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PRESS RELEASE

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Finalists for the 2011 Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction showcase durable solutions in resilient urban planning

Geneva – Four cities and two organizations have been shortlisted for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction, worth $50,000, with winners to be announced 10 days from now at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, on 12 May.

The Award is given to an individual or organization for outstanding and internationally recognized action that contributes to building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. It is designed to stimulate wider application of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the key instrument for implementing disaster risk reduction, adopted by the Member States of the United Nations in 2005.

The finalists include the cities of Bhubaneswar, India; North Vancouver, Canada; Santa Fe, Argentina, and San Francisco, Philippines. Two organizations making the final cut are the Coordinator Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), headquartered in Guatemala, and the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority, a joint initiative of the Pakistan Government and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

A jury of four disaster risk reduction experts, from Jamaica, the Philippines, South Africa and Turkey, says a cash prize will be awarded to each of the top three applicants, whose identity will be revealed at an award ceremony on 12 May.

“Being prepared is both a political and personal choice, exemplified by the top candidates who kept going despite resource constraints or changes in the political landscape,” said Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. “The jury reported being highly impressed by the calibre of applicants this year. In the end, the deciding factor was institutional durability and an ability to convince everyday people to care about risk and to reduce its impact on their lives.”

Ms. Wahlström heads the Geneva-based United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), which manages the award. UNISDR received 25 letters of nomination this year – twice as many as last time – comprising 14 cities, 4 individuals and 7 institutions (see attached for details).

She attributed the predominance of cities in the competition this year to the surge of interest among local governments in disaster risk reduction as a result of UNISDR's "Making Cities Resilient – My City Is Getting Ready!" campaign launched in the summer of 2010. To date, 635 cities are participating in the Making Cities Resilient campaign, each submitting questionnaires of self-assessment which are posted online for public scrutiny (http://www.unisdr.org/campaign).

Many of the nominees for the Sasakawa Award this year are working to boost resilience through community-based projects, which fits with the theme of the 2011 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, "Invest Today for a Safer Tomorrow: Increase Investment in Local Action." The conference runs from 8 to 13 May, with 2,000 participants – including many city mayors – expected to attend.

Notes

The top six candidates for the Sasakawa Award will have an opportunity to present their case at the "Ignite" stage of the Global Platform conference, and to answer questions from the audience.

1. Tuesday, 10 May, 13:15-14:00: San Francisco and North Vancouver
2. Wednesday, 11 May, 14:00-14:45: CEPREDENAC and ERRA
3. Thursday, 12 May, 13:15-14:00: Bhubaneswar and Santa Fe

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Nominees for the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction (2011)

(To request interviews with nominees, please contact Dizery Salim, Public Information Officer/Media Relations, salimd@un.org)

Cities and municipalities

Ancona, Italy

The city of Ancona in eastern Italy has a population of about 100,000 and is home to one of the busiest ports in the Adriatic region. In 1982, a terrible landslide destroyed homes, roads, hospitals and other important institutions. The culprit was 180 million cubic meters of soil and rock sliding off Montagnolo Hill. After the event, officials considered ways to stabilize the earth but due to the large size of the landslide, the city could not be certain about its complete stabilization. Hence, the city of Ancona decided – in its own words – "to live together with the landslide" instead of carrying out complex and expensive stabilization works. Ancona established an early warning system integrating landslide management with the municipality emergency plan. The Ancona Monitoring Centre is said to be the only centre in Europe where an advanced monitoring network has been set up and made operative on a very large urbanized landslide area. Slope movements are monitored in real-time, allowing the city to carry out civil emergency plans. The next big challenge for the City Administration will be to enhance the involvement of local people in a bottom-up planning process. "'Living with landslide' is not a slogan, it is a way of living," says the city's Landslide Department.

