

Media release

Embargoed until 00:01hrs GMT 18 January, 2006

Royal
Geographical
Society

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

● Disasters are destroying the targets for millennium development goals warn experts at Royal Geographical Society disaster forum

International experts agree that disaster risk reduction is not sufficiently prioritised by the world's governments and such disasters are affecting progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Evidence for this will be presented at a disaster forum, hosted by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) on Wednesday 18 January, 2006.

This forum will feature experts from the international disaster community, including representatives from research, government and policy to practitioners on the ground, NGO's and businesses. The forum coincides with the first anniversary of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, aimed at disaster reduction, and will outline challenges and provide suggestions for how the framework can achieve its goals successfully.

The forum is jointly organised by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and Action Aid International as part of the Society's Environment and Society Forum series entitled: *From Caribbean hurricanes to Indian floods: Experience and lessons learned for disaster reduction.*

Helena Molin Valdes, Deputy Director, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction states: "The Framework has been successful insofar as over than 40 countries have improved their policies for disaster risk reduction since its launch in 2005, and these countries include Indonesia, Ethiopia and India."

However, Valdes warns that: "These policy changes are largely reactive and with the frequency of disasters increasing due to weather changes caused by global warming, more governments need to invest in poverty reduction which strongly incorporates disaster risk reduction. This is vital to the reduction of vulnerability to disasters, in terms of both loss of life and economically.

Jim Drummond, Director, UN Conflict and Humanitarian Division, DFID states: "This past year has seen some dreadful disasters which have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, ruined millions of livelihoods and caused billions of pounds worth of damage. It is increasingly recognised that the poor, mainly in developing countries, suffer most when these events occur. Disasters are holding back progress with the Millennium Development Goals. The international community must do more to minimise the impact and reduce the vulnerability of poor people to these events"



9. Action Aid is an international development agency whose aim is to fight poverty worldwide. Action Aid formed in 1972, and for over 30 years they have been growing and expanding - helping over 13 million of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged people in 42 countries worldwide. In all of their country programmes Action Aid work with local partners to make the most of their knowledge and experience.