



**KARLSTADS KOMMUN**

May 8, 2013

## **Mayor of Karlstad Municipality -Official Statement for Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, May 2013**

*Submitted by: Peter Kullgren, Deputy Mayor of Karlstad Municipality in Sweden*

Our main challenges with disaster risk reduction stem from the physical geography. Karlstad is located on a delta, fed by the longest river in Sweden, the Klarälven, and Vänern, the largest lake in Western Europe. There are many communities along its water course and many uses of the river and lake. High water fluctuation causes erosion and risk for landslides. The Klarälven Delta has been identified by MSB (The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency) as a high risk area according to the European Union Floods Directive.

City government needs to drive disaster risk reduction processes with support from the national and county governments. The Swedish laws such as the Civil Protection Act, the Planning and Building Act and the Emergency Management Ordinance give us the mandate to act.

Our attention is also focused on the need to adapt to climate change.. In 2007 the government undertook a major investigation, "*Sweden Facing Climate Change: Threats and Opportunities.*" Projections show that we can expect more water in the future. Karlstad's risk and vulnerability assessment, environmental strategy and climate change adaptation strategy, are guiding tools for our holistic approach to these challenges.

DRR is financed through tax revenues. Each sector in the city government has its own budget and actions are implemented as necessary. Risk specialists at the technical office have an ongoing dialogue with the city planning office, the environmental office, rescue services, county and national authorities and with the building industry. "Acting as one" for disaster risk reduction allows us to analyse our challenges from different viewpoints.

The flood mitigation program is our most significant DRR work. Besides this, Karlstad has taken other steps to create a resilient city such as expanded public transportation, reduced emissions, sustainable development, and effective energy production such as wind power.

Valuable information about DRR is obtained from research at Karlstad University's Centre for Climate and Safety. The knowledge from projects and investigations is incorporated into city planning. Assessments of the impact of these risks are made prior to construction and housing development.



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In addition, the 19 agencies and organisations in the Swedish National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction assist cities. One example is that MSB subsidizes some prevention and mitigation measures. Another example is the Meteorological and Hydrological Institute that provides weather and high water prognoses for early warning.

Public involvement is essential. The city officials inform and consult the residents of Karlstad on DRR matters. One effective way is through the flood mitigation walk. At various stops through the city, residents see areas at risk and what measure are being taken or are planned. The risk maps are put on the Internet. It is important to have a dialogue with residents and other affected stakeholders. Newspapers and TV, and social media, help us to inform the public and raise their interest in DRR.

Karlstad is involved in many networks and in projects subsidized by the European Union. These have allowed experts to see the challenges and solutions in other countries. Such collaboration with other cities keeps us focused. By looking outside of our city boundary lines, we can better decide what we actually want to achieve and how to do it.

Karlstad Municipality joined the UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient campaign in 2010. Karlstad is one of 5 Swedish cities using the Local Government Self-Assessment Tool (LGSAT) to measure progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Swedish National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction arranged a Post 2015 Framework National Consultation meeting in November 2012. Karlstad Municipality and the other Swedish cities that participated, believe it is important to continue along the same lines as HFA 1. It provides a common language. Continue the Making Cities campaign and keep the 10 essentials of implementing HFA at the local level.

Although we have come a long way in implementing the HFA, one city does not have all the solutions. Together with diverse actors, we can create a blueprint for the future, one that will keep our people, environment and structures safe in a changing and hazard-filled world.