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PRESS RELEASE

UN/ISDR 2007/03
Geneva

An on-line game to teach children how to save lives and livelihoods

As part of its current campaign on education called “Disaster risk reduction starts at school”, the secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is launching today an on-line game aimed at teaching children how to build safer villages and cities against disasters. Children will learn how the location and construction materials can make a difference when disaster strikes and how early warning systems, evacuation plans and education can save lives and livelihoods.

The game called “Stop disaster game” is a free on-line game aimed at children aged 9 to 16. It has been produced by Playerthree, an English company and can be downloaded from Internet in less than three minutes. Players have different types of missions to accomplish within a specific budget and time limit before a simulated hurricane, earthquake, flood, tsunami or wildfire strikes. They have to choose between five scenarios with three levels of difficulty and the winners will be the ones who save more people and livelihoods.

“Education is essential for reducing children risks to disasters”, says Salvano Briceño, Director of the UN/ISDR secretariat in Geneva. “Children are the future mayors, architects, builders, school teachers and citizens of tomorrow. If we teach them about disaster risk reduction from an early age, they will understand why it is vital to build houses, schools and hospitals in safe locations, to have early warning systems in place and reduce disasters.”

The on-line game is an educational tool that contains a number of teacher packages, fact sheets and videos which will allow children, teachers and parents to further understand the importance of disaster risk reduction.

“At the moment, the game is only available on Internet. We are aware that not all children have easy access to Internet and we are already preparing a DVD format to reach more youngsters in remote areas in Africa, Asia and Pacific or Latin America and Caribbean”, says Salvano Briceño. “We are also thinking of adding new scenarios such as drought which is a devastating disaster in many parts of the world.”

The English version is being launched today but a multi-language version will be released during a major event on the International Disaster Reduction Day on 10 October 2007.

The UN/ISDR previously produced another board game called Riskland, aimed at children aged 6 to 10. The game has been a very successful educational tool and has been translated in many local languages, available at www.unisdr.org.

You can find the game on: www.stopdisastersgame.org