



PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MEDITERRANEE

الجمعية البرلمانية للبحر الأبيض المتوسط

*Public Affairs and Communications Office*

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**“Disasters are a development issue” –  
*Mrs. Margareta Wahlstrom (UNISDR) at PAM meeting in Lisbon***

Mrs. Margareta Wahlstrom, Assistant Secretary-General for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) addressed Mediterranean Parliamentarians currently meeting in Lisbon within the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committees of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

Mrs. Wahlstrom illustrated the general situation in disaster reduction and management and gave an overview of her Agency’s involvement in the establishment of policies and programmes aimed at helping the international community further understand the importance of the issue at all levels.

The UN Agency official underlined the fact that disasters have to be considered as development issues and that hazard prevention requires coordination among institutions at the national and international level as well as good financial support. “Each sector of society is involved. Now it is important to bring in the private sector as partners as they do it well and can also share the financial burden,” Mrs. Wahlstrom added.

As far as the role of parliamentarians is concerned, she said that they should work more together in order to share their experiences and hopefully come up with a document in which agreed approaches and guidelines are proposed.

Mrs. Wahlstrom said that today every country is exposed to possible disaster events and this calls for every one to have in place plans and procedures to respond immediately when they are hit by such catastrophes. While the level of attention must remain high towards those regions and countries where poverty prevails, developed countries must also be alert and equipped for a prompt intervention when the events call for it.

From a financial point of view, the international community spends around 4 to 5 billion US dollars as a response to natural disasters and “this does not include costs for reconstruction and rehabilitation,” Mrs. Wahlstrom added.

“The challenge we are facing is that we should start planning for a 35 year period rather than for the next five, but unfortunately we do not have enough knowledge about that,” Mrs. Wahlstrom concluded.

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For further information please contact:

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