Bhubaneswar, India

Bhubaneswar, a city in Orissa state, India, has moved from one extreme weather condition to another: in 1999, a super cyclone hit the city reducing it to a ghost city; heat waves in 1998 took away hundreds of lives and floods reduced the city to disaster. Since those years, the city has moved steadily to ensure a better life for its citizens, going from awareness to mock drills, and practicing disaster risk reduction as the core of the city's development vision. A risk assessment conducted by the City Managers' Association Orissa finds that the city has improved its institutional mechanisms and infrastructure for addressing disaster risk, and currently hosts state-supported institutions like Orissa State Disaster Management Authority and Orissa Disaster Rapid Action Force. Despite being located in the poorest state in India prone to cyclones, floods, heat wave and heavy rains, Bhubaneswar has emerged as the hub of industry, education and even tourism. It has also begun involving the community in disaster management. The city "Bhubaneswar is now a role model, and has become an investment destination and one of India's most competitive cities," notes the Sasakawa jury.

Cairns, Australia

Cairns, in northeastern Australia, is known for its comprehensive disaster management framework and was the first to be accepted in the "Making Cities Resilient" campaign by the United Nations. The Cairns Regional Council, a body of elected officials which governs the city, have delivered projects such as the Cairns Central Business District Flood Mitigation project and Lake Placid Bund Wall to provide an increased level of flood protection to the community. In December 2010, a category-5 rated Disaster Coordination Centre, the only one of its kind in Queensland, was completed and operational through the coordinated response to Cyclone Yasi, which made landfall on 3 February 2011. Long before Yasi made landfall, however, authorities had warned that a "life threatening" weather system the size of Hurricane Katrina would slam the northeast coast, in line with predictions from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology. "What people bill as a miracle comes down to the city's good understanding of risk, and knowing how to reduce vulnerability and minimize exposure to risk," noted Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, when news emerged that there were no deaths from the ferocious winds.

Chitwan, Nepal

Chitwan, a district in Nepal, faces multiple hazards that includes flood, drought, landslide, insect pests, diseases and wildlife intrusion. Within the country, Chitwan is considered a pioneer of community-based early warning systems for floods resulting from overflow from two major rivers, the Narayani and Rapti. The district believes that its early warning mechanisms have been effective in reducing losses from four floods that occurred in August 2010. Chitwan's District Development Committee is taking the lead in resilience-building, by supporting the District Disaster Management Committee in producing 31 vulnerability maps. It is also offering disaster preparedness workshops.

Istanbul, Turkey (and former Governor of Istanbul Moammar Güler)

Turkey is one of the most seismically active countries in the world, with more than 95 per cent of its landmass at risk of earthquakes. This setting creates social and economic vulnerabilities, as 70 per cent of the population and 75 per cent of industrial facilities are located in earthquake-prone areas. In recent times, several major earthquakes have affected Turkey: the Marmara Earthquake, which killed 17,000 people in 1999, and several others in 1983, 1992 and 1995. Within the nation's high-risk context, Istanbul is the most vulnerable to disaster due to its high population and commercial and industrial densities. There is a relatively high probability of a major earthquake affecting Istanbul in the next 30 years, and feasibility studies indicate that about 30 per cent of public facilities in Istanbul may collapse in a major earthquake. The Istanbul Seismic Risk Mitigation and Emergency Preparedness Project, which began in 2006 at a cost of €310 million but which rose to €967 million since then, is the world's largest single-city seismic mitigation programme, through which the city has retrofitted or reconstructed 908 facilities that include hospitals and schools. Other achievements include a digital inventory of cultural heritage buildings in Istanbul.

Makati, Philippines

Makati, a city with a workday population of 4 million people, is under threat of earthquakes and floods and was the first in the Philippines to establish an emergency command and control centre. The Mayor of Makati seeks to go beyond response; after tropical storm Ketsana passed over Manila in September 2009, property buyers shunned neighbourhoods that fared badly against the onslaught. Over time, empty lots were taken over by informal settlers, building homes that experts know are vulnerable to floods and other natural hazards. Binay's administration has convinced the private sector to use money from private companies to directly finance public service programmes that are managed not by the city but by non-governmental organizations. Using that formula, Makati signed an agreement recently with one of the biggest banks in the country, securing $46,000 (2 million pesos) to build resilient housing targeted at informal settlers. Like other cities in the Philippines, the city devotes 5 per cent of its total budget, totalling $25 million (11 billion pesos) in 2011, to a calamity fund, of which 70 per cent is used for prevention measures.

