



Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

Third Session, Geneva, Switzerland
8 - 13 May 2011

MAYORS STATEMENT ON RESILIENT CITIES FOR THE 3rd GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

13 May 2011, Geneva

Cities are engines for development, prosperity and innovation. Covering only 1% of the earth's surface, urban areas are home to half and soon to be two thirds of the global population. Cities are also home to a billion urban poor in informal settlements. Worldwide urban areas use 75% of the world's energy and are responsible for 75% of global greenhouse emissions¹ - with growing and alarming impact on climate change. Today, billions of people live in earthquake prone cities and billions live in cities at risk from cyclones and other extreme weather events. By 2050, these numbers may double or triple.

Local governments, at all levels, urban and rural, are the first institutional levels to respond to disasters and are best placed to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. Local communities matter and are the places where disasters and the immediate and real effects of climate change are most intimately felt. Our cities are already at risk, and increasingly so due to impacts of in-migration driving urbanization. Consequently vulnerabilities and exposure to earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, floods and other natural and man-made hazards are increasing.

It is essential that we work together, that national governments involve and work with the local governments and community leaders in building strategies for risk reduction and for the implementation of these.

Local disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies - making cities resilient - must support local sustainable development and improve the quality of life of our inhabitants, in particular the urban poor; especially women, children and other vulnerable groups who are most exposed to the impacts of climate change and other hazards.

Elected Mayors and political leaders need to respond to the expectations of our citizens. It is important to make disaster risk reduction an integral part of our development planning efforts. This must include at a minimum, a consultative and participatory approach, the protection of critical water and waste management systems, livelihoods, transport systems, and the protection of individual and public assets including cultural and historical heritage.

The "Making Cities Resilient Campaign", launched in 2010 at the Mayors Adaptation Forum in Bonn, demonstrates local leadership and raises awareness of how our efforts to reduce disaster risk are making our cities safer and more resilient. More than 750 local governments have signed up since the launch and have committed to the "ten essentials in making cities resilient" as a guide for action planning and monitoring. Many cities around the world are already developing and implementing local risk reduction and adaptation strategies in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

¹ Kamal-Chaoui, Lamia and Alexis Robert (eds.) (2009), "Competitive Cities and Climate Change", *OECD Regional Development Working Papers N° 2*, 2009, OECD publishing, © OECD.



At the conclusion of the 3rd Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, participating Mayors and Local Authorities wish to make the following commitments:

We commit to:

- ✔ Taking a leadership role in linking local level development and disaster resilience, understanding that all stakeholders should be integrated in planning, awareness raising, and investing in disaster risk reduction and resilience building in our cities and towns.
- ✔ Becoming promoters and leaders of the Global Campaign for Making Cities Resilient - 'My city is getting ready' - at the national, sub-national and local levels, including participation in city-to-city dialogue, evaluation and scaling up of best practice, and implementation of the "10 Point Essentials" for building resilience.
- ✔ Working with our city councils, civil society including the private sector and others to promote legal frameworks and proportionate budget increases aimed at strengthening capacities for resilience at the local government level through strategic spatial and territorial planning, land-use, and development programming.
- ✔ Advocating among international and national entities to make resources available through coordination with local governments as a way of strengthening autonomy, capacity, accountability and transparency for increasing resilience within our communities, towns and cities.

We call upon participants of the Global Platform to:

Commit to advancing the objectives of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign, by:

- ✔ Promoting active participation of cities and local governments.
- ✔ Supporting the establishment of "Role Model Cities" and promoting national and regional city-networks to increase disaster resilience.
- ✔ Acknowledging the need for local governments and communities to have a stronger voice at international forums on disaster risk reduction and climate change in which to share their concerns, perspectives, and actions.
- ✔ Maintaining a local government-led regular dialogue for local leaders and national authorities in the context of the campaign.
- ✔ Promoting an Alliance of Local Governments to promote disaster resilience including standards and benchmarks, knowledge transfer, broadening political space, sharing experience and monitoring progress.
- ✔ Encouraging South-south, city-to-city and triangular cooperation and learning opportunities.
- ✔ Sharing information regularly and developing the knowledge base for capacity enhancement on risk reduction for cities.

- ✔ Committing to invest in local action and protecting the most vulnerable through appropriate enabling legal and regulatory frameworks that recognize the role of local government in planning for risk, and building in resilience. Understanding that local governments need direct access to financing mechanisms and technical resources from all levels – multilateral, national and local – in order to implement their strategies and initiatives.
- ✔ Scaling up advocacy for disaster risk reduction to all sectors, raising awareness amongst decision-makers at all levels to commit to and apply policies and especially financial and legal means for creating disaster and climate resilience at the local level.
- ✔ Working together to achieve decentralized political, administrative and legal framework that increase capacities and resources for local governments to deal more efficiently with disaster risk and resilience.
- ✔ Defining contributions, obligations and responsibilities of all sectors: state, local government, private sector, community groups, and external partners including academia, faith-based groups, city networks, and those with indigenous knowledge.
- ✔ Reformulating, where appropriate, local development plans to integrate risk reduction in all municipal functions including; building- and land use plans and regulatory systems, solid and liquid waste management, water production and distribution systems, parks and environmental management, emergency management, and development sectors.
- ✔ Promoting and achieving meaningful participation of community and interest groups, creating and strengthening networks and coordination, promoting multi-stakeholder local platforms/alliances, establishing mechanisms for social auditing as strategic and cross-cutting aspect of risk reduction and strengthened local and urban governance.

In conclusion:

We call upon the United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) to increase its commitment to managing the Making Cities Resilient Campaign as a part of its core programme. We further call upon the UNISDR secretariat to work with city networks², the UN Organizations and civil society organizations to sustain local preparations for disaster risk reduction, and building local resilience.

For further information on the **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction**, visit:
www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2011

For further information on the **Making Cities Resilient Campaign**, please visit:
www.unisdr.org/campaign

² Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), CityNet and Earthquake Megacities Initiative (EMI)

Annex I

A Ten-point checklist for local governments¹ - Ten essentials for making cities resilient

The campaign proposes a Ten-point checklist of Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient to serve as a guide for commitment by Mayors.

Have your City Council and local government sign up to this!

www.unisdr.org/campaign

Ten-point Checklist - Essentials for Making Cities Resilient¹

1. Put in place **organization and coordination** to understand and reduce disaster risk within the local government, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society-build local alliances. Ensure that all departments understand their role and contribution to disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
2. **Assign a budget** for disaster risk reduction and provide incentives for homeowners, low-income families, communities, businesses and public sector to invest in reducing the risks they face.
3. Maintain up-to-date data on hazards and vulnerabilities, **prepare risk assessments** and use these as the basis for urban development plans and decisions. Ensure that this information and the plans for your city's resilience are readily available to the public and fully discussed with them.
4. Invest in and maintain **infrastructure that reduces risk**, such as flood drainage, adjusted where needed to cope with climate change.
5. Assess the **safety of all schools and health facilities** and upgrade these as necessary.
6. Apply and enforce **realistic, risk-compliant building regulations and land use planning principles**. Identify **safe land for low-income citizens** and develop upgrading of informal settlements, wherever feasible.
7. Ensure **education programmes and training** on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and local communities.
8. **Protect ecosystems and natural buffers** to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices.
9. Install **early warning systems and emergency management capacities** in your city and hold regular public preparedness drills in which everyone participates.
10. After any disaster, ensure that the **needs of the survivors are placed** at the centre of reconstruction with support for them and their community organizations to design and help implement responses, including rebuilding homes and livelihoods.

¹ The Checklist builds on the priorities identified in the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* - www.unisdr.org/hfa