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ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

At the 81st Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Dear Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and our 52 National Societies across Asia and the Pacific, we welcome the 81st session of the ESCAP Commission and the focus on regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development.

Urbanization in this region is rapid, but so too are many risks — climate change, migration, public health emergencies, and inequality. Cities are increasingly on the frontline of these intersecting challenges, and to be resilient, their development must be inclusive, community-centered, and risk-informed.

The IFRC and our network of National Societies are taking action across the region to strengthen urban resilience in some of the world's most disaster-prone and densely populated contexts. We support urban communities to anticipate, withstand, and recover from shocks—through initiatives like anticipatory action, urban disaster risk reduction and strengthening legal frameworks for disasters.

We work closely with local governments to conduct urban risk assessments, strengthen preparedness in informal settlements, and expand early warning systems, under the Early Warnings for All initiative, together with our partners UNDRR, WMO and ITU.

As you discuss progress on resilient and sustainable urban development, we call on governments to take four key actions:

1. Invest in localized, people-centered urban resilience by empowering communities and local actors like our National Societies.
2. Invest in and scale up anticipatory action and early warning systems that reach the last mile. While many good investments have been made in early warning systems, they are still not reaching everyone in time to save lives and livelihoods.
3. Strengthen climate and disaster risk governance across urban planning, health, infrastructure, and services and
4. Update and strengthen domestic disaster legislation and frameworks, including supporting the regulation of international assistance in line with the Draft Articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disasters.

The IFRC stands ready to deepen collaboration with governments and partners to accelerate inclusive and sustainable urban resilience. Together, we can build cities that are not only stronger and safer—but more equitable and prepared for the future.

Thank you.