Press Release
ASEAN Disaster Management Agreement to Enter into Force by End of 2009
ASEAN Secretariat, 16 September 2009

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is expected to enter into force by the end of the year. The Philippines said today that its Senate had ratified the AADMER on 14 September 2009 and will deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of ASEAN by October 2009. The Philippines is the last of the ten ASEAN Member States to deposit its instrument of ratification of AADMER. The AADMER provides for its entry into force sixty days after the deposit of the tenth instrument of ratification.

"I would like to thank all ASEAN Member States for their determination in ratifying the Agreement. This marks a significant milestone in ASEAN's collective efforts to build a disaster-resilient community by the year 2015," said Dr Surin Pitsuwan, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, upon receiving the news.

AADMER is a regional legally-binding agreement that binds ASEAN Member States together to promote regional cooperation and collaboration in reducing disaster losses and intensifying joint emergency response to disasters in the ASEAN region. AADMER is also ASEAN's affirmation of its commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

Margareta Wahlström, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction said that "the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is the first of its kind in the world, an agreement that binds Asian states together to address disaster risk reduction and improve their preparedness for response. I congratulate ASEAN and the Governments of Southeast Asia for their foresight and engagement in affirming their commitment to the HFA and for offering partnerships to the United Nations and other partner organisations to help achieve the objectives of the Agreement."

AADMER contains provisions on disaster risk identification, monitoring and early warning, prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response, rehabilitation, technical cooperation and research, mechanisms for coordination, and simplified customs and immigration procedures. AADMER also provides for the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) to undertake operational coordination of activities under the Agreement.

AADMER was signed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in July 2005, after four months of negotiations, making it one of the fastest negotiated agreements in ASEAN's history. Since the signing of AADMER in July 2005, ASEAN has put in place measures to implement many provisions under the Agreement. Under the purview of a specialised ASEAN body called the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), standard operating procedure, training and capacity building, disaster information sharing and communication network, rapid assessment team, have been set up or put into practice. The Philippines is scheduled to host a regional simulation exercise (code-named ARDEX-09) at the end of October 2009.

Dr. Surin said that, "ASEAN has accumulated invaluable lessons learnt from our experience in providing the coordination mechanism and serving as the humanitarian bridge between the international community and the affected population after the Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar last year. ASEAN will use this experience to ensure that AADMER is meaningful, effective and operational for reducing disaster losses and responding to future large-scale disaster emergencies". The ASEAN Secretary-General was

appointed as the ASEAN's Humanitarian Assistance Coordinator by the ASEAN Leaders during the Summit in February 2009.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is composed of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

NOTE:
The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters is noted in the AADMER as the agreed framework for disaster risk reduction.