Summary and Recommendations:
Families left homeless by disasters and civil unrest often face dire housing situations as they struggle to rebuild their lives. As disasters escalate in number and intensity and civil conflicts endure, there exists an urgent need to reduce vulnerability and prepare for them, especially in cities and in high-risk areas. Habitat for Humanity (HFH) has provided humanitarian shelter and affordable housing for over thirty-five years and works with communities around the world to prepare for disasters and to address the consequences when they strike. HFH supports the work of the United Nations in its efforts to address disaster risk reduction (DRR) and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Yet despite HFA's achievements, governments at every level have room to take more concerted action to reduce vulnerability, mitigate risks and build resilience in local communities, especially in high-risk urban settlements.

In anticipation of HFA2's impact on the future of DRR over the next 10 years and understanding that elements of housing and land are critical components for risk reduction and resilience, HFH makes the following recommendations to government officials, policy makers, and the United Nations system:

(1) Enact adequate and effective laws and regulations that apply to DRR and facilitate sound planning, land use, finance, access to services, design and construction of safe shelter and settlements, environmental management and climate change adaption;[1]

(2) Recognizing that investments in prevention far outweigh the costs of disaster, increase national government funding for DRR to reduce the rising cost of humanitarian assistance and economic loss;

(3) Ensure security of tenure, particularly for affected populations, to safeguard continued access to land and rebuilding without fear of eviction before and after a disaster;

(4) Engage local government officials and communities as decision-makers and first responders in addressing local needs by applying community-based DRR mechanisms (e.g., Community-based Disaster Risk management (CBDRM) or the Participatory Approach for Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA)) within both shelter and DRR programs and thus improve the lives of vulnerable people by developing capacity and raising awareness on shelter related risks; and

(5) Implement policies/programs to support the development of capacity and skills-building tools for affected and vulnerable populations (youth, women, children, disabled, aging, displaced persons).

With HFA set to expire in 2015, Habitat for Humanity is advocating for policies that provide families with the tools to build resilience, engage in the political process and manage their own needs

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[1] See IFRC/UNDP publication *Effective law and regulation for disaster risk reduction: a multi-country report – Summary; and Global Housing Indicators Policy Tool at* http://globalhousingindicators.org

The Need:

In recent years, disasters triggered by natural hazards have become much more commonplace and threatening, especially to vulnerable populations, such as the poor, women and children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. In March 2013, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) reported that in the 2000-2012 period, disasters killed 1.2 million people, impacted another 2.9 billion and caused USD 1.7 trillion worth of damage.

In June 2014, Asian ministers came together to recognize the increasing impact and risk of disasters in the Asia-Pacific region and expressed deep concern over super typhoons in the Philippines, multiple floods in Thailand, China and India, earthquakes in Pakistan and earthquakes followed by tsunamis in Indonesia and Japan, all of which occurred within the last five years; an increasing number of medium and small scale disasters have resulted in huge social, economic and environmental losses in the region, as countries are already experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change. In last year alone, Typhoon Haiyan, considered one of the strongest tropical cyclones ever recorded, affected more than 16 million people in 41 provinces in The Philippines and nearly 6,300 people lost their lives. According to the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), more than 4.1 million people were displaced, with almost 1.1 million houses damaged. These alarming statistics illustrate the need for preparedness, mitigation, and the importance of increasing resilience as the frequency and intensity of disasters, coupled with population growth and rapid urbanization, expose more people to greater disaster risk.

Hyogo Framework for Action:

Held in January 2005, in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, adopted the present Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. With an aim to "manage disaster and climate risk in development at local, national and international levels for resilient people and countries," the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) was designed as a political instrument to increase resilience and guide governments and communities vis-à-vis the impact that disasters have on development. 168 countries subscribed to HFA.

In March 2015, in Sendai, Japan, a new global framework, HFA2, will be formalized and adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. HFA2 will address three goals: avoiding new risk; reducing existing risk; and strengthening resilience. Participating nations have made noticeable progress toward reducing disaster risk, specifically mortality risk, by strengthening internal cooperation through the development of national and regional strategies. However, there have not yet addressed the underlying factors of risk creation, and the target levels of public investments in risk prevention have not been reached. Additionally, several organizations have stated that insufficient attention has been given to small and medium size disasters. Relevant factors include unequal economic development, poorly planned and managed urban and regional development, the decline of regulatory ecosystem services, poverty, exclusion and inequality, weak governance, diminished local capacities and climate change. In other words, the strength of the community, businesses, and the social, political, and economic support systems of a region or country are critical to disaster resilience. As such, HFA2 should account for these factors and establish specific targets in plans and investments to increase communication, accountability, and monitoring at the global, national, and local levels.

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