



International Strategy for  
Disaster Reduction



World Health  
Organization



THE WORLD BANK



Photo by Carlos Gaggero, UN/WHO



Photo by Lissette Chavarría

Being prepared: Hospital staff simulate a fire evacuation during surgery, Mexico

2008



United Nations

# International Day for Disaster Reduction

*Wednesday 8 October*

*The International Day for Disaster Reduction raises the profile of disaster risk reduction and encourages every citizen and government to take part in building more resilient communities and nations.*

[www.safehospitals.info](http://www.safehospitals.info)



Photo: PHO/WHO



## Message

This year's International Day for Disaster Reduction falls on the third anniversary of the massive 2005 South Asian Earthquake that devastated a whole region of Pakistan. A series of similarly devastating disasters this year have highlighted the urgent need to reduce disaster risk and vulnerability to natural hazards. Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, the Wenchuan Earthquake in China's Sichuan province, historic floods in the United States and India, and a deadly drought in the Horn of Africa, all show that more needs to be done worldwide to safeguard lives, livelihoods and economic development.

Last year, the International Day was marked the world over by teachers and schoolchildren at the conclusion of the World Campaign for Disaster Reduction 2006-2007: Disaster Risk Reduction Begins at School. This year, the emphasis on critical infrastructure continues with a new focus on making hospitals and health facilities safe from disaster. As part of the new World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2008-2009: Hospitals Safe from Disasters, UNISDR Secretariat is working closely with the World Health Organization, with support from the World Bank, to reduce risk, protect health facilities and save lives.

From a human perspective, all disasters are a health issue, and damage to health systems affects nations as a whole and every part of society. A disaster-safe hospital is part of a disaster-safe community. Everyone needs to be aware of the crucial role health facilities and health systems play and must be committed to their safety.

**Sálvano Briceño**  
Director, UNISDR Secretariat



Photo by Lisette Charana, Mexico

## What is disaster reduction?

It is every citizen and government's responsibility to work towards a world free of preventable disaster losses. Disaster reduction is about making sure natural hazards have as little destructive impact as possible on lives, livelihoods and development. This is achieved by building resilience and reducing risk and vulnerability. Disasters are not unchangeable facts of life, but are a result of human vulnerability to natural hazards. The way that we build, organize and manage our communities and environment can make the difference between a disaster and just bad weather.





## Campaign launches

Regional centres worldwide launched the World Disaster Reduction Campaign this year, starting with a high level roundtable with governments, international agencies and health experts in Davos, Switzerland. Read more about the regional launches at [www.safehospitals.info](http://www.safehospitals.info)

# Hospitals safe from disaster

## World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2008-2009

The difference in cost between building a safe and an unsafe hospital can be negligible – on average 4% of the cost of the facility. But that tiny investment can mean the difference between life and death, or between a chronically unhealthy community and one that develops sustainably. During disasters, those who are injured need urgent medical attention. Those who have escaped injury still require medical services in the long term, but after a disaster public health is often forgotten. When health services and hospitals fail due to disaster, people die and suffer needlessly both during the disaster and long afterwards.

The Campaign's objectives are to effect change that helps to:

1. Protect the lives of patients and health workers by ensuring the structural resilience of health facilities;
2. Make sure health facilities and health services are able to function in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters - when they are most needed; and
3. Improve the risk reduction capacity of health workers and institutions, including emergency management.

## Information Kit



The Campaign Kit, available in 6 languages, provides facts and figures and ways that everyone can make a difference. [www.safehospitals.info](http://www.safehospitals.info)

Relaunching  
8 October 2008

## www.safehospitals.info

An information and resource hub for the World Disaster Reduction Campaign 2008-2009: Hospitals Safe from Disasters, that will serve as an ongoing resource beyond the end of the campaign.

Visit the website regularly for more on the development (including regional versions) of the Hospital Safety Index - a tool that provides an initial snapshot of a health facility's safety level, key events like next year's World Health Day which will complement the Hospitals Safe from Disaster campaign, global resources for health practitioners and managers of health facilities, news about the campaign, multimedia resources such as DVDs and video clips, and media resources.



