

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON CATASTROPHE LOSSES

*By Mr. V. Anantha Subramaniam\**

These are times when not a day passes without at least a report appearing in the newspapers about losses due to natural calamities or man-made tragedies. Unseasonal rains leading to large-scale flooding or sudden snowing or freezing on the onset of summer or prolonged famines or forest fires seem to be the order of the day. There is greater awareness about green house effect and global warming. International conferences have been held to tackle some of these problems. Most of the countries have started enforcing emission standards for automobiles. Alternate sources of energy to fossil fuel are being seriously explored. An international panel of eminent climatologists have observed that the changes in the global temperature and other climatic parameters can no longer be explained by natural variability alone

but are most probably caused by man. It is expected that the mean global temperature will increase by another 1-3.5° C within the next 100 years and mankind will be experiencing temperatures it has never experienced before. While most of the world is reeling under the influence of El Nino, one shudders to imagine the scenario when ocean temperatures go up and icebergs start melting. These vagaries of nature coupled with human activities bring about major losses which insurers designate as "Catastrophic". What is the impact of these losses and how do we protect ourselves from their onslaught?

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\* Executive Vice President, Thai Prasit Insurance Co. Bangkok