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E-mail: Mvelezhenao@worldbank.org**World Bank and Italian Government Strengthen Collaboration
on Disaster Risk Management**

Rome, November 11, 2009—The World Bank and the Italian Civil Protection Department (CPD) signed today a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to join efforts towards advancing the agenda of disaster risk reduction, sustainable recovery, and reconstruction in disaster-prone developing countries. The signing took place at the Civil Protection Command and Control Direction in L'Aquila, in a ceremony hosted by Mr. Guido Bertolaso, Head of Italian Civil Protection - Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

"The World Bank is honored to partner with the Italian Civil Protection Department," said **Katherine Sierra, World Bank Vice President for Sustainable Development**, who signed the MoU on behalf of the World Bank. *"The Italian authorities have undertaken exemplary measures in earthquake emergency management, in response to the L'Aquila earthquake that struck in April this year, and the Memorandum will allow other countries to benefit from their experience."*

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) facilitated a Knowledge Exchange Mission to L'Aquila by a World Bank Global Expert Team for Disaster Risk Management. This Mission, in collaboration with the office of the Executive Director for Italy, was designed to exchange lessons and experiences from Italy's preparedness and emergency mobilization response and the World Bank's post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction operations in recent earthquakes in Turkey, Pakistan, and China.

The Mission has led to increased cooperation between the Bank and Italian authorities, underscoring the effectiveness of the Italian Civil Protection Department in training over 1.2 million volunteers in tasks of emergency and recovery, preparedness and prevention, as well as its rapid intervention for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation of cultural heritage. The CPD has also collaborated with an upcoming World Bank publication, supported by GFDRR, on a housing and reconstruction handbook *"Safer Homes, Stronger Communities: Rebuilding After Disasters,"* referencing the Italian experience with respect to housing solutions adopted after the L'Aquila earthquake.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed today further advances these ongoing - collaborative efforts, calling for the documentation and dissemination of the L'Aquila earthquake response and recovery experience, particularly focusing on the Italian civil protection system and its actions in response to the earthquake. The MoU also seeks a closer coordination in Italy's external assistance and World Bank-supported programs in disaster risk reduction and recovery, especially in the Western Balkans and Mediterranean countries.

GFDRR

GLOBAL FACILITY FOR DISASTER
REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Reducing Vulnerability to Natural Hazards

A partnership of ACP Secretariat, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and The World Bank.

Both the Civil Protection Department and the World Bank will benefit from the exchange of knowledge among Italian authorities, World Bank staff, and international organization officials, government officials, non-governmental organizations, and private sector organization representatives through training in disaster reduction and recovery activities; as well as from a closer cooperation on the disaster risk management Euro-med initiative, including exploring the possibility of the establishment of a Euro-med earthquake insurance pool.

About GFDRR

The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) is a partnership of 21 countries, the ACP Secretariat, the European Commission, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and the World Bank, committed to helping disaster-prone developing countries and regions reduce their vulnerability to natural hazards and adapt to climate change. GFDRR promotes technical and financial assistance to high-risk low- and middle-income countries based on a business model of ex-ante support to mainstream disaster risk reduction in national development strategies and investments, and ex post disaster assistance for sustainable recovery. As part of its mandate, GFDRR promotes global knowledge and good practices, supports initiatives for enhanced global and regional cooperation, and promotes greater South-South cooperation in disaster risk reduction. For more information, visit www.gfdr.org.