

## **The purpose of the Copenhagen Policy Forum**

The numbers and impacts of disasters have increased over recent decades, largely as a result of unsustainable development practices, and now climate change is beginning to increase the frequency and intensity of weather hazards. These trends are likely to continue, creating significant challenges for humanitarian actors at the operational level and for policy makers. Humanitarian resources, both human and financial, are already stretched and to prevent the situation from worsening, new approaches to humanitarian response are urgently needed.

Considerable progress has been made within the humanitarian community in the past decades to improve the quality of disaster response. Among other things, this has led to a significant reduction of the numbers of people being killed by disasters. Yet, in the last couple of years, the positive trend has stagnated. The number of people being affected by disasters - both large and small - in the last thirty years has gone up in a dramatic curve. Humanitarian actors are acutely aware that risk reduction strategies and programmes are crucial to address the vulnerability of people to disasters. There is increasing documentation of the link between climate change and future human vulnerability, and recent disaster trends underline the urgency of effective and coordinated action.

In 2005 at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted by 168 countries as the key global strategy to implement disaster risk reduction. Climate change was acknowledged as an important underlying risk for disasters. The HFA was adopted by the UN General Assembly later that year.

The Bali Action Plan, adopted at the 13th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) in Indonesia in December 2007, acknowledged the role of "risk management and risk reduction strategies" in climate change adaptation strategies. The Copenhagen Policy Forum is intended to provide additional momentum to support follow up on the Bali Action Plan, and explore the synergies and complementarities of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

The purpose of the Copenhagen Policy Forum was to identify opportunities and build joint efforts, especially as input to the 14th UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP-14) to take place in Poznan, Poland; and for providing input to the COP-15 in Copenhagen 2009 to effectively address the urgent challenges of disasters and climate change.