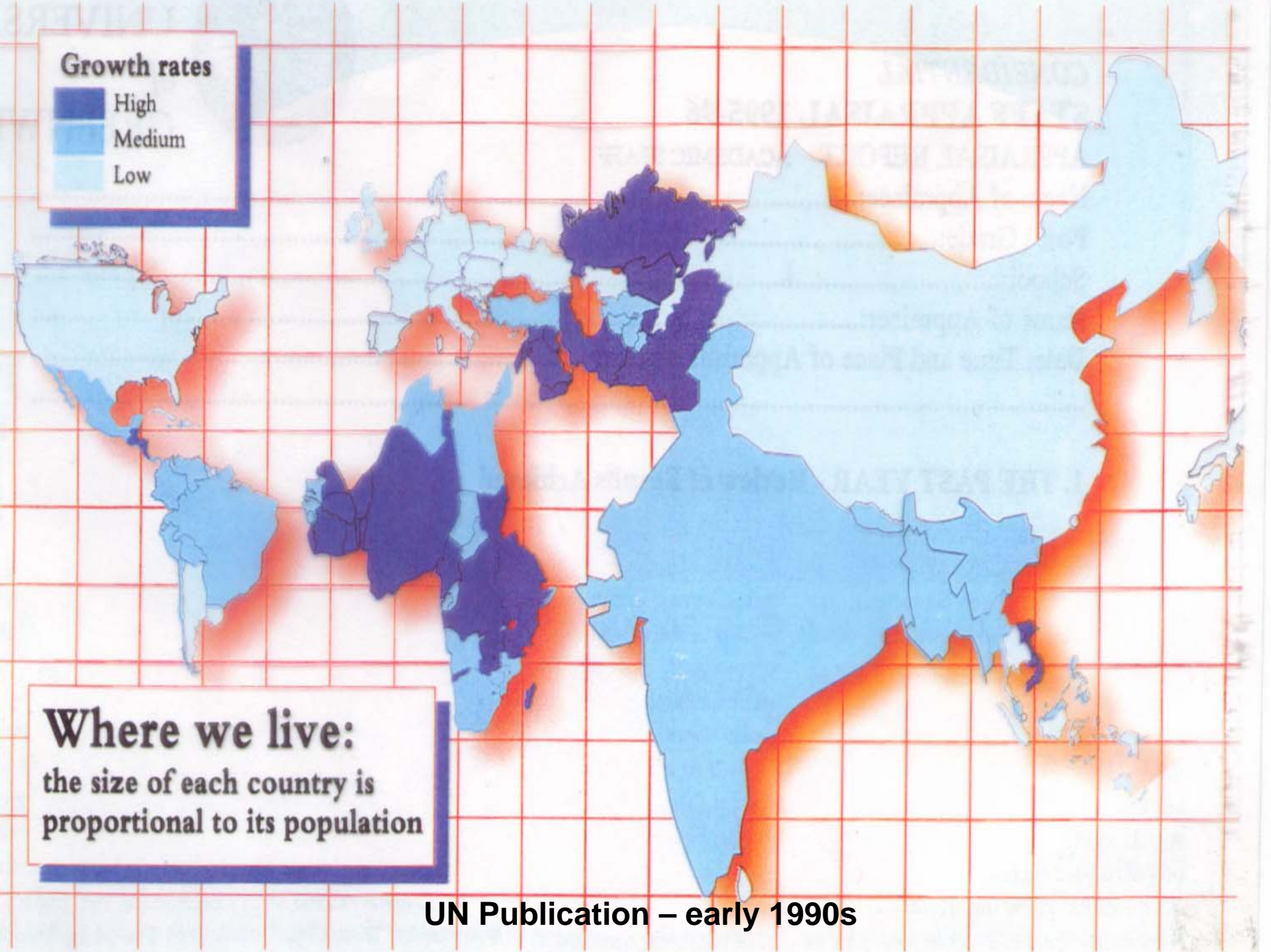
Growth rates



Where we live:

