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PRESS RELEASE

PHILIPPINE MAYORS JOIN GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO MAKE CITIES RESILIENT

Bangkok, July 26, 2010 – Last week three new mayors from the Philippines became part of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready*, joining 60 other mayors from around the world already committed to the campaign.

As signatories to the campaign -- launched in Germany last May -- Mayor Ronaldo B. Golez from Dumangas, Iloilo, Mayor Rico C. Rentuza from the Municipality of St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, and Vice Mayor Alfredo A. Arquillano from Jr. of San Francisco Municipality, Cebu, became the latest to commit to the campaign's checklist of ten essentials that will make their cities more resilient.

The signing ceremony, observed by Joey Salceda, Governor of the Province of Albay and officials from the Climate Change Commission, the Department of Education, and the Office of Civil Defense, was held during the "Southeast Asia Regional Consultation Workshop on Strengthening Climate Resilience", organized from 22 to 23 July 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand by Plan International, the Institute of Development Studies and Christian Aid.

The Municipality of Dumangas, is a coastal town in the province of Iloilo, which experiences two extreme conditions – floods during rainy season and drought during the dry season. In response, Dumangas Local Government has implemented the Climate Field School for Farmers as an innovative disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategy for agriculture.

One of 16 Villages in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, is the site of one of the world's worst landslide in 2006, which also wiped out the entire 480 hectares in nearby Barangay Guinsaugon. The disaster buried more than 1,000 people alive. Two years after this disaster and under the leadership of its Mayor, the town of St. Bernard has received the prestigious "Gawad Kalasag Award," an annual Philippine Presidential award for having the best contingency plan for disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction programme in place.

The Municipality of San Francisco, in the Camotes Group of Islands in Cebu is facing increasing threats to its coastal mangrove forests, seagrass belts and corals increasing storm surges, sea level rise, coral bleaching, overfishing, and coastal encroachments. The local government, in partnership with Plan Philippines has promoted a climate risk management project in the island that incorporates child centered DRR and CCA practices, which promotes child involvement in governance, knowledge management, reduction of underlying risks and in small scale mitigation projects.

The activities by these local government units represent exemplary cases promoted by the “Strengthening Climate Resilience (SCR)” Initiative, which aims to enhance the ability of governments and civil society organizations in developing countries to build the resilience of communities to disasters and climate change as part of their development work.

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.

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.

For information on the Strengthening Climate Resilience Programme in Southeast Asia, please contact:

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