



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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PRESS RELEASE

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CITIES PUSH FOR RESILIENCE AS GLOBAL DISASTER LOSSES HIT \$500 BILLION

BONN, 14 May 2012 – Addressing city leaders at the 2012 Resilient Cities Congress, the UN’s top disaster risk reduction official Margareta Wahlström today launched a new phase of the *Making Cities Resilient* campaign which now includes 1,020 cities around the globe.

The action comes as the UN prepares for the largest-ever summit on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro next month.

Ms. Wahlström, the Head of UNISDR, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, told Mayors and local government leaders: “Cities and towns are on the frontline when it comes to economic losses due to the rising frequency and intensity of floods and other disasters which have accelerated since this campaign was launched two years ago at the first Resilient Cities Congress. Economic losses since then amount to US\$ 500 billion.

“Due to demand and growing solidarity among cities on the frontline of climate change and disaster risk we are extending the Campaign to 2015 and providing cities with tools to assess their progress in tackling risk and climate change as they seek to convince governments and the private sector to invest more in resilience.

“Cities are at the heart of our globalized economy. Cities will now have an online tool for self-assessment against the Campaign’s Ten Essentials for a resilient city. Today we are also launching a guide to resilience created by, and for, mayors and other local government leaders.”

The new *Handbook for Local Government Leaders: How to Make Cities More Resilient* was developed at the request of city leaders to explain why building disaster resilience is necessary; and what kind of strategies and actions are required by cities and local governments to achieve resilience.

Jurgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn, a Campaign member and Role Model City, speaking alongside Ms. Wahlström, endorsed the handbook on behalf of mayors everywhere. “UNISDR is helping cities enrich their understanding of risks accumulated from years of development without attention to proper land-use planning, uncontrolled population growth and other vulnerabilities. The key to a sustainable future lies in the hands of cities but only if they are risk-aware and ready to tackle their vulnerability. This is the purpose of our campaign and what the handbook hopes to address.”

The *Handbook for Local Government Leaders: How to Make Cities More Resilient* was officially launched by Ms. Wahlström in Bonn today at the 2012 Resilient Cities Congress, convened by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is a network of over 1,200 cities, towns and counties worldwide and one of 25 partners working to support the *Making Cities Resilient* campaign, which is run by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), headed by Ms. Wahlström.

Alongside ICLEI, the 24 other partners working with UNISDR to support the campaign include UN-HABITAT/UNICEF with the Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) and HABITAT’s World Urban Campaign for Resilient Cities; United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG); as well as Cisco whose Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG) works with the global public sector on resilient cities.

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 seeks “the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.”

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