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DISASTER LOSSES TOP ONE TRILLION DOLLARS AS DONORS UNDERFUND RISK REDUCTION

GENEVA, 20 March 2012 – The UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, today launched a new report by Development Initiatives which highlights major discrepancies in the way that donors allocate funding for disaster risk reduction despite economic losses of over one trillion dollars from disasters so far this century.

Ms. Wahlström said: “This report is a very timely examination of funding for disaster risk reduction when it is now clear that we have broken through the trillion dollar ceiling for economic losses so far this century. As of the end of 2011 we can conservatively state that disasters so far this century have cost over \$1,380 billion”

The Report “Disaster Risk Reduction: Spending Where It Should Count” highlights the fact that the top 40 recipients of humanitarian aid between 2000 and 2009 only receive about 30% of total development aid (\$363 bn out of \$1,229 bn) compared to 90% of all emergency aid. And just \$3.7 billion was spent on disaster risk reduction in the 40 countries surveyed in the report.

Ms. Wahlström said: “The disparity that exists in the allocation of development aid can be partly explained by geo-political strategic interests but it is doubly surprising to find that so little of that allocation of development aid is actually for disaster risk reduction. Thanks to Development Initiatives we know that just \$3.7 billion went to 40 of the poorest countries on earth for disaster risk reduction, which represents about 1% of their development aid allocation of \$363 billion.

“Clearly there is something not right here. After all, these countries account for over half the people affected by disasters and almost 80% of deaths. They may account for only \$75 billion of the total economic losses of \$887 billion during the report’s time-frame but we know that the impact of these losses is much higher in least developed countries than it is in high-income countries. I would urge donors to re-examine their priorities to ensure that spending on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is more in line with the needs.”

Jan Kellett, a Programme Leader with Development Initiatives and co-author of the report, said: “at a time when humanitarian needs are at an historic high, and donors are under considerable pressure to spend less and prioritise value for money, a reassessment of spending is imperative. This report reveals the critical need for a revised financing model which places greater emphasis upon the reduction of risk, based on comprehensive assessments of need and appropriate prioritisation of funding, as well as improvements in the quality of reporting”.

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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