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Mexico City mayor to champion UN campaign to reduce disaster risk



Making Cities Resilient campaign

21 November 2010 – The United Nations body that coordinates global disaster reduction efforts today named the mayor of Mexico City, Marcelo Ebrard, as champion of a UN initiative aimed at enhancing cities' disaster preparedness.

Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, appointed Mr. Ebrard as champion of the “Making Cities Resilient” campaign at a ceremony during the World Mayors Summit on Climate in Mexico City.

“It is our way to recognize Mayor Ebrard for his exemplary leadership, and for showing how local action can be taken to build the resilience of nations and their assets,” said Ms. Wahlström, who heads the Secretariat of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

“It is particularly relevant at a time when the cost of disasters is expected to rise significantly because of climate change. Cities will have to bear the biggest brunt of climate-related risks,” she added.

Mr. Ebrard signed a historic emissions reduction agreement with more than 70 mayors ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December.

Under the agreement, the “Mexico City Pact – Global Cities Covenant on Climate,” signatories commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a transparent manner.

Commenting on the international climate negotiations, Mr. Ebrard said because talks at the national level were not progressing fast enough, cities needed to take the lead.

“I am convinced we can campaign together to get our cities ready, as leaders, or risk leaving future generations facing insurmountable problems,” he said. “Mexico City is situated on a closed basin and former lake, which make us one of the most vulnerable megacities in the world. Curbing the emission of greenhouse gases is essential to reduce climate-related risks,” he added.

“Making Cities Resilient – My City Is Getting Ready!” is a campaign to promote safer cities based on 10 essential actions for local government. Managed by UNISDR, the campaign began earlier this year and is now 150-cities strong.

The 10 actions forming the centrepiece of the campaign are designed to empower local governments through more robust budgets, stronger institutions, improved infrastructure, attention to ecosystem management and citizen engagement.

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