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## **SRSG message for the International Day for Disaster Reduction 13 October 2010**

Today, the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, is the International Day for Disaster Reduction<sup>1</sup>. We would like all of you to join us in focusing on how, together, we can continue to reduce disaster risk.

And, in particular, this year's theme for Disaster Reduction Day is city resilience, taken from the global campaign "*Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!*"<sup>2</sup>

Cities today are bigger and growing faster than ever in human history. Well over 50 per cent of the world's population lives in cities. Cities are centres for innovation, economic opportunities, economic growth, entertainment – people want to live in cities and be part of modern life!

Cities, though, are also high-risk areas because of their very rapid growth. Many governments, even with the best of intentions, cannot keep up with the enormous growth and pressure on infrastructure. Cities are also sitting in risky areas -- they are built on seismic fault lines, or lying in coastal areas; they are exposed to cyclones, hurricanes and flooding, and experience intense rainstorms and mudslides. We can see it happening all around the world, both in cities that are rich and cities that are not so rich.

Therefore, the campaign this year is calling on city leaders, the everyday population, civil society, and those engaged in science and technology to really engage with local governments. We are calling on people to use well-known methods for risk assessment, improving urban planning, and strengthening the coordination and institutions to train citizens to listen to early warning signals. We are calling on them to ensure that early warning systems are in place.

The purpose of this is to protect cities better, to protect investments, and to protect people's lives. It is a way to ensure that, by 2015, we can achieve -- as we have committed in our common framework, the Hyogo Framework for Action -- to achieve a considerable reduction in loss of life and financial losses to disasters worldwide.

Please join us in making this campaign a strong success, so that through it, we can see how to make progress over the next five years.

Thank you very much for joining us in this campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/go/iddr2010/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign>