

World Disaster Reduction Campaign

MAYORS' STATEMENT

Launch of *How to Make Cities More Resilient: Handbook for Local Government Leaders* Bonn, Germany – 14 May 2012

Urban leaders increasingly recognize that resilience is best achieved when multiple actors come together to strengthen partnerships between multilateral institutions, national governments, private sector, and civil society. Today, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), together with ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, United Cities for Local Governments (UCLG), the Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative, and UN-Habitat, as well as mayors and local leaders attending the Resilient Cities 2012 Congress, are here to mobilize local, national and international support to:

- ✔ Strengthen local and regional governments' capacity to protect cities' human and economic assets through national and international disaster risk reduction frameworks and legal instruments.
- ✔ Empower local and regional governments with capacities and access to financing for local and urban resilience policies, strategies and activities.
- ✔ Advocate the importance and value of disaster risk reduction activities through the promotion of the Ten Essential Actions for Making Cities Resilient, and new resources, including the Handbook for Local Government Leaders and the Local Government Self-Assessment Tool.
- ✔ Raise the profile of urban resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation across local, national and global policy agendas.
- ✔ Encourage active participation by local and regional government leaders and cities in the post-2015 Hyogo Framework for Action consultation process and future sustainable development frameworks.

To achieve these goals, we call on fellow local level governments, city networks and national governments to take the following Three Actions:

- ✔ Apply and access the tools and resources available to improve disaster risk assessment and planning, and integrate resilience into local and urban development plans and capacities.
- ✔ Work in a participatory and inclusive way to develop plans and build resilience, and share your experiences with other local governments and sponsor city-to-city learning events.
- ✔ Allocate budgets for disaster risk reduction and resilience as a core part of sustainable urban development planning and as part of your municipal services.

These calls to action come at a critical time. Cities function as the command centers of our social, cultural, technological, and economic livelihoods and progress. By mid-century, roughly three-quarters of the world's population will be concentrated in cities. This rapid urbanization, set against the backdrop of increasingly erratic climatic events, poses great risks to lives, infrastructure and financial systems. Urbanization in locations where existing infrastructure, finance, and institutions are least able to cope with the impacts of disasters, is a particular concern.

Coastal erosion, decaying urban infrastructure, higher density exposure to geological and industrial threats, and increased stress to natural resources and eco-systems, as well as a growing economic inter-dependence between cities and states, are contributing to greater human and economic losses in cities across the world. The compound effects of climate change present new uncertainties and risks that threaten to exacerbate urban vulnerability.

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



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Local and regional level government is – or must be – the first line of response to crises and the focal point for services and regulations that can reduce risks. It is with this in mind that UNISDR, ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, UCLG, and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change launched the Making Cities Resilient Campaign-My City is Getting Ready at the inaugural Resilient Cities Congress in Bonn in 2010. Since then, more than 1,100 urban leaders have pledged to improve their cities’ resilience by better assessing their risk and planning ahead before hazards occur.

Today, UNISDR is launching *How to Make Cities More Resilient: A Handbook for Local Government Leaders*, which includes the Local Government Self-Assessment Tool. The tools, developed with over 20 partners committed to advancing urban resilience, are designed to help civil authorities move beyond advocacy and deliver sustainable disaster risk reduction plans, and further support national commitments to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

In June 2012, the world will concentrate on how to address sustainable development in the new millennium. The outcome should include new commitments and goals related to risk reduction and resilience. We, as local government leaders, are deeply committed to ensuring that this outcome is recognized, and the global community supports our efforts. As local government leaders, we must also do our part by improving innovation to achieve practical approaches to risk assessments, and disaster preparedness and financing.

We applaud UNISDR and its partners’ continued commitment to advocate on behalf of local and regional governments to ensure our voice is heard at national and international levels and provide practical tools and resources that will further strengthen our ability to protect our people, assets and communities.

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“The key to a sustainable future lies in the hands of cities but only if they are risk-aware and ready to tackle their vulnerability. This is the purpose of our campaign and what the handbook hopes to address.” – *Jürgen Nimptsch, Mayor of Bonn*

“Building urban resilience and protecting city populations requires strong leadership from local leaders. Through networks such as ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, the World Mayors Council on Climate Change and UNISDR’s Making Cities Resilient Campaign, as well as the gains made here at the Resilient Cities 2012 congress, local leaders are able to share experiences and work toward common resilience and sustainability goals. The Handbook for Local Government Leaders: How to Make Cities More Resilient provides clear resiliency guidance for local leaders moving into the future.” – *David Cadman, ICLEI President*

“Due to demand and growing solidarity among cities on the frontline of climate change and disaster risk, we are launching a self-assessment guide to resilience, created by, and for, mayors and other local government leaders.” – *Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Reduction, United Nations*

“Understanding that the capacity of cities to withstand and recover from crisis demands the integration of effort of all parties, both within cities and outside at national and international levels, we stand ready to continue to play our role in promoting resilience as a pre-condition for sustainable urban development.” – *Dr. Joan Clos, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT*

“The DRR community finally has a sound and practical document to guide policy, planning and action at local level. This is a tangible accomplishment of the Campaign that undoubtedly will push DRR forward.” – *Fouad Bendimerad, Ph.D., P.E., Chairman Earthquake Megacities Initiative (EMI)*

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