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PRESS RELEASE

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City leaders join UN Making Cities Resilient campaign

Geneva, Switzerland – Local governments are showing their commitment to protect cities and citizens from natural hazards by signing up to a new global disaster risk reduction campaign.

Davos (Switzerland), Port-au-Prince (Haiti), Santa Tecla (El Salvador) and Baofeng (China) are the latest to join the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction's *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready* campaign, which is aimed at guiding to process to put in place much-needed disaster reduction plans.

On 30 May 2010, leaders from eight cities – Bonn (Germany), Mexico City (Mexico), Saint-Louis (Senegal), Larreynaga-Malpaisillo (Nicaragua), Karlstad (Sweden), North Little Rock (Arkansas), Durban (South Africa) and Albay (the Philippines) – took part in the UNISDR's official campaign launch at the First World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change in Bonn.

“We understand that there is an urgent need to come together in a campaign that will help us to better share ways to reduce urban risk, and therefore save lives,” said Marcelo Ebrard, the mayor of Mexico City and chair of the World's Mayors Council on Climate Change.

The campaign is targeting over 1,000 local government leaders worldwide to commit to sustainable development practices that increase their cities resilience to disasters. This includes: improving urban planning, infrastructure and building safety; reinforcing drainage systems to reduce floods, storm and health threats; installing early warning systems; conducting public preparedness drills; and taking measures to adapt to the increasing impact of climate change.

“Poverty and vulnerability are not a fatality, people are not irreversibly condemned. Our predecessors fought to leave us with a heritage and it is our responsibility to preserve and promote it for the next generation,” said Cheikh Mamadou Abiboulaye Dieye in Bonn.

“It is fundamental that we as local leaders are conscious about the risks,” said also Enrique Gomez, 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.”

Mayors and local leaders from a number of Asian cities, including New Delhi, Mumbai, Colombo and Kathmandu, are also expected to sign up to the UNISDR campaign at a launch event on 8 June

in New Delhi, India sponsored by the Indian Ministry of Urban Development, the National Institute of Disaster Management and the SAARC Disaster Management Centre in New Delhi.

“We are very encouraged by the positive response to the new campaign and the number of cities that are already engaged worldwide,” said Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. “A resilient city and its citizens can benefit greatly from the opportunities presented by urban risk reduction actions.”

The UNISDR Secretariat is the overall coordinator of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. UN agencies including UN-HABITAT, WHO and UNICEF are key partners along with city associations and organizations, including the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and CityNet. NGO networks, grassroots organizations and other UNISDR partners are also engaged in the campaign.

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

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