International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

KEY MESSAGES

**International Day for Disaster Reduction / ASEAN Day for Disaster Management 2015 / Southeast Asia / 13 October 2015**

*The following messages aim to provide cohesive or coordinated messaging to National Societies in Southeast Asia, which reinforce the Red Cross Red Crescent network, and relations with ASEAN, National Disaster Management Offices, local officials and other partners. The messages can be used for advocacy, speeches, media relations and more.*

1. ***The Red Cross Red Crescent contributes to a more resilient ASEAN***

Every day across ASEAN, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies contribute to building safer, healthier communities. In one of the most disaster-prone regions of the world, ASEAN Day for Disaster Management is a critical moment for the Red Cross Red Crescent and our partners, to mark our collective efforts in disaster risk reduction. We call on all partners to use this opportunity to not only be reminded of the importance of investing in disaster risk reduction, but to also encourage every citizen and government to take part in building more resilient communities, to ensure that “ASEAN is resilient as one”.

1. ***Disaster risk reduction is at the heart of the Red Cross Red Crescent’s mandate***

From a global to a local level, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are committed to helping communities prepare for and recover from disasters and crises. Our investment globally in disaster risk reduction has almost doubled since 2009. In 2013, the IFRC and its member National Societies reached over 12 million people in Asia Pacific through disaster risk reduction programs.[[1]](#footnote-1)

For the IFRC, disaster response and disaster risk reduction go hand-in-hand. Together with community-based volunteers, we provide life-saving information and training on disaster preparedness, strengthening the knowledge and capacity of young children and their families. At the national level, as an auxiliary role to public authorities, National Societies work with government counterparts to ensure there are effective legal frameworks in place to minimize the impact of disasters when they strike.

1. ***Communities must be kept at the center for successful resilience to disasters***

In line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the approach of the Red Cross Red Crescent to resilience is “people-focused and action-oriented”. Across Southeast Asia, National Societies are making communities safer through disaster risk reduction programs. The Red Cross Red Crescent empowers people through education, information and trainings, so they serve as a life-long resource within their own communities. Our staff and volunteers are embedded in the communities they serve and have a unique understanding of their context.

As part of our ongoing efforts, the [**One Billion Coalition for Resilience**](http://www.ifrc.org/one-billion-coalition) was launched at the World Conference in Sendai, in order to reinforce the importance of community and civic action for resilience. Within the next ten years, the goal of the coalition is to engage at least one person in every household around the world in active steps towards enhancing community resilience.

1. ***Partnership is key to strengthening the resilience of communities***

Everyone has a role to play in strengthening community resilience within ASEAN. The challenges we face from disasters and climate change cannot be addressed alone; it requires partnership between the Red Cross Red Crescent, the private sector, government, non-government actors, civil society, international NGOs, intergovernmental actors, and most importantly, local actors.

As highlighted in the World Disasters Report 2015, each year $20billion US dollar is invested in vital humanitarian assistance, including disaster response and resilience initiatives. Just 1.6 per cent of this is directed to local non-government organizations.[[2]](#footnote-2) This discrepancy points to an imbalance between the rhetoric of localizing aid and the reality. The humanitarian community must work together to ensure more equal partnerships which direct resources directly – or through national entities – to community level, where humanitarian needs are the greatest and development impacts are felt the most.

In their auxiliary role to public authorities, National Societies are in a unique position to also complement the efforts in disaster risk reduction and disaster management with the authorities, helping to bring all actors together in partnership for the benefit of communities at risk.

1. ***Traditional knowledge should be valued and it is key to reducing risk***

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recognize the importance of integrating traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices for disaster risk reduction. Traditional knowledge can help us understand how people respond to, and live with risk. By combining this expertise with scientific knowledge, the impact of disasters on communities could be significantly reduced.

1. ***Climate change is a future challenge that requires everyone’s response***

The Red Cross Red Crescent recognizes climate change is one of many catalysts to disaster with extreme weather events increasing in frequency and intensity. Over the past several decades, there has been a sharp increase in weather-related disasters in the Asia-Pacific, impacting lives and livelihoods.

***7. Strong laws create safer communities and promote local level action***

Laws and policies around issues such as land use planning, building codes, and facilitation of humanitarian relief are critical – especially in disaster-prone regions such as Southeast Asia. It is these laws that help countries reduce disaster risks, and respond when they occur. Recognition of the important role that laws can play is growing around the world. Here in Southeast Asia, momentum is building as governments develop and review their disaster risk management laws. Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the International Federation are supporting these efforts, with the understanding that strengthening national laws and policies, and utilizing traditional and local knowledge, is an important step towards resilience.

1. DRR Mapping Results, 2013, IFRC [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Disasters Report 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)