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Inside the Rio+20 pavilion (UN Photo / Maria Elisa Franco)

“WE CAN DO BETTER” - UNISDR CHIEF

- 1.3 million killed, 4.4 billion affected, \$2 trillion economic losses -

In the build up to Rio+20, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, urged UN member States to face up to the realities of the economic and human impact of disasters since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro twenty years ago. "I hope that this month's UN Conference on Sustainable Development will take on board the losses this planet has suffered in the twenty years since the last such conference. During that time we have seen record economic losses, great numbers of people killed and billions displaced, injured or homeless because of growing exposure to extreme events fuelled by rapid urbanization, poverty, environmental degradation, climate change and a lack of good governance.

"The numbers tell the story. Over the last twenty years, it is conservatively estimated that disasters have killed 1.3 million people, affected 4.4 billion and resulted in economic losses of \$2 trillion. These are staggering numbers when you consider what it means in terms of missed opportunities, shattered lives, lost housing, schools and health facilities destroyed, cultural losses and roads washed away. We can do better. The Rio+20 Conference needs to put down a marker and introduce time-bound, realistic sustainable development goals which will eradicate this enormous waste of human, social and economic resources. We know how to do it. We have the tools."

"All UN member states have endorsed the Hyogo Framework for Action which spells out what the priorities are in terms of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation but we need to accelerate action. This is especially important in the absence of any meaningful progress in tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Let's have action. Disaster risk reduction saves lives and livelihoods and builds resilience."

Read more: <http://goo.gl/gvBe0>

WHAT DO THE STATS MEAN

See infographic on page 4

Large numbers are often difficult to digest but it's clear that a lot of children are orphaned by disasters, homes are lost and work-places are damaged or destroyed never to open again. Approximately 25 years of Overseas Development Aid has effectively been wiped out by the economic losses of the last 20 years. Storms, earthquakes and floods in particular have taken an enormous toll on infrastructure.

According to UNISDR's Global Assessment Report for Disaster Risk Reduction, since 1989, 64,000 schools and 73,000 kms of roads were damaged or destroyed mainly in frequently occurring, low-severity extensive disasters in just 19 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



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Impacts of Disasters since the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit

In 1992, the United Nations organized a conference on environment and development in Rio de Janeiro, called the Earth Summit. The purpose of the conference was to rethink economic growth, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection.

