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to disasters

Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!

World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2011

Bonn is getting ready!

Bonn, Germany



Population: 317,949 (2008)

Type of Hazard: Floods

Located about 25 kilometres South of Cologne on the Rhine River, the City of Bonn is the headquarters for several United Nations organizations and 150 Non Governmental Organisations, working towards sustainable development worldwide. As a platform for the international dialogue on global challenges, the city has hosted two Early Warning Conferences. The UN Campus is seat to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (UNISDR-PPEW). The platform, which started operations in 2004, develops early

warning and preparedness systems for disasters.

While Bonn has a high standard of environmental quality, particularly in the areas of air purity, water, nature and climate protection, it continues to face threads of regular flooding. In 1993, 1995 and 2003, the banks of the Rhine exceeded the city's 10-metre water level, causing millions of dollars in damage.

Disaster Risk Reduction activities

In Germany, combating floods is organized on a local, decentralized basis. The fire departments coordinate the activities to combat such disasters. The City of Bonn, with regional financial assistance, has invested large funds into flood prevention facilities, including the reinforcement of the Rhine's embankments. Bonn is also part of the Flood Emergency Community Rhine, an inter-regional network of cities, local authorities and grass root initiatives along the Rhine, as well as the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR). On a global scale, Bonn is fostering project partnerships and experience exchange with cities worldwide. An example is La Paz (Bolivia), where a joint EW-project has taken place between 2006 and 2009.

Cities all over the world are looking for the best possible options for the future of their citizens and economies. Security, health and well-being of the people living in cities are threatened by disasters, more and more of them induced by global change. The only way into the future is resilience: the more cities and citizens are prepared, the less disasters strike them.



Living on the banks of the Rhine means living with the flood. Human experience and technical skills traditionally come together to strengthen Bonn's resilience against flooding. On a global scale, we see mutual benefit in city networks and project partnerships worldwide. Our fire department has worked with their pairs in La Paz (Bolivia) during their EW-project – and we will continue to seek exchange and to share best practice.

Jürgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn