



PERMANENT MISSION OF FINLAND
GENEVA



Permanent Mission of Thailand

2 September 2014

Excellencies,

Past experiences have shown that natural disasters have brought with it many human rights challenges. Among other things, affected people, especially at-risk groups, become more vulnerable in times of crises. The extent to which natural disasters affect the basic human rights of peoples therefore depends on how governments and humanitarian actors integrate human rights into their disaster preparedness and response.

To discuss these and other related issues, we have the honour to inform you that Finland, the Philippines and Thailand will be organizing a side event entitled "*Human Rights in pre-disaster and post-disaster situations*", at the margins of the 27th Session of the Human Rights Council, on **Wednesday 17 September 2014 from 15.00 to 16.30 hours, Room XXIV**, Palais des Nations.

In this connection, we wish to invite you or your Permanent Mission's representative to attend the side event and participate in the discussion. The concept paper of the said side event is enclosed herewith for your perusal.

We look forward to your attendance and participation.

Accept, Excellencies, the renewed assurances of our highest consideration.

(Päivi Kairamo)
Ambassador and PR of
Finland

(Cecilia B. Rebong)
Ambassador and PR of
the Philippines

(Thani Thongphakdi)
Ambassador and PR of
Thailand

All Permanent Representatives and Observers to the United Nations Office
and Other International Organizations,
GENEVA.

All Heads of International Organizations and Agencies,
GENEVA.

as of 1 September 2014

Concept Paper

Side event on Human rights in pre-disaster and post-disaster situations co-sponsored by Finland, the Philippines, and Thailand

Date and Venue

Wednesday 17 September 2014 at 15.00-16.30 hrs., Room XXIV, Building E, Palais des Nations

Concept

- Natural disasters require not only the provision of humanitarian assistance, but also human rights protection in this specific context.
- The extent to which natural disasters affect the basic human rights of people would inevitably depend on how governments and humanitarian actors integrate human rights into their disaster preparedness and response.
- Affected people, especially at-risk groups, become more vulnerable in times of crises. Preventing discrimination, abuses as well as ensuring equal access to humanitarian aid and public services, equal treatment and respect of human rights, are therefore vital.
- Faced with more frequent natural disasters which have led to high mortality risks and greater economic losses, the international community has been focusing more on prevention, preparedness and building resilience policies.
- The 3rd World Conference in Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, where a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction will be adopted. It is therefore timely to discuss on how to ensure respect for human rights in pre-disaster and post-disaster situations and how a rights-based approach could be mainstreamed or integrated in disaster risk management policies at different levels.

Speakers

- **Opening Statement by Ms. Flavia Pansieri**, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights - *Human rights and OHCHR in natural disasters*
- **H.E. Ms. Cecilia B. Rebong**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the UN in Geneva - *The Philippines' Typhoon Haiyan Experience: Best Practices and Lessons Learned*
- **Ms. Margareta Wahlström**, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Disaster Risk Reduction - *Disaster risk reduction and the respect of human rights and the fundamental freedom of affected people*
- **Mr. Rashid Khalikov**, Director of OCHA Geneva - *Equal access to humanitarian aid and public services for affected people*
- **H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN in Geneva - *Human Rights and the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*

Moderator H.E. Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN in Geneva.

Format

1. Each speaker will be given 5-7 minutes to make a presentation.
2. An interactive format, with comments / questions / answers, will follow the presentation. Participants are encouraged to make use of the interactive format as much as possible.
3. At the end of the event, speakers will be invited to provide their short concluding remarks (1-2 minutes).
