Side Event for the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment

Better laws, safer communities: How can domestic legislation reduce disaster risk?

Date: 25th June at 6:15pm

Room: 7 NLB

Organizers/Sponsors:

- Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York
- IFRC
- UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Background:

Law is generally recognized as a powerful tool for governments to promote disaster risk reduction (DRR). Surprisingly, however, there is very little information available about what works well and what does not when it comes to legislation for disaster risk reduction. Are there good models to follow? Pitfalls to avoid? What kinds of laws are most important? Why are legal rules not always implemented? What can countries learn from each other?

This side event at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment will examine these questions based on a comparative study of 31 countries undertaken by IFRC and UNDP, the largest multi-country study to date on laws for disaster risk reduction. The key findings of the study “Effective law and regulation for disaster risk reduction; a multi-country report” will be presented and the panel will initiate a dialogue on next steps in strengthening DRR laws, including how the issue should be addressed in the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The study began in 2010 as a joint initiative and presents an analysis of the status of integrating DRR into legislative and regulatory frameworks. The report aims to support legislators, public administrators, advocates and disaster risk reduction, development and humanitarian practitioners in preparing and implementing effective legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction tailored to specific country needs. The report will inform the 2015 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction and the successor arrangement to the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2015. The report objectives are to:

- present a range of examples of DRM Laws from different country contexts and legal systems;
- identify factors that have supported or hindered the implementation of DRM Laws in some country contexts;
- provide an analytical framework against which a variety of different DRM Laws and selected sectoral laws can be assessed at country level, in terms of effective support for DRR;
- make recommendations for legislators, practitioners, and policy makers engaged with reviewing or drafting DRM Laws and selected sectoral laws.
Audience:

The audience of approximately 70 people will be the participants of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment, including UN Member States, UN agencies, humanitarian and development partners, the private sector, Red Cross/Crescent Societies, academics working in related fields and the media. Also country representatives that have been featured in the study will be present.

Programme:

The event will feature presentations by high level representatives of Switzerland, UNDP and IFRC:

- Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations (Chair – confirmed)
- Jordan Ryan, UNDP BCPR, Director (confirmed)
- Elise Baudot, IFRC, General Counsel (confirmed)

The technical panel will include (in total three of the following):

- Mary Picard, Lead Author of the report (confirmed)
- Representative of the Government of Mexico (TBC)
- Scott Paul, Oxfam USA, Senior Humanitarian Policy Adviser

The speakers will provide their respective perspectives on the relevance of legislation for fostering Disaster Risk Reduction and the key findings of the Multi-Country Study.

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(beverages and light snacks will be served)