

## United Nations Demands Retraction from Thai ASEAN News Network

Bangkok (Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section) – The United Nations has demanded an immediate retraction from the Thai ASEAN News Network for the serious misquotes of Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in a story that ran this week.

The story, which revolved around the flood situation in Thailand, falsely attributed quotes to Dr. Heyzer that criticized the government.

The reality: the United Nations has issued no statement criticizing the government, and has only offered support and assistance as Thailand faces the worse floods in more than six decades.

“These quotes are completely contrary to the solidarity and support that the United Nations is giving in Thailand,” said Dr. Heyzer. “The quotes are totally wrong and a poor reflection of journalist standards that are meant to reflect the truth.”

Please find below the original statement issued by ESCAP to the press on 18 October:

### **ESCAP expresses solidarity with flood victims in Thailand and South-East Asia**

Bangkok (UN ESCAP Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section) – The top United Nations official in the Asia-Pacific region today expressed grave concern over the unprecedented loss of life and livelihoods caused by heavy monsoon rains and tropical storms in South-East Asia and reiterated continued United Nations support to affected countries in improving resilience to natural disasters.

“The historical floods continue to cause a humanitarian crisis in the region. Please be assured that the United Nations stands in solidarity with the victims of the catastrophic floods,” United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Dr. Noeleen Heyzer said in her message.

More than 700 people have been killed by the disasters with an assessment by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) showing that, as of 13 October, the destruction of homes, crops, economic assets and infrastructure had affected over 8 million people across Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Viet Nam and the Philippines.

Thailand’s worst floods in half a century have claimed 297 lives and affected 2.4 million people in 25 provinces, according to United Nations estimates as of 17 October. Twelve provinces, including Bangkok remain at high risk of being flooded.

Noting that the Asia-Pacific region experiences more disasters than any other region in the world, Dr. Heyzer said that over 20 United Nations agencies under the Regional Coordination Mechanism are working with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to build resilience to natural disasters through a joint ASEAN-United Nations Strategic Plan of Cooperation on Disaster Management for the period 2011-2015, as well as a joint ASEAN-UN Mechanism for Rapid Response to Climate-related and Other Disasters.

“Over the past few months, whilst Pakistan has experienced severe floods, earthquakes have hit Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Disasters pose a significant challenge to the realization of inclusive and sustainable development in Asia, and make more difficult the efforts of national governments in meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015,” Dr. Heyzer added.

“With nearly one third of the world’s population living in Asia Pacific, addressing the causes of vulnerability to disasters is critical to protecting peoples of Asia,” the ESCAP chief added.

For more information please contact:

Ms. Francyne Harrigan

Chief, Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section, ESCAP

T: +66 2 288 1864, M: +66 81 835 8677, E: harriganf@un.org