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Typhoon Activity in 2004 Forecast to be Average by TSR Consortium

Nine intense typhoons and 17 typhoons forecast with overall activity similar to that in 2003

London, 10th March 2004—Inhabitants of the Far East and southeast Asia should prepare themselves for a typhoon season similar to last year, leading weather experts say.

Tropical Storm Risk (TSR), the consortium of experts on insurance, risk management and seasonal climate forecasting led by the Benfield Hazard Research Centre at University College London, today issued projections for another close to average Northwest Pacific typhoon season in 2004. The typhoon season lasts from 1 January to 31 December with 95% of typhoons occurring historically after 1 May.

TSR anticipates 26 tropical storms, with 17 of these being typhoons and nine of these latter intense typhoons. TSR's first extended range forecast for 2004 indicates a 41% likelihood of an above-average activity season, a 38% probability of a near-normal season and only a 21% chance of a below-normal season.

“The main climate factor influencing our typhoon forecast for 2004 is the expected value in August and September 2004 for the temperature of the sea waters in the region 150°W-160°E, 5°S-5°N” said Dr. Mark Saunders, the TSR lead scientist. Warmer than normal summer waters here are linked to northwest Pacific trade wind speed changes which enhance cyclonic vorticity (i.e. more storms are spun up) over the regions where intense typhoons and typhoons form. Colder than normal summer waters have the opposite effect. TSR anticipates summer sea temperatures close to average in 2004; a condition which favours an average typhoon season.

TSR has an impressive forecast track record. Recent long-range forecast successes include those for the 2002 and 2003 Northwest Pacific typhoon seasons, the 2002 and 2003 Atlantic hurricane seasons, and for the 2001/2 and 2002/3 Australian-region tropical cyclone seasons. For the 2004 Northwest Pacific typhoon season TSR will be issuing monthly updated seasonal forecasts through to early August 2004. TSR forecasts can be accessed through TSR's website www.tropicalstormrisk.com.

Typhoons rank as the most costly and deadly natural disaster affecting much of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and coastal areas in other southeast Asian countries. In 2003 typhoon Maemi caused 118 deaths and damages of US \$ 4.5 billion (economic) and US \$ 0.5 billion (insured) in South Korea.

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Notes to Editors:

About Tropical Storm Risk (TSR):

Founded in 2000, Tropical Storm Risk (TSR) offers a leading resource for forecasting the risk from tropical storms worldwide. The venture provides innovative forecast products to increase risk awareness and to help decision making within the (re)insurance industry, other business sectors, government and society. The TSR consortium is co-sponsored by Benfield, the leading independent reinsurance intermediary, Royal & Sun Alliance, the global insurance group, and Crawford & Company, a global claims management solutions company. The TSR scientific grouping brings together climate physicists, meteorologists and statisticians based at the UCL (University College London) Benfield Hazard Research Centre.
www.tropicalstormrisk.com.

About Benfield Hazard Research Centre:

Benfield Hazard Research Centre is sponsored by Benfield, the leading independent reinsurance intermediary and risk advisory business. Benfield's customers include many of the world's major insurance and reinsurance companies as well as Government entities and global corporations. Benfield employs over 1,700 people based in over 30 locations worldwide.
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With over forty researchers and practitioners, the Benfield Hazard Research Centre is Europe's leading multidisciplinary academic hazard research centre and comprises three groups: Geological Hazards, Meteorological Hazards and Seasonal Forecasting, and Disaster Studies and Management. The Centre is based at University College London, which along with Oxford and Cambridge, is one of the UK's top three multi-faculty teaching and research institutions.
www.benfieldhrc.org