



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
Secretariat, Geneva

For more information
Please contact:

Brigitte Leoni
Media Relations
Tel: +41 22 917 8897
leonib@un.org
www.unisdr.org

PRESS RELEASE

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MY CITY IS GETTING READY, IS YOURS?

The World Disaster Reduction Campaign is launched in Lima to help make cities more resilient to the impact of natural hazards

Lima, Peru – The earthquake that wreaked havoc on Port-au-Prince, the earthquake and the tsunami that struck Chile earlier this year, and the continuous volcanic ash fall in Iceland that paralyzed large parts of Europe, reinforce the urgency for cities to take the necessary steps to put in place their much needed disaster reduction plans.

Each year, the number of people living in slums and informal settlements—which are often built in unsafe areas, on unstable slopes and floodplains— increase by 25 million. With more than half the world population living in urban areas, cities are particularly vulnerable to the risks of natural hazards, such as earthquakes, drought and floods.

In order to strengthen city preparedness and reduce the impact of disasters, the regional unit for the Americas of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) will launch a new campaign on Monday May 31, 2010 in Lima, Peru to raise awareness and increase commitment to sustainable development practices that contribute to a city's well-being and safety. In addition, the 40th anniversary of the Ancash earthquake will be commemorated. Undoubtedly, this has been the worst disaster so far to hit the Peruvian people, which claimed more than 70,000 lives, injured 140,000 people, left more than 1 million people homeless and affected more than 3 million people.

The two-year campaign, **Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready**, urges leaders and local governments to commit to a checklist of Ten Essentials for making cities more resilient.

Mr. Ricardo Mena, head of the UNISDR regional office, explained that “the aim of the campaign is to enlist more than 1,000 local government leaders worldwide to invest more in disaster risk reduction, which includes improving urban planning, infrastructure and building safety; reinforcing drainage systems to reduce flood, storm and health threats; installing early warning systems; conducting public preparedness drills; and taking measures to adapt to the increasing impacts of climate change.”

The campaign was launched worldwide on May 30 in the city of Bonn, Germany, with the mayors of Mexico City and the Telica Commonwealth, Nicaragua, among other participants.

Urban risk reduction offers a large number of advantages. When implemented successfully in the context of sustainable urbanization, resilient cities help reduce poverty, advance development and employment, and foster greater social equity, new business opportunities, more balanced ecosystems, and improved health and education.

The UNISDR secretariat is the overall coordinator of the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction Campaign. However, local, regional and international partners, as well as participating cities and local governments, are the main drivers of the initiative.

UN-HABITAT, with its World Urban Campaign, is a key partner, along with other UN agencies such as the Federation WHO and UNICEF, which are already working on safe hospitals and schools. The UNISDR is also working with a number of city associations and organizations, including the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, and CityNet, as well as with regional bodies, such as the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA), and the Federation of Latin American Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA).

For further information, please visit: www.eird.org/camp-10-11 y www.preventionweb.net