



Brian Ward Memorial Lecture Announcement

Friday, 5 October 2012

15:00

Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand
Bangkok, Thailand

Jan Egeland, Human Rights Watch, speaks on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation – areas where urgent actions are needed.

5 October 2012 (BANGKOK) - Jan Egeland, deputy executive director of Human Rights Watch and director of its European operations, will give a lecture on the importance of being proactive in disaster prevention and preparedness and climate change adaptation. His lecture will raise questions related to the interconnectedness between a changing climate and reducing risks associated with natural disasters, and highlight the importance of weather and climate services. His lecture arrives at a time when governments from around the region are confronting ways in which they can reduce disaster impacts and make societies more resilient.

“Climate services are weakest in the places that need them most – climate-vulnerable developing countries. This situation is unacceptable and unjust,” Mr Egeland explained.

The impacts of natural disasters associated with climate change leave thousands displaced and are often the root of humanitarian crises throughout South and Southeast Asia. In response to the region’s changing climate and natural disasters that accompany it, international development partners are working together to make communities in urban and rural areas more resilient. Seven of the ten most populous cities are located in South and Southeast Asia, and by 2030, they are expected to double their population from 1.36 to 2.64 billion (source: UNFPA). With this fact in mind, it is vital to understand how to adapt to climate changes, and how to be better prepared for natural disasters, including a rising sea level.

Mr. Egeland elaborated, “The time has come for setting up a global system for providing climate services and applying them in decision making at every level of society. Putting this system in place is very much within reach, but will require unprecedented collaboration across political, functional and disciplinary boundaries, and a global mobilisation of effort.”

As Guest Lecture, Mr. Egeland will expose his perspectives on the challenges related to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and humanitarian responses. He will draw upon his wide and unique global experiences, which range from organizing the international response to the Asian Tsunami to the humanitarian crises in Dafur and Lebanon.

The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, based in Bangkok, Thailand, will host the events to take place on 5 October 2012 and will facilitate a panel discussion with scholars and professionals from around the region on these pressing issues after Mr. Egelang's lecture. The panel discussion will be attended by leading officials, scholars and professionals in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management.

The media is encouraged to participate to raise time sensitive questions related to this topic.

The lecture is held in memorial of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center's (ADPC) founding father and humanitarian, Brian Ward (1932-2004). Brian Ward is well-known for his contributions to disaster risk management in South and Southeast Asia.

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Schedule of Events:

15:00: Guest Lecture by Mr. Jan Egeland

16:00: Panel Discussion on Challenges Related to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in the Asia Pacific Region (participants to be announced)

17:30: Reception for all participants

About the Guest Speaker:

Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, Jan Engeland was the executive director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. As UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator from 2003 to 2006, Egeland helped reform the global humanitarian response system and organized the international response to the Asian Tsunami, and crises from *Darfur to the Democratic Republic of Congo to Lebanon*. In 2006, Time magazine named him one of the 100 "people who shape our world." From 1999 to 2002, he was the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Colombia, and from 1990 to 1997 he was State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has 30 years of experience from international work with human rights, humanitarian situations, and conflict resolution, and was among the initiators of the peace negotiations that led to the Oslo accords between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization in 1993.

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