



**Launch of the *Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready*
Kandalama, Sri Lanka on 19 July 2011**

In association with

International Conference on Building Resilience: Interdisciplinary approaches to disaster risk reduction, and the development of sustainable communities and cities (www.buildresilience.org)

The Ministry of Disaster Management and the Disaster Management Centre will lead the national launch of the “Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready”, in partnership with Ministry of Local Government, Centre for Disaster Resilience, University of Salford UK, Practical Action, UNDP Sri Lanka and UNISDR. The International Conference on Building Resilience: Interdisciplinary approaches to disaster risk reduction and the development of sustainable communities and cities (www.buildresilience.org), will host the Making Cities Resilient Campaign 2010-2015 national launch in Sri Lanka. The launch will provide an appropriate backdrop for policy, academic and practitioner audience to explore how they may support the campaign's goal: to help cities and local governments to get ready, reduce the risks and become resilient to disasters.

About the Campaign

The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is working with its partners to raise awareness and commitment for sustainable development practices that will reduce disaster risk and increase the wellbeing and safety of citizens - to invest today for a better tomorrow. Building on previous campaigns focusing on education and the safety of schools and hospitals, ISDR partners are launching a new campaign in 2010: Making Cities Resilient. The campaign will seek to convince city leaders and local governments to commit to a checklist of Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient (enclosed herewith in Annex) and to work alongside local activists, grassroots networks and national authorities.

UNISDR and its partners have developed this checklist as a starting point for all those who want to join in the campaign. Equally important is that commitment to these Ten Essentials will empower local governments and other agencies to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted by 168 governments in 2005. Good urban and local governance is the key to this resilience!

The vision of the campaign is to achieve resilient, sustainable urban communities. The campaign will urge local governments to take action now to reduce cities' risks to disasters. The objectives of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign are threefold, and can be achieved through building long-lasting partnerships:

- **Know more** - Raise the awareness of citizens and governments at all levels of the benefits of reducing urban risks
- **Invest wisely** - Identify budget allocations within local government funding plans to invest in disaster risk reduction activities.
- **Build more safely** - Include disaster risk reduction in participatory urban development planning processes and protect critical infrastructure

“My City is getting ready” is a rallying call for all mayors and local governments to make as many cities as possible as resilient as possible. It is also a call for local community groups, citizens, planners, academia and the private sector to join these efforts.

While the campaign addresses citizens – those who live in urban areas and who elect the decision makers who can take the necessary steps to make their cities safer – the campaign's principal target groups are mayors and local governments of cities of different sizes, characteristics, locations and risk profiles. Mayors and local governments are the agencies who can take action and make our cities safer. Mobilizing these important actors in the disaster risk reduction process is essential to making cities resilient. The campaign slogan has meaning for everyone. Whatever the city, the message to reduce risk will resonate with all citizens worldwide. For example, Sao Paulo is Getting Ready! Kobe is Getting Ready! Istanbul is Getting Ready! Santa Tecla is getting ready!

Partners in the national launch in Sri Lanka

The Ministry of Disaster Management and the Disaster Management Centre lead the national launch in partnership with Ministry of Local Government, Sri Lanka, Centre for Disaster Resilience, The University of Salford UK, Practical Action, UNDP Sri Lanka and UNISDR.

Background and objectives of the national launch

The International Conference on Building Resilience, which will host the Making Cities Resilient Campaign 2010-2015 national launch in Sri Lanka, is organized by the Centre for Disaster Resilience, University of Salford, UK and RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia (www.buildresilience.org). The launch will provide an appropriate backdrop for policy, academic and practitioner audiences to explore how they may support the campaign's goal: to help cities and local governments to get ready, reduce the risks and become resilient to disasters.

The launch of the Campaign aims to:

- a. To increase the knowledge and awareness of urban risk issues and solutions, as well as the role of local governments in addressing disaster risk at all levels (communication drive, adaptable to local needs and languages)

- b. To raise the political profile of disaster risk reduction for local governments and local governance, to improve the development investments to reduce risk and to provide stronger synergy between local and national policies (promote “compacts” between local and national authorities).
- c. To develop a “Hyogo Framework for Local Governments” guide, enhance and disseminate technical tools to apply risk reduction at local levels (promote training, capacity development opportunities; city-to-city learning).

