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UN-backed study urges donors to place greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction



Margareta Wahlström, Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. UN Photo/JC McIlwaine

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International aid donors must do more to ensure that their spending on disaster risk reduction is in line with the needs of affected communities, a new United Nations-backed report launched today reveals.

According to the study, “Disaster Risk Reduction: Spending Where It Should Count,” distressed communities afflicted by natural disasters and climate change have been underfunded despite

global economic losses of over one trillion dollars caused by natural disasters during the past 11 year period.

“This report is a very timely examination of funding for disaster risk reduction when it is now clear that we have broken through the trillion dollar ceiling for economic losses so far this century,” [said](#) the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, who noted that as of 2011, a conservative estimate put costs from disasters at over \$1,380 billion.

The study spotlights the fact that, between 2000 and 2009, only \$3.7 billion went to 40 of the world’s poorest countries for disaster risk reduction, representing a mere 1 per cent of their overall development aid allocation of \$363 billion.

“Clearly there is something not right here. After all, these countries account for over half the people affected by disasters and almost 80 per cent of deaths,” continued Ms. Wahlström.

“I would urge donors to re-examine their priorities to ensure that spending on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation is more in line with the needs,” she added, noting that the impact of the economic losses was much higher in least developed countries than in high-income nations.

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