



9th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
Beijing, China
21-24 October 2014

Workshop 2

Climate change and urbanization

Background paper

Prepared By

Cook Islands Red Cross
Fiji Red Cross
Kiribati Red Cross
Maldivian Red Crescent
Philippines Red Cross
Samoa Red Cross
Vanuatu Red Cross
IFRC

Workshop 2 Climate Change and Urbanization

1. Brief description of the background to this issue in the International Federation

The IFRC World Disasters Report 2010 (WDR) was dedicated to “Urban Risks”. It identifies three major trends that are driving the urbanization of disasters; climate change, population growth and poorly planned urban development. The impacts of climate change are being distributed unevenly among urban populations, with low-income groups particularly vulnerable due to their greater exposure to hazards and their lower levels of adaptive capacity. Cities that are unable to deal with the many hazards and risks of today will be unable to deal with the new climate challenges of the future. This means that the focus on building resilience to cope with uncertainty is becoming more important in protecting the lives and livelihoods of urban populations..

Governments party to the Geneva Conventions and Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies prioritised addressing the humanitarian consequences of environmental degradation and climate change at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, 26-30 November 2007) and adopted resolution 1 “Declaration: Together for humanity”. The resolution specifically states that “*We are resolved to ensure that environmental degradation and adaptation to climate change are integrated, where relevant, in disaster-risk-reduction and disaster-management policies and plans. We will seek to mobilize the necessary human and financial resources to implement them, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people.*”

IFRC, Strategy 2020 provides clear directions to address issues relating to climate change and states that; “*Our climate change adaptation work is through scaling up disaster risk reduction measures and strengthening traditional methods of coping with disasters that are relevant in particular environmental contexts. We also contribute to mitigating the progression of climate change through advocacy and social mobilization to promote sustainable community development that optimizes communities’ carbon footprints. This means using energy more efficiently to reduce the impact of the way we live on the environment in terms of the production of greenhouse gases*”.

The 17th session of the General Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya 18-21 November 2009 strongly recognised the need to address the risks posed by climate change and urbanization in several programmatic areas.

2. Current situation/activities of the National Societies in respect to the topic

Key contexts and trends

Rapid urbanization and climate change are amongst the most significant phenomena of the 21st century. In 2010, for the first time in human history, urban inhabitants outnumbered rural inhabitants globally. It is predicted that the fastest rates of urbanization will take place in China, South-East Asia and South Asia, with cities absorbing two million new urban residents every month and projections that built-up areas will triple in the coming two decades.

Every day, more than 100,000 people move to slums in the developing world - *that is one person every second*. Nearly 1.5 billion people currently live in informal settlements and slums without adequate access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation. Many are at risk of hurricanes, cyclones, flooding, earthquakes and epidemics, as well as crime, violence, fires and industrial accidents. Developed countries are not totally safe and immune from urban disaster risks. In recent years some of the most destructive urban disasters have occurred in highly developed countries..

The impacts of climate change are already being felt across the globe and are resulting in increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. The global average temperature has risen by about 0.8°C in the past 100 years and will rise to at least 1.4°C by the end of this century, even if emissions were stopped today, due to the long lasting effect of already emitted greenhouse gases. The possible impacts of climate change are particularly important for the Asia Pacific region as hydro-meteorological related disasters made up 57% of disasters recorded in the region from 2004-2010.

Increased vulnerability to climate change is likely to manifest in a number of areas including; adverse effects on food security and agricultural yields; changes in water quality and quantity; decreases in energy security; damage to coastal-marine areas and resources; damage to coral reefs, depletion of fish stocks and associated ecosystem services; migration of populations hit by extreme climatic events such as floods and droughts; loss of biodiversity and loss of associated ecosystem services a result of forest loss; and an increase in climate change related disasters and their associated impacts in rural and urban areas.

While climate change impacts will vary from region to region and will be closely related to existing vulnerability and risk exposure, poor people in developing countries will be the hardest hit as their livelihoods are usually dependent on the natural resource base and climate-sensitive activities such as rain-fed agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry. At the same time, they have limited resources to cope with or recover from economic and environmental shocks.

