

Cairo, 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2009

**INVITATION: Regional Workshop on Urban Risk Reduction, 4-5 Nov. 2009**

It is our pleasure to invite you to the first regional workshop on urban risk reduction to be held in Damascus, Syria on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2009. In collaboration with the World Bank and under the auspices of the Syrian Ministry of Local Administration and UNDP Syria, UNISDR is organizing the first regional meeting on urban risk reduction with participation of regional stakeholders and representatives of local authorities.

Disasters are a recurrent reality for many nations and the Arab world is not immune, where the threat of storms, floods, earthquakes and increasing risk from climate change including sea level rise and drought is ever present. The rapid population growth and urbanization in the Arab region have caused a drastic increase in vulnerability to natural hazards. Currently, more than 50% of the Arab populations are living in urban areas that are rapidly growing and stressing natural resources and development. Addressing the region's context and challenges in urban risk reduction will be the focus of the two-day regional workshop that aims at stimulating constructive debate on priority areas of common concern in the region and to engage local governments in future efforts for comprehensive urban risk reduction.

It is expected that the workshop will facilitate the development of a regional and comprehensive urban risk and vulnerability assessment tool that assist local authorities in mainstreaming risk reduction in development plans and projects. Furthermore, the workshop will offer a forum to discuss regional activities and plans to support the upcoming World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2011 on "Building Resilient Cities".

We look forward to your participation and engagement in this workshop. Kindly confirm your participation by 10 October 2009 to UNISDR ([guro.sornes@unisdr-wana.org](mailto:guro.sornes@unisdr-wana.org)) and advise if you need assistance with entry visa to Syria. Detailed agenda and information will be sent in due course.

Thank you and best regards.

Sincerely Yours,



Luna Abu-Swaireh  
Head a.i.  
Regional Office for Arab States