

PRESS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR TO ADOPT DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PLAN

GENEVA, 18 October 2011 – The new Government of Myanmar intends to adopt the disaster risk reduction plan that was drawn up after Cyclone Nargis two years ago following a series of meetings with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström.

Wahlström who heads UNISDR, the UN office responsible for disaster reduction, said today on her return from a four-day official visit to Myanmar: "It was a very useful visit and it is clear from our meetings with senior government officials that lessons have been learned from Cyclone Nargis two years ago and a considerable effort is being made to put those lessons into practice.

"We discussed how disaster risk reduction can support poverty alleviation strategies and sustainable development efforts. The country is undertaking important legislative and institutional reforms relevant to reducing disaster risk and while some capacity is available in-country it is critical that due cooperation and support be made available. It will be important to ensure close dialogue and coordination among government, UN, NGOs, the private sector and donors to ensure effective implementation of the disaster reduction plan which the government has now agreed to adopt.

"We also discussed the new disaster management law and the establishment of a national disaster loss database. UNISDR made some suggestions for more emphasis on disaster risk reduction alongside disaster preparedness and response. UNISDR is particularly pleased at the emphasis being placed on hazard risk-mapping and the work being undertaken to introduce a national building code for seismic risk. "

During her visit, Wahlström met with local leaders and people from communities which were badly affected by Cyclone Nargis. She also met with the Society of Engineers and the Myanmar Chamber of Commerce to discuss private sector involvement in disaster risk reduction.

About UNISDR

UNISDR is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* which has been adopted by 168 countries and seeks "the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in

lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.” Over 130 countries now report on their disaster risk reduction efforts. The biennial Third Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction took place in May 2011 and was opened by the UN Secretary General. It attracted several Heads of State and over 2,600 delegates representing 168 governments, 25 inter-governmental organizations, 65 NGOs and other ISDR partners. UNISDR has facilitated the creation of 38 National Disaster Data Bases around the world as part of its on-going global effort to lead and convince governments and the private sector to invest in risk reduction and avoid recurrent disaster losses which waste development resources. It has also mobilised over 800 cities and local governments to take part in the World Disaster Risk Reduction Campaign, *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!* In early 2011, UNISDR supported the initiative by the President of the UN General Assembly to organize the first thematic debate on disaster risk reduction ever held in the UN General Assembly.

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