

Invitation to an Open Forum: Psychosocial Response to Disasters Focus on Children in Asia

The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is hosting an **Open Forum on Psychosocial Response to Disasters with Focus on Children in Asia** at the Imperial Queen's Park Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand on **26 January 2010 from 9am-4pm.**

Internationally-renowned experts and practitioners working with disaster-affected children will give keynote speeches*. **Le Ly Hayslip**; globally-renowned writer, humanitarian and activist from Vietnam, will lead the afternoon discussion session and press conference. Her autobiography 'When Heaven and Earth Changed Places' became Oliver Stone's film 'Heaven and Earth'. Le Ly Hayslip is a child survivor herself and founded the Global Village Foundation which is supporting children in the aftermath of disasters in Vietnam.

Honorary guests include **H.E.Ms Merete Fjeld Brattested, Ambassador of Norway.**

Attendance is entirely FREE, including coffee reception at 10.30am and/or buffet lunch at 12.30pm. You are welcome to share your experience and expertise during the discussion session starting at 1.30pm. There is some space available for sharing of organizational materials/brochures on psychosocial issues and children in disasters.

The Open Forum is the first time the specific needs of children in Asia affected by disasters have been addressed in this way. This is a vital opportunity to debate how useful current psychosocial techniques are for children in Asia. Guests at the event include experts from Ministries of Health, Non-Governmental Organisations, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies, academic institutions and key media representatives, from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. This is a significant opportunity to hear the issues faced by the children of this disaster-prone region, and understand ways to support them.

The Open Forum is the opening event to a three-day cross-sector workshop, where new psychosocial techniques will be shared and developed. ADPC, with funding support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is undertaking a wider project on Psychosocial Response to Disasters, which will strengthen national capacity throughout Asia to cope with the psychosocial and mental health effects of disasters and emergencies.

ADPC would be delighted if you are able to attend this event and to raise awareness of ways that Asia can become more 'disaster prepared'. Asia is the world's most disaster-prone region. Now is the time to prepare to support Asia's children, for the future of the region.

If you are able to accept our invitation, please email: **Esther Lake, Communications and Information Coordinator, ADPC** e-mail: esther@adpc.net tel: +66 (0) 2298 0681 ext 407 website: www.adpc.net/phe

Notes to Editors *Keynote speakers available for interview on request:

Le Ly Hayslip, Founder, Global Village Foundation, Author 'When Heaven and Earth Changed Places'

Dr. Benjaporn Panyayong, Senior Psychiatrist, Dept. of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

Dr. Satyabrata Dash, Head of Bangladesh Office, ActionAid Australia

Dr. Atle Dyregrov, Director, Center for Crisis Psychology, Bergen, Norway

Prof. William Yule, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, UK

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.