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PRESS RELEASE

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State of the Climate Report: Inaction to Kill 5 million – Mostly Children – by 2020

- *Groundbreaking “Climate Vulnerability Monitor” exposes world headed for nearly 1 million deaths every single year by 2030 without corrective actions – 350,000 lives lost annually already today – the most acute countries stand on climate brink*
- *Industrialised countries are not spared, suffering more than half of all economic costs – an explosive increase in every main climate stress is set to plunge world into a third-of-a-trillion dollar annual crisis within 20 years*
- *Virtually all harm caused by climate change preventable today through readily available and cost-effective responses – report details over 50*
- *Leaders and people everywhere urged not to risk further catastrophe: “inaction unconscionable”*

London, 3 DECEMBER 2010 – DARA, a leading humanitarian research organisation, and the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of committed most vulnerable countries, today launch a major new global report on the state of the climate crisis. The “Climate Vulnerability Monitor” reveals distinct vulnerabilities in 184 countries and all regions of the world to short-term impacts of climate change just as the slow search for an international deal to tackle longer-term global warming continues at the UN climate summit in Cancún, Mexico (COP-16).

The Climate Vulnerability Monitor, backed by leading international authorities on climate change, categorises countries across the world into low; moderate; high; severe; or acute vulnerability to its impact. The report’s barometer assesses each country according to estimated effects in the four key areas of health, weather disasters, human habitat loss and economic stresses on affected sectors and natural resources.

The Monitor points to a large-scale crisis with some impacts increasing by over 300% globally by 2030. In less than 20 years, almost all countries in the world – over 170 – will realise high vulnerability to at least one major climate impact as the planet heats up: “the fate of the vulnerable will be the fate of the world.”

Today, the majority of impacts are still highly concentrated in more than 50 acutely vulnerable low-income countries, urgently needing assistance. Close to 80% of the entire human toll of climate change exclusively concerns children in Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia succumbing to malnutrition, diarrheal disease or malaria, discloses the report. Communities most exposed and vulnerable are being completely overwhelmed by just small increases in extreme weather, leading to situations similar to this year’s floods in Pakistan.



President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives, founder of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, said: *“The Maldives stands at the climate change frontline. So it has always been crystal clear to us what must be done. But what happens to the Maldives today, will happen to others tomorrow. The Monitor helps to bring that clarity of vision to the entire world. We aim to become carbon neutral as a country by 2020. Those who follow our lead and adopt renewable energy and green technologies will be the winners of the twenty-first century.”*

Half of all economic losses fall on industrialised countries, with the United States worst hit by overall damage costs. But climate change will seriously worsen global inequalities. Smaller total economic losses mask seriously greater relative costs elsewhere: more than 4% of GDP on average for the South Pacific region. Where poverty is most extreme, especially Africa, so is the degree of economic losses. And over 99% of all fatalities occur in developing countries.

“If we let pressures more than triple, or worse, no amount of humanitarian assistance or development aid is going to stem the suffering and devastation. Highly fragile countries will become graveyards over which we pour billions of dollars. Low-lying islands will simply not be viable anymore, then disappear. We will all pay and we will pay big time,” said DARA Director General Ross Mountain, who previously headed large UN field operations, including for the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq.

Global human development goals currently at risk of not being met correspond exactly to those areas where climate change impacts are felt the most: child mortality, hunger and extreme poverty. *“Woefully inadequate”* existing national plans indicate a burning need to step up support from major emitters to frontline countries facing the harshest changes.

Highly effective responses exist for dealing with almost every type of impact faced today according to the report, which details over 50 possible responses to different effects. Avoiding widespread death from climate-sensitive diseases like malaria is particularly cost-effective. Nowhere near the required level of measures have been implemented, especially in the most vulnerable places on earth.

John Ashton, UK Special Representative for Climate Change speaking at the launch said: *“Failure to respond to climate change will intensify competition for resources and shrink the political space for cooperation. It is an affront to fairness, since it puts the greatest burden on those who did least to cause the problem and are least able to deal with its consequences.”*

DARA Trustee and advisor to the report, José María Figueres, Former President of Costa Rica, said: *“Impacts clearly fall disproportionately on the poor and the young. Half of the world’s population is under 25 years old, and our actions now will determine the state of world they inherit. The world’s youth is ready to take action to address climate change, but it is our responsibility to take leadership to accelerate in the transition to a low carbon economy.”*

While estimates may be higher or lower, the report expects it most likely understates the impact of climate change since many known effects are not measured due to inadequate data or limits to existing scientific inquiry. The report calls for urgent attention to key research questions that limit our understanding of climate vulnerability. Nevertheless, the findings *“are unlikely to fundamentally change”*. The report emphasises the serious but avoidable harm it outlines as clear justification that inaction is inexcusable, and further global warming, reckless.

