

Press release

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EUROPEAN MINISTERS CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN REDUCING DISASTER LOSSES

MILAN, 9 July 2014 – Efforts to ensure political commitment to a new global agreement on reducing disaster losses have received a major boost as representatives from 40 European countries agreed to a series of sweeping recommendations designed to build resilience to disasters. Europe experienced over 40 major disaster events last year affecting millions. Major flood and hailstorm events generated \$25 billion in economic losses.

The first-ever European Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction was hosted yesterday by the Italian Minister of Interior, Angelino Alfano, who said: “We need to focus on preventing the creation of new risks, reduce the existing risks and strengthen the resilience to disasters. We welcome the collaboration between UNISDR and the European Commission towards building resilience in Europe.” Italy currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Margareta Wahlström, Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, said: “Europe’s leadership on disaster risk management is vital for the adoption of a robust new global agreement on disaster risk reduction at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. We heard strong evidence today from several European countries that investing in disaster-proof infrastructure results in real savings when disaster strikes.”

The meeting which was attended by Government Ministers and other high-level representatives resulted in a Declaration urging improved accountability, transparency and governance for disaster risk management in the agreement which will succeed the existing Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted by all UN Member States in 2005 after the Indian Ocean tsunami.

EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Kristalina Georgieva, said: “Europe has given a strong boost today to the Post-2015 Development Agenda and emphasized the linkages between reducing disaster risk, the new Sustainable Development Goals and the new climate change agreement. I am also pleased to see the emphasis in the Declaration on the sharing of data on disaster losses and hazards, raising public awareness, and the setting of operationally feasible and measurable targets for reducing disaster losses.”

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.”