



## UNITED NATIONS & USAID HONOR SERBIAN COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE UPGRADED THEIR DISASTER RESILIENCE

**BELGRADE (Sept. 7)** – Thirty Serbian municipalities and cities received certificates from the United Nations for their commitment to disaster resilience and joined a global United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UN DRR) global campaign called “Making Cities Resilient – My City is Getting Ready.”

Margareta Wahlström, the United Nations’ Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, awarded the certificates today at the Palace of Serbia in New Belgrade.

“Urban risk reduction delivers many benefits,” Ms. Wahlström said. “Resilient cities help reduce poverty, provide for growth and employment, and deliver greater social equity, fresh business opportunities, more balanced ecosystems, better health, and improved education.”

To earn the certificates, the Serbian municipalities worked with the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Preparedness and Planning Program to improve safety and disaster resilience. Each received USAID Enhanced Disaster Resilient status.

On Wednesday, five more municipalities received USAID’s Enhanced Disaster Resilient status bringing the total number of USAID-certified resilient municipalities to nearly 70. The U.S. Embassy’s Chargé d’Affairs Earle Litzenberger honored the municipalities, noting that over the past five years, USAID has improved disaster management in 120 Serbian municipalities by training 1,400 first responders and 200 youth responders, and conducting 28 major emergency simulations.

Thanking Serbia’s Ministry of Interior, the Red Cross, and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Mr. Litzenberger said, “The citizens of Serbia can sleep easier tonight because your leadership has created a safer, more disaster-resilient Serbia.”

Not all USAID-certified communities will join the UN’s global campaign. Approximately 50 have qualified, making Serbia is one of the campaign’s leaders in Europe.

“Serbia is recognized by the UN to be at the forefront of EU countries in education of local government leaders in emergency response,” noted Predrag Maric, the Assistant Minister of Interior and Head of the Sector for Emergency Management. “Training builds the capacity of Disaster Management Teams and gives new authority on the local level as a result of the new Law on Emergency Situations.”

Communities that have earned USAID’s Enhanced Disaster Resilient status have gained advanced preparedness and planning skills to protect residents and property from natural and manmade disasters. Joining the UN DRR campaign makes them part of a network of municipalities that are dedicated to reducing the risks of disaster and improving their disaster management skills.

### END ###

For more information about this event, please contact Sandra Vlatkovic at [sandra\\_vlatkovic@dai.com](mailto:sandra_vlatkovic@dai.com) or 063 373 083, or Iva Savic at [iva.savic@undp.org](mailto:iva.savic@undp.org) or 063 304 736.

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