Strong Cities Network
Melbourne Declaration – July 2018

We, the Mayors, Governors and Sub-national leaders of the Strong Cities Network:

Condemn the escalation and impact of terrorism, violent extremism and social polarisation in communities the world over. *We underline* that 2016 saw more countries than ever before suffer terrorist attacks, with over 25,000 deaths globally as a result of increasingly coordinated and strategic campaigns by militant extremist groups and those inspired by their ideologies. *We recognise* that this challenge is one that impacts not only those directly affected by violence, but the wider community fabric and civic culture upon which our societies depend.

We believe that local leaders have a unique role in responding to these challenges. As leaders, our first priority is above all to protect and promote the safety and security of our citizens.

With more than half of the world's population currently living in urban areas, projected to rise to two-thirds by 2050, *we underline* that in both urbanised and rural communities, cities and local governance will have increased importance in a dynamic and globalised world.

On this basis, *we promote* global cooperation between sub-national leaders on the most challenging issues of our time and *we unite* to share knowledge, learning and innovation.

Collectively, as the Strong Cities Network, *we are committed* to meeting the need for effective local, municipal and urban governance for the 21st Century, enabled to address our most important shared challenges amid complex and competing demands.

In particular, *we declare* the need for mayors, governors and sub-national leaders to:

- **Promote and uphold the guiding principles of the Strong Cities Network**, including human rights, good governance, standing up to all forms of discrimination, hate and violence, and building strong partnerships between cities and the communities they represent;
- **Share, learn from and adapt international best practice** on prevention and resilience, countering the isolation that many localities may experience in addressing these issues;
- **Build cross-sectoral partnerships** to prevent and counter polarisation, including with businesses, in particular through the SCN Mayoral Taskforce on Public Private Partnerships;
- **Develop and implement evidenced, integrated and effective local strategies** to tackle the drivers of violent extremism;
- **Identify, adopt and strengthen a credible and sustainable local prevention infrastructure** which connects cities and municipalities with grassroots communities, key frontline services and local community leaders and stakeholders;
- **Drive innovation in data** collected and held at local levels, to better understand both the risks in our communities and the impact we can make on mitigating them;
- **Understand, empower and equip the frontline services** which drive prevention at local levels