

## Press release

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### NEW HFA TO ENSURE WOMEN INVOLVED IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT SAYS UNISDR

**8 March 2013, GENEVA** – The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNISDR, today marked International Women's Day with an announcement that women will play a central role in developing the next global framework on disaster risk reduction.

Margareta Wahlström, UNISDR Chief said: "So far this century, we can conservatively state that over 500,000 women have died in disasters and over one billion have lost their homes or been otherwise affected by the growing tide of disasters and extreme weather events worldwide. The next global framework on disaster risk reduction to be agreed by 2015 must address the underlying causes."

A mid-term review of the existing international framework on disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), found that the vast majority of countries reporting on its implementation do not factor in gender issues during disaster planning and often ignore the contributions of women.

Ms. Wahlström said: "We are now at a crucial stage in the consultations on the next HFA or HFA2. It is clear that we need more specific commitments from governments, local governments, the private sector and other stakeholders that they will tap into the knowledge and skills of women who are always key to any successful response efforts when disaster strikes. Unfortunately, they are all too often ignored during the planning and preparedness phases. This must change."

UNISDR is organizing a special event with UN Women and the Huairou Commission at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May which will feature a major debate: "HFA2: Women Making A Difference." Some 3,000 people are expected to attend the Global Platform.

The Global Platform will explore why gender considerations are lacking in government and private sector efforts to reduce disaster risk and explore strategies that have worked to increase women's participation in decision-making positions.

Ms. Wahlström said: "The development of the HFA2 can be a watershed moment in ensuring that disaster risk management explicitly factors in gender-based vulnerability and risks. An important remedy is to ensure that women and girls are engaged more as volunteers and develop careers in disaster management."

**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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