



Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management

Welcome Greeting by

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**SECOND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CATASTROPHE RISK MANAGEMENT
CLIMATE CHANGE – IMPLICATIONS ON FOOD AND WATER SECURITY**

Thursday 3 March 2011, 9:15 am
Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore

Good morning,

Guest-of-Honour, President, Nanyang Technological University, Dr Su Guaning

President-Designate and Provost, Nanyang Technological University, Prof Bertil Andersson

Chairman of the Institute of Catastrophe Risk Management (ICRM) and Member of the NTU Board of Trustees, Professor Hareesh Shah

Distinguished Speakers, Delegates and Guests

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of ICRM at NTU, we would like to extend our warmest greetings to everyone to the Second International Symposium on Catastrophe Risk Management. We have about 125 participants from over 10 countries. To our guests from overseas, welcome to Singapore!

Since our launch in January 2010, we have received encouraging support from the Singapore government and also the industry towards our research activities on climate change and catastrophe risk management. For instance, Aon Benfield Asia Pte Ltd has pledged a gift to establish the Aon Benfield–NTU PhD Research Award with us last September; Willis Re will be funding Post-doctoral Fellowships at ICRM; we have received donations from Guy Carpenter & Company Pte Ltd, Yanada Technologies Ltd, and RMS Inc.; and currently we are in the final review stage with funding agency for two key start-up projects on flood and seismic risk assessments. We are also in the midst of discussions with our local government agencies as well as overseas institutions that share our goals and vision. I am thus most encouraged that meaningful collaborations are in the pipeline.

About 10 days ago, on 22 February 2011, an M=6.3 earthquake struck Christchurch, New Zealand. The earthquake left the downtown of Christchurch in ruins. Its death toll has reached over 160 and more than 50 people are still missing. There have been so many lives affected by the disaster, and there is so much closure still needed.

The devastating raging floodwaters in Australia in recent months have caused extensive property losses. Lives were lost, several towns were submerged, and homes were without power because electricity was switched off to prevent electrocutions and damage to electrical systems. This clearly points to us that there is an imperative need for a multi-disciplinary approach to mitigate the effects of such natural calamities.

Likewise for Mount Merapi, the effects of the volcanic eruptions were felt greatly by the Indonesians, as Indonesia sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire which is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Merapi spewed lava and hot clouds of volcanic ash, killing many people with thousands more evacuated. The eruption has devastated many villages and thousands of hectares of countryside in central Java, and lava was reportedly flowing into rivers on the volcano's lower slopes. The ash plumes from the volcano also caused major disruption to aviation. Yogyakarta's international airport was closed on many occasions last November due to limited visibility, with ash falling on the runway, taxiway and terminal aprons.

Therefore, one of the goals of the Symposium is to provide a platform where we can learn from the world's leading experts and from one another. This will hopefully help us address the pressing issues faced by the communities and develop mitigation strategies. Another aim of the Symposium is to raise awareness and understanding of food and water security risks against the backdrop of potential impacts resulting from climate change, which will then lead to the development of novel and innovative public-private partnerships towards mitigating and managing such risks.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for joining us at the Second Symposium on Catastrophe Risk Management amidst your busy schedules. I wish all of you a fruitful time at the Symposium.

Thank you.