



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

For more information
please contact:

Brigitte Leoni
Media Relations
Tel: +41 22 917 8897
leonib@un.org
www.unisdr.org

PRESS RELEASE

UNISDR 2011/10
9 March 2011

United Nations: in times of dwindling resources, disaster risk reduction is an easy win

Geneva, Switzerland – A new report from the United Nations confirms what governments already hear but are slow to believe: that disciplined public sector involvement in “disaster risk reduction” can significantly reduce setbacks brought by hundreds of droughts, earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes and other hazards that befall the world each year, on average.

Released today, the “Mid-Term Review of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,” points out that a majority of countries have roadmaps for creating and safeguarding wealth, but many are lacking capacity. In some cases, there is capacity but no legal basis for coordination among the different government sectors.

“The world needs to hear from its leaders, ‘This fragmentation leads to weakness. The political, economic and social agenda is not complete if we can’t protect our wealth from the next earthquake or storm,’” says Ms. Wahlström, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction. “The report emphasizes that countries need to conduct risk assessments that lead to wiser development plans, to be carried out by institutions that are well-funded, well-coordinated and trustworthy.”

The report, written half-way through the ten-year mandate of the Hyogo Framework, analyses the findings from nine workshops around the world on disaster risk reduction, four online debates involving over 300 participants, six in-depth studies, a literature review and internal reviews conducted by major non-governmental organizations and bilateral and multilateral aid organizations.

Agreed in 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action is the world’s only blueprint for staving off losses caused by natural hazards, often overshadowed by news on losses from war, unemployment or inflation. The earthquake in Haiti in January 2010 and New Zealand in September 2010 and February 2011, and the floods in Pakistan in July 2010 and in Australia in December 2010 are some recent examples of the devastating effects of disasters on lives and social and economic fabric of the societies.

According to the report, countries that regularly experience disasters have become more safety conscious. Those countries are now trying to ensure that disaster lessons are not forgotten, such as

Japan with its National Day of Earthquake Remembrance and National Disaster Risk Reduction Day. Similar examples can be found in Bangladesh, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, and Vietnam.

Countries are also more serious about implementing the Hyogo Framework. The number of countries voluntarily reporting on progress through the “HFA Monitor,” developed after the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, has risen since the Framework came into being in 2005. During the first reporting cycle ending in 2007, 27 governments completed reports on HFA implementation. The number grew to 77 during the second reporting cycle, ending in 2009. For the cycle ending in 2011, more than 100 reports have been initiated nationally.

Many countries also have recently enacted laws relating to disaster risk reduction, among them India, Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Anguilla (UK), Gambia, Indonesia, Egypt, Philippines, Zambia and Papua New Guinea. The report however notes that countries must strive for “a senior, over-arching authority” that can set policies, be accountable for how policies are carried out and ensure enough funds to sustain work in disaster risk reduction.

Ms. Wahlström cautioned: “We are still far from having empowered individuals adopt a disaster risk reduction approach in their daily lives. We need individuals to demand that development, environmental and humanitarian policies and practices be based on sound risk reduction measures.”

When the Hyogo Framework for Action ends in 2015, a successor framework for disaster risk reduction, was indicated in the report, should be based on “solid, structural links” with sustainable development and climate change international framework agreements.

Said Ms. Wahlström: “This report provides an opportunity to catalyze discussion and focus attention on activities that must be undertaken urgently if we are to achieve the outcome expected in the Hyogo Framework for Action by 2015 and contribute to setting the agenda for the Rio+20 world summit on sustainable development, planned for 2012.”

* * * * *