Statement from the Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience to the 7th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Bali, Indonesia from 23-28 May 2022

The Community Practitioners Platform for Resilience (CPPR) is a constituency-led platform of grassroots women leaders and community organizers from impoverished and disaster-prone urban and rural settlements around the world.

Facilitated by the Huairou Commission: Women, Homes and Communities, we bring the experience of our local, pro-poor, gender-just, risk-reduction and resilience building efforts to inform national and global learning and advocacy efforts with a broad diversity of allies.

We are advisors to the UNDRR Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism and have, since 2009, organized Grassroots Academies and multi-stakeholder learning events in UNDRR Global and Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We are represented at this 7th session by a delegation of over 20 representatives of grassroots women’s- and allied organizations from Asia, Africa and Latin America and more than twice this number planning together and participating virtually.

We gather in Bali as COVID-19, the climate crisis and escalating conflict threaten to erode years of development gains. The pandemic has provided powerful reminders that further guide our work in implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

First, that persistent and systemic inequalities create disproportionate burdens on the women and girls, in their diversity, who live and work in poor communities, informal settlements, and informal economies. The pandemic and official responses (such as lockdowns) highlighted and aggravated many of the chronic stresses that our communities struggle against daily – including food and land-tenure insecurities, gender-based violence and the extreme unpaid caregiving roles played by women.

Second, that the leadership demonstrated through women’s grassroots organizing has played a demonstrable role in reducing risk in and beyond their communities. Grassroots leaders have, for instance, raised community awareness of risks, identified vulnerable households and mobilized existing networks to promote food security, distribute relief materials and support displaced and returning migrants.

Through working closely with their local governments, grassroots organizations have helped authorities to expedite more systematic and inclusive action. Through continued global, regional and national peer-learning networks, good practices were being shared in real-time.
These achievements throughout the Pandemic were made possible through years of women’s leadership and grassroots organizing for resilience. Community-led organizations have established a solid track record of risk-informed planning and managing flexible finances, such as Community Resilience Funds, to implement integrated, locally-appropriate solutions to disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation poverty eradication, gender-just development and environmental management.

Yet, grassroots organizations, and grassroots women’s organizations in particular, continue to be excluded from formal DRR and climate change planning and budgeting processes. Overlooking and undervaluing grassroots contributions and leadership is a massive barrier to achieving impact at the scale needed to meet global targets.

Development and climate institutions at all levels need to align their funding and partnership strategies to the changes actually needed to flow more resources to the local level. It is time to close the gap between rhetoric and action. There is too much at stake.

In the next three years the CPPR will continue to focus its efforts on shifting the status quo from current top-down approaches to a model where grassroots women and other local actors have greater power and resources to build their communities’ resilience including through active dialogue in the context of the High-Level Political Forum, World Urban Forum, UNFCCC COP’s and Gender Equality Forum.

The Mid Term Review of the Sendai Framework is as critical opportunity to take stock of the contributions of grassroots women’s and other community-led organizations. It is also the opportunity to review the factors that support or undermine effective partnership with grassroots organizations and power-holders in key national, regional and global institutions. We invite government and other stakeholders to join us in this effort.