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Notes:

Report

The final report is under embargo until 3am GMT December 3rd 2010, to request a copy please use the contact details provided below.

Contact

The London launch of the report will take place at 8.45am GMT at the Commonwealth Club London on 3rd December. In order to express an interest in the report, to place request for interview or for more information, please contact James Drewer on +44 207 467 9238 / +44 7801 151 531 or jdrewer@daraint.org or Pete Bowyer on +44 7740 913 886

The Cancun launch of the report will take place at Press Conference Room "LUNA" Moon Palace, Sunrise Building, Cancun at 9am (CST) on December 3rd. In order to express an interest in the report, to place request for interview or for more information, please contact Christian Teriete on +52-1-9982128172

About the Climate Vulnerability Monitor

The Climate Vulnerability Monitor is an independent global assessment of the effect of climate change on the world's populations today and in the near future. It will also contain an effectiveness review of some key measures that can be taken now to adapt to climate change and limit impacts that harm people, their economies and the environment.

The report targets some basic questions about climate change, including where the most serious impacts are being felt? To what degree? And what measures can minimise its harmful effects? In doing so it will clarify the extent of the main impacts of climate change on human society, and what some of the most effective responses to that impact are known to be. It will clearly highlight the scale of what is at stake in the upcoming Cancún climate talks and for all the world's populations if action is not taken in greatest urgency to deal with climate change.

Advisory Panel

The report has been brought together by an expert panel of key international authorities including:

Mary Chinery-Hesse - Chief Advisor to the Former President of Ghana, Member of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union (incoming)

Helen Clark - Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Jan Eliasson - Former President of the UN General Assembly, Former Foreign Minister of Sweden

José María Figueres Olsen - Former President of Costa Rica, Chairman of the Carbon War Room

Saleemul Huq - Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

Yolanda Kakabadse - International President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Ashok Khosla – President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Chairman of Development Alternatives, Co-Chair, UN Resources Panel

Ricardo Lagos - Former President of Chile, Former President of the Club of Madrid

Loren Legarda - Senator of the Philippines, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation for Asia and the Pacific

Ahmed Naseem - Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives

Rajendra Pachauri - Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Director General of The Energy Resources Institute (TERI)

Teresa Ribera - Secretary of State for Climate Change of Spain

Johan Rockström - Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Stockholm Resilience Centre

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber - Founding Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

Klaus Töpfer - Former Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Margareta Wahlström - UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction



Michael Zammit Cutajar - Former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Peer Review Committee

The report has been reviewed by a committee of key international authorities including:

Yasemin Aysan - Under Secretary General of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Suruchi Bhadwal - Associate Director of the Earth Sciences and Climate Change Division of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Manuel Carballo - Executive Director of the International Committee for Migration and Health (ICMH)

Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum - Senior Scientist on Public Health and Environment of the World Health Organisation (WHO)

Ian Christoplos - Senior Project Researcher of the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)

Pierre Encontre - Chief of Special Programmes of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Anne Hammill - Senior Researcher on Climate Change and Energy of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Juergen Kropp - Head of the North-South Research Group of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Marc Levy - Deputy Director of the Centre for International Earth Science Information Network of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

Bo Lim - Special Climate Change Advisor of UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Urs Luterbacher - Chairman of the Environmental Studies Unit of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Hansjoerg Strohmeyer - Chief of the Policy Development and Studies Branch of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Farhana Yamin - Portfolio Manager of the Climate Change Division of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)

DARA

Founded in 2003, DARA is an independent humanitarian organisation committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of aid for vulnerable populations suffering from conflict, disasters and climate change. Its activities have spanned over 40 countries across 5 continents. DARA is led by Ross Mountain who headed UN relief operations during the Iraq War following the Bagdad UN HQ bombing (2003-2004).

Climate Vulnerable Forum

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is the first global partnership of nations from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific united against by a common threat as some of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. CVF countries have contributed least to a problem that threatens, in many cases, their very survival.

The CVF first convened in the Maldives in November 2009 and adopted a declaration that expressed alarm at the pace of change to the Earth caused by climate change and sealed the commitment of participating nations to work in concert towards strongest action tackling global warming and its negative effects.

Participant nations include Bangladesh (future chair designate), Barbados, Bhutan, Kiribati (incoming chair), Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam as well as the Maldives (first chair).

2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference

The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference will be held in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. The conference is officially referred to as the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 6th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties (CMP 6) to the Kyoto Protocol.



<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>