the size of each country is proportional to its population

UN Publication – early 1990s

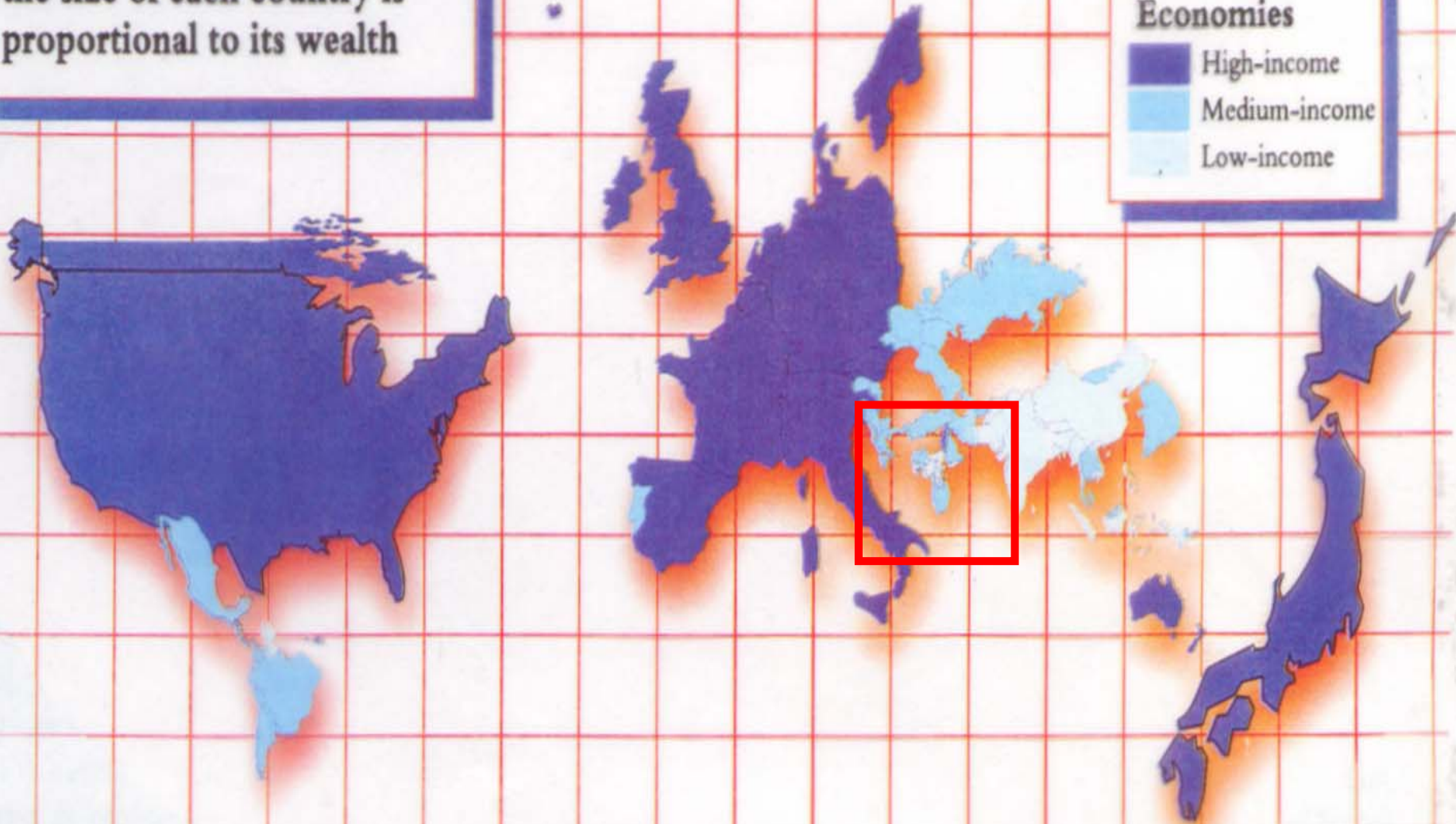


How rich we are:

the size of each country is proportional to its wealth

Economies

- High-income
- Medium-income
- Low-income



Estimates of some avoidable deaths

12 million children under five die of easily preventable diseases *per year* (WHO)

1900 to 1999

the number of deaths in all age groups from *all* sudden onset hazards was less than 11 million...

