



Disaster Preparedness Workshop Remarks

"Building Resilience Beyond Our Walls"

May 2, 2012

Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director

Good morning. I'm Michael Pappas, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Interfaith Council (SFIC) and on behalf of the Leadership Team and Board of Directors of the SFIC I want to welcome you all to today's workshop. In addition to all of our guests noted in the program, I'd like to take a moment to welcome Secretary Karen Baker, Secretary of Service and Volunteering for the State of California.

In times of crisis, people and institutions define themselves. We need look no further than the response of the faith community at the moment Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast to be reminded of the important role congregations play as key stakeholders in the response and recovery equation. The greater community looks to our precious spiritual, facilities and volunteer resources at critical moments and we've always been there to rise to the occasion. Such instinctive responses to mobilize are in our DNA because, as people of faith, it's our moral obligation and civic responsibility to be first responders.

In large part, the San Francisco Interfaith Council owes its very genesis and existence to the role it was asked to play in the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and since then has made disaster preparedness a focus and core mission. The SFIC served as the first fiscal sponsor and continues to support the important work of San Francisco Community Agencies Responding to Disaster (SF CARD). In an effort to equip our congregations with the resources, training and relationships necessary to assume the role they will inevitably be called to play, in time of crisis, the SFIC has offered four important Disaster Preparedness Workshops for Congregations over the past eight years. In recognition of this history, role and the resources the faith

community represents, the City and County of San Francisco, last year, invited the SFIC to take a seat among key demographic stakeholders at its Disaster Council table.

Important work like this, however, cannot be undertaken in silos. In an effort to foster and create a culture of preparedness among our 800 constituent congregations, their respective judicatories and faith-based social service agencies, the SFIC is blessed to work with our civic partners at the City and County of San Francisco's Department of Emergency Management and Neighborhood Empowerment Network, as well as our NGO partners at SF CARFD and the American Red Cross of the Bay Area. We are so grateful for the generosity of California Pacific Medical Center and the Walter and Elise Haas Fund for continuing to support our work in disaster preparedness and in particular, for making this day possible by underwriting the expenses for this workshop. To the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, Episcopal Community Services CHEFS Program and the countless volunteers who selflessly lent a hand in preparing for this workshop, we say a heartfelt thank you. Together we have labored to organize and construct what promises to be an informative and engaging workshop. Together we welcome you as partners in disaster preparedness.

At this time, it gives me great pleasure to invite San Francisco Police Department Chief Greg Suhr and San Francisco Fire Department Chief Joanne Hayes-White, who are themselves and represent the true heroes on the front lines of disasters in our City, to address this assembly.