



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

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For more information contact:

Tze Ming Mok
Public Information
Tel:
[+41 22 917 8896](tel:+41229178896)
mokt@un.org

Brigitte Leoni
Media Information
Tel:
[+41 22 917 4968](tel:+41229174968)
leonib@un.org

Jonathan Abrahams
Tel.:
[+41 22 791 4366](tel:+41227914366)
Technical Officer, WHO
abrahamsj@who.int

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

The price we pay for the failure of hospitals or health facilities due to disasters is too high. In comparison, the cost of making hospitals safe from disasters is tiny. Disaster damage to health systems is a human tragedy, results in huge economic losses, deals devastating blows to development goals, and shakes social confidence. Making hospitals and health facilities safe from disasters is an economic requirement, and also a social, moral and ethical necessity.

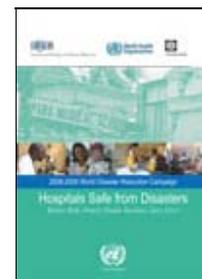
Special attention must be given to ensuring the physical and functional integrity of health hospitals and facilities in emergency conditions. This is about more than just protecting buildings. Health facilities are only truly safe from disasters when they are accessible and functioning, at maximum capacity, immediately after a hazard strikes.

What the Campaign will do

From 2008-2009, the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) will partner with governments, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organisations and

Hospitals Safe from Disasters

2008-2009 World Disaster Reduction Campaign



Information Kit

English - French
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Brochure

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Message from
[Mr Sálvano Briceño](#)
Director, International
Strategy for Disaster
Reduction

individuals worldwide to raise awareness about why and how to redouble efforts to protect health facilities and ensure they can function during and in the aftermath of disasters.

A wide range of activities will be carried out together by the UN/ISDR secretariat, WHO and their respective regional offices within the framework of the Campaign. Other ISDR system partners will be involved, in particular the World Bank, UNDP, WMO, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, WFP, IFRC and the various ISDR networks of NGOs, private sector, academic institutions, parliamentarians and local authorities. At the national level, the main responsibilities belong to the National Platforms for disaster risk reduction, which are focal points for the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Ministries of Health.



[Message from Dr. Ala Alwan](#)
Former Assistant
Director General, Health
Action in Crises
World Health
Organization

Objectives

The World Disaster Reduction Campaign on Hospitals Safe from Disasters aims to raise awareness and effect change that will:

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

Key messages

The most expensive hospital is the one that fails:
Hospitals and health facilities represent an enormous investment for any country. Their destruction imposes major economic burdens.

Disasters are a health and a social issue:
Not only is health treatment critical in the aftermath of a disaster, damage to health facilities and systems affects development long into the future.

Protecting critical health facilities from disasters is possible and cost effective:
Including risk reduction in the design and construction of all new health facilities, and reducing vulnerability in existing health facilities through selecting and retrofitting the most critical facilities, costs less than you might expect.

The health workforce must be agents of disaster risk reduction:
Health workers are central to identifying potential health risks from natural hazards and promoting personal and community risk reduction measures.