

UNISDR's head of policy, John Harding, launched a new briefing note on effective measures to build resilience in Africa to adapt to climate change at the COP17 in Durban. It reflects the commitment of many countries in Africa to investing funds to reduce risk to floods and droughts though funds are insufficient. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of addressing disaster risk through public expenditures and contribute to discussions on financial models to address climate change. This brief builds on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Special Report on Extreme Events of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC/SREX). IPCC/SREX found that 'opportunities exist to create synergy in financing for disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change'.
For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/hlt4V>



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APEC BACKS PRIVATE SECTOR RESILIENCE

Countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum (APEC) have pledged to increase private sector engagement in their disaster resilience agenda, in a year when floods and earthquakes have wiped out assets worth billions of dollars across the region. In a ministerial statement issued in Hawaii on 11 November, APEC ministers and senior government officials, recalling commitments made under the Hyogo Framework for Action – a blueprint for disaster risk reduction universally agreed by the international community in 2005 – promised to develop public-private partnerships within their own economies and report on their progress next year. The UN disaster reduction office, UNISDR, took part in technical discussions held in San Francisco, United States, last September, in preparation for APEC's high-level dialogue on disaster resiliency. Jerry Velasquez, head of UNISDR's Asia Pacific Office, commended the group for devoting ministerial-level attention to the issue. "After the tsunami in Japan and floods in Thailand, it is urgent to develop a forum or an association with private and public partners to ensure the development of business continuity programmes," he said.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/5g83E>

RISK ON ASEAN-UN SUMMIT AGENDA

UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has highlighted disaster risk reduction as a major area where the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) can work together to assist vulnerable people. Following the 4th ASEAN-UN Summit, the Secretary-General welcomed the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the UN and ASEAN. "The UN is ready to work closely with a newly global ASEAN on sustainable development and climate change; on disaster risk prevention and preparedness; on food and energy security; on human rights; on women's empowerment; and the whole range of regional as well as UN issues", he said.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/A3NIH>

SUPPORT GROUP BRIEFED ON DURBAN

UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, briefed the ISDR Support Group on December 12 on the outcome of the COP17 Climate Change Conference in Durban. While welcoming the fact that work is to commence on a new legal agreement on climate change to come into effect in 2020, she said no time should be lost on stepping up climate change adaptation efforts including operationalizing the Green Climate Fund. UNISDR's focus will be on preparing a technical paper and a workshop on risk assessment methodologies as agreed by the COP 17. It will also support the COP Adaptation Committee and ensure synergies between the National Adaptation Plans and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. She said: "We remain committed to engage actively with the UNFCCC process in a targeted manner."



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IPU EMPHASIS ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Parliamentarians from around the world gathered in Durban, South Africa, to press for progress in the COP17 climate change negotiations and called on the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) "to prioritize disaster risk reduction and capacity building as cross-cutting issues and to give them the utmost attention." Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, said action on climate change had become a priority for the IPU and that parliamentarians dismayed at the lack of progress in the climate change negotiations "could not stand idly by waiting for national governments to take action."

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/vaQ9G>



From left: UN Secretary-General confers award to recognize the President of Indonesia as UNISDR's first global champion for disaster risk reduction (See p2.) - UN Photo/Mark Garten

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MEASURING IMPACT AT LOCAL LEVEL

UNISDR and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability completed a four-month pilot test of the Local Government Self-Assessment Tool (LG-SAT) designed to help disaster risk reduction efforts in over 1,000 cities and local governments that have signed up to UNISDR's global "Making Cities Resilient" Campaign. LG-SAT has been made possible with funding from the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid branch, ECHO.

From July to November 2011, 23 cities in 16 countries provided data on 43 key indicators developed to gauge the progress of local governments in implementing ten essential actions for participation in the Cities Campaign. Ilham Arief Sirajuddin, the Mayor of Makassar, the provincial capital of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, with a population of 1.4 million, said: "The assessment helped us to understand the challenges and that we need to focus on strengthening local authority capacity to cope with disaster risk and the impact of climate change."

"We've never had something like this before," said Piyush Ranjan Rout, co-founder and Executive Director of Local Governments Network in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India – one of the pilot cities. He commended the initiative for providing an opportunity for local governments to bring several institutions to the table to discuss disaster risk reduction and become familiar with the underlying principles for action promoted by UNISDR. The tool will be officially launched in January 2012.

For more information, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign>

MEXICO CITY WIN FOR CLIMATE ACTION

The World Green Building Council awarded Mexico City the prestigious Local Climate Action Leadership Award for its Climate Action Plan (CAP) as well as its global leadership on the Mexico City Pact also known as the Global Cities Covenant on Climate which has been signed by 147 cities committed to fighting global warming through a range of strategies.