Mashhad, Iran

Samen District in the municipality of Mashhad, Iran, is the oldest district in the heart of the city, and the location of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza. In the late 1970s, the district was modernized to improve the safety, comfort and easy access of pilgrims and to ensure smooth operation of activities related to the Holy Shrine. The safety of this region, especially against earthquake, is the biggest concern to city officials especially during the pilgrimage periods of summer, New Year and religious holidays. At the same time, the broader metropolitan area of Mashhad is vulnerable to the impact of

climate change, with over 2.42 million people facing threats from more intense tropical cyclones, extreme rainfall, drought and a rising temperature. As the population size leads to a gradual expansion and increase in city size, the municipality of Mashhad established the "Samen Project," consisting of 30 closely linked projects to address unexpected events and accidents in Mashhad metropolis. It has prepared an atlas of disasters in metropolitan areas and provinces, established a Health-Safety-Environment Assistant in metropolitan municipalities, and prepared earthquake scenarios for metropolitan areas. If Mashhad wins, the award money would be used, among other things, to "empower children to face disasters, through projects such as disaster resistant games," adds the municipality's Director of Crisis Management Organization and Adviser to the Mayor.

Mumbai, India
With an estimated population of nearly 14 million, Mumbai is the largest urban centre in India. It is also the country's financial capital, contributing more than half the country's taxes and customs duties. Located in the western seaboard of India, Mumbai is exposed to risks from multiple sources: cyclones, coastal erosion, landslides, earthquakes and epidemics. Sea level further compounds the city's risks. In 2005, heavy rain submerged large parts of the city, leading to 2,000 deaths and complete disruption of city life for about two days. The disaster triggered a shift in the city's disaster management system, moving from a response-based and reactive mindset to a more proactive and development focused approach to disaster risk reduction. Led by the Greater Mumbai Disaster Management Authority, the city engages over 100 institutions and organizations to understand its risks and identify solutions that have a broad range of support among leaders and their constituents. The Executive Director of the Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative says the city's preparations for the 2011 monsoon season resulted in fewer disturbances and negligible losses for the city compared to previous years. At the same time, the city has 6.5 million slum dwellers, amounting to 60 per cent of the city's population, whose resiliency would take decades more to build. If chosen as a winner, the Joint Commissioner of Mumbai says, "A portion of the award money will be used to train first responder training from the slum communities."

North Vancouver, Canada
The District of North Vancouver is a vibrant community of approximately 82,000 residents, stretching from the sea to its mountains. In 2005, after a deadly landslide left one person dead, the District decided to publicly recognize the risks it faced from natural hazards. Sustainable hazard risk management and disaster risk reduction initiatives are embedded in all city departments – from planning and land-use through to engineering and recreation. Citizens set community risk tolerance and an on-going recognition to mitigation of their risks, incorporate risk-reduction decision criteria into its official community plans, strategic planning and development permitting process, institute early warning systems for landslides and debris flows. In the fields of science, technology and engineering, North Vancouver has been an innovative leader, advancing disaster risk reduction with partners including municipal government, universities and federal government departments. The jury for the Sasakawa Award says the District of North Vancouver "demonstrates capacity for challenging, absorbing and producing technology, traditional knowledge, new knowledge and products, and innovative practices."

