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PRESS RELEASE

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THIRD ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN MALAYSIA

Governments agree to commit more resources to disaster risk reduction at national and local levels

(Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia) Government officials from more than 80 Asian countries who gathered in Malaysia 2–4 December for a three-day Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, agreed to commit more resources to disaster risk reduction measures to better protect their countries against disasters.

Asia Pacific is by far the most affected region by disasters and climate change is a major threat that will further aggravate the vulnerability of millions of people in this part of the world.

In the final Kuala Lumpur declaration, governments called for allocating 10 per cent of the humanitarian aid to disaster reduction measures, encouraged more public private partnerships and proposed to set voluntary targets for public spending on multi year disaster risk reduction programmes at the national and local levels that will help reducing the human and economic losses due to disasters. The initiative to allocate 10 per cent of humanitarian aid for disaster risk reduction was proposed by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in his message to the participants and was strongly supported by the Malaysian government who was hosting the conference.

As the international level, this would amount to around \$US 750 million per year from humanitarian aid budgets.

“The importance of setting specific financing targets for disaster risk reduction is becoming increasingly accepted by governments. We will not reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals unless we invest more in risk reduction” said Salvano Briceño, Director of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat.

Governments also recognized the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action as an important adaptation tool to reduce the future impact of weather-related disasters and the fundamental role of public awareness, education and media as a starting point for all other disaster risk reduction initiatives.

The Government of the Republic of Korea will be the fourth country to host the Next Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled for 2010.

Note

1. The estimate of \$US 750 million from international humanitarian aid was calculated by taking 10% of the mid-point between two figures: i. the average annual international humanitarian funding over the period 2003 -2007: US\$ 8.12 billion; and ii. the average annual international humanitarian funding over the same period, excluding the year 2005: US\$ 6.85 billion. (*The year 2005 was unusual in that international humanitarian funding reached US\$ 13.2 billion due to the massive response to the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami*). Source: Financial Tracking System, UN/OCHA (July 2008)