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PRESS RELEASE

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UNISDR today launched “*Making Cities Resilient*” campaign in Kuwait

Kuwait – Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, today officially launched the “*Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!*” campaign in the Arab region, during an event in the margins of the General Assembly meeting of the Arab Towns Organization. The event also took place in presence of H.E. Abdulaziz Yousef Al-Adsani, Secretary General of the Arab Towns Organization and Dr. Fadel Safar Ali Safar, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Kuwait.

Recently in the Arab region, several cities experienced floods, including Hadramout, Yemen, in 2008; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2009; and Agadir, Morocco in 2010. Many more cities in the region will be exposed to disasters in the future due to increasing unsafe urban settlements and climate change impacts, as predicted by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

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. Among others, the ten actions include reinforcing drainage systems to reduce flood, storm and health threats; installing early warning systems; and conducting public preparedness drills.

“No region of the world is immune from disaster, and the campaign offers ten concrete areas of action to reduce disaster risks,” said Ms. Wahlström. “I hope that when these Arab cities join, they will inspire many more to do the same. It will allow them to highlight the work they are doing to make their cities resilient.”

UNISDR is the overall coordinator of the campaign, which also calls on civil society, planners and urban professionals from different sectors, national authorities and community groups to support the campaign with innovative solutions to help local governments reduce risk.

More than 100 cities have now joined the campaign. Among them are Mexico city (Mexico), Durban (South Africa), Bogota (Colombia), Port au Prince (Haiti), Amman (Jordan), Albay Province (the Philippines), Cairns (Australia), Chennai City (India), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), and Katmandu (Nepal). Many more are expected to sign up today as part of the national activities organized for the International Day.

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