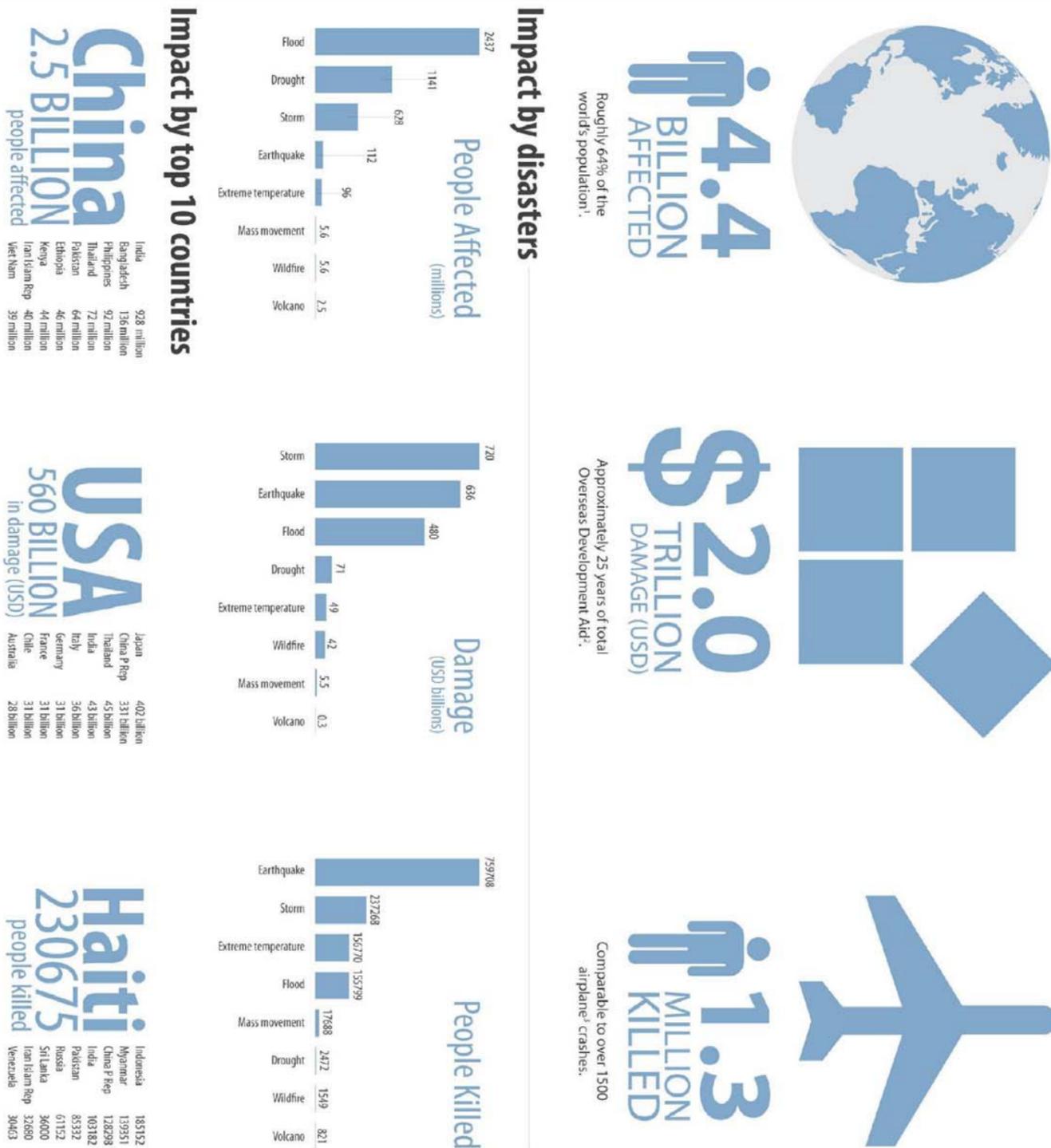
Twenty years later, the UN is organizing Rio+20, a chance to move away from business-as-usual and to end poverty, address environmental destruction and build a bridge to the future. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) plays an important part in this future of sustainable development.

Here's a look at the impact of disasters since the Earth Summit (1992-2012).



UNISDR
The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<http://www.unisdr.org>

Created on 11 June 2012
PAN-SOUKES
EM-DAT - <http://www.emdat.be/>: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database. Data version: 11 June 2012 - 012,07 Disasters. Natural Disasters as reported in EM-DAT. Affect: The sum of injured, homeless and people requiring immediate assistance during a period of emergency. It also includes displaced or evacuated people from disasters. Damage: Estimated figures. Victims: Persons confirmed as dead and persons missing and presumed dead.
UN Stats - <http://unstats.un.org>: Estimated mid-year world population for 2010 is 6.9 billion.
OECD - <http://stats.oecd.org>: GDP from 1985-2010 (ranked approximately) USD 7 trillion.
AidHub - <http://www.aidhub.com>: A380 maximum capacity: 15,853.



RIO FOCUS ON DROUGHT

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is advocating for the establishment of universal national drought policies, because "droughts are by far the most damaging of all hazards."

Mannava Sivakumar, Director of the Climate Prediction and Adaptation Branch, WMO, said drought affected poor countries in the African Sahel as well as wealthy countries. WMO is planning to convene a high-level meeting on national drought policy in March 2013, in Geneva.

Helena Molin Valdes, Deputy Director of UNISDR, urged the international community to support countries in creating national disaster loss data bases which systematically record the human and economic impacts of drought thus making it a more visible risk and providing the evidence for decision makers to take proactive measures to reduce the impacts.

Read more:

<http://goo.gl/3HvVJ>



Learn more about Rio+20 and DRR!

