

The UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for disaster risk reduction, Margareta Wahlström, has urged governments to commit resources to building national disaster loss data bases so they can better target spending on infrastructure to avoid recurring losses and damages. Ms Wahlström was attending the European launch of the IPCC's Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) which was first proposed by UNISDR and the Government of Norway in 2008.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/8XRTn>



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UNISDR CHIEF VISITS PHILIPPINES

UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström attended the annual meeting of the Asia Development Bank (ADB) in Manila where she facilitated the vulnerable cities seminar entitled "Waking up to the need for urban disaster risk management." UNISDR also joined forces with a leading university earlier this month to urge Manila's business community to reduce its disaster risk and to develop business continuity plans which take account of the capital city's extreme exposure to earthquakes and typhoons. Disasters cost the country a record \$615 million last year. "Adopting business continuity plans is not a question of choice but a double imperative for the Philippines as earthquake and typhoon risks are very high and seriously threaten business assets and profits", Margareta Wahlström, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction told more than 100 participants at a roundtable on business continuity planning (BCP) held in Ateneo Graduate School of Business in Manila.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/aXzHG>

UNISDR FOCUS ON CENTRAL AMERICA

Weak disaster preparedness and recovery planning in two of the world's most disaster-prone countries were discussed over four days this month by government officials, mayors, local government representatives and international risk management experts in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, as they seek to develop national disaster recovery plans for Honduras and neighboring El Salvador. Addressing the UNISDR-organized International Training Workshop on Planning for Disaster Recovery, Jose Manuel Hermida, the UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, observed that "the high vulnerability of Honduras and El Salvador is not so much related to the number of disasters that have hit the region as the weakness of disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery".

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/NQqe3>

UNISDR BACKS EUROPEAN ADAPTATION PROJECT

UNISDR is backing a newly launched project from the European Commission, "Adaptation Strategies for European Cities", designed to provide capacity building and support for European cities in developing and implementing an adaptation strategy for climate change. Helena Molin-Valdes who manages UNISDR's "Making Cities Resilient" campaign urged campaign members in Europe to get involved in the project which is led by UNISDR partner ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) for the Directorate-General for Climate Action. For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/aL57Y>



Visit our webpage dedicated to Disaster Risk Reduction and Rio+20
<http://www.unisdr.org/2012/rioplus20/>



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AMERICANS REPORT FEELING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Extreme Weather, Climate & Preparedness in the American Mind, a survey carried out last month by the Yale Project on Climate Communication and George Mason University for Climate Communication, finds that 51 percent of Americans believe that extreme weather will cause a natural disaster in their own community in the next year. It comes as a series of dissemination events take place around the world for the IPCC's Special Report On Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/u7nhL>



From left: David Cadman, President of ICLEI, Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Jürgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn, hold up "How to Make Cities More Resilient - A Handbook for Local Government". (Photo: ICLEI)

CITIES CAMPAIGN ENTERS NEW PHASE

Addressing city leaders at the 2012 Resilient Cities Congress, the UN's top disaster risk reduction official Margareta Wahlström 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. "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. The Mayor of Bonn, Jürgen Nimptsch, who helped launch the "Making Cities Resilient" campaign two years ago is now urging mayors around the world to get involved in the UNISDR-led consultations taking place on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/nn4Z1>



Visit our Toolkit for Local Governments and download the Handbook here:

<http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/toolkit>

CAMBODIA LEARNING LESSONS FROM FLOODS, SAYS UNISDR CHIEF

In 2011, floods affected 1.6 million people in Cambodia; 700 000 were children -- a record number. "Cambodia is clearly learning lessons from the recent floods. I am encouraged by the rapid increase of awareness countrywide on DRR. The memory of last year's floods is still fresh in the minds of people, while there is strong will among the government ministers I recently met to do more to avoid a repeat of 2011," observed UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, during a six-day visit to Cambodia.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/3b9KU>

USING GIS FOR DRR

Innovations in technology have made it easier in the last decade to reduce disaster risks and plan for the future. The internet combined with technologies, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), now makes it possible to better understand and communicate the social and physical complexities of disasters. This was clearly echoed by Ambassador Betty E. King, permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations Office in Geneva, in April at the conference 'GIS for the United Nations and the International Community'. "Technology is a valuable tool that has the potential to transform the way we work, and it also can deliver cost efficiencies, increase transparency, and make an organization more relevant to what is happening around the world in real time," said Ambassador King in her keynote address.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/qLydR>

CITIES 'GOING IT ALONE' ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

A new survey by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, shows that 68% of cities are pursuing adaption planning for climate change but "only 7 per cent of cities surveyed believe that their national governments fully understand the realities of adaptation planning at the local level." The global survey, Progress and Challenges in Urban Climate Adaptation Planning, was presented by author, JoAnn Carmin, at the "2012 Resilient Cities Congress" which took place from 13-14 May in Bonn, Germany.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/m8Jn1>



A survey conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and ICLEI found that 68% of cities are pursuing adaption planning for climate change but "only 7 per cent of cities surveyed believe that their national governments fully understand the realities of adaptation planning at the local level". (see above)



Photo: World Bank / GFDRR

Floods becoming more dangerous, more costly, says World Bank

A new guide launched at the WMO HQ warns that urban flooding is "becoming more dangerous and more costly to manage because of the sheer size of the population exposed within urban settlements." Launched by one of the report's lead authors, World Bank expert, Abhas K. Jha, said: "we need to worry about people and assets in harm's way for the foreseeable future."

"Cities and Flooding: A Guide to Integrated Urban Flood Risk Management for the 21st Century," published by the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Risk and Recovery, highlights the staggering growth in economic losses over the last two decades even though flood deaths have declined in many parts of the world. By 2030 the majority of urban dwellers will live in cities of less than one million people "where urban infrastructure and institutions are least able to cope." For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/HtMGj>

THE COSTLY IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Over the last five years economic losses due to disasters reached over \$800 billion worldwide and a new report has found that 81% of surveyed cities experienced an increase in natural hazards over the same period. Nearly half of the 468 cities who participated in the survey reported a range of impacts, and damage to local government property was the most frequently cited impact. The lack of financial support and understanding of the urban adaptation challenge outlined in the new survey is a key reason why initiatives such as UNISDR's two year old "Making Cities Resilient" campaign are crucial in raising awareness, promoting peer-to-peer learning and generating political support and understanding for local governments. Only 7% of respondents believe that their national governments fully understand the realities of adaptation planning at local level.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/Qt4Ht>

MINDANAO MAYORS SEEK ACTION

Mayors from across the disaster-affected island of Mindanao are to petition the President of the Philippines, Benigno C. Aquino Jr., to allow the use of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund for prevention and mitigation activities at local level as part of a nine-point plan of action agreed earlier this month.

UNISDR champion, Governor Joey Salceda of Albay, hosted a two-day meeting on "Building a Resilient Mindanao" in Legazpi, Albay, which resulted in the plan of action which draws on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/WnAq2>