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**Red Cross helps communities cope with increasing number of natural disasters throughout Southeast Asia**

13 October 2015 – CITY OF DISTRIBUTION

In celebration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Day for Disaster Management, the [NAME OF NATIONAL SOCIETY] is joining with [NAMES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES] to host [EVENT DESCRIPTION]. The event in [NAME OF CITY] is part of a regional effort by the Red Cross throughout Southeast Asia to strengthen efforts in addressing one of the biggest humanitarian challenges today – natural disasters.

According to the World Disasters Report 2015, globally in 2014 an estimated 107 million people were affected by disasters. Unsurprisingly, the greatest impact was in Asia Pacific, where 48 per cent of natural disasters occurred.

“Over the past decade, disasters in Asia Pacific have increased three-fold,” explains [NAME, TITLE]. “We know that investing in disaster risk reduction is not only vital for our people, but it is a cost-effective way forward in the face of such an enormous challenge” [HE/SHE] continues.

In 2014 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies together with National Societies, invested a total of 151.7 million Swiss francs on disaster risk reduction around the globe.

Everyday across Southeast Asia, the Red Cross Red Crescent is working with local volunteers in various ways to strengthen their resilience to both small and large-scale disasters.

“We have lived around mangroves for years, but we didn’t exactly know their benefits” explains Juliawati, a member of the Indonesian Red Cross who volunteers in her local community.

She is part of a project focusing on risk reduction after the devastating Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004. “They can reduce the impact of storms, help with erosion, high water, and also reduce the strength of a tsunami…” she continues.

From mangrove projects along coastal areas in Viet Nam and Indonesia, to school safety trainings in Myanmar and Thailand, the Red Cross hopes to help communities cope with the increasing number of natural disasters that hit the region each year.

“Strengthening the resilience of communities and putting our efforts together in Southeast Asia, is the only way forward,” says [NAME, TITLE]. “We must do what we can, with things in our control and help our future generations.”

**For enquiries or further information, please contact:**

NAME, TITLE

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