An overarching objective is to reach out to the public - citizens of cities and communities- to raise the general awareness levels and engagement for sustainable risk reduction and preparedness.

Target Audiences

The campaign addresses primarily local governments at all levels (cities, towns, townships or villages) based on their responsibilities as first responders to the needs and well-being of the population. The campaign targets towards creating space for citizen participation, sound local/urban governance and accountability. More specifically, the Campaign will target:

- political leaders (*Mayors, city councils*)
- technical local govt functionaries and other experts with an impact on a city’s development and safety (*planners, city managers in different sectors, building regulators, educators, emergency managers etc*)
- local leaders, community and citizen groups, NGOs and other opinion makers- both as important partners, and targets.
- National authorities, in particular to promote decentralization and in their role of regulation and influence over local policy and risk configuration.
- Other target audiences as appropriate per country or city, including with private sector.

Expected Outcomes

It is expected that the Campaign and its launch in Sri Lanka will lead to:

- Increased commitment from political leaders for making cities resilient;
- Increased number of activities to disaster risk reduction in cities, both of national and local organizations that ultimately lead to making cities resilient;
- Increased awareness in policy , planning and implementer stakeholders , and among citizens disaster risks, and possible measures for risk reduction
- Sharing of good practices for Making Cities Resilient and Disaster Risk Reduction nationally, regionally and globally.
- Enhanced practices for City-to-City Learning

Campaign Update (Global)

At present, there are 629 cities and provinces in various countries joining the campaign. In many countries the campaign lunch was also organised at Sub-national levels in addition to the national launches , for example in region 5 and 7 in the Philippines, Italy, in the state of Orissa in India, Province of Tyrol, Austria and all its 279 municipalities. In the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction which will take place during 8-13 May 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland will arrange the awarding ceremony for

mayors or governors who won in Sasakawa Award, which was dedicated to the theme of Resilient Cities in 2011. The winners will be able to demonstrate how their achievements are linked to the current World Disaster Risk Reduction campaign, “Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!” drawing on as many of the Ten Essentials as possible for addressing issues of local governance and urban risk. The Campaign UPDATES are posted on the campaign website and sent out to partners, participating cities and institutions. For further information please visit: www.unisdr.org/campaign

Ten-point Checklist - Essentials for Making Cities Resilient

- 1.** Put in place **organization and coordination** to understand and reduce disaster risk, based on participation of citizen groups and civil society. Build local alliances. Ensure that all departments understand their role to disaster risk reduction and preparedness.
- 2. Assign a budget** for disaster risk reduction and provide incentives for homeowners, low-income families, communities, businesses and public sector to invest in reducing the risks they face.
- 3.** Maintain up-to-date data on hazards and vulnerabilities, **prepare risk assessments** and use these as the basis for urban development plans and decisions. Ensure that this information and the plans for your city’s resilience are readily available to the public and fully discussed with them.
- 4.** Invest in and maintain **critical infrastructure that reduces risk**, such as flood drainage, adjusted where needed to cope with climate change.
- 5.** Assess the **safety of all schools and health facilities** and upgrade these as necessary.
- 6.** Apply and enforce **realistic, risk-compliant building regulations and land use planning principles**. Identify safe land for low-income citizens and develop upgrading of informal settlements, wherever feasible.
- 7.** Ensure **education programmes and training** on disaster risk reduction are in place in schools and local communities.
- 8. Protect ecosystems and natural buffers** to mitigate floods, storm surges and other hazards to which your city may be vulnerable. Adapt to climate change by building on good risk reduction practices.
- 9.** Install **early warning systems and emergency management** capacities in your city and hold regular public preparedness drills.
- 10.** After any disaster, ensure that the **needs of the survivors are placed at the centre of reconstruction** with support for them and their community organizations to design and help implement responses, including rebuilding homes and livelihoods.