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## Public Awareness through Disaster Day

### Thailand

#### – Background

From the tsunami in the Indian Ocean countries on 26 December 2004 to cyclone Nargis on 2 May 2008, the calamities have caused damage to lives, resources, the environment, as well as to social and economic structures around the world. Climate change is expected to be a severe disaster in the future; therefore, the global platform has stimulated many countries to respond. Various implementations have been initiated to create awareness and reduce the risk such as the early warning system, and education and public awareness. In particular, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 has been adopted and become the global framework for disaster risk reduction and building the resilience of communities to disaster.

#### – Main story

Education and public awareness are essential measures for enhancing disaster risk reduction, and building a culture that is safer. At the international, regional and national levels, a disaster day has been established to help raise the public awareness.

At the global level, during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990 – 1999), the UN's General Assembly designated the second Wednesday of October as International Day for Disaster Reduction as a vehicle to promote a global culture of disaster reduction, including disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

In the ASEAN region, the ASEAN Ministers responsible for disaster management decided in December 2004 to celebrate the ASEAN Day for Disaster Management in conjunction with the International Day for Disaster Reduction in order to coordinate action at the national, regional and global levels and build a safer region.

At the national level, various countries including Thailand have specified their national disaster day by cabinet's approval. Therefore 26 December of every year has been set as the National Disaster Prevention Day to commemorate the tsunami disaster that struck the six southern provinces. Moreover, at the regional level, Thailand is the leader of ASEAN's Day for Disaster Management.

#### Thailand's activities through Disaster Day 2008

##### **ASEAN DAY for Disaster Management (ADDM) in conjunction with the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR).**

Thailand cooperated with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, the ASEAN Secretariat and UNISDR to organize the ASEAN Regional Drawing Competition on the occasion of the 2008 ADDM and IDDR. The theme was "Safer Community – Hospitals, Schools and My Dream House" to promote and increase awareness among the school children in the ASEAN region of their community's vulnerability to disasters and appropriate disaster risk reduction initiatives that can be taken to mitigate the impact of disasters, particularly the importance of building safe schools, hospitals and housing to realize ASEAN's vision of a safer, disaster-resilient community.

Eighteen national drawings were submitted to the Regional Review Committee (RRW) from the six countries of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

The RCC Meeting was held in Bangkok on 18 September 2008, and five regional winners were selected: the 1st

place drawing was from Thailand, the 2nd and 3rd place from the Philippines, the 4th place from Indonesia and the 5th place from Brunei. The top three place winners received USD 1,000 and a Certificate of Merit, USD 500 and USD 300 with a Certificate of Merit, respectively, and the 4th and 5th place winners received a Certificate of Merit. All of the drawings are the copyrighted by the ACDM.



1<sup>st</sup> place  
Thailand



2<sup>nd</sup> place  
The Philippines



3<sup>rd</sup> place  
The Philippines



4<sup>th</sup> place  
Indonesia



5<sup>th</sup> place  
Brunei

The regional winner and the runners-up were invited to join the commemoration of the 2008 ASEAN Day for Disaster Management and the International Day for Disaster Reduction. The program was to be held at the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 October 2008, and the winners would be awarded their prizes. Unfortunately, at that time, Thailand was faced a political situation, so this event was organized at the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Bangkok.



### National Disaster Prevention Day

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of the Interior, Thailand's organization for disaster management, and the Secretariat Office of National Safety Council conducted National Disaster Day on 26 December 2008. The objectives were:

1. Promotion of public awareness and disaster prevention and preparedness
2. Building a "Safety Mind" and "Safety Culture"

Various governmental, local, and NGO agencies along with foundations held and participated in activities to celebrate this day to increase public awareness and safety in the public mind. Thailand has designed many activities in the National Disaster Prevention Day around the country (75 provinces) and in Bangkok. Some examples are:

#### Road Safety Campaign



#### Exhibition on disaster prevention and mitigation



### Demonstration of Emergency Response and Rescue



**A workshop on the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness System; awarding prizes to local authorities, academies, institutions; outstanding Civil Defense volunteers in disaster prevention and mitigation.**



#### – Conclusion

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation has recognized to the necessity of promoting education and public awareness measures to make a more sustainable, safer country. Thereby, many programs have been initiated: Community-based Disaster Risk Management, Mr. Warning, handbook/ brochures on various types of disasters, etc. to promote public awareness and reduce the risk of disaster.

#### – Contact information

Luckana Manimmanakorn  
Chief of International Cooperation  
Research and International Cooperation Bureau  
Disaster Prevention and Mitigation  
Ministry of Interior, Thailand  
Phone: 662-637-3654  
Fax: 662-243-5279  
E-mail: mluckana@yahoo.com