Patong, Thailand
Patong municipality, in Thailand's Phuket province, has spent much of the time after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami hit to make the city an attractive tourism spot once more. In addition to tsunamis, Patong is prone to landslides, flash flood and fires. Working with the Phuket Tourism Association, the municipal government of Patong has devised incentives to encourage hotels, businesses and other private investors to disseminate hazard and risk information at tourism destinations, through its "Disaster risk reduction: a tool kit for tourism destinations – practical examples from coastal settlements in Asia," which was produced in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme and other national and international organizations in 2008. Shopping malls, hotels with more than 80 rooms, condominiums of more than 2,000m^2, and buildings higher than 50m must submit reports to the Division of Public Works for regular inspection. Early warning is provided to residents from three towers along the beach, built in 2005 with support from the Swedish and German governments. Sound reaches up to 1.5 miles inland and warnings are offered in six languages catering to tourists: Thai, English, Chinese, German, Japanese and Swedish. "The increase in tourists coming to Patong and Phuket since 2006, just one year after the Tsunami, is a powerful demonstration of tourists' confidence in the safety of the city," says the country's Director of Tourism.

Saijo, Japan
The city of Saijo, in southwestern Japan, has ancient roots, with signs of a seventh-century fortress and an ancient road discovered within its boundaries. Beginning in 1670, the area was a prosperous market town for about 200 years, turning into Saijo town after the Japanese feudal system was abolished and promoted to Saijo city in 1941. It currently has a population of about 115,000 people. A typhoon occurred in September 2004 that caused damage to homes and other infrastructure to the tune of US$59.5 million. Lately, the city has been receiving heavier rainfall and is vulnerable to more typhoons, which officials fear could lead to slope failure. Typhoons expose other problems: the first to fourth areas within Saijo are in mountainous regions with many elderly residents, who found it difficult to evacuate during the 2004 typhoons and could find it difficult to evacuate again, if called for. Since then, between 2005 to 2008, the municipality held 546 meetings to produce a regional disaster prevention map. A volunteer organization for disaster prevention was formed and a forum was opened to create a regional society of safety, which was attended by 500 people. In addition, the city held a drill with 1,700 participants. "The key challenges that Japan faces are related to the revitalization of the small and medium-sized towns and villages in the mountain areas. In the context of an aging society [in those areas], it is not the new development of the technology which matters; rather, the community network and people's power is considered the key point," says Chair of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Regional Task Force for Urban Risk Reduction.

Saint Bernard, Philippines (and Mayor of Saint Bernard, Rico Rentuza)
In 2006, one of the worst landslides hit the Philippines: the Guinsaugon landslide in the municipality of Saint Bernard. The disaster left 154 dead, 28 injured and 1,000 people buried alive. Under Mayor Rico Rentuza, the city developed a disaster risk management agenda encompassing an early warning system, reduction of the adverse effects of natural hazards, information management on watershed characteristics, establishment of a disaster risk management office and mobilization of the community for disaster preparedness. Two years after the Guinsaugon incident, Saint Bernard became one of the recipients of the 2008 and 2009 Gawad Kalasag Award for best practices in disaster risk reduction. The city became a role model for others: in 2008, the Mayor and representatives from the municipal government travelled to the World Landslide Forum in Tokyo to present the city's best practices in disaster risk reduction and its relationship with governance and the affected community. When the city of Luzon was struck by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009, Saint Bernard helped provide emergency response and technical support. In January 2011, when heavy caused floods and landslides, the city of Saint Bernard demonstrated that they had learned their lessons from past disasters by pre-emptively evacuating 1,281 families from 21 villages. With its Public Information Committee, Saint Bernard was the sole municipality among the regions able to provide regular updates through its Disaster Situation Report, receiving a commendation from President Benigno Aquino.

San Francisco, Philippines

The city of San Francisco, located on a remote island in the Philippines, is home to 40,000 individuals. A place of beautiful beaches and natural wonders, it is prone to dangerous monsoon winds and lethal typhoons. The city is determined not to repeat the events of 1990, the year of the last big disaster – Typhoon Ruping – which damaged houses, crops and caused six deaths. The city's resilience hinges on the Purok System unique to San Francisco, which is an indigenous method of self-organization at the sub-village level. A Purok "Capital Build Up" programme has people depositing an amount agreed on by residents as initial capital for emergency purposes. This has increased fluid assets of the Puroks to use as a post-disaster assistance fund. With limited access to the Internet, cellphones and radios, the Purok system is used to disseminate information and risk assessments, with Purok coordinators acting as couriers of information to the residents. To strengthen the city's human resources capacity and to complement the effort of everyday citizens, teachers are sent to seminars and trained on solid waste management and disaster risk reduction. The city says the prize money will be used to support the Two Million Trees Project to rehabilitate watershed areas and give participants of a food-for-work programme to plant trees and generate income

