

Press release

13 March 2015 – UNISDR 2015/08

ISO STANDARD TO DISASTER-PROOF CITIES ANNOUNCED AT UN CONFERENCE

13 March 2015, SENDAI – The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) today agreed to help pioneer a new ISO Standard in 45 cities already recognized for their commitment to keeping their citizens safe from a range of natural hazards including floods, storms and earthquakes.

The new ISO standard for resilient and sustainable cities – ISO 37120 – is based on 100 indicators which steer and measure the performance of city services and quality of life. It is being implemented by the Toronto-based World Council on City Data (WCCD).

Margareta Wahlström, head of UNISDR, said: “The Making Cities Resilient Campaign launched four years ago now has 2,500 participating cities and towns with a combined population of some 700 million people. We have 45 role model cities that are ready to implement the new ISO 37120 standard for resilient and sustainable cities. We will work together with WCCD to further build the family of ISO standards for resilient cities.”

A key goal of the collaboration between UNISDR and WCCD is to ensure that the Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient will be incorporated into the ISO standard for resilient cities. The Ten Essentials focus on issues such as good urban planning, land-use, a risk-informed citizenry, safe schools and health facilities, protection of eco-systems, early warnings and emergency management.

Prof. Patricia L. McCarney, President and CEO, World Council on City Data, said: “In my opinion UNISDR’s Making Cities Resilient Campaign and the Ten Essentials are two of the most important initiatives addressing resilience. This work by UNISDR in partnership with the WCCD and the work being undertaken within the ISO in building a family of standards for resilient and sustainable cities will provide the essential tools for cities to be resilient. This is a very exciting prospect and will be of enormous benefit to improving the quality of life in cities.”

The announcement was made today in Sendai prior to the opening tomorrow of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction which will adopt a new framework for disaster risk reduction that will pay particular attention to reducing urban risk.

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.”