



**Name of Event: [Featured Event] Natural Hazards, Unnatural Disasters – Economics of Effective Prevention**

**Date of Event: May 11, 2011**

**Panellists:**

- Mr. Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (Chair)
- Mr. Matthias Frei, Correspondent and Presenter, BBC America (Moderator)
- Dr. Apurva Sanghi, Senior Economist and Team Leader, World Bank (Presenter)
- Mr. Dato' Seri Mohamed Aziz, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia
- Ms María del Pilar Cornejo, Minister, National Secretariat for Risk Management, Ecuador
- Mr. Kenichi Suganuma, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan and Chief Consulate, Geneva
- Ms Vanessa Rosales Ardón, President, National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response, Costa Rica

**1) Outline**

This panel discussion, based on the main findings of the joint World Bank – UN report: *"Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: Economics of Effective Prevention"* ([www.worldbank.org/preventingdisasters](http://www.worldbank.org/preventingdisasters)), brought together a number of disaster risk management experts and policymakers. Earthquakes, droughts, floods and storms are natural hazards, whereas unnatural disasters comprise the death and damage resulting from human acts of omission. The report argues that prevention is possible, and examines how to do this cost-effectively.

**2) Key messages, outcomes, recommendations**

- Governments should invest in disaster prevention
- Through adequate forward planning, much of the devastation and loss of life caused by natural hazards can be avoided

- It is cheaper to invest in preventing unnatural disasters than to recover from their effects
- Governments need to provide their population with information, incentives and adequate infrastructure through strong institutions.
- The report notes that in the future, growing cities and a changing climate will shape the disaster prevention landscape, making prevention an ever more pressing issue.

### **3) Conclusions**

- Preventing deaths and destruction from disasters pays, if done right
- Prevention pays but you do not always have to pay more for prevention
- Cost-effective preventive measures include greater access to hazard-related information and regulatory changes to remove distortions, such as abolishing rent and price controls and providing secure titles to encourage better repair and upkeep of buildings
- In certain cases increased spending *is* warranted and even modest increases, and greater sharing of data internationally, can have enormous benefits