

Statement from participants of

”Geophysical Hazards and Plate Boundary Processes in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean: A Workshop to Build Seismological Collaboration and Capacity”

24-27 October, 2010, Heredia, Costa Rica.

The tragic event in Haiti of January 12th, 2010, highlights the vulnerability of Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean to earthquakes. Looking forward, every country, and the region as a whole, needs to re-assess its exposure to earthquake hazards and examine and improve its resilience to this threat.

In accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the following actions are recommended by this group for all nations in the region due to their high earthquake hazard:

Priority 1- Ensure that Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Develop national earthquake hazard mitigation plans, including specific activities, agency responsibilities, funding levels, and monitoring.

Priority 2- Identify, assess, and monitor earthquake risks and enhance rapid notification

For earthquake hazard evaluation and notification, earthquake-detection networks, geological and geophysical studies, are essential, and should be undertaken in cooperation with partners through collaborative centers or projects.

Priority 3- Use knowledge, innovation, and education to establish a culture of security and resilience at all levels

The state should prioritize education of the public and implement programs of mitigation at all levels of the society. Technical and scientific education should also be strengthened to provide a vibrant community of earthquake professionals.

Priority 4- Reduce the underlying risk factors

Strengthen earthquake research and use of its results to develop and enforce building codes and land-use planning.

Priority 5- Strengthen earthquake preparedness for effective response at all levels

Prepare responders for earthquake disasters using the best science and resources available.

To adequately address these priorities, regional governments must establish the necessary investment and financial mechanisms.