AMERICAS

Experts: Strict building codes saved lives in powerful Chile earthquake
CNN, 3 April 2014 (Chile)
http://cnn.it/1h88Aa

Reporting that the implementing strict building codes and rigorous evacuation plans, the awareness and preparedness of millions of Chileans who live along an arc of volcanoes kept the death toll -- only six by Wednesday, 2 April, afternoon -- low after an 8.2-magnitude earthquake. The article compares the most recent Chilean earthquake with that in Haiti which killed at least 230,000 people. It is underlined that these disasters demonstrate that implementation of the building codes, enforcement mechanisms and public awareness do make difference.

Architects, engineers are Good Samaritans, finally
Business record, 2 April 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1j4DSha

Reporting on adopting the new legislation which makes architects, engineers and a range of property experts members of a disaster relief crew. As members of the team they will be protected from liability lawsuits under the Iowa Tort Claims Act.

Bill would ease tax burden after natural disaster
The News-Gazette, 2 April 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1lqOM1

Reporting on the new bill aimed at easing the tax burden on small businesses in Illinois that have to rebuild after a natural disaster. This bill provides the small businesses with the similar protections as those which have already been put in place for the homeowners.

Bill streamlines Virginia homeland security efforts
The Roanoke Time, 2 April 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1i4gxsI

Reporting on new legislation that streamlines Virginia’s ability to keep the communities safe by putting the homeland security planning and preparedness functions in the same place as the emergency and disaster responses.

Slide erased their homes, but maybe not their loans
Seattle Times business reporter, 2 April 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1frslm9

Reporting that in the aftermath of the Snohomish County mudslide, surviving homeowners face the possibility having to repay mortgages on homes that no longer exist.

ASIA PACIFIC

How effective is Pakistan’s disaster authority?
IRIN, 3 April 2014 (Pakistan)
Reporting on the current challenges in the disaster management in Pakistan. In particular, a number of operational and institutional flaws are highlighted in delivering humanitarian relief in the context of disasters of various kinds. It is also observed that the bodies entrusted by the legislature with the disaster management functions lack coordination, expertise and suffer from poor governance.

**With Plane Still Missing, Legal Moves for Payouts Start**
The New York Times, 1 April 2014 (China)
http://nyti.ms/1ibzBGx

Reporting on various prospects of the compensation for families of 227 passengers of Flight MH370.

It is noted that the insurance companies have already made payments to some relatives. In addition, families can expect to receive compensation from Malaysia Airlines because of guarantees in an international treaty. They can also opt to sue the airline for more damages, or sue Boeing or a component manufacturer. However, it is observed that any lawsuit could take years to conclude.

**Litigation is inevitable after the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370**
Campbell Law Observer, 31 March 2014 (Malaysia)
http://bit.ly/1pW9uIL

The tragic disappearance of Flight MH370 implicates a variety of international legal issues, including which nation is responsible for leading the formal investigation once the wreckage is found and the liability of Malaysia Airlines (and possibly Boeing) to the families of Flight MH370 passengers.

Looking for the replies on the questions linked to the search and recovery effort as well as for the issues of investigation, liability and compensation, the article analyses the available legal avenues under the international aviation law, such as the international treaty instruments and institutional mechanisms within the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

**Politicians and Corporates Ensure Acrid Haze Returns**
The Diplomat, 1 April 2014 (Indonesia)

Reporting on each year, about 200 million people across large swathes of Southeast Asia are forced to choke on dreaded smog caused by massive burning off in Indonesia, where the culprits have enjoyed a long-standing impunity.

A significant step forward in this regard is the willingness of the Indonesian parliament to finally ratify the ASEAN Agreement on Trans-boundary Haze Pollution, 12 years after the treaty was first adopted by the bloc’s 10 member states.

In addition, the article addresses the legal possibilities to invoke the liability of the companies and highlights the way for ordinary citizens to launch a legal action against companies that violate the laws.

**EUROPE**

**Climate catastrophes in other countries will hit UK’s food security**
The Guardian, 31 March 2014 (UK)
http://bit.ly/1hrM1w7

Reporting that reliance on imported food and rising population leaves Britain exposed and vulnerable to climate shocks overseas, in particular when countries exporting food supplies increase their export taxes or even put the legislative ban on the food export because of climate emergencies at home.

The article notes that while the IPCC report does not single out impacts for Britain, it says Europe as a whole can expect further economic costs from flooding and extreme heat.
Indonesia must vote to protect its forests
Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2 April 2014
http://bit.ly/1dQcqVw

Reporting that deforestation is a major source of the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, and saving Indonesia’s last-standing forests could bolster the region’s and the world’s defences against the impacts of a changing climate.

The author claims that since the adoption of the country’s Basic Forestry Law in 1967, in the name of development at any cost, the government of Indonesia has been handing over forests and peat lands, including the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples, to companies eager to profit from the country’s fertile lands. Now the inhabitants of Indonesia by the vote for the national and regional legislators as well as for president four months later may support the legislative initiatives protecting the forests and may influence the core policy choices in this domain.