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News Brief No. 00/36
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2, 2000

International Monetary Fund
700 19th Street, NW
Washington, D. C. 20431 USA

**Excerpted Remarks on Regional Initiatives in Asia by
Mr. Horst Köhler, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund**

On Thursday, June 1, 2000, Mr. Horst Köhler, Managing Director of the IMF, discussed regional initiatives in Asia with senior Thai officials in Bangkok, including Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and Finance Minister Tarrin Nimmhaeminda. The following are excerpts of his remarks.

"Regional initiatives can be very helpful in supporting sustained economic growth and stable financial relations among participating countries—which are precisely the goals that the IMF is tasked to promote, on a global scale, through its surveillance and financing responsibilities. Countries are often well-placed to encourage their neighbors to strengthen economic policies, and I therefore welcome regional arrangements that bolster this constructive policy dialog. The Manila Framework Group is one example of such a forum that, I believe, has served a useful role, and which the IMF has actively supported by providing regular input for its consultations.

"Moreover, I would recall that Asian countries supported their crisis-hit neighbors, and later the Japanese government introduced the Miyazawa Initiative that provided valuable support to several countries in the region. All of these developments are welcome and the IMF looks forward to being a partner in developing further these regional crisis prevention and resolution mechanisms.

"In this vein, I see the recent 'Chiang Mai Initiative' among ASEAN members and China, Korea and Japan (the "ASEAN" + 3") as another

example of enhancing regional cooperation. The ASEAN + 3 have clearly stated that they view the swap and repurchase arrangements as complementary to the work of the IMF. Of course, the details of these arrangements still have to be worked out, and it is difficult to comment precisely at this stage. I am confident that the Initiative will be made to fit well into a strategy of addressing economic issues of importance to the region, as well as of providing broad international support for countries in need. On our part, we shall continue—and, if appropriate, step up—our support of various regional fora, and we look forward to coordinating our assistance with any regional financing arrangement like the 'Chiang Mai Initiative.'"