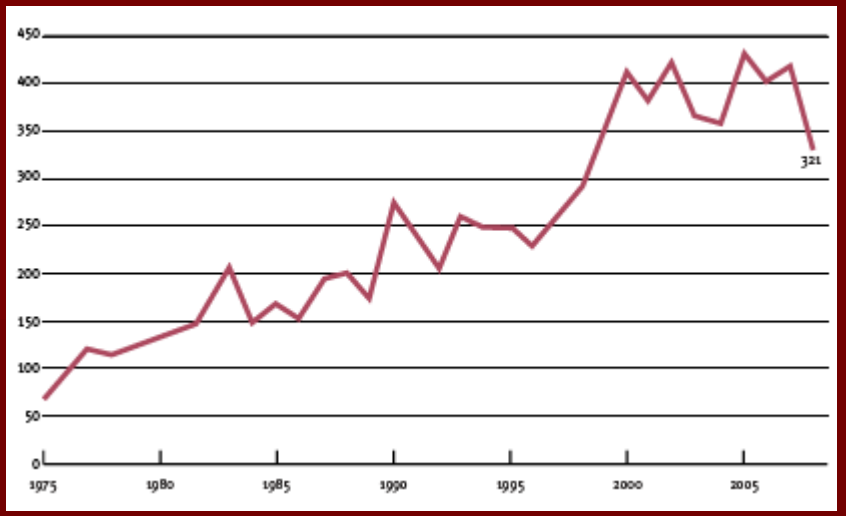
Climate Information and Emergency Preparedness

More statistics



- Disasters are increasing in frequency, scale and impact

- Weather-related disasters increased significantly
  - increased from 195/year (1997-98) to 365/year (2000-06)
  - 98% of 250 million people affected in a typical year (1998-2007) suffered from climate-related disasters
    - particularly droughts and floods; earthquakes devastating but rare
  - by 2015, could grow by 54% to 375+ million people affected each year [Oxfam]

- and small-scale but high-frequency events (eg. annual flooding in South Asia) can cumulatively cause more damage than large events.

- Disasters disproportionately affect the poor
  - 65% of disasters (1991-2005) occur in developing countries
  - over 95% of people killed in developing countries

- Preparedness works
  - number killed per 100,000 is one-tenth of that in 1950s
  - $1 of disaster reduction, $2-10 saved in avoided costs
  - UN: better government action could have saved many of the 235,000 killed in 2008.

How can climate info help?

- EARLY WARNING allows governments and communities to better ADAPT, resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from disasters
  - short-term/crisis: storm, flood, lightening
  - medium-term/preparedness: slope protection, dike creation, coastline protection (hazard mapping)
  - long-term: new challenges (eg. drier forest litter, spread of vector-borne disease)

What climate information is important?

- Policy makers need to understand social and economic costs for issue to rise on priority list, as well as political costs of inaction
- So….
  - decadal – the time it takes for policy makers to make major decisions and marshal resources
  - down-scaled to match geography of governance structures
  - needs to be consensus in scientific community
  - packaged in terms of likelihood (certainty), not variability (uncertainty)