

## EUROPEAN FORUM IN SKOPJE

President Gjorge Ivanov of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia speaking at the opening in Skopje of the Second Annual European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction, reminded the audience of the great Skopje earthquake in 1963 that left thousands dead and injured as well as more than 200,000 homeless. "In 2010 Europe saw the biggest increase in disaster events - plus 18.2 percent - compared to the decade's averages," UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, told the Forum which first met two years ago and seeks to stimulate exchange of knowledge and expertise between participating National HFA focal points.



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## GLOBAL FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S CHARTER FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

For children by children: The Children's Charter for Disaster Risk Reduction which was originally launched by two children from the Philippines at the 2011 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction has become a key advocacy tool as a result of the focus on it for International Disaster Reduction Day. It was developed through consultations with more than 600 children in Africa, Asia and Latin America by UNICEF, Plan, Save the Children and World Vision. The charter aims to raise awareness of the need for a child-centred approach to DRR and for strong commitment from governments, donors and agencies to take appropriate steps to protect children and utilise their energy and knowledge to engage in DRR and climate change adaptation.

It outlines five priorities:

- Schools must be safe and education must not be interrupted.
- Child protection must be a priority before, during and after a disaster.
- Children have the right to participate and to access the information they need.
- Community infrastructure must be safe, and relief and construction must help reduce future risk.
- Disaster Risk Reduction must reach the most vulnerable.

For more visit: [www.childreninachangingclimate.org](http://www.childreninachangingclimate.org)

## DRR MEDIA TRAINING ACROSS THE WORLD

Some of the biggest media houses in the world from the Times of India to the Philippines Daily Inquirer to Caracol Television in Colombia have now participated in media training on disaster risk reduction organized by UNISDR with the support of ECHO, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid branch. The 6th such media training workshop was completed in Tunisia this month and this time the target audience was 40 disaster risk management experts from Algeria, Comoros, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia with the goal of making them more media-savvy and providing them with tips for engaging with their own national media. The workshop was supported by the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and Environment and the country office of UNDP. Lars Bernd, Regional Programme Officer at UNISDR's Regional Office for Arab States, said: "They learned how to better promote their national policies, programmes and activities, including through establishment of a network, better press releases and media advisories and other practical ways of communicating the complexities of DRR."



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# EVIDENCE

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## SINO-AFRICAN DROUGHT COOPERATION

Over 40 officials from China, Africa and the United Nations took part in a three-day "Sino-African High-Level Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction" in September which called for drought risk reduction to be on the agenda of next year's Sino-African Summit for Development Cooperation.

## UN-EU PARTNERSHIP

The UN-EU Partnerships Report for 2010 – released at the 66th session of the UN GA - highlights the increasingly important role of disaster risk reduction in the joint activities of the United Nations and the European Union. This is the first time UNISDR has contributed to the UN-EU Partnership Report signifying the shift in perspective of the partnership from addressing crisis to strengthening resilience.



Margareta Wahlström, meets with Pakistan President, Asif Ali Zardari

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## INTERNATIONAL DISASTER REDUCTION DAY

Over 80 countries around the world answered UNISDR's call to "Step Up for Disaster Risk Reduction" on October 13, International Disaster Reduction Day. Reports are still coming in about the 100+ events. There was a huge response also on social media with thousands of tweets marking the day. The focus was on engaging children and young people in disaster risk reduction as the group most affected by disasters each year. UNISDR estimates that every year over 100 million children and young people are affected by disasters. UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström, said: "This year we are issuing a call for everyone to 'Step Up for Disaster Risk Reduction' but especially children and young people who have such a special insight into how disasters disrupt their lives and the lives of their communities. We must get beyond perceptions of children as passive and subordinate to ensure they are active participants in decision-making and risk reduction activities. They can influence their communities to invest in safe schools and health facilities and take into account the special circumstances of children and other vulnerable groups when designing early warning systems and other projects which contribute to resilience in the face of disasters and climate change."

For more information, visit: <http://www.unisdr.org/2011/iddr/>

## UNISDR SUPPORT GROUP MEETS

UNISDR's Strategic Framework 2025 and Work Programme to 2015 will be presented at the UNISDR Support Group meeting in Geneva on October 17 by UNISDR Chief, Margareta Wahlström. There has already been considerable feedback from a wide range of donors to a draft which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Essentially, UNISDR is seeking \$64.9 million for the next biennium 2012-2013 and will focus on four strategic objectives centred on implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; producing and disseminating credible evidence to support disaster risk reduction; advocacy for increased public and private sector investment in DRR; and an emphasis on communication and delivery of results.