SAN FRANCISCO JOINS CAMPAIGN

San Francisco Mayor, Edwin M. Lee announced this week that San Francisco has become the first major US city to join UNISDR's 'Making Cities Resilient' Campaign which seeks to save lives and reduce economic losses in member cities.

Mayor Lee said: "San Francisco has worked tirelessly to increase our overall resilience by investing in our physical infrastructure, such as our water system, and increasing the capacity of our residents and communities to respond to and rapidly recover from disasters."



Edwin M. Lee (Source: <http://www.sfmayor.org>)

Speaking at the Rio+20 Resilient Cities event, UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström said: "We welcome Mayor Edwin Lee on behalf of the people of San Francisco as the 1,000th city to join the UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient campaign. San Francisco's participation further signifies that cities of all sizes and economic strength are prepared to take the lead on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

"We are also particularly pleased to designate San Francisco as a role model city for 'Advancing Resilience through the Whole Community Approach' given the City's efforts to engage its citizens at neighbourhood level in building resilience."

Find out more about Making Cities Resilient, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign>

PRIVATE SECTOR RESILIENCE PLEA

A meeting of 1,000 business executives gathered at Rio+20 heard a passionate plea for resilience from Aris Papadopoulos, CEO of Titan America, a large cement manufacturer, who is also chairman of UNISDR's Private Sector Advisory Group. "To me, the conversation on sustainability was missing one element -- resilience. Urbanization investment over the next 20 to 30 years will exceed all such investment made so far in human history. It's very important that this investment be resilient so we don't have to build twice. My passion is disaster risk reduction. Disaster losses can take back 20 years of development progress. It's a tremendously important issue."

Margareta Wahlström, UNISDR chief, explained that the private sector advisory group was created to advise her office on how to speak to business and to provide insights on how business leaders take decisions. **Read more:** <http://goo.gl/y2vXZ>

RIO SCRUTINY PRINCIPLES

Around 200 legislators from 74 countries and the European Union met this week on the sidelines of Rio+20 conference to approve a "Legislators' Protocol," containing a set of "Rio Scrutiny Principles" to strengthen legislators' capacity to hold governments to account on promises made at development conferences including Rio+20.

Margareta Wahlström, UNISDR chief, praised delegates for seeking more accountability from nations on sustainable development commitments. "Parliamentarians can help governments connect the dots by passing legislation that links aspects such as natural capital accounting, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation," she said. The function of coordinating and overseeing disaster risk reduction is often placed with the wrong national entity -- usually the national disaster management body -- with little capacity for policy coherence, she told the parliamentarians at the end of their two-day World Summit of Legislators. **Read more:** <http://goo.gl/7IGsr>

'DIG DEEP' FOR POST-HFA, SAYS UNISDR

UNISDR is urging governments "to dig deep" and consult a broad range of stakeholders at both national and community level as they reflect on their experience to date of implementing the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities*. "The outcome of this period of self-reflection is critical in order to ensure that we come up with a strong framework successor to the HFA which expires in 2015," said UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlstrom, as she attended the Resilient Cities event at Rio+20.

The United Nations has kicked-off consultations on the post-2015 framework in advance of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction which the Japanese government will host in 2015. UNISDR is working with Member States, private sector, civil society and communities to look at how best to build on the gains made over the past decade, and further advance risk reduction and building resilience, while ensuring links with the emerging post-2015 development agenda. **Download the consultation paper -** <http://goo.gl/s067p>

"We would like to see the business sphere engaging countries in disaster risk reduction using 'business logic.' That's our big vision for public-private partnership."

Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and UNISDR chief

"National governments must adopt policies that engender cooperation and coordination at all levels of government in order to increase their capacity to cope with extended periods of water scarcity in the event of a drought - The ultimate goal is to create more drought resilient societies."

Mannava Sivakumar, Director of WMO's Climate Prediction and Adaptation Branch – see opposite page "Rio Focus on Drought"



The "Tree of Vision" at Rio+20, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. For more information on Disaster Risk Reduction at Rio+20, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/2012/rioplus20> (Photo / Dizery Salim)