Santa Fe, Argentina
Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, in the Pampeana Plain in east Argentina, is known for its rich natural resources – but also for its heavy floods. The city is surrounded by two rivers, the Parana and Salado, and most neighbourhoods are located on swamplands, lagoons and sandy ground. In April 2003, the Salado River overflowed past the unfinished flood protection embankment, reaching a height of two or three meters. More than 130,000 people were forced from their homes and 24 people were killed. In 2007, extraordinarily heavy rain in March led to heavy floods once more, displacing 28,000 people and cutting off access to the city. The two floods were caused by different phenomena but both had a severe impact on the city and its development. In December 2007, the city created a risk management and risk communication programme that divided the city into zones, which clearly defined some areas as risky. In neighbourhoods frequently affected by floods, the city held meetings and workshops with residents to establish warning systems, safe routes and meeting points for preventive evacuation. In areas with many informal settlers, several thousand have been "regularized" and given certificates of occupancy, debt cancellation certificates and sale contracts. The city expects to regularize more informal settlers in the near future. Already, scores of families in zones not protected by flood embankments have been relocated.

Individuals

Sunday Idowu Adebayo, Nigeria
There should be more collaboration between the source of trans-Atlantic hurricanes (Africa) and their landing spot in the United States or Caribbean to cause timely warnings, says meteorologist Sunday Idowu Adebayo, whose recent analysis shows that hurricanes can originate from, and pass through, the African continent, eventually moving into the Atlantic and crossing over to the east coast of America. In a paper written recently, Mr. Adebayo explains that Hurricane Alberto, which formed around 30 July 2000 in southwest Sudan, moved through the northern tip of Central African Republic, northern Cameroon and Chad Republic before entering Nigeria on 31 July. From then on, it moved through 15 states from northeast to southwest before entering the Atlantic between Lagos and Contonu in Benin. It continued westward until 3 August, when it was reported by the ship, Conti Sydnew, which registered 34 knot gusts. Alberto apparently moved along the coast of West Africa for three nights without any ship or satellite picking it up. From 3 August, it was monitored closely until it headed for Iceland on 23 August, after a looping trajectory in the mid-Atlantic where it attained a category-4 status. "His work reveals an obscure hurricane could have caused devastating destruction if it had passed through populated cities," notes Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Captain Dele Ore, in his letter of support for Mr. Adebayo, who adds that Mr. Adebayo is "always ready to discuss and share his scientific work with people around him."

Irena Manzella, Italy
Irene Manzella, a post-doctoral student at the University of Geneva's Mineralogy Department in the Earth and Environmental Sciences Section, is known for her great interest for disaster prevention, forecast and mitigation. She carried out her training in a highly affected area in Nicaragua, where she worked with local authorities and non-governmental organizations to build up community resilience in El Viejo after Hurricane Mitch. Her work led to a consulting project for the assessment of hazard, vulnerability and risk, in collaboration with the municipality of Managua for the development of the legal framework and the emergency response of the city. This gave her the possibility to present a final dissertation on cooperation projects in high-risk areas, based on her study of Nicaragua. She is now performing laboratory tests on the physical processes that develop in volcanic eruptions. "Although she may be fairly young to receive [the Sasakawa Award], it is important to show that young persons are also able to take important responsibilities in risk reduction activities," says supporter and independent expert in landslides, Christophe Bonnard of the University of Geneva.