“Global risk is best reduced at local level. This is the only way to minimize losses and save more lives.”

Margareta Wahlström during her visit to Pakistan

## UN SG BACKS DRR FOR RIO+20

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is calling for any future framework for sustainable development to include a “clear prescription for incorporation of disaster and climate risk management.” The issue of disaster reduction featured prominently during the General Debate of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly. In his report, the Secretary-General recommends that national disaster loss registers, disaster risk mapping and financial tracking systems be established and further developed to effectively support future development planning and investment

## UNISDR CHIEF VISITS PAKISTAN, MYANMAR

The Special Representative of the Secretary General on DRR, Margareta Wahlström, met with the Pakistan President, Asif Ali Zardari, for the first time during a three-day visit. President Zardari said he would personally “champion the process of disaster risk reduction” as his country copes with two successive years of heavy flooding affecting millions of people. Wahlström said: “The first priority in the short term for the government is to strengthen the early warning and preparedness capacity at provincial and district level. Early warning systems work when people are educated about how to respond to them.” Wahlström also paid a four day visit to Myanmar where she observed International Disaster Reduction Day and engaged with senior Government Ministers on a national action plan for disaster risk reduction and a Disaster Management Law. The Myanmar government announced that 60% of its 41,000 schools and 70% of its rural health centres will be renovated to make them safer against disasters. The government has also promised to incorporate disaster risk reduction into the school curriculum.

## DRR FOCUS AT HORN OF AFRICA SUMMIT

The September Summit on the Horn of Africa agreed a “Nairobi Strategy” which includes a twin track approach to drought risk management whose “new approach and focus should be preventive rather than reactive, and should be holistic rather than emergency oriented.” The strategy was backed by Summit host, Kenya’s President Mwai Kibaki, President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, President Salva Kiir of South Sudan, President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed of Somalia and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia. The East African Heads of State have also said they will try to allocate a “significant portion of national revenue” to fund regional projects in drought-prone areas focused on ecosystem rehabilitation and sustainable livelihood practices, and promoting disaster risk reduction among pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in particular.



Source: <http://tinyurl.com/6d259yb>

## DATA COLLECTION GAP HIGHLIGHTED

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, drew attention to the “data-collection gap” which is preventing governments from effectively determining risk levels with his launch of the Fourth report of the MDG Gap Task Force in New York in September. Access to new approaches to disaster risk reduction feature prominently in the Report which notes: “Despite many gains in developing, codifying and sharing know-how for disaster risk reduction, significant gaps remain. For example, many countries have not collected reliable data on historic disaster losses, save for those concerning major disasters. Owing to this data-collection gap, Governments cannot effectively determine risk levels. Initiatives such as the global Making Cities Resilient Campaign launched by the UNISDR in May 2010, need to be strengthened. They help bring disaster reduction knowledge to local governments – those most often responsible for managing disaster risks.”

## PHILIPPINES FLOODS

UNISDR champion, Senator Loren Legarda of the Philippines, has called for an integrated flood warning and response system as 3.2 million people struggle with the impact of back-to-back typhoons which have triggered widespread floods across the country. “The country cannot afford suffering from so many floods that continually erode our development gains. It is high-time for the country to have an integrated flood forecasting, warning and response system and a holistic approach to the flood risk problem,” she said. Senator Legarda has successfully advocated for legislative change in disaster management in the Philippines. She recently urged the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the Climate Change Commission to increase their collaboration to reduce flood risk and strengthen the resilience of local communities against climatic events.



Source: Flickr @chrisam42

## THE ROAD TO DURBAN

Over 50 African Ministers of the Environment attending the Fourth Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) adopted a declaration endorsing an ‘African Common Position’ as the basis for negotiations by African States at the next round of UN Climate Change negotiations (COP17) to be held in Durban, South Africa.

## MEXICO TACKLES QUAKE RISK

Mexico City, a high-risk mega city, which is building the world’s largest drainage system at a cost \$5 billion, has just brought in a new law which allows for people living in unsafe buildings at risk of earthquakes to be re-housed safely. Ricardo Mena, Head of UNISDR’s Americas Office, said: “Preventive actions have been complemented by preparedness initiatives that include training of 10,000 public servants and members of local citizen committees on family disaster preparedness plans.” Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard is a high-profile advocate for disaster risk reduction and the city is a member of the UNISDR ‘Making Cities Resilient’ Campaign.