

Statement of CITYNET (the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements)

(Delivered at “Reducing Disaster Risk and Building Resilience to Disasters in Cities” meeting, held on 6 June 2007 at 12:45, as a side event at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, first session, Geneva, Switzerland, 5 – 7 June 2007)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour of representing CITYNET at this important meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to propose to you some action we can take to work together towards the creation of the Global Forum for Urban Risk, and concrete action we can take for fulfilling the Forum’s goals.

The Tsunami Disaster of December 2004 was one of the major natural calamities of our time. This catastrophe, as well as the many other disasters that occurred subsequently, have affected the lives of thousands of people in Asia. The Tsunami disaster was a turning point for CITYNET, influencing a shift in the direction of the Network. CITYNET decided to take up “Disaster Risk Reduction” as one of its top priorities. The CITYNET Disaster Cluster was created and, through city-to-city cooperation, it has undertaken activities in several disaster-stricken cities in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. Yokohama, the President City of CITYNET and a previous host of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, has consistently called on mayors and local government leaders to support the reconstruction of disaster-affected cities.

Together with other like-minded local organizations, CITYNET has been involved in addressing the importance of disaster risk reduction and building resilience to disasters for the past several years. Thus, it is our great pleasure that we are able to

gather today in mutual agreement on the creation of the “Global Forum for Urban Risk Reduction.”

It is our hope that the Global Forum will not only strengthen the position of local governments at the international level, but will also reinforce our political will to take concrete action towards fulfilling our goals. The Hyogo Framework for Action, or the HFA, which was partially based on the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, has provided us with a set of issues for the period 2005 to 2015. Although the HFA has mentioned the necessity for local governments to be empowered, there are several issues that are not fully reflected under the Framework, such as the lack of resources, specifically for urban centres and cities, and a lack of understanding of the need for integrating risk reduction into overall urban planning and management within local governments. Therefore, we feel it is important to create an **HFA for Cities** that will highlight the role local governments can play in ensuring the implementation of the HFA at the local and city levels. **HFA for Cities** would help local governments to create safer cities and build a resilient community.

We hope you agree that the formulation of the **HFA for Cities** could be the first task of the Global Forum for Urban Risk Reduction. CITYNET will be pleased to work with you in the future sessions of this Forum to contribute to the creation of the **HFA for Cities**, which can then be used as a basis for us to move forward in taking action.

Finally, we – CITYNET – would like to reaffirm our commitment to cooperating closely with you to ensure the safety of urban citizens through various approaches, including training and capacity-building programs, urban DRR audits, connecting legislative and institutional efforts on disasters, and other similar actions. Members of the CITYNET Disaster Cluster will meet in Makati, Philippines, in November this year to further the ongoing discussion about the disaster reduction action to be taken by local governments in the Asia-Pacific. We firmly believe that if we all work together, we will make a greater impact in making cities safe and people-friendly.

Thank you very much for your attention.