

## **Key Note Address representing ADPC Strategic partners**

**Ms Ingrid Fiskaa , State Secretary , Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Norway**

*Your Excellency, Mr Abhisit Vejjajiva, Prime Minister, Kingdom of  
Thailand,*

*Dr Chanawongese, Chair of the ADPC Board of Trustees,*

*Dr Bhichit Rattakul, Executive Director of ADPC,*

*Distinguished participants,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

- It is an honour and a privilege for me to address you on this very important 25 year Anniversary of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center.
- The recent earthquake and tsunami disaster in Japan has reminded us once again how fragile our societies are. We are not able to eliminate the hazards, but as Japan we can certainly reduce our vulnerability and make our risk-exposed societies more resilient.
- Norway enjoys close collaboration with ADPC within the area of disaster risk reduction (DRR). I am very pleased that our Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a partnership agreement with ADPC on joint efforts to promote new initiatives at national and regional level in Asia. The main focus is on capacity-building for national organisations responsible for disaster risk reduction.

- This collaboration is also part of the Norwegian Government's policies for improving disaster preparedness and supporting other countries' preventive measures, including emergency preparedness. The People's Republic of China, Vietnam and Bangladesh are priority countries for Norway for partnerships on disaster risk reduction efforts. At a breakfast meeting this morning, I was encouraged to learn about the achievements so far. ADPC has been instrumental in implementing a number of concrete initiatives under our collaboration scheme.
- We need to focus more attention on the close linkages between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. We were therefore very pleased that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) took up the idea of preparing a special report on the management of extreme weather-related phenomena. As part of the preparatory process for this report, ADPC hosted a very useful authors' meeting here in Bangkok last year. This is an example of the important role of the ADPC and its cooperation with other actors.
- Experience has shown that preventive measures work; look for instance to Cuba or to Bangladesh. Preparedness saves lives. Allow me also to draw your attention to the World Bank's recent report on the economics of prevention, where the conclusion is clear: "Prevention pays, if done right".
- The central elements in the Norwegian Government's disaster risk management policies are : assessing risks, securing emergency preparedness, investing in risk mitigation (including use of early warning) and improving institutional structure and building capacity. In all these areas, Norway supports projects through ADPC and other regional organisations, the UN system,

and the World Bank, and through cooperation with national governments and organisations.

- Allow me a comment on the use of early warning systems. ADPC is the founding father (or mother) of RIMES (The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia). After the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean in 2004 ADPC offered to host to host and develop a regional early warning centre in Bangkok. This was widely debated. We are pleased that ADPC succeeded in its efforts.
- The recent earthquake and tsunami disaster in Japan will focus a lot of attention on how to best prepare for new mega-disasters. This is justified. At the same time we must not forget the increasing number of high frequency, but low to medium intensity disastrous events.
- ADPC with its vast experience in the region is well positioned to play a significant role in disaster risk reduction in the coming years. This will imply improving preparedness both for the smaller high frequency disastrous events, and for the big ones. ADPC provides an inspiring example of how disaster risk reduction initiatives across borders can lead to fruitful regional collaboration and networking.
- To conclude, I wish ADPC all success in its work in the coming years. On behalf of my Government, I want to assure you that Norway is proud to be associated with ADPC as a strategic partner.
- Thank you