

Building Cities Resilience to Disasters: Protecting Cultural Heritage and Adapting to Climate Change

Report

19-20 March 2012

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The conference, held in Venice from 19 to 20 March 2012, was attended by European Mayors, representatives of local and national governments working on disaster risk reduction in Europe, as well as regional organizations, such as Council of Europe, European Commission, the private sector and three United Nations bodies -the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

The meeting sought to:

- Consider the key role played by disaster risk reduction measures and the protection of cultural heritage;
- Explore climate change adaptation policies and plans at local level;
- Facilitate the sharing of good practices by Cities through direct exchanges;
- Build partnerships at local level, through the involvement of new actors.

1. Opening and Making Cities Resilient Campaign Signing Ceremony

Following the opening of the event by Mr. Mayor Orsoni, Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Franco Gabrielli, Head of Italian Civil Protection and Mr. Antonio Navarra, Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change¹ the Cities of Dubrovnik and Zagreb, Croatia, joined the Making Cities Resilient campaign by signing the certificate of commitment to "Ten Essentials" becoming the latest European cities to join the campaign.

Nice, France, was formally recognized by Ms. Wahlström as a role model city for "involving citizens in building resilience and creating a risk culture: Intelligent City," an honor received by its Deputy Mayor, Benoit Kandel. A second French city, Sommières en Garde, was named a role model for its work in flood prevention, and was represented by Bruno Barthez, Director of the city's Emergency Centre.

Speaking upon receiving the Role Model Certificate, Mr Benoit Kandel acknowledged that "making every citizen an actor is both our key and our major lever to achieve greater resilience", whilst Mr Barthez, pointed out how the city had been able to create a risk culture and to establish an effective disaster management plan. "The small size of the town is a testimony of how resilience can be built at local level", he stated.

Finally, Mayor Giorgio Orsoni was awarded a certificate of recognition by Ms Wahlström as "European Campaign Champion for Making Cities Resilient" for his personal engagement in "promoting the Making Cities Resilient Campaign in Europe towards building resilience to disasters and protecting cultural heritage". Ms. Wahlström praised the city's government for its active role in protecting cultural heritage with the direct involvement of citizens. "Citizens participate directly in disaster risk reduction efforts through an effective municipal civil protection system, for instance through a special group of citizen-volunteers, expressly devoted to the protection of cultural assets in case of an emergency," she said.

¹ Copy of the speeches are available at <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

2. Session 1: Cultural Heritage and Disaster Risk Reduction

This session sought to address the linkages between disaster risk reduction and cultural heritage protection. The session was chaired by Professor Mustafa Erdik, Director of Bogazici University, Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute in Turkey.

Mr Boccardi, Focal Point, Sustainable Development, Disaster Risks and Capacity-Building, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, highlighted in his presentation how it is crucial to protect our heritage from disasters, both because of its inherent symbolic value to societies and for its major contribution to their sustainable development. It is in light of this that UNESCO has used the experience accumulated over the decades in protecting heritage from disaster to develop tools aimed to assist its member States better prepare their heritage sites to disasters. This has happened in the context of the recognized need to shift the strategic focus from ex-post intervention to prevention and risk reduction.

Mr Sfeir, Senior Council Member of the City of Byblos and Ms Martine-Allouche, Marine Archaeologist Advisor in Marine & Coastal Archaeology, exposed the experiences of Byblos in protecting cultural heritage. Mr Sfeir illustrated how an exchange with the City of Venice helped them exchange best practices in addressing communal challenges such as sea-level rise, whilst Ms Francis-Allouche exposed the current situation of maritime Byblos, the risks it is facing today as well as the measures which should be undertaken to address the overall challenges.

Pierpaolo Campostrini, CORILA² Director and City of Venice's Focal Point for the Making Cities Resilient Campaign, illustrated how the conservation and protection of the City's unique patrimony is inseparable from the major functional and civic role played by the city and its lagoon, not just as a visitor destination but also for living, as well as for the ecosystem services provided by the largest Mediterranean lagoon.

