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**PRESS RELEASE**

**UNDP Teams with Municipality of Strumica in Wildfire Recovery Efforts**

**22 August 2012** – UNDP will support the early recovery efforts in Strumica, an area particularly affected by the extremely dry conditions and heat waves that have triggered wildfires throughout the country.

The wildfires in Strumica have harshly affected livelihoods, forests and roads. Four people have died, 18 have been badly injured, informal housing settlements have been under threat, and valuable forest resources have been lost.

The Municipality of Strumica requested support from UNDP for immediate recovery activities, but also, for the development of an integrated Municipal Strategy for Disaster Risk Management.

Immediate support will be provided to the local authorities for strengthening coordination efforts, developing a Municipal Damage Assessment Study and a Municipal Early Recovery Plan.

In the next 12 months, the Municipality of Strumica and UNDP will be working together to implement all the necessary recovery measures, but also, to put in place preventive planning mechanisms which will make the municipality more resilient and its citizens safer in the future.

Disaster risk reduction is vital for building a more equitable and sustainable future. Making investments in prevention and preparedness is a necessary part of systematic efforts to increase resilience to disaster.

“Effective risk reduction measures not only save lives but can also significantly reduce the economic losses incurred in disasters”, says UNDP Resident Representative Deirdre Boyd.

Within the past decade, awareness of the need to invest in disaster risk reduction in the country has increased substantially. UNDP’s dedication to risk preparedness is now strongly shared at both national and local government level, forming the basis for projects to develop national strategies for preventing and mitigating the impacts of disasters and the negative effects of climate change.

Over the past five years, UNDP has been partnering with the Government’s National Crisis Management Centre and a number of local municipalities to build up the capacities of institutions to deal more efficiently with disaster risks and prepare for the hazards arising from global warming.

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