



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### UNISDR WELCOMES LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOCUS ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

**DURBAN, 5 December 2011** – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, today welcomed the Durban Climate Change Adaptation Charter for Local Government agreed yesterday by Mayors from around the world as “the best possible start to a critical week in the life of this planet when we so urgently need real leadership on mitigation and adaptation.

“It would be a tragedy if the climate adaptation agenda was held hostage to broader agreements on mitigation and financing so it is encouraging to see city mayors and local governments forging ahead and agreeing to mainstream adaptation in local government development planning regardless of the COP17 outcome.

“Disaster risk reduction and reinforcing resilience are integral to climate change adaptation in a world where vulnerability and exposure to extreme weather is increasing year by year with the destabilisation of the world’s weather systems and poor urban planning and land use.

“As UNISDR knows from its ‘Making Cities Resilient’ Campaign, local government is where the rubber hits the road when it comes to responding to the human impacts of climate change. We fully support funding for cities, towns and municipalities for their registered adaptation actions.”

The Charter’s signatories, members of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, called upon local, sub-national and regional governments to accelerate their adaptation efforts by committing to a series of measures including mainstreaming adaptation in local government planning; impact and vulnerability assessments; alignment with mitigation strategies; to seek direct access to funding including “a local adaptation thematic window in the Green Climate Fund”; and create partnerships.

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability designated James Nxumalo, the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality which includes Durban, to present the Charter to the high level segment of the COP17/CMP7 meeting getting underway this week.

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#### **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 900 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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