



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **UN launches disaster reduction campaign “*Making Cities Resilient*” in Africa, at Planning Africa 2010 Conference in Durban, South Africa**

Durban - Maputo (Mozambique) and Overstrand Municipality (South Africa) are the latest local governments to join the World Disaster Reduction Campaign “Making Cities Resilient - My city is getting ready!”

“Overstrand is full of natural beauty and rich in marine life. We are therefore signing up to preserve our environment,” said Theo Beyleveldt, Mayor of Overstrand Municipality, located within the Overberg District Municipality in South Africa’s Western Cape province.

The signing ceremony took place yesterday at the campaign launch held by the United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) with its partners UNHABITAT at the Planning Africa 2010 conference, in Durban, South Africa. The conference, whose theme is *Beyond Crisis; Opportunities and Actions*, was held against a backdrop of extreme climate events that recently triggered floods in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Niger, and landslides in Tanzania and Uganda. Floods and landslides have caused widespread damage in urban areas.

“A resilient city and its citizens can benefit greatly from the opportunities presented by urban risk reduction actions” said Helena Molin Valdes, Deputy Director of UNISDR who was present at the launch. “We are inviting people to take an active role in the campaign so that our cities and urban centres can become safer today and for generations to come.”

Ms. Valdés said that extreme climate conditions were among the major contributors to risk, as seen with the recent floods that had caused enormous loss of lives and livelihoods hit Pakistan. With cities becoming more prone to climate-triggered disasters, local governments will face a greater challenge in strengthening the public’s readiness to reduce disaster impacts.

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” that will make

their cities more resilient. Some key actions highlighted by the campaign are investing more in safer infrastructure and buildings; 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.

Over 80 local governments around the world have already joined the campaign.

“UNISDR is the overall coordinator of the campaign, which also calls on civil society, planners and urban professionals from different sectors, national authorities and community groups to support the campaign with innovative solutions to help local governments reduce risk.

UNISDR works closely with UN agencies such as UNHABITAT, whose own campaign promotes sustainable urbanization (World Urban Campaign); WHO and UNICEF, on hospital and school safety; NEPAD; the African Union (AU); city associations; and organizations such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability and CityNet.

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