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UNISDR CHIEF CALLS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO TAKE LEAD ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION

GENEVA, October 12 - The Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, today marked International Day for Disaster Reduction with a call for women and girls to take leadership in disaster management in a world where disasters are on the rise.

Ms. Wahlström said: “Over half of the 200 million people affected by disasters each year are female. The best disaster recovery programmes in the world involve women who have survived such events. If we are to build true disaster resilience we need to put the emphasis on their greater involvement before disasters strike.

“The focus of this year’s International Day for Disaster Reduction is on women and girls whose efforts to build resilience to disasters often go unrecognized. Women are responsible for many of the key strategic decisions of daily life. In many parts of the world this includes securing food, water and energy. They have real impact when they are fully involved in community planning for disaster risk reduction.

“Discussions have now opened on the development of a new Post-2015 international framework for disaster risk reduction. We have learned from implementation of the existing agreement, the Hyogo Framework for Action, that national planning for disaster relief and recovery often excludes considerations of gender-based vulnerability and risks. One important remedy is to empower more women and girls to engage as volunteers and develop careers in disaster management.”

The UN International Day for Disaster Reduction is observed each year on October 13. Exceptionally, UNISDR is marking the day this year on October 12. A huge range of events is taking place around the world this week focused on the theme “Women and Girls – the (in)Visible Force of Resilience” including tsunami drills in Myanmar, a workshop on gender-based violence in Vanuatu, community work in Rwanda, a poster and essay contest in the Philippines, a panel discussion at George Washington University, an education seminar in Nicaragua, and seismic risk discussion in Greece to mention a few of the listed events.

The Gender and Disaster Network www.gdnonline.org has put together an interactive crowd sourcing map featuring resilience in action by women and girls around the world and which can be viewed at <http://www.unisdr.org/2012/iddr>

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