Press Release on Enhancing capacity to respond to natural disasters

Enhancing capacity to respond to natural disasters
UN agencies to organize workshop in Bangkok

Issued jointly by ITU and UN/ESCAP


The workshop is part of ITU’s and ESCAP’s respective efforts to build capacity on preparedness for disaster communications, particularly in those countries which are prone to natural disasters. It aims to provide guidance on technical, policy and institutional issues in the development of networks, systems and possible regional cooperation in the future for communications to support disaster management. The event will focus on improving rapid response in emergency situations, especially in least developed, developing and small islands developing states in Asia and the Pacific.

Delegates from Member States will discuss disaster threats, strategies and initiatives for improved disaster response as well as on assistance required to improve disaster management in their countries. Speakers will include experts from UN agencies, other international organizations, Government agencies, civil society, telecom companies, and members of ESCAP and ITU. Participants from least developed and low-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region are supported by the ITU fellowship programme with additional financial support from ESCAP.

Panel discussions will be held on the last day of the Workshop.

Specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- review activities related to disaster communications in participating countries
- assess the current status of disaster management communications with respect to awareness of disaster risk, forecasting of potential disasters, development and dissemination of disaster early warnings, and responses to disasters
- enable donors to explain opportunities to potential recipients
- identify suitable technologies, features and technical options for disaster communications
- enhance institutional and human capacity on utilizing telecommunications for disaster management using case studies, lesson learned, and past experiences
- develop a common framework for the development of a National Emergency Telecommunication Plan
- explore possible regional cooperation for sharing information and practices, and for international response to major disasters based on the Tampere Convention
- explore the development of regional cooperative mechanisms for disaster management, including communications aspects

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About ESCAP

Headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand, The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. With 62 members and associate members and a geographical scope that stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific island nation of Kiribati in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south, ESCAP is the most comprehensive of the United Nations five regional commissions.

ESCAP seeks to overcome some of the region’s greatest challenges and carries out work in three main thematic areas: poverty reduction, managing globalization, and tackling emerging social issues.

ESCAP focuses on issues that are most effectively addressed through regional cooperation, including:

- Issues that all or a group of countries in the region face, for which it is necessary to learn from each other;
- Issues that benefit from regional or multi-country involvement;
- Transboundary in nature, or that would benefit from collaborative inter-country approaches;
- Issues that are of a sensitive or emerging nature and require further advocacy and negotiation.

About ITU