The roundtable panelists were, in addition to the presenters and the Chair of session, Ms Cristina Sabbioni, Director a.i. Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate Historical Climatology Group. The roundtable was moderated by Emily Hough, Editor in Chief of the magazine 'Crisis Response'.³

3. Session 2: Cities Resilience to Disasters in a Changing Climate

This session provided an overview of climate change adaptation and risk reduction activities. It was chaired by Ms. Rosario Bento País, Head, Adaptation Unit, Directorate General for Climate Action, European Commission.

The session was opened by Mr. Carlo Carraro, Vice President of IPCC, WG III and President, Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Drawing on the recent IPCC report on "Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation" (SREX) due to be released in March 2012, the presentation explains the latest state-of-the-art knowledge about the threats to which coastal zones are exposed, as well as ways to protect human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.

Alex Nickson, Strategy Manager for Climate Change Adaptation and Water, Greater London Authority and Dave Wardle, Project Executive, UK Environment Agency,

² CORILA stands for Consortium for Coordination of Research Activities Concerning the Venice Lagoon System.

³ A video recording of the sessions is available at: <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

illustrated how climate change is increasing the vulnerability of the City of London to disasters.

Benoit Kandel, Deputy Mayor, City of Nice, showed how the City has been working to involve citizens in disaster management activities and in doing so how it created a risk culture, which now plays a vital role in disaster prevention.

The roundtable, which in addition to the panellists, the presenters and the Chair of the session, saw the participation of Mr Vittorio Prodi, Member of the European Parliament, was moderated by Åke Svensson, Coordinator, Swedish National Platform for DRR. ⁴

4. Session 3: City to City Exchanges: the Value of Sharing Experiences

The session was chaired by Paola Albrito, Regional Coordinator, Europe, UNISDR.

Ian Clark, Head of Unit, Civil Protection, prevention and preparedness, Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), European Commission, illustrated EU actions on disaster management over the last ten years and then focused on the key challenges these policies face at the present time especially in relation to the prevention of disaster.

Mette Lindahl Olsson, Head of Natural Hazards and Critical Infrastructure Section, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, gave the example of how the Swedish National Platform has been instrumental in involving Cities in the Making Cities Resilient Campaign and how it has facilitated City to City learning by promoting exchange visits between Cities.

Konstadinos Konstadakopoulos, Head of Environment & Sustainable Development Department of the City of Patras, Greece, made an intervention on how the partnership of the City of Patras with the Cities of Ancona (Italy) and Bullas (Spain) helped them to develop a better climate change adaptation plan.

The roundtable session, in which the Chair and the presenters took part, was moderated by Emily Hough. ⁵

⁴ A video recording of the sessions is available at: <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

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5. Session 4: Building Partnership

This session was chaired by Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Executive Secretary, European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement, EUR-OPA, Council of Europe.

Luca Rossi, International Relations Department, Civil Protection Department, Italy, showcased the activities of the Italian National Platform in the field of disaster risk reduction and how Italy has contributed to maintaining disaster risk reduction high on the international political agenda. Mr Giuseppe Guarino, Manager of Training and Projects, Gruppo Lucano, showcased the activities of the Gruppo Lucano (an Association of Civil Protection volunteers) in embracing resilience, in particular through engaging 26 municipalities in the Making Cities Resilient Campaign.

Joanna Matthys, Managing Director, Marsh, elaborated on Marsh's engagement in the Making Cities Resilient Campaign, and on the role of the private sector in building systemic resilience.

Guillaume Riou, Project Manager, Poles Risques, talked about the current joint Poles Risques – UNISDR project which is integrating the questions of the "Gestion Risquest Territoriaux" label to the Campaign's Local Government Self-Assessment Tool.

