

Press release

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BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA LAUNCH DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PLATFORM

25 March 2013, SARAJEVO – UNISDR Chief Margareta Wahlström today participated in the launch of a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina where over 400,000 people have been affected by floods and drought since the beginning of the century, taking a major toll on the country's economic development.

Ms. Wahlstrom said: "The engagement of Bosnia and Herzegovina to work together in a coordinated approach in reducing risk to disasters at the local and national level through its National Platforms is a strong step toward building citizen's resilience to disasters.


"Bosnia and Herzegovina has been very successful in saving lives in disaster events but it is clear that flooding particularly, poses a major threat to economic development. The establishment of this national platform is the culmination of many positive actions that have taken place since 2008 when the Parliamentary Assembly adopted the Framework Law on the protection and rescue of people and property in the event of disasters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I urge everyone to keep up the good work and the momentum".

The Platform was launched this morning at the opening of two-day event on disaster risk reduction in Sarajevo. It now joins 22 National Platforms in Europe that are integrating disaster risk reduction into national development policies, planning and programmes.

Attending were high-level officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina, including his Excellency Marko Vujević, Adviser to the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who opened the session, and His Excellency Fahrudin Radončić, Minister of Security.

Mr. Radončić said "Damage caused by flood, fire, earthquake or disaster due to human factor is measured in hundreds of billions of dollars and the fate of hundreds of millions of people has been altered in a negative sense. An attempt to reduce this damage is something that all states and communities should work on."

Last year, Bosnia and Herzegovina undertook a national risk assessment in line with European Commission guidelines. The country is also participating in the disaster risk reduction regional project "Building Resilience to Disasters in the Western Balkans and Turkey" supported by the Commission.



Also today, the Municipality of Sarajevo Centar joined the global Making Cities Resilient Campaign launched by UNISDR in 2010 which now has 1,350 members worldwide. Centar is the first municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the Campaign which focuses on reducing disaster risks in urban settings. The Mayor of Sarajevo Centar, Mr. Dževad Bećirević signed the agreement with Ms. Wahlström.

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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