AFRICA

African States sign declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction
Swazi Oberson, 19 May 2014
http://bit.ly/1n4w1Wh

Reporting on a declaration signed by African States during the Third African Ministerial Meeting for Disaster Risk Reduction held within the framework of the Fifth Africa Regional Platform for DRR which was held from May 13 to 16, 2014, in Abuja, Nigeria. In the declaration, African States recognised disaster risk reduction as an effective means to achieve resilience through prevention, mitigation and preparedness to enable nations and communities to absorb loss and damage, minimise impacts and move forward.

AMERICAS

Hickenlooper signs disaster relief legislation
KJCT8.com, 19 May 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1sYU5H6

Reporting that the state will pay the property taxes of individuals who lost their homes in Colorado floods or wildfires last year with legislation that Gov. John Hickenlooper has signed into law. The Democratic governor signed the proposal Saturday in Lyons, one of the places hardest hit by flooding. He also signed four other bills dealing with last year's disasters.

Cold weather didn’t make water crisis ‘major disaster,’ FEMA says
Charleston Gazette, 21 May 2014 (USA)
http://bit.ly/1ojYXGE

Reporting that, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, cold weather in January and February did not rise to the level of a “natural catastrophe” sufficient to make January’s water crisis in the Charleston area a “major disaster.” For the second time, FEMA denied Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin’s request to declare the water crisis a “major disaster.” Doing so could have brought the region more federal money to reimburse costs associated with the water crisis.

ASIA PACIFIC

In meeting with Sewol families, Pres. Park says special law is needed
The Hankyoreh, 17 May 2014 (South Korea)
http://bit.ly/1oWINh

Reporting that on May 16, President Park Geun-hye said she thinks it is necessary to pass a special law and assign a special prosecutor to investigate the tragic sinking of the Sewol. That day, one month after the Sewol sunk, Park met with a 17-person delegation from the Countermeasures Committee for Victims, Missing Passengers, and Survivors in the Sewol Ferry Disaster. Responding to the families’ demands for the passage of a special act to uncover the truth, Park said that she agreed on the necessity of a special law and also that a special prosecutor should be appointed, the Blue House said.
Anticorruption bills gain momentum after tragedy
Inside Korea, 21 May 2014 (South Korea)
http://bit.ly/1nv3lkQ

Reporting that lawmakers are seeking to pass a set of anticorruption bills by June to ensure public safety and eliminate government cronyism to tackle the fallout from the ferry disaster that left more than 300 people dead or missing. Lawmakers hope the new legislations will root out decades-old government practices potentially harmful to public safety.

EUROPE

Floods in Serbia: Humanitarian aid delivery made easier
in Serbia, 19 May 2014 (Serbia)
http://bit.ly/1k87AUr

Reporting that Serbia's Customs Administration has issued an order to all customs posts to view the humanitarian aid process as a priority and it simplified the procedure of the aid delivery to their destinations in flood-hit parts of Serbia as much as possible.

Taxpayers facing ambulance service legal bill for inquests
Yorkshire Post, 20 May 2014 (UK)
http://bit.ly/1n4N5sy

Reporting that Yorkshire Ambulance Service has hired a leading barrister for the inquests in Warrington where the actions of staff at the former South Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service will come under scrutiny. At the original inquests into the disaster at Sheffield Wednesday's ground in which 96 people died, a cut-off time of 3.15pm on April 15, 1989 was controversially set amid claims no one trapped in the crush could have been saved after this time. One of the main questions the coroner Lord Justice Goldring has set for inquest jurors to answer relates to the role of the ambulance service by examining its emergency response to the emerging disaster and considering if more could have been done for those who died.

3 face charges in Turkey mine disaster amid anger
KWQC, 18 May 2014 (Turkey)

Reporting that in the face of widespread anger over Turkey's worst mining disaster, prosecutors arrested three people, including a company manager, on charges of negligence. The three were also accused of causing the death of more than one person, a charge that doesn't imply intent, prosecutor Bekir Sahiner said at a news conference in the western town of Soma, where 301 coal miners were killed in the tragedy. The arrests follow allegations by miners that the company failed to heed safety concerns and that government inspections had been superficial.

Turkey's mining labor safety laws more advanced than ILO's rules: Labor minister
Hurriyet Daily News, 21 May 2014 (Turkey)
http://bit.ly/1gl5Qas

Reporting that in response to criticism about the inefficient inspection of mines, Labour Minister Faruk Çelik has argued that Turkey's law on mining labour safety are more advanced than the requirements proposed by the International Labour Organization (ILO).