

Press release

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UN: HUGE VOLUME OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS POSE MAJOR THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

GENEVA, 8 September 2017 – The UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mr. Robert Glasser, today expressed his deep concern at the volume of extreme weather events unfolding across the world and the implications for future loss of life and economic damage to the world economy.

Mr. Glasser said: “There can be little doubt that 2017 is turning into a year of historic significance in the struggle against climate change and all the other risks that put human life in danger and threaten the peace and security of exposed and vulnerable communities around the world who find themselves in harm’s way from hurricanes, floods and earthquakes.

“We must realise that these disaster events are not natural phenomena but are a result of a built environment which is not fit for purpose and a failure to understand how we are intensifying the cocktail of disaster risk by not adequately addressing poverty, land use, building codes, environmental degradation, population growth in exposed in vulnerable settings and, most fundamentally, greenhouse gas emissions.

“The floods and monsoon rains across South Asia, deadly landslides and drought in Africa, the impact of four major Atlantic hurricanes, a major earthquake in Mexico with a tsunami threat to central America vividly demonstrate that we need to redouble our efforts to reduce the impact of such events in the future. They are a reminder to us all that the worst disasters which could happen have not happened yet.

“If we do not succeed in understanding what it takes to make our societies more resilient to disasters then we will pay an increasingly high price in terms of lost lives and livelihoods.”

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About UNISDR: UNISDR is the UN office dedicated to disaster risk reduction. It is led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 which seeks “the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses, in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.”

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