

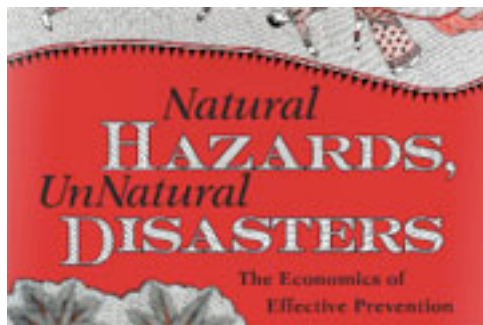


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## UN official underlines need for disaster preparedness to enhance resilience



29 April 2011 – The head of the United Nations office tasked with assisting countries with disaster risk reduction today stressed that governments and communities must urgently build disaster preparedness to avoid paying higher human and economic costs when such events occur.

“We are in a fast-moving car and ahead is a crash waiting to happen. We need to act,” said Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and head of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction ([UNISDR](#)).

In a statement ahead of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Geneva on 10-13 May, Ms. Wahlström pointed out that cities and communities from Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Pakistan and other countries which have been recently affected by earthquakes, floods and mudslides continue to pay a high price today in terms of economic losses.

Leaders from across the world will gather to discuss and decide on the needed commitments and immediate actions on disaster risk reduction. The platform is the world’s foremost gathering of stakeholders committed to reducing disaster risk and building the resilience of communities and nations.

The theme of this year’s forum is “Invest today for a safer tomorrow: Increase investment in local action.” It will be attended by more than 2,000 representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and the private sector.

An added dimension of the conference will be the World Reconstruction Conference, organized by the World Bank and the UN, at the same venue, and constitutes one of the main pillars of the Global Platform.

“Recent experience – for example, in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake – shows that despite great goodwill and collective efforts, we need to improve how the international system supports national reconstruction and recovery,” said Selina Jackson, the World Bank Special Representative to the UN and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“If done right, a crisis situation can be a window of opportunity. Therefore, it is appropriate and very timely that we are now holding the first ever World Reconstruction Conference, with the theme ‘Rethinking reconstruction for a safer future’,” said Ms. Jackson.

The Global Platform will be opened by [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon, who will also launch a report entitled *2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction – Revealing risks, redefining development*. Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro will chair the forum in Geneva.

The Global Platform was established in 2007 as a biennial forum for information exchange and partnership building across sectors to improve the implementation of disaster risk reduction through better communication and coordination among stakeholders.

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