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Press Release

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Ministers of Education sign Disaster Risk Reduction Declaration

Panama- Ministers of Education from Latin America and the Caribbean have signed the “Panama Declaration” for Disaster Risk Reduction in the education sector, following three days of meetings.

The Declaration was signed during the International Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Education Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Panama City on October 12-14 2011. The conference was convened by the Ministry of Education of Panama in conjunction with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), Plan International, UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, RET (Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust), World Vision, USAID/OFDA/LAC, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

In addition to strengthening the education sector in disaster risk reduction, the Declaration will align the integrated work among the guarantor States and international cooperation agencies and institutions supporting this issue, in order to achieve greater impact to the benefit of all children, youth, and communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The ministers and vice ministers made the following pledges, among others:

- Guarantee the right to education in emergency situations and disasters.
- Foster the inclusion and/or strengthening of risk management in the curriculum and in teacher skills development, at all educational levels and modalities, in accordance with the specific policies of each country.
- Establish a regional thematic platform for disaster risk management in the education sector, according to the strategic lines developed by the States.
- Implement a policy for the assessment and ongoing improvement of existing educational infrastructure, and the development of new school facilities, in accordance with risk management codes and standards.

This Conference and the signing of the “Panama Declaration” represent the start of an effort to awaken the commitment of educational authorities in these countries to put into effect the recommendations and suggestions, as well as to promote a culture of prevention, make facilities safe, and prevent the loss of life.

Furthermore, October 13 was the International Day for Disaster Reduction, which this year focused on the involvement of children and youth.