Jose Maria Clemente Sarte Salceda, Philippines
Governor Jose "Joey" Salceda of Albay province, Philippines, is driven by his effort to save people's lives and property through a "zero casualty" policy. When Mr. Salceda took over as Governor, Albay province had a relatively good track record in disaster management, but he took the province a step further with a sustainable framework for disaster risk reduction, which Mr. Salceda linked to socioeconomic goals such as the Millennium Development Goals. He was the mastermind behind the Albay and Manila Declarations on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, which established disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as both a national and local priority for building community resilience to climate change impacts. This earned him the name "Green Economist Governor" in the Philippines. If awarded the Sasakawa prize, Mr. Salceda says that he will give the money "to the people of Albay, who are the real disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and Millennium Development Goals champions, and for my fledgling Climate Change Academy for Local Government Units in the Philippines." Mr. Salceda was named Champion of the United Nations "Making Cities Resilient" campaign.

Surono, Indonesia
Dr. Surono, who goes by only one name, is head of Indonesia's Vulcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation Centre and is described by his peers as a policy maker, creative bureaucrat, scientist, risk communicator and disaster educator. In his country, he became known as a compelling risk communicator to the public at large, appearing on national television and newspapers after Indonesia became hit by several large-scale geohazards in 2004. To those that have worked with him, Surono is a creative thinker, using his knowledge of science to drive policy and help shape a model for future disaster risk reduction not only in Indonesia but also in Southeast Asia. He is known for a combined focus on realistic hazard assessments and how to achieve the maximum level of risk reduction. "To handle these tasks in cooperation with decision-makers and the public, [a person] needs a very good sure instinct, especially because the decision for an evacuation…is not totally based on scientific facts but more on experience," says the Secretary of the German Geophysical Society, who has worked with Surono to study the explosive behaviour of Mount Merapi, one of Indonesia's active volcanoes. Surono says he has plans to strengthen the capacity of local government and community-based disaster risk reduction in the area around another active volcano, Mount Sinabung.

Institutions and Projects

Coordinator Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC), Guatemala
CEPREDENAC is a one-of-a-kind coordination centre that acts as a forum for information exchange, technical assistance, training, prevention and forecast consultancy for disaster mitigation. Over the years, despite financial and other constraints, the organization has stayed the course while maintaining a good record of consensus-building in the Central American region – a disaster-prone area known for volcanic and seismic activity, drought and flooding. Observers have praised CEPREDENAC for adopting an approach based on sound science, through which it has diffused and disseminated disaster risk reduction principles to the six Central American nations that it serves. CEPREDENAC has also received praise for demonstrating good leadership in meeting the needs of those six countries for disaster risk reduction, which have, in turn, recognized its legitimacy by investing a voluntary annual fee of US$30,000 as well as released scientists and technocrats to serve in the institution. CEPREDENAC supports the consolidation of information systems that include Internet components and radio communications systems. It also coordinates studies regarding the legal status of early warning systems within the national legal frameworks of disaster risk reduction management. It is currently developing a communication platform for information exchange and transfer.

Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority, Pakistan
The Government of Pakistan established the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) in October 2005 to take up the mammoth task, through the Post-Earthquake Rural Housing Reconstruction Programme (RHRP), of rebuilding regions affected by the devastating earthquake earlier that month, which rendered 3.5 million people homeless. Over 70,000 people were killed and more than 42,000 families deprived of their main breadwinner. It is a user-build programme. A field study organized UN-HABITAT declared that all benefits of an owner-driven approach appeared to have been achieved: training, social mobilization, public awareness and livelihood development. Experts say the strengths of the programme "can be seen right across the board: logistics, technical safety, social mobilization, community participation, speed of delivery, selection of beneficiaries, financing system, scale of provision and cultural sensitivity."

FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance, Pakistan
FOCUS is a humanitarian and disaster response agency operating in Pakistan since 1998 with a strong presence in Europe, Canada, United States, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and India. It is an affiliate of the Aga Khan Development Network. FOCUS is among the pioneer agencies specializing in search and rescue and disaster preparedness and response. It has also been instrumental in provision of relevant expertise to National Disaster Management Authority, the government agency responsible for disaster management and response. When the Attabad landslide occurred on 4 January 2010, blocking the Hunza Valley, FOCUS undertook a series of investigations that were instrumental in both raising the profile of the problem and in arranging evacuations of the slope as the problem became more serious. That action was said to have saved 100 lives. FOCUS developed an innovative lake monitoring and early warning system, as part of its efforts to safeguard people living downstream from the river dam. It has also begun awareness raising sessions for people in downstream areas, apart from developing evacuation plans and demarcating risk-prone areas in case of a lake burst.

Global Network for Disaster Reduction, United Kingdom
The Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction is responsible for the groundbreaking "Views From the Frontline" programme that directly supports the strategic goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Over 620 civil society organizations have managed to gather over 50,000 views and voices from people living at the frontline of disasters across the world, producing a dialogue about progress in disaster risk reduction at the grassroots level. In the course of preparing Views from the Frontline, GDNR has developed a process that works with regional coordinating organizations and national coordination organizations. Local capacity is continually being built, so that local non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations are able to provide good, solid quantitative data on disaster risk reduction. "This process has built the self-confidence of civil society to take their data along to government officials and discuss the results, increasing the power of advocacy," say experts.

MOHEB, Iran
The MOHEB project, run by Iran's Social Welfare Organization, is a project that delivers "empowerment education" through drills. Members of the community from all walks of life are given training on how to react in emergencies and what their roles should be before aid workers and government agencies arrive. Community members are assigned to different committees to provide support to the community itself in the first hours of an emergency, and a specific committee was formed to support children and another for women. Psycho-social support during emergencies is a main element of the MOHEB project. A committee consisting of a consultant, social worker and psychiatrist is established to facilitate implementation of the programme in the selected area. A local committee, consisting of representatives of the local population, is responsible for organizing and providing community training. The project is arranged in a participatory manner and villagers are identified and assigned to different teams, such as relief, rescue, logistics and others. "The idea is to reduce the impact of disaster by training and preparing the members of the community to help themselves," says UNICEF, which had an opportunity to observe MOHEB at work in 2009.

Sustainable Reconstruction Master Plans for 25 Coastal Cities, Chile
On 27 February 2010, Chile experienced the most widespread urban earthquake ever recorded. It was felt by more than 12 million people and, apart from damage to the capital city, severely affected the Metropolitan Area of Greater Concepción, the second largest city in the country. The earthquake partially razed five cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, 45 cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants and more than 900 villages and coastal and rural communities. As part of the national post-earthquake and tsunami reconstruction plan, Chile's Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is developing a sustainable reconstruction Master Plan for 25 coastal cities. The Plan promotes the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, and encourages the participation of dozens of communities, towns and cities, mayors and residents, and Intendants and Governors. The Plan counts on the generosity of businesses and their employees, as well as foundations, universities and civic organizations to promote longer term commitments where individual positions and interests are being postponed in favour of the common vision and interest: to rebuild, as soon as possible, and better.

Tehran Disaster Management and Mitigation Organization, Iran
Iran stands out as one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. Its capital city, Tehran – the biggest megacity in the country with a population of more than 11 million in its 22 metropolitan districts – is surrounded by active and hazardous seismic faults that have the potential to trigger multiple disasters in this city. The Tehran Disaster Management Headquarters, established by a Cabinet decree, played a significant role in reducing urban risks and vulnerability to disasters, and was upgraded to the Tehran Disaster Management and Mitigation Organization (TDMMO), which further unified the management system for preparedness against disasters at urban management level. Most recently, TDMMO established a safe emergency evacuation programme in Tehran, emphasizing community-based participation at metropolitan districts. The project has many components, such as identifying evacuation sites and access routes, preparing maps and overseeing logistics, which will be implemented through collaboration and direct participation of district communities. In the past, TDMMO has worked with international

organizations, such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, to establish an emergency response plan for the first 72-hours after an earthquake, and a second plan to reduce the vulnerability of the Tehran area to the impact of earthquakes.

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