



## Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

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979/69, 24th Floor, SM Tower, Paholyothin Road, Samsen Nai, Phayathai, Bangkok, 10400, Thailand  
Tel: (02) 2980681-92, Fax: (02)2980012-13, E-mail: [adpc@adpc.net](mailto:adpc@adpc.net), Website: [www.adpc.net](http://www.adpc.net)

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**BANGKOK, THAILAND**

### **8.6 magnitude earthquake tests Asia-Pacific disaster preparedness**

**Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) commends the timely and effective actions of many disaster management partners, Governments, National Disaster Management Agencies, Emergency Responders and community members to the earthquake and tsunami warning on 11 April 2012 – but warns that disaster preparedness must remain a high priority and be continually enhanced throughout the region.**

Dr. Bhichit Rattakul, ADPC said; “This huge quake was a reminder that disaster can strike at any time. As Thailand celebrates the Songkran New Year holiday, many families were on the beaches of southern Thailand – the initial fear was that this could lead to a repeat of the devastation caused by the 2004 tsunami.”

“Much has been done since then by ADPC and our regional partners; ASEAN and Governments have demonstrated commitment to disaster preparedness and risk reduction, and communities have raised awareness. But we still have a long way to go for a fully disaster-prepared Asia.”

The quake, which struck at 3.38pm Bangkok time, was followed by aftershocks and triggered regional tsunami warnings. On the Andaman coast of Thailand, people evacuated to higher ground for several hours. Beaches in southern Thailand, including the popular resorts of Phuket, Phi Phi, Krabi and Khao Lak all have tsunami evacuation routes and information. Following the 2004 tsunami, ADPC worked with community leaders, Thailand’s Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) and NGOS including Thai Red Cross Society in devastated areas of coastal Phang Nga province, to help set up more effective response systems. On 11 April 2012, Thailand’s tsunami warning towers sounded alarms prompting the rapid evacuation.

“This time, at-risk areas were 99.5 % evacuated within 40-50 minutes,” said Dr Bhichit. “With effective early warning systems and high levels of community awareness, people won’t be caught unawares again. The challenge now is to enhance disaster management systems and keep up these levels of preparedness and awareness.”

In Sri Lanka, a warning message was sent from Mr. N.M.S.I. Arambepola, ADPC Executive Director a.i. – providing early information to the Sri Lankan Disaster Management Center (DMC), and Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB).

“I rapidly informed all appropriate agencies immediately after ADPC sent me the information from Bangkok. They received my message as the first information on the earthquake and tsunami warning. They thanked me for the alertness shown by ADPC.” said Mr. Arambepola.

ADPC also set up a web page within minutes of the quake, with information, alerts and links, and utilized social media to spread the warning and enhance community response.

This region-wide test of early warning and preparedness demonstrates yet again the vital importance of regional collaboration to enhance disaster preparedness and strengthen response systems – towards a safer Asia-Pacific.

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## **NOTES TO MEDIA**



Established in 1986 at the initiative of three UN agencies – WMO, UNDP and UNOCHA – Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) is an organization which 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 staff from 20 different countries, ADPC’s activities span climate risk management, disaster management systems, public health in emergencies, and urban disaster risk management. ADPC also provides 20 regional training courses in many aspects of disaster preparedness, management and response.

**[www.adpc.net](http://www.adpc.net)**

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### **For further information contact:**

**Esther Lake**

ADPC Communications, Information and Network Coordinator

[esther@adpc.net](mailto:esther@adpc.net)