# Major events Worldwide

## on International Day for Disaster Reduction 2008

### New York, USA

The global event will be a high level panel in New York featuring representatives of countries that have suffered major disasters, including China, and that have since focused closely on protecting critical infrastructure such as health facilities and schools. The event will also announce the launch of [www.safehospitals.info](http://www.safehospitals.info) as the global website of the Hospitals Safe from Disaster campaign.

*Focal point: Tze Ming Mok, UNISDR Secretariat, Geneva - [mokt@un.org](mailto:mokt@un.org)*

### Bangkok, Thailand

UNISDR with the ASEAN Secretariat will hold an Award Ceremony for a regional drawing competition called *Safer Community - Hospital, School and House of My Dream*, and organize a roundtable discussion on the issue.

*Focal point: Christel Rose, UNISDR Secretariat, Asia and the Pacific - [rosec@un.org](mailto:rosec@un.org)*

### Cairo, Egypt

UNISDR and partners will hold an event in Cairo involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from academic institutions and hospital directors, to civil society organizations. UNISDR and WHO will also launch the Campaign's regional framework, a regional version of the Hospital Safety Index and a PSA. *Focal point: Tine Ramstad, UNISDR Secretariat West Asia North Africa - [tine.ramstad@unisdr-wana.org](mailto:tine.ramstad@unisdr-wana.org)*

### Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Coordinating with UN Country Teams, UNISDR West Asia North Africa will plant trees and encourage tree planting by other UN Country Teams across the region to fight desertification, drought and climate change.

*Focal point: Goulsara Pulatova, UNISDR Secretariat West Asia North Africa Sub-regional Office - [goulsara.pulatova@unisdr-wana.org](mailto:goulsara.pulatova@unisdr-wana.org)*

### Islamabad, Pakistan

To mark the International Day for Disaster Reduction, Pakistan will hold its National Conference on Disaster Management and a two-day expo on disaster risk reduction, organized by the National Disaster Management Authority with the support of the South Asian Resources Centre.

*Focal point: Abdul Karim Nayani, UNISDR Secretariat Special Representative - [nayani@un.org](mailto:nayani@un.org)*

### Mpumalanga and West Cape, South Africa

The Government of South Africa will hold celebrations culminating on 16 October in Mpumalanga with a street parade and drama competitions. The Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa is holding a major conference near Cape Town on 8-9 October.

*Focal point: Martin Owor, UNISDR Secretariat Special Representative - [martin34@un.org](mailto:martin34@un.org)*

### Panama City, Panama and Washington D.C, USA

UNISDR and the Pan American Health Organization will be launching a photography contest on safe hospitals, and planning outreach activities with regional hospitals and health facilities to commemorate the day.

*Focal point: Margarita Villalobos, UNISDR Secretariat for the Americas - [margarita.villalobos@eird.org](mailto:margarita.villalobos@eird.org)*

### Tehran, Iran

The 3rd Economic Cooperation Organization Conference on Disaster Risk Management will be held 7-8 October, supported by UNISDR Secretariat. There will also be a knowledge fair and media training.

*Focal point: Seyed Mohammad Sadatinejad, UNISDR Secretariat Special Representative - [mohammad.sadatinejad@unisdr-wana.org](mailto:mohammad.sadatinejad@unisdr-wana.org)*

## Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction

Nominations now open!

The 20th Sasakawa Award will be awarded in June 2009, and nominations are now open. Previously awarded every International Day for Disaster Reduction, the Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction will now be awarded biennially, to coincide with the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. For more information, including the nominations process for the award, please see

[www.unisdr.org/sasakawa2009](http://www.unisdr.org/sasakawa2009)

## Call for good practices in making Hospitals Safe from Disasters

- What is being done to make hospitals, health facilities and systems, and health workers safe from disasters?
- Does your organization have a project or initiative that should be showcased as a good practice example for others?

UNISDR Secretariat and WHO are collecting good practices on making hospitals safe from disasters, including initiatives on: structural and non-structural safety, keeping hospitals working through disasters, and hospital and staff preparedness.

Good practices will be selected from submissions for a publication to be launched on International Day for Disaster Reduction 2009. Deadline for submissions is 30 May 2009.

Please contact Ms Tze Ming Mok ([mokt@un.org](mailto:mokt@un.org)) for a template to submit full details of your good practice.