The roundtable session panellists were, aside from the presenters, Mr Peter Gruetter, Cisco Systems. It was moderated by Ake Svensson. ⁶

6. Adoption of the Venice Declaration and Concluding Remarks

Participants adopted the "Venice Declaration on Building Resilience at the Local Level towards Protected Cultural Heritage and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies" ⁷

The adoption of the Venice Declaration was followed by concluding remarks building on the wealth of practices, activities and challenges faced in addressing city resilience through the protection of cultural heritage and adaption to a changing climate .

All documents related to the event are available at <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

⁶ A video recording of the sessions is available at: <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

⁷ To view copy of the declaration see: <http://preventionweb.net/go/25027>

Venice Declaration on Building Resilience at the Local Level towards Protected Cultural Heritage and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

We, Mayors and Local Government representatives together with National Government Officials, representatives of the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Private Sector, UNESCO, UNHABITAT and UNISDR,

1. Having participated in the event "*Building Cities Resilience to Disasters: Protecting Cultural Heritage and Adapting to Climate Change*" organized by the City of Venice and UNISDR,

2. Recognizing that:

- a) More than half of the world's population now lives in cities or urban centres, which serve as the economic engines of nations, and where around 100 cities are in control of 30 per cent of the world economy;
- b) Cities, including over 200 World Heritage urban properties, are living evidence, a physical store of cultural heritage that represent a source of cultural identity and a non-renewable human asset, and that urban vulnerability to risks are one of the most significant threats to the preservation of such assets;
- c) A well-conserved historic environment, supported by living traditional knowledge and skills, considerably reduces underlying disaster risks' factors, strengthens the resilience of urban communities and saves lives.
- d) Sustainable development must integrate disaster risk reduction and resilience building at all levels through planning across sectors to increase urban resilience to disaster;
- e) Disaster risk is driven higher by climate change particularly in urban areas due to the increased incidence of extreme weather events, such as flooding, flash floods, tropical cyclones, drought, wildfires and heat waves, which affects the growing populations of cities;

3. Recalling:

- a) The World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2015 Making Cities Resilient: "My city is getting ready!" which is aimed at achieving resilient sustainable urban communities based on the principles of the Hyogo Framework for Action;
- b) The Mayor's Statement on Resilient Cities at the Third Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which calls on UNISDR to work with city networks, UN entities and civil society organizations to sustain local preparations for disaster risk reduction and local resilience-building;
- c) The Strategy for Disaster Risks Reduction at World Heritage Properties, which was adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st Session in 2007.

Resolve to:

- a. Ensure the continuation of exchanges of experiences and good practices within communities, cities and local governments on achievements related to disaster risk reduction at the local level;

- b. Actively encourage exchanges between cities facing challenges posed by the protection of cultural heritage in a changing climate;
- c. Further the engagement of European local level city networks in embracing resilience to disasters with a particular focus on cultural heritage protection and climate change adaptation by promoting and embracing the objectives of Making Cities Resilient Campaign;
- d. Support the integration of heritage concerns into national and local disaster risk reduction policies and plans and, at the same time, ensure that disaster risks are taken into consideration within management plans and systems for heritage properties in their territories, notably for World Heritage Cities;
- e. Ensure that sustainable development strategies reflect disaster risk reduction measures at the local level for urban sustainability and resilient growth;
- f. Encourage communities, cities and local governments to take advantage of existing sources of information such as the Making Cities Resilient website, national databases and other available information related to the activities of participating cities to ensure that achievements and obstacles in addressing vulnerabilities to disasters are shared and built upon;
- g. Integrate the Ten Essentials of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign into local risk reduction plans as a way to accelerate efforts to make cities safer and to prevent the loss of lives and assets;
- h. Foster partnerships for disaster risk reduction with the private sector to analyze the root causes of continued non-resilient activity in the urban built environment, related infrastructure and cultural heritage, and to enhance collaborative exchanges regarding dissemination of risk data;
- i. Encourage the use of the Local Government Self Assessment Tool as a channel for sharing advances and challenges in reducing risks at the local level towards building cities resilience.

Adopted on 20 March 2012.





