



Press Release – *UNDER EMBARGO until 19 Sept 2011:*

19 Sept 2011

EARTHQUAKE HITS AS DISASTER RESPONDERS TRAINING OPENS IN DHAKA

As the strong 6.9 magnitude earthquake shook Bangladesh on Sunday, distinguished guests and trainees were gathering for the opening of a new disaster response training course for local communities – the first line of defense in any disaster.

Distinguished guests at the Community Action for Disaster Response course (CADRE) launch at the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) Mirpur 10, Dhaka - **Mr. M Aslam Alam**, Secretary, Disaster Management and Relief Division (DMRD) Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MOFDM) Govt. of Bangladesh, **Mr. Ahsan Zakir**, Director General, Disaster Management Bureau (DMB), **Mr. Khondoker Jakaria Khaled**, Deputy Secretary General, BDRCS, and **Brigadier General (Retd.) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah**, Director General, FSCD – together pledged to continue to support community disaster preparedness in Bangladesh.

The damaging quake 495 km away in Sikkim saw residents of Dhaka evacuating buildings in fear. It was a stark reminder of the need for communities in Bangladesh to be prepared for emergencies. With CADRE, trainees from the BDRCS, the FSCD and representatives from NGOs BRAC, CARE and Oxfam will develop their skills in first response, to assist victims of earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires and other disastrous events. The three-day CADRE training is ongoing until 21 Sept 2011, to be followed by a CADRE Training for Instructors, from 23 Sept -30 Sept 2011. When Bangladeshi CADRE instructors are trained, they will be able to train communities in Bangladesh, so people know what to do for the best in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

The training program is being coordinated by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand and a Regional Office in Dhaka. CADRE is part of the Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER), funded by United States Agency for International Development – Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID-OFDA) and American Red Cross (ARC) and is running in nine Asian countries. CADRE teaches emergency medical skills, management of mass casualties, collapsed structure rescue, water safety and how to keep family and neighbours safe. Participants are tested through practical simulations and practice sessions. The Senior Instructors are from FSCD and from the Philippine Bureau of Fire Protection, with many years of experience in Medical First Response, Community Search and Rescue and Disaster Management.

Mr. M Aslam Alam, Secretary, DMRD, MOFDM of the Govt. of Bangladesh said; “Tonight’s earthquake is a timely reminder that there are many hazards for Bangladesh. A sincere thank you to our development partners and to everyone for attending CADRE. We welcome your support to Bangladesh as we dedicate ourselves to developing our disaster preparedness.”

Special Guest Mr. Ahsan Zakir, Director General, DMB, said; “DMB is a long-term partner of ADPC in our efforts to build capacity for disaster preparedness – and the community is the first line of response.”

Special Guest Mr. Khondoker Jakaria Khaled, Deputy Secretary General, BDRCS said; “I would like to thank our donors USAID and ARC for their excellent support, and the instructors and facilitators from ADPC and FSCD. BDRCS works extensively throughout Bangladesh with communities and volunteers. This training will support our work.”

Chief of Party PEER, ADPC Mr. Sajedul Hasan, said; “PEER is committed to assisting communities throughout Asia in disaster preparedness. I would like to thank our distinguished guests for their invaluable support to PEER in making this happen” Chairman, Brigadier General (Retd.) Abu Nayeem Md. Shahidullah Director General, Fire Service and Civil Defence said; “Professional disaster responders can’t respond alone – they need the community support. This is a great program, for the common good of the people of Bangladesh.”

CADRE course participant Ms. Ferdousi Begum Rozy, BDRCS volunteer, Sylhet said: “CADRE has a very important community focus – we are motivated to develop our skills and teach disaster preparedness in communities throughout Bangladesh.”

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- **Media representatives are cordially invited to attend the Final Simulation exercises for the CADRE training, featuring live disaster simulation exercises (water rescue, resuscitation, triage etc.) based on an emergency scenario – on Weds 21 Sept 2011 starting at 10am - FSCD. There will be good opportunities for filming and photographs, as well as interviews with key personnel.**
 - For more information on attending the Simulation Exercises, as well as general information and photographs, please contact:
 - Mr. Murad Billah, Country Coordinator, Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) - email: muradbillah@gmail.com tel: 01711-184276
 - or / Esther Lake, ADPC / PEER Communication and Information Coordinator - e-mail: esther@adpc.net tel: +66 (0) 2298 0681 ext 407
 - **More information available on PEER website - www.adpc.net/peer**
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Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC): Established in 1986 at the initiatives of three UN agencies – WMO, UNDP and UNOCHA, ADPC supports the advancement of safer communities and sustainable development, through implementing programs and projects that reduce the impact of disasters upon countries and communities in Asia and the Pacific. With more than 100 staffs from 20 different countries, ADPC's activities cover four thematic areas: Climate Risk Management (CRM), Disaster Management System (DMS), Public Health in Emergencies (PHE), and Urban Disaster Risk Management (UDRM). ADPC also provides 20 regional training courses.

Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) : A regional training program initiated in 1998 by the U.S. Agency for International Development's, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) strengthening disaster response capacities in nine countries in Asia. www.adpc.net/peer
