

**First Preparatory Meeting
Geneva 14-15 July 2014**

Official Statement by Local Authorities Major Group

Mister or Madame Chair,

It is an honour for me to represent the Local Authorities major group composed of cities, local and regional authorities at this first preparatory meeting for the Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

At the outset, I would like to extend my appreciation to the secretariat of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and thank UCLG and ICLEI in supporting us as the organising partners.

Mister or Madame Chair,

Rapid urbanisation and expansion of cities and regions is exposing more people, economic assets and increasing social inequalities due to the risk of disasters including effects of climate change. For local and regional governments, increased climate variability imposes additional challenges to effective urban management and the delivery of key services, while for residents it increasingly affects their lives and livelihoods due to more frequent floods, landslides, heat waves, droughts, and fires. There is an urgent need now to engage local authorities not only as a service delivery mechanism but also as essential stakeholders in the implementation of this new framework.

The IPCC in 2012 noted that in the next few decades, a major driver of the growing economic damages and losses from disasters will be the increasing concentration of people and assets in hazardous locations, especially in urban areas. IPCC in 2014 reiterated that a high proportion of the world's population most affected by extreme weather events is concentrated in urban centres. These urban centres lack both local governments with the capacity to reduce disaster risk, and much of the necessary infrastructure.

The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction notes that poor urban governance drives urban risks. Cities', commercial, industrial and residential locations prove to be livelihood centers for the urban poor, internally displaced and rural migrants, who left with no choice but to settle on dangerous locations subject to natural or human-induced hazards.

Although local governments are at the forefront of reducing risk and managing disasters, HFA progress at the local levels has been lagging behind. Major barriers include insufficient devolution of authorities and resources to local levels and insufficient capacity of local institutions.

Thus supporting the preamble of the suggested elements we agree that the new framework should be built on existing frameworks while promoting actions at the local level in order to reduce the increasing risks from disasters worldwide.

Mister or Madame Chair,

This statement is based on feedback from consultations with local governments, which started in early 2012, including outcomes of the Regional Platforms and the 4th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. This includes 63 dedicated local

consultations where the views of local and national authorities on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction have been sought. These consultations were supplemented by the results of the local government self-assessment reports from 500 cities and municipalities from 40 countries.

The message from these consultations is clear.

First, recognizing the needs at local level, we would call for reinforcement of the role of local and regional governments, strengthen their capacities and include them as essential implementers and actors of the framework under the guiding principle of the suggested elements.

To strengthen measures for implementation, we need to make provision for

- a. Integration of local risk information and engagement of local and regional governments in national decision-making process including national platforms and similar mechanisms which otherwise will induce new risks from future policies.
- b. Inclusion of urban development and land use plans to address disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
- c. Ensure allocation of budget and promote community-based disaster risk management by involving those at risk through planning, decisions and implementation - particularly women and other vulnerable groups as agents of change.

To reinforce public awareness and education, we, local and regional government leaders, recommend that the new disaster risk reduction framework should continue and further strengthen the key role of local and regional authorities by effective decentralization with the principle of active citizen engagement and participation to ensure local risk reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience.

The suggested elements put forward global targets and families of input and output indicators for monitoring, reporting and review. Although policies and plans are developed at national level, investments and implementation are carried out at the local level, thus, we call for inclusion of local indicators and a strengthened local reporting which supports in the development and monitoring of local plans.

Before concluding, let me reiterate that we welcome the purpose outlined in the suggested elements and the people centred approach it has proposed for advancing disaster risk reduction and resilience.

Working with all stakeholders and partners, we will continue to promote disaster risk reduction and resilience to make communities safer from disasters.

Thank you.