

Afghans sign up for Safer Cities

KABUL, Afghanistan, 16 April 2013 – Five Afghan cities have joined the Making Cities Resilient Campaign organized by UN-Habitat and the United Nations’ disaster reduction organisation, UNISDR, with support from the Kabul Municipality.

At an event chaired by the mayor of Kabul specially designed safety toolkits for schools and hospitals were launched with the aim of strengthening the partnership between the Government, the United Nations and the people of Afghanistan. The cities that joined the campaign are Jalalabad City in Nangarhar Province, Charikar City in Parwan Province, Nili City in Daikundi Province, Pul-e Alam in Logar Province and Maidan Shar City in Wardak Province.

Since 1992 UN-Habitat has been working with communities across Afghanistan placing people at the centre of decision making and action. This approach, *the People’s Process*, makes the people more responsive and self-reliant, promotes their dignity, pride and sense of ownership, and helps build peace and social cohesion. UN-Habitat is, in addition, working very closely with the municipalities through strengthening institutional capacity and practicing good governance.

The Senior Human Settlements Officer of UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Srinivasa Popuri recalled the famous quote by John F. Kennedy, “There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.”

The Director of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authorities Dr. Daim Kakar said, “I am happy to learn that UNISDR and UN-Habitat have begun this initiative and we are very hopeful to expand it to all cities with close cooperation of the local governments. Being the coordinating body for disaster management we extend our full support to all the partners and local governments.”

The Directorate General for Municipal Affairs, Mr. Abdul Baqi Popal said, “We want to take action – step by step – towards improving infrastructure and mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and disaster response during the campaign and beyond 2015”.

At the launching ceremony the presentation on the structure and strategies towards safer risk reduction of Kabul City was made by the Deputy Mayor of Kabul. This was supplemented by a presentation on the toolkits for policy makers and practitioners made by Professor Das, the Lead Technical Advisor of UN-Habitat. While in Kabul Professor Das also organized a Training of Trainers session on the use of the toolkits attended by more than 30 engineers, municipal staff and community members.