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UN KICKS OFF DISCUSSIONS ON NEW INTERNATIONAL BLUEPRINT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

GENEVA, 5 March 2012 – The UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, and HE Yoichi Otabe, the Japanese Ambassador to the International Organizations in Geneva, announced today the start of consultations on a new international blueprint for reducing disaster losses in advance of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction which the Japanese government is proposing to host in 2015.

The new framework for disaster risk reduction will build on the success of the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities* in spreading a culture of disaster prevention around the globe. The Hyogo Framework was agreed at the first-ever World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe in Hyogo Prefecture in January 2005 on the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, and a month after the Asian tsunami.

Ms. Wahlström said: “As we look to the anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, the start of consultations on the post-HFA framework is a suitable occasion on which to acknowledge the debt that the world owes to Japan when it comes to sharing its vast experience and knowledge of disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

“The learning from the Great East Japan Earthquake will be a vital contribution to preparing the world to meet the challenges of disaster risk in the urbanized, globalized world of the 21st century where a natural hazard can trigger a chain of catastrophic events impacting lives and livelihoods in tragic ways unless we are realistic in our assessment of risk and act accordingly.”

HE Yoichi Otabe said: “The Great East Japan Earthquake has provided us with further confirmation of the importance of disaster risk reduction as a critical global issue in the 21st century. Development is too often sidetracked and at times even reversed by disasters, so investing in disaster risk reduction and resilience supports sustainable development. We have seen a significant improvement in the political and economic commitment to reducing risk and increasing resilience since the Kobe World Conference in 2005 and hope that this will be enhanced as a result of Rio+20.

“The Hyogo Framework provides an analytical tool for gauging progress towards reducing disaster losses and encourages both strategic and action-oriented planning. Progress is being made but more needs to be done to help countries to address the causes of risk. Japan will hold an international conference in the disaster-stricken Tohoku region this summer to boost international cooperation on coping with natural disasters and to support discussions on establishing a post-HFA Framework. A new framework will help to mainstream disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policy after the Millennium Development Goals.”

There are 133 countries reporting on their progress in implementing the HFA making it the most important source of information on disaster risk management at the country level. UNISDR is collaborating with 40

countries on building national disaster loss data bases, a critical knowledge base for making investment decisions in disaster risk management. There are now 78 National Platforms for 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 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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