



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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PRESS RELEASE

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HORN OF AFRICA CRISIS RESULTS IN EFFORT TO IMPROVE ACTION ON EARLY WARNINGS

NAIROBI/GENEVA, 13 February 2012 – In advance of critical rainfall forecasts for the Horn of Africa, the UN office for disaster risk reduction, UNISDR, today announced a partnership with the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) to ensure rapid dissemination of weather updates to disaster managers.

Pedro Basabe, Head of the UNISDR Regional Office for Africa, said: “The failure to mobilise an adequate and timely response to the food crisis on the Horn of Africa when the alarm was first raised 18 months ago has led to many unnecessary deaths. This scenario is in danger of repeating itself across the Sahel this year where more than one million children are at risk of severe malnutrition and ten million people face hunger.

“We hope this new partnership between UNISDR and ACMAD will forge closer links between the climate science community and disaster managers in Africa. The result we want is better understanding of early warnings and a more rapid response at all levels, local, national, regional and international.”

Alhassane Diallo, ACMAD Director-General, said: “Structured dialogue between climate scientists and disaster managers will result in a better understanding of climate change and the impact on vulnerable communities. Early warnings and seasonal forecasts are all essential to the work of a disaster manager but climate change will mean even more extreme events and weather variability which will impact greatly on disaster management in the future.”

The partnership was announced today at a forum on disaster risk management in Nairobi. It comes two weeks before the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, which will provide the regional climate outlook statement for the all-important March to May 2012 rainy season.

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 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 almost 1,000 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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