

Press release

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PACIFIC CYCLONES HIGHLIGHT EXISTENTIAL THREAT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

2 April 2015, GENEVA – The head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Margareta Wahlström, spoke today of her concerns about the future development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the face of extreme weather events.

Ms. Wahlström said: “It is remarkable that in the two weeks since the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, both the Republic of Vanuatu and the Federated States of Micronesia have been forced to declare a state of emergency following two separate Category 5 cyclones which have caused several deaths, population displacement and widespread destruction. This weekend many millions of people could be affected across the Philippines by Typhoon Maysak depending on its strength when it makes expected landfall.

“The Pacific is a constant reminder to the rest of the world of what is at stake this year as agreement is sought on climate and new sustainable development goals to complement the framework on disaster risk reduction agreed last month in Sendai, Japan, at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

“For many small island states, expected future losses are not just disproportionately high, they pose an existential threat. Climate change combined with poverty and exposed infrastructure and housing, will lead to a significant increase in economic losses due to increased wind damage and sea level rise. Unless disaster risk is reduced these countries will struggle to meet the development needs of their people.”

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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