



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Secretariat, Geneva

Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready *World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-11*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) **(Short version for press kit)**

Why focus the campaign on “Making Cities Resilient?”

Cities are the lifelines of today’s society. They serve as economic engines, centres of technology and innovation, and they are living evidence of our cultural heritage. However, eight out of the ten of the world’s most populous cities are at risk of being severely affected by an earthquake, whereas six out of ten are vulnerable to storm surge and tsunami waves. The severity of the impact of natural hazards is linked to unplanned urban development, ecosystems decline and failing infrastructure, such as insufficient storm drainage and poor quality of building stocks. Impacts of climate change are aggravating the vulnerability conditions of urban dwellers. Weak urban and local governance add to the difficulties to deal with disaster risk.

Which cities are most at risk by natural disasters?

In the first decade of the 21st century (2000-2009), earthquakes accounted for nearly 60% of the people killed by disasters, according to the Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). The eight most populous cities on earthquake faultlines are Tokyo, Mexico City, New York, Mumbai, Delhi, Shanghai, Kolkata and Jakarta.

Climate related disasters such as flooding, flash floods, tropical cyclones, drought, wildfires and heat waves now affect more people worldwide. The UN estimates there are 3,351 cities located in low-elevation coastal zones around the world. Of the top 30 cities, 19 are in river deltas. The top 10, in terms of population exposed to coastal flood hazard, are Mumbai, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Miami, Ho Chi Minh City, Kolkata, New York, Osaka-Kobe, Alexandria and New Orleans.

Tokyo, New York, Mumbai, Shanghai, Kolkata and Buenos Aires are the most vulnerable to storm surge.

What is the “Making Cities Resilient” campaign about?

Cities, towns and local governments need to take action to become resilient to disasters. Throughout 2010-11 and beyond, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) will campaign, together with all relevant stakeholders, for this to happen. A ten-point checklist of essentials for making cities resilient will serve as a guide for commitment during the campaign.

What are the objectives of the campaign?

Overall, the campaign seeks to raise awareness and effect change by urging local governments to take immediate action and to build multistakeholder partnerships to achieve this. The objectives of the Making Cities Resilient campaign are threefold, and can be achieved through building long-lasting partnerships to:

Know more, by raising awareness of citizens and governments at all levels of the benefits of reducing urban risks.

Invest wisely, by identifying budget allocations within local government funding plans to invest in disaster risk reduction activities.

Build more safely, by including disaster risk reduction in participatory urban development planning processes and protect critical infrastructure.

How can we all make this happen?

By engaging mayors and local governments around the world, and urging them to sign up to the campaign and reduce risk in a number of different ways. This includes working towards meeting the goals set out in the Ten Essentials checklist, creating local partnerships and alliances with citizens and community groups, and organizing public hearings, drills and other awareness-raising activities.

The campaign kit also suggests a variety of concrete steps that can be taken by other partners in disaster risk reduction, such as local government associations, national governments, academia, donors, the private sector as well as international and regional organizations and NGOs.

Who are we trying to reach?

The campaign's principal target groups are mayors and local governments of cities and towns of different sizes, characteristics, locations and risk profiles. Besides mayors and local governments, the campaign is also calling on civil society, planners and urban professionals, as well as national authorities and community groups to develop innovative solutions and engage with local governments to reduce disaster risks.

Who is organizing the campaign?

The UNISDR secretariat is the overall coordinator of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. However, local, regional and international partners and participating cities and local governments are the main drivers and owners of the campaign. UN-HABITAT, with its broader World Urban Campaign, is a key partner in this campaign, along with other UN organizations, city associations and organizations such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and CityNet. NGO networks, grassroots organizations and other UNISDR partners are also engaged in the campaign.

How long will the campaign last?

The campaign runs for two years until December 2011. Although a number of cities and local governments are already undertaking risk reduction activities, the momentum gained during this period will help sustain and mainstream

disaster risk reduction in the long run. Following the campaign, it is expected that many cities and local governments will have included disaster risk reduction as an integral component of local development plans, with a view to facilitating the advancement of the goals of the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters by 2015*.

What will be the role of cities in the campaign?

Local governments and cities will play an active role in the campaign, both as advocates and drivers of disaster risk reduction implementation at the local and international level. A number of committed mayors, high-level public figures and local governments will be identified and help UNISDR and its partners promote and implement the campaign.

How can cities and local governments sign up to the campaign and what is expected from them?

Cities and local governments are being invited by UNISDR and its partners to join the campaign, by either becoming a Champion, Role Model or Participating City or Local Government. All participating cities and local governments are expected to take an active role in the campaign and willing to contribute know-how, resources and overall support to the campaign efforts within their reach and capacity.

How many cities are we aiming to reach?

The aim of the campaign is to get 1,000 local government leaders to commit to at least one of the *Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient* by 2011, and to involve hundreds of participating local governments and as many citizens as possible to join the resilient cities initiative in the following years.

What will be the concrete activities carried out during the campaign?

A number of global and regional initiatives will be carried out during the two-year campaign, in collaboration with partners and participating cities and local governments. Such activities include:

Organizing policy dialogues, workshops and other events to raise the profile of urban risk issues, create political space among different stakeholders, and provide opportunities for information and knowledge sharing

Organizing city-to-city learning and study tours with role model cities, in collaboration with the campaign partners

Promoting and facilitating access to existing tools and resources for urban risk reduction, particularly through the campaign website

Developing and contributing to high-visibility initiatives, such as the “One Million Safe Schools and Hospitals” pledging initiative.

Where to go for more information?

For further information on the 2010-11 World Disaster Reduction Campaign, please visit: www.unisdr.org/campaign or contact: isdr-campaign@un.org.