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PRESS RELEASE

PREVENTING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION FROM NATURAL DISASTER Regional Launch of "Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention"

Bangkok, Thailand – Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), in collaboration with the World Bank and funding support from Royal Norwegian Government, is organizing the regional launch of "Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters: The Economics of Effective Prevention" on Wednesday, 8 December 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The 250-page report, jointly developed by the World Bank and the United Nations, says that annual global losses from natural disasters could triple to \$185 billion by the end of this century. Climate change could then add \$28-68 billion more in damages each year from tropical cyclones alone. The report warns that the number of people exposed to natural hazards in large cities could double to 1.5 billion by 2050.

The report takes an in-depth look at the cost effectiveness of disaster prevention. It targets directly at the world's finance ministers and looks at disasters primarily through an economic lens. Economists emphasize self-interest to explain how people choose the amount of prevention, insurance, and coping. But lenses can distort as well as sharpen images, so the report also draws from other disciplines: psychology to examine how people may misperceive risks, political science to understand voting patterns, and nutrition science to see how stunting in children after a disaster impairs cognitive abilities and productivity as adults much later.

The launching event will bring regional experts in the field of economics and natural disaster together for a discussion on the report and its implication for Asia and the Pacific region. The invited panels include: Dr. Apurva Sanghi, Senior Economist of the World Bank; Dr. Naris Chaiyasoot, Director General at the Fiscal Policy Office, Ministry of Finance of Royal Thai Government; Dr. Patrick Fox, Head of Disaster Management Coordinator for Southeast Asia of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Dr. Mathew A. Verghis, Lead Economist of the World Bank; Dr. Xuan Zengpei, Director, Information and communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction Division of UNESCAP.

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Notes to Editors

- **Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC):** Established in 1986 at the initiatives of three UN agencies – WMO, UNDP and UNOCHA, ADPC is a leading regional 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 the Head Office based in Bangkok, Thailand, ADPC works throughout the Asia and Pacific region.