

Declaration on the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration

We, the organizers, supporters and participants of the Second World Congress for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration, gathered in The Hague, Netherlands, this 17th day of April 2024,

Guided by the aim of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to establish inclusive societies in which “No one will be left behind”,

Mindful of the 2021 Kyoto Declaration on Advancing Crime Prevention, Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law: Towards the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promotes rehabilitative environments in the community to facilitate the social reintegration of offenders with the active involvement of local communities,

Mindful further that the United Nations Standards and Norms on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, in particular the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules) advocate the importance of “public participation” in promoting offender reintegration,

Recalling the Tokyo Declaration of the Asia Volunteer Probation Officers Meeting, adopted in July 2014, which aimed to build an international network of volunteer probation officers and promote information sharing and the exchange of challenges and best practices,

Recalling the Kyoto Declaration on Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration adopted at an ancillary event at the Kyoto Congress in March 2021, which recognizes the significance of community-volunteer support for offender rehabilitation, the necessity of public support and public understanding for the role of community volunteers, and aims to establish the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration within the framework of the United Nations,

Noting that the efforts of community volunteers can facilitate offender reintegration by helping these individuals overcome the challenges of social stigma and lack of community support they face as they strive to reintegrate successfully into our communities,

Recognizing that the *hogoshi* system, which has been developed with the vitality of private citizens and institutionalized in Japan over the course of 130 years, has caught the global spotlight as one of the most comprehensive and promising measures for achieving

the reintegration of offenders, the prevention of crime and the construction of peaceful and secure communities,

Recognizing further that the *hogoshi* system is the inspiration for the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration and for improving recognition of the contribution of volunteers around the world,

Noting with approval the efforts and contributions made by community volunteers from countless organizations in criminal justice systems to support offender rehabilitation and reintegration and prevent reoffending, and the many other varied and important examples of work undertaken by community volunteers globally,

Declare the following:

1. We understand that the majority of people in prison will return to the community and that the engagement of volunteers in reintegration support can assist long-term desistance and enhance community safety;

2. We note that community volunteers supporting offender rehabilitation and reintegration stand beside offenders returning to, or who are supervised in, the community, like good neighbors, and are invaluable in promoting public understanding and support for offender reintegration, and promoting their activities globally will contribute to the development of safe and secure societies for all;

3. We recognize that the efforts of such community volunteers are in line with the principle that “No one will be left behind” and are convinced that more global efforts must be made to promote the significance of the role of community volunteers;

4. We propose April 17th as the International Day for Community Volunteers Supporting Offender Reintegration to enhance global awareness of the efforts of community volunteers who support offender rehabilitation and reintegration, and to promote international networks among volunteers;

5. We will explore diverse approaches, including the establishment of an International Day within the framework of the United Nations, aiming to cultivate further public understanding of the work of community volunteers and to establish efficient and effective volunteer systems.