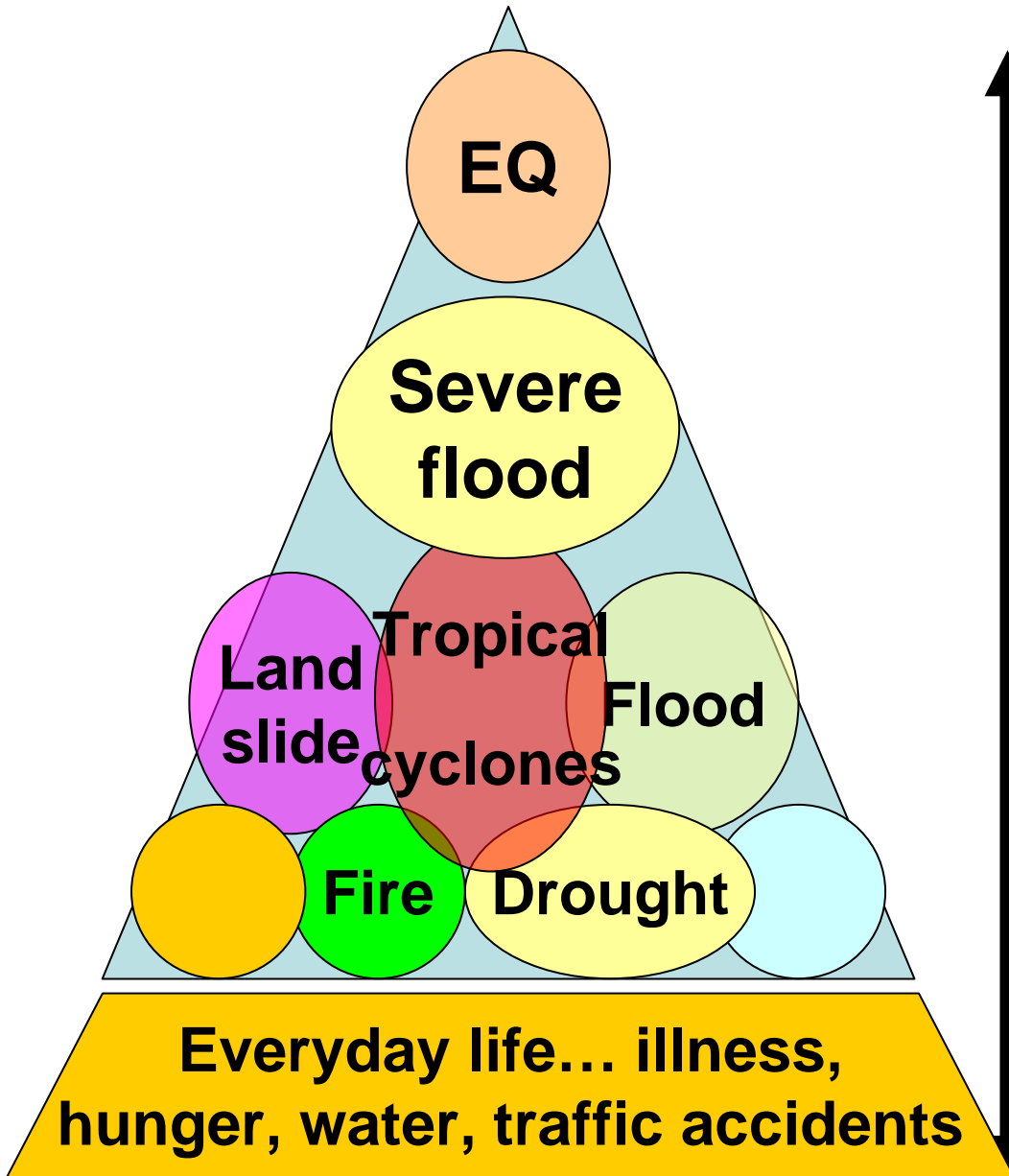
Poor people & risk priorities

- Natural hazards may not be at the top of people's priorities
- Daily life – the pursuit of livelihoods – takes precedence above all
- Changing people's perception of risk and their behaviour is crucial but ***difficult!***
- Reducing disaster vulnerability requires FIRST strengthening livelihoods AND improving social protection (priorities of the powerful through good governance)

*“Any idiot can face a crisis.
It is day-to-day living that
wears you out.”*

Anton Chekhov

Risk hierarchy



Extreme but infrequent

Affected people: "Little we can do about them.."

Damaging & their within memory

Common & coped with

Priorities!

Drought zone

Flood zone

**Where does
community
risk reduction fit?**

Earthquake
zone

Long-term recovery issues

- What were pre-existing vulnerabilities?
- Does relief include recovery issues?
 - Asset recovery/ replacement
 - Livelihood recovery/ substitution
- Is hazard preparedness built in (to reduce future disasters)?
- Will life be as (bad as) before? Recovery of *status quo ante* is not very attractive to many
- Will pre-existing power relations be reinstated?
 - Gender
 - Caste
 - Ethnicity/ Aceh & Tamil conflicts

Vulnerability reduction = Development?

- Protect and strengthen livelihoods of the vulnerable
- Improve people's base-line conditions
- Improve quantity and quality of assets available for income-generating activities
- But preserve natural sources of protection – e.g. mangroves
- Reduce liability of assets to damage or loss in a given hazard
- Reduce risk of disruption of employment activities by hazards



Sand dams: low-tech weapons against drought & climate change

16 November 2006

New Scientist news service Catherine Brahic



Sand dams in Kenya