



United Nations
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PRESS RELEASE

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MY CITY IS GETTING READY. IS YOURS?

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction launches a global campaign to help cities build resilience against the impacts of natural hazards

Bonn, Germany – The earthquake that wreaked havoc on Port-au-Prince, Haiti, earlier this year, and the continuing fallout of volcanic ash from Iceland that has paralysed large parts of Europe, reinforce the urgency for cities to take the necessary steps to put in place much-needed disaster reduction plans.

With more than half the world's population living in urban areas, cities are particularly vulnerable to the risks of natural hazards, such as earthquakes, drought and floods. To strengthen a city's readiness to reduce disaster impacts, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is launching this Sunday, 30 May 2010 in Bonn, Germany, a new campaign to raise awareness and boost commitment for sustainable development practices that will increase a city's well-being and safety.

The two-year campaign, **Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready**, urges leaders and local governments to commit to a checklist of *Ten Essentials* that will make their cities more resilient.

“A resilient city and its citizens can benefit greatly from the opportunities presented by urban risk reduction actions,” said Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. “When successfully mobilized, resilient cities may benefit from growth and employment, business opportunities, balanced ecosystems, better health and improved education.”

The aim of the campaign is to enlist over 1,000 local government leaders worldwide to invest more in disaster risk reduction, which includes: improving urban planning, infrastructure and building safety; reinforcing drainage systems to reduce flood, storm and health threats; installing early warning systems; conducting public preparedness drills; and taking measures to adapt to the increasing impacts of climate change.

“Cities all over the world are looking for the best possible options for the future of their citizens and economies,” said Mayor Jürgen Nimptsch of Bonn, Germany. “The way to secure this future is through resilience. The more cities and citizens that are prepared, the greater the chances are for disaster reduction.”

Nimptsch, as well as leaders from five other cities – Mexico City, Mexico; Saint Louis, Senegal; Karlstad, Sweden; Larreynaga-Malpaisillo, Nicaragua; and Albay, the Philippines – will be the first to sign up and commit to one or more of the *Ten Essentials* at a campaign launch, which will take place during the First World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change in Bonn from 28-30 May 2010.

“It is fundamental that we as local leaders are conscious about the risks,” said Enrique Gomez Toruño, the mayor of Larreynaga-Malpaisillo in Nicaragua. “We learned a lot during the recent influenza epidemics and before that from Hurricane Mitch, floods and landslides. We learned we have to invest more time, more capacities to reduce our risks.”

In addition to the commitment of government leaders, the campaign also calls on local community groups, planners, academia, NGOs and the private sector to join in the efforts to make as many cities as resilient as possible.

“Urban risk reduction is an opportunity that cities and their populations cannot afford to miss,” added Margareta Wahlström. “We are inviting people everywhere to take an active role in the campaign so that our cities and urban centres can become safer today and for generations to come.”

The UNISDR Secretariat is the overall coordinator of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. However, local, regional and international partners as well as participating cities and local governments are the main drivers of the initiative.

UN-HABITAT, with its broader World Urban Campaign, is a key partner, along with other UN agencies such as WHO and UNICEF, which are already working on hospital and school safety. UNISDR is also working with city associations and organizations, including the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and CityNet.

END NOTES:

The six leaders to sign up to the campaign in Bonn, Germany, on 30 May 2010 are:

- Jürgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn, Germany
- Marcelo Ebrard, Mayor of Mexico City
- Cheikh Mamadou Abiboulaye Dieye, Mayor of Saint Louis, Senegal
- Enrique Gomez Toruño, Mayor of Larreynaga-Malpaisillo, Nicaragua
- Ake Pettersson Frykberg, Vice Mayor of Karlstad, Sweden
- Joey Sarte Salceda, Provincial Governor of Albay, the Philippines

There will be additional signing events on 31 May at the International Disaster and Risk Conference (IDRC) in Davos, Switzerland, and in Lima, Peru, at a meeting hosted by the Andean Community of Nations, as well as from 8-9 June in New Delhi, India, at a regional conference sponsored by India’s National Institute for Disaster Management, and from 28-31 July in Shanghai, China, at the Shanghai Expo 2010.

For more information about the campaign, visit: www.unisdr.org/campaign and www.preventionweb.net