PRESS RELEASE

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Mayor of Port-au-Prince urges local governments to develop "a culture of security" at disaster risk reduction forum in Shanghai

Geneva – "Local governments need to develop a culture of security and have access to the means to respond to a catastrophe," stressed Haiti's Mayor of Port-au-Prince to other mayors gathered at a forum on disaster risk reduction in Shanghai, which concluded today.

Mayor Jean Yves Jason said his key message to other mayors, based on the experience of Port-au-Prince after January's devastating earthquake was, "Be ready."

With the hurricane season starting, Mayor Jason said his priority was to ensure enough capacity to provide for people's safety, through better information and simulation drills. "My people still live in a very precarious situation," he explained, adding that 70 per cent of his staff had perished in the quake and that he still had "not seen any of the pledged help to rebuild Port-au-Prince".

Mr. Jason was among one hundred local government officials taking part in the 28-30 July Shanghai Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction -- organized by DevNet, ICLEI, UN-Habitat, UNISDR with support from the International Recovery Platform and GROOTS -- at the sidelines of the 2010 Shanghai Expo, "Better City, Better Life."

Forum participants agreed on ways to link recovery with long-term economic development plans and promote disaster risk reduction as part of the Millennium Development Goals. They also committed to using disaster risk reduction as a tool to reduce weather-related disaster impacts. Such commitments will advance the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, a ten-year plan to reduce disaster losses endorsed by 168 Member States in 2005.

In addition, a ceremony was held today -- the forum's final day -- to welcome the signature of five cities to the *Making Cities Resilient* campaign, launched in Germany last May. Jejomar Erwin S. Binay, Jr., Mayor of Makati City, Philippines; Ilham Arief Sirajuddin, Mayor of Makassar, Indonesia; Ananta Narayan Jena, Mayor of Bhubaneswar, State of Orissa, India; Mao Zhi Xiong, Secretay General and Assistant Mayor, City of Chengdu, China; and Idrissa Diallo, Mayor of Dalifort-Foiral, Senegal are the five latest cities to join the 60 other mayors from around the world committed to the ten essentials of the campaign.

That checklist includes assigning a budget to maintain critical infrastructure such as flood drainage, safety of all schools and facilities, and to protect ecosystems and natural buffers to mitigate hazards, among others.

Another special ceremony marked the naming of the Governor of the Philippine province of Albay, Joey Salceda, as campaign "Champion" by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström. Campaign Champions are recognized for their achievements in promoting disaster risk reduction, and will be given opportunities for a two-year period to participate in high-profile national or international events as a spokesperson for making cities resilient.

"We now know, and every citizen in the Province knows, that disaster risk reduction is a good investment," said Governor Salceda, a strong supporter of disaster preparedness who joined the campaign in May.

The campaign's aim 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.

For more information on the *Making Cities Resilient* campaign, visit: http://www.unisdr.org/english/campaigns/campaign2010-2011/.

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