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## PRESS RELEASE

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**Madagascar cyclones:**

**The UN/ISDR secretariat calls for effective action to face extreme weather events**

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat urges the international community to invest more in disaster risk reduction to reduce the impacts of extreme weather events.

“What is currently happening in Madagascar is a good illustration of what can happen in many countries. Madagascar is suffering from the worst cyclone season this year with more than 6 cyclones since December and a total of more than 60 people dead and thousands forced to leave their flooded homes,” said Sálvano Briceño, Director of the UN/ISDR secretariat. “The increased severity and frequency of extreme weather events prevents people from recovering before facing the next event, making them more vulnerable to disasters. This changing pattern will require increased investment in risk reduction activities.”

People in Madagascar are well prepared to face cyclones, and the country has strong national mechanisms in place. A national platform for disaster risk reduction has been operating since 2002 and has implemented mechanisms to alert, inform and educate people on all types of hazards. The unusual number of cyclones, however, makes the situation extremely difficult for the people of Madagascar as they do not have enough time to recover from one cyclone to another.”

“We are doing a lot to alert people 24 hours a day and to inform them about their risks,” says Jacky Randriaharison, Executive Secretary of the National Bureau on Disaster Reduction. “Last November, we put in place a programme of sand bags that seems this time to have protected many houses from destruction. Those sand bags were placed on top of the roofs to reduce wind impacts. This simple measure saved a lot of people but we could not avoid the intensity of rains. Soils were completely saturated and many people died because of mud and debris avalanches that could not be stopped.”

The recent IPCC report projected last February that it is very likely that more hot extremes, heat waves and heavy precipitation events will become more frequent. It is also likely that tropical cyclones (typhoons and hurricanes) will become more intense. In some parts of the world, climate change will mean more intense and frequent hazards, in others, it will mean facing hazards that communities have not encountered before.

“We need to put in place mechanisms that can help our societies adapt to this new situation. The Hyogo Framework for Action offers recommendations that should be implemented and can be effective to reduce disaster risks caused by climate-related hazards,” added Sálvano Briceño.

For more information about the recent cyclones in Madagascar, please go to:

[http://www.em-dat.net/disasters/Visualisation/emdat\\_display\\_list.php](http://www.em-dat.net/disasters/Visualisation/emdat_display_list.php)