The city's \$1 billion package of environmental measures implemented over the last three years is designed to take seven million tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) out of the atmosphere of Mexico City which was once renowned as the most polluted mega-city on the face of the earth.

Martha Delgado Peralta, Secretary of the Environment for Mexico City Government, told UNISDR: "About 70 percent of that reduction is because of the transport revolution which the Mayor imposed on Mexico City. He extended the Bus Rapid Transit Corridors, built another 24 kms of metro line, and he encouraged the replacement of the old fleet of 90,000 taxis."

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/7uCIK>

DURBAN ADAPTATION CHARTER WELCOMED

The Durban Climate Change Adaptation Charter for Local Government adopted by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability was welcomed by UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, as "leading the way with practical measures to tackle climate change". The Charter was presented to the High Level Segment of the COP17 by James Nxumalo, the Mayor of eThekweni Municipality which includes Durban. It was endorsed by 114 Mayors and local government leaders representing 950 local governments including New Delhi, Dar Es Salaam, Banjul, Lagos, Windhoek, Thimpu, Dakar, Vancouver and Buenos Aires. The signatories call upon local, sub-national and regional governments to scale up action to accelerate their adaptation efforts by committing to a series of measures including mainstreaming adaptation in local government planning; impact and vulnerability assessments; alignment with mitigation strategies; direct access to funding including "a local adaptation thematic window in the Green Climate Fund"; and partnerships. **For more information, visit:** <http://goo.gl/0eEKO>

BUSAN BACKS RISK REDUCTION

UNISDR chief Margareta Wahlström has welcomed the recognition given to disaster risk reduction as a key development issue by the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) at Busan. The December 1 outcome document declares: "We must ensure that development strategies and programmes prioritise the building of resilience among people and societies at risk from shocks, especially in highly vulnerable settings such as small island developing states. Investing in resilience and risk reduction increases the value and sustainability of our development efforts." Wahlström said it is especially valuable that the "Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation" is committed "to invest in shock resistant infrastructure and social protection for at-risk communities as well as increasing the resources, planning and skills for disaster management at the national and regional levels." A new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation will be in place by June 2012 "to support and ensure accountability for the implementation of the commitments at the political level."

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/RWHGL>



MAJOR ADVOCACY SUCCESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

UNISDR and the Norwegian government scored a major advocacy success with the IPCC publication in November of the Summary for Policymakers of the Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX), first proposed in 2008 by the Norwegian government and UNISDR. It has a focus on vulnerability and population exposure as critical issues which need to be addressed. "It is the first IPCC report that integrates the work of researchers studying disaster risk management with climate science, climate impacts, and adaptation to climate change. The Report's findings underline how the well-being of vulnerable, impoverished populations living in parts of the world most exposed to disasters fuelled by climate change, will be severely undermined in the coming century," said UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström. The Norwegian government team in Kampala was led by Øyvind Christophersen, Senior Adviser, Climate and Pollution Agency, who said: "It's maybe one of the best reports ever on how to address the risk related to extreme climate events. The strength of the report is the assessments of how to manage the risk and how to integrate different aspects of risk management." **For more information, visit:** <http://goo.gl/25doS>

1ST UNISDR GLOBAL CHAMPION

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, formally recognized the appointment of Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, as the first UNISDR global champion of disaster risk reduction at the 19th ASEAN summit in Bali as the region coped with the impact of record floods. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is being recognised for making disaster risk reduction a national priority following the Asian tsunami which hit the country on December 26, 2004, just two months after he took office. He was the first head of State to convert the international blueprint for disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action, into a national plan. UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, commented: "Within weeks of taking office, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was confronted with one of the worst disasters in his country's history. He rose to the occasion and set about transforming risk management in Indonesia through a series of far-reaching measures which will be an enduring part of his political legacy." **For more information, visit:** <http://goo.gl/btGRH>

UNISDR CHAMPION HONOURED

UNISDR champion Senator Loren Legarda has received the Asian Leader Award for Environment Policy, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. The award was given by publishing company Seagull Philippines, which held its 1st Seagull Philippines Asian Leaders Awards ceremony for Excellence, Best Values and Social Responsibility, at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Makati City. Legarda, Chair of the Senate Committee on Climate Change, is author of laws in the Philippines relating to climate, such as the Climate Change Act and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/NxtAV>

"Kristianstad's efforts to prevent flooding and protect drinking water will inspire cities in other parts of the world."

Helena Molin-Valdes, Campaign Coordinator, on the city in southern Sweden becoming one of over a thousand cities that have now joined "Making Cities Resilient" campaign.

For more information, visit: <http://goo.gl/fU5Gz>