



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Local governments come together to build safer communities in Sri Lanka, commit to World Disaster Reduction campaign**

Colombo, Sri Lanka – Local governments released a joint action plan today to tackle hazard risk in Sri Lanka. The plan identifies key priority activities that follow the ‘Ten Essentials’ of the World Disaster Reduction Campaign “Making Cities Resilient: My City is Getting Ready!” in nine provinces in the country.

Drawing on the specific hazards that the provinces face, the plan includes developing city hazard maps, instituting building regulation by-laws, and providing training as well as education programmes for government officials and school children on urban disaster risk reduction. The action plan will be implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Disaster Management and the Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Council.

The joint plan was released during a ceremony where 20 urban councils and three municipal councils from local governments in nine provinces pledged to make their communities safer from disasters by joining the “Making Cities Resilient” campaign.

“It is fundamental, that our local leaders are conscious of the potential risk their citizens face and we need to invest more on disaster risk reduction measures at local levels in partnership with all our stakeholders,” said Honorable Mahinda Amaraweera, the Minister of Disaster Management.

The Minister further added that the ‘Mahinda Chintana’, a key policy document of the Government of Sri Lanka, stresses the need to ensure the long term sustainability, environmental sensitivity, and climate resilience of planned cities.

Local government mayors, chairmen, and provincial government representatives made their pledges during the ceremony hosted by the Ministry of Disaster Management and the Disaster Management Centre. The ceremony was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Council of the Government of Sri Lanka, the Centre for Disaster Resilience, the University of Salford United Kingdom, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Practical Action, and the Federation of Sri Lanka Local Government Authorities.

“The real battle against climate risks takes place at the community level. Cities and municipalities are in the front lines,” said Al Arquilano, Vice Mayor of San Francisco, Cebu in the Philippines who attended the launch of the plan and shared the experiences of San Francisco with the Sri Lankan local government representatives. San Francisco, a small coastal city prone to typhoons, is one of the winners of the 2011 United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction and was recognized for its achievements of community engagement in risk.

“To win the battle against disasters, it is important to empower our communities to do their share. As we all know, reducing disaster risks is everybody’s business,” added Mr. Arquilano.

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**Notes for Editors:**

- For more information on the World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2010-2011 - Making Cities *Resilient: My city is getting ready*, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign>
- For information relating to the campaign in Asia please contact Hang Thi Thanh Pham at [phamh@un.org](mailto:phamh@un.org), + 6622882750