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GOTHENBURG BECOMES 400th EUROPEAN CITY TO JOIN UN CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT CITIES

World Urban Forum, NAPLES, 4 September, 2012 – The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) today welcomed Sweden’s second largest city, Gothenburg, into the global “Making Cities Resilient” Campaign, a two-year old campaign to protect lives and reduce economic losses from disasters in urban settings.

Gothenburg with a population of 500,000 is the 400th city or town in Europe to join the campaign which now has over 1,000 members worldwide all committed to better coordination, organization and funding of disaster risk reduction at community level.

The Lord Mayor of Gothenburg, Ms. Lena Malm, speaking today at the World Urban Forum in Naples, said: “I am very happy that Gothenburg has joined the Making Cities Resilient Campaign. The campaign is incredibly important as it highlights the future challenges the world is facing. In Gothenburg, we are already working with adapting our city to future extreme weather and I hope that this campaign will serve as a forum where we can share our experiences as well as learn from other cities. We are looking forward to becoming an active member of the campaign.”

Gothenburg was welcomed to the campaign by UNISDR Chief and UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, who said: “The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction is pleased that a city of Gothenburg’s stature recognizes the merits of participating in this campaign. Strong leadership and the political will to engage are crucial to building resilience to disasters and these are very evident in the measures being taken by the city managers in Gothenburg to tackle extreme weather and the impacts of climate change on coastal cities.”

Situated on the west coast of Sweden, Gothenburg is growing rapidly and faces major challenges to find solutions for adapting to rising sea level and more frequent floods. The city is active in conducting risk assessments, operating early warning systems and disaster management training.

Last year the Gothenburg Water Company established three new water level gauges on the Göta River to be used in a hydrological model for flood management taking into account characteristics of land surfaces, soil composition, water levels, upstream sources of flooding, surface water flow paths, and sewer network capacity. Worldwide, over 106 million people were affected by floods last year which are the most common natural hazard.

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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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