Key priority areas of intervention in the coming years for the IFRC to ensure that future evolving risks are effectively integrated into resilience building activities will be:

- Development of climate smart IFRC programmes and operations
- Advocacy for the most vulnerable populations at risk from negative impacts of climate change and urbanization
- Strengthening community preparedness and response capacities, with a specific focus on community-based early warning and monitoring systems
- Building capacities at both NS and community levels and strengthening of local level governance to support scaling up of public education and awareness activities on disaster risk reduction and climate change
- Increasing engagement with national level planning, in particular with reference to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process and ensure that information collected through community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCAs) are fed into national and local level planning
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and rehabilitation of the environment to reduce risk and increase resilience of livelihoods to shocks.
- Strengthening of NS capacity to support resilience building and enhanced disaster preparedness and response in urban areas
- Scaling up of IFRC activities to reduce urban disaster risks and vulnerability
- Development of NS long-term strategic plans for building urban resilience
- Field testing and revision of current IFRC tools and methodologies for use in urban contexts
- Development of IFRC's common approach and guidelines for urban DRR and management
- Expanded partnership and engagement beyond traditional disaster stakeholders in urban areas

Achievements and innovations

I. Common for climate change and urbanization:

- An additional (supplementary) guidance document to the current VCA tool has been developed and published to guide NS to better integrate climate and urban risks into the VCA process.
- Humanitarian Diplomacy considerations are higher on the IFRC's agenda when advocating for vulnerable, at-risk populations.

II. Climate Change

NS capacity building:

- IFRC secretariat together with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre has supported NS through zones and regions to conduct training programmes.
- IFRC-Climate Centre joint launch of Climate Training Kit which is useful for NS to design their own training programmes at a country level.
- IFRC-Climate Centre joint development of e-learning course on climate change which is now available for NS volunteers via the IFRC learning platform.

Information services:

- IFRC and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) signed a MoU for stronger collaboration between the two organisations to help vulnerable communities and local institutions to use climate information for better decision making for agriculture, food security, water, health and disaster preparedness related issues.
- Climate Centre, IFRC and International Research Institute (IRI) for climate and society provide global seasonal forecasts for disaster managers to prepare for seasonal disasters such as floods and droughts.
- Climate Centre is currently piloting forecast based financing under the concept of Early Warning Early Action to help to develop funding mechanisms to take actions before a disasters occur.
- Climate games are also an attractive way to aid decision making for disaster managers as well as increasing climate change awareness.
- Ongoing support is provided to NS through IFRC zones to prepare for El Nino and La Nina conditions.

Community based adaptation:

- Many NS in the Asia Pacific region implement hundreds of community based risk reduction programmes to reduce vulnerability in both rural and urban contexts. There is an increased trend and interest towards integrating climate change aspects into community programming.

Policy and advocacy:

- National Adaptation Plan guide was published by the secretariat to help NS engage in the national policy dialogue on climate change and national adaptation planning process.
- IFRC together with the Climate Centre has been engaging in the international policy dialogue in the UNFCCC led annual climate change conferences (CoP).
- IFRC and the Climate Centre have worked together to respond to the IPCC 5th assessment reports to highlight the issues of the most vulnerable through the generation of wider media coverage.

Areas for innovation and further research:

- Web based system to develop climate smart VCA reports: Currently there is lack of step by step methodology to ensure community action plans are climate smart. A web based system will provide practitioners with easy to use templates for climate proofing of all community actions.
- Forecast based financing: two pilot projects were carried out in Togo and Uganda by the Climate Centre and German Red Cross. This approach needs further testing within the wider IFRC system to further develop it to become a disaster preparedness tool similar to DREF.
- Attribution to extremes: This simply means that when a major climate related disaster happens (e.g. Typhoon Haiyan) we need to be able to say with confidence that there is a clear linkage

with climate change. The Climate Centre has initiated research in this area with academic institutions to look in to the science.

- Messaging and communication: Costs and benefits of early actions, public awareness and education campaigns. More documentation of existing DRR and Climate Change practices should be done. In many areas, there have been realizations that IFRC has in fact been undertaking many adaptation projects though not labