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Enhancing urban resilience against disasters can spur development – UN official



Making Cities Resilient campaign

12 July 2010 – Dozens of cities have signed on to a United Nations initiative to boost their resilience against natural hazards, which, according to a senior official with the world body, can accelerate progress towards achieving development targets.

So far, 58 cities have joined the campaign, entitled **Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready**, which was launched in May and calls on leaders and local governments to commit to a 10-point checklist.

Margareta Wahlström, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, told reporters in New York today that the scheme is "extremely important" in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**), the eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

Reducing the risks to cities – now home to more than half of the world's population – posed by disasters can help the world reach these Goals, she said.

For example, achieving the second MDG – ensuring that all children complete primary schooling – means that more than 100 million additional children will attend school. Because more schools will have to be erected to accommodate these young people, "why not build them safer?" Ms. Wahlström asked.

Resilience, she said, includes cities having a budget for risk reduction and ensuring that their critical infrastructure – sanitation, hospitals and others – are able to withstand disasters. It also entails urban areas having early warning systems in place for emergencies, as well as systems ready for any recovery effort.

The campaign, coordinated by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction ([ISDR](#)), seeks to give cities a forum to share their experiences and expertise, especially given that risks are on the upswing due to increases in weather-related disasters.

The official voiced optimism that cities around the world will be successful in shoring up their readiness for hazards, citing Makati City, in the Philippines, as an example of an urban area that has enhanced its resilience.

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