



## Declaration

### Mayors' Conference on the occasion of the International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III)

We, Mayors of cities and municipalities from all parts of the world met at March 26 in Bonn to discuss the importance of Disaster Reduction and Early Warning to mitigate the negative effects of natural hazards.

We are concerned that the increasing number of disasters of natural origin and losses of life and property is going to undermine our efforts for sustainable development. The implementation of effective Disaster Reduction measures is a condition sine qua non for sustainable development.

Early Warning provides a core component of this strategy. It is one of the most effective instruments of Disaster Reduction, it saves lives and mitigates the impact of natural hazards.

Today more people live in cities than ever before in human history. The trend of urbanisation is irreversible. While cities have a tremendous potential as drivers of growth and social development, they are also huge agglomerations of people and values and thus of risk.

We underline that in times of globalisation, the effects of disasters of natural origin striking the growing number of megacities and damaging their productive capacities will have a global effect.

We realise that disasters of natural origin are the result of a natural hazard and the vulnerability of society. Cities are increasingly vulnerable to natural hazards because of unplanned urban growth, an increasing complexity of infrastructure, and due to insufficient resources targeting Disaster Reduction. To secure our development aims at the urban level, Early Warning and Disaster Reduction measures are becoming even more pressing issues to achieve sustainable development.

We realise that Early Warning starts and ends with the people. It starts with those who design the Early Warning Systems and ends with those who react in time when they receive a warning. Projects at the community level that mobilise the communities for voluntary action thus are the backbone of effective Disaster Reduction and Early Warning.

We realise and underline the value that volunteers bring to successful planning and implementation of Early Warning Systems, through provision of technical inputs as well as through mobilising and capacitating the community to respond to disasters.

We support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, January 2005 and welcome



the initiative taken by the German government to host the Third International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III).

*Thus we declare the following:*

While we recognise the responsibility of each citizen, we affirm that it is the primary responsibility of governments to reduce risks and enforce legislation. Thus the integration of Disaster Reduction and its most effective instruments of prevention measures and Early Warning in governmental policy are vital to achieve sustainable development.

We emphasise the need to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction and Early Warning in urban governance at all levels based on the importance of cities for the development of their countries.

We commit ourselves to raise public awareness in our cities on the nature of risks we are facing by increasing the flow of information to our citizens and by integrating risk awareness into school curricula and training and focus on the role of media to take serious their responsibility in informing the public.

We affirm that the incorporation of civil society including volunteer resources, is a crucial element to integrate effectively Disaster Reduction and Early Warning into development efforts. And we urge national governments and the international community to enhance decentralised and long term capacity building programmes.

We will use and strengthen our existing networks to support an initiative to improve the disaster resilience of our cities by implementing Disaster Reduction and especially Early Warning into our development and urban spatial planning.

City-to-City-cooperation will be an important and vital strategy for the exchange of experience and lessons learnt in Early Warning and Disaster Management at the local level. We therefore commit ourselves to increasingly use our City-to-City-cooperation as an instrument for exchange and capacity enhancement in this regard.

*We therefore ask national governments and the international community to:*

Support the dialogue between international, national and local level with the aim to improve the exchange of information - which is an essential component of any Early Warning System - and coordination.

Give priority for the establishment and strengthening of people centred Early Warning projects and increase research on vulnerability factors to assist the communities at risk.

Enhance the decentralisation of Disaster Reduction activities supported by strategic management of social capital including volunteer resources, civil society



organisations, combined with the allocation of the necessary human and financial resources at the local level.

Support the development of the necessary legislative framework, which outlines the different competencies and responsibilities of stakeholders at the national and local level, including the national and local governments, vulnerable communities, civil society and volunteer organisations in an outcome oriented manner.

We call upon political leaders at all levels to commit to thrust concrete actions targeting the mobilisation of social and economic actors, and community participation, utilising capacity building as a tool targeting all social actors.

Bonn, 26 March 2006