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PRESS RELEASE

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Twenty Philippine Governors sign up to make their Provinces Resilient to Disasters

Legaspi City, Philippines - Twenty Philippine Governors joined the *Making Cities Resilient: My City Is Getting Ready!* campaign at a summit of local government leaders from 4 to 6 November in Albay.

The Local Government Unit SUMMIT+3i has the theme “Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in the Philippines.” Participants will discuss how climate change adaptation at local government level is critical for meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

“Albay has a zero casualty policy as far as disaster impacts is concerned,” said Making Cities Resilient Champion Joey Salceda, Governor of Albay Province in the Philippines. “We have also created the institutional frameworks to deal both with climate change and disaster risks, and have set aside budgets to reduce future risks from the impacts of climate change, including through our work to achieve the MDGs. Dealing with climate change and disaster risks is the responsibility of chief executives of local government and cannot be delegated or outsourced.”

UNISDR launched the worldwide campaign last May, enlisting local government leaders to commit to ten essential actions to reduce disaster risks. These actions include investing more in disaster risk reduction, preparing and sharing risk assessments, ensuring early warning systems are in place, and protecting ecosystems to reduce floods, cyclones and storm surge impacts.

“Cities are sitting in risky areas often lying in coastal areas and seismic fault lines, exposing millions of people to cyclones, hurricanes, flooding and earthquakes,” said Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. “The Ten Essentials are a step in the right direction that will help building resilient cities.”

“We cannot stop cities growing but we can start planning them in a more sustainable way,” she added. “It does not require huge amounts of new resources, but different ways of using existing resources.”

More than 130 cities have already joined the UNISDR World Disaster Reduction Campaign and are committed to complying with one or more of the Ten Essentials. Among them are Mexico City (Mexico), Durban (South Africa), Bogota (Colombia), Port-au-Prince (Haiti), Amman, (Jordan),

Albay (the Philippines), Cairns (Australia), Chennai City (India), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Saint Louis (Senegal).

As an outcome of the LGU Summit and as a contribution to the Campaign, Albay province is launching the climate change academy and is now offering capacity building programmes for local government officials on issues such as determining vulnerability to impacts of climate change and identify possible adaptation measures at the local level that could further enhance local development plans/programs.

“We are very encouraged by the commitment shown by local governments in the Philippines,” said Alfonso V. Umali, Jr, Governor of Oriental Mindoro, National President of the League of Provinces of the Philippines. “Local governments are key players in building the resilience of communities and are essential partners to protect citizens from disasters and in particular from weather-related disasters.”

For more information on the World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2011 - *Making Cities Resilient: My city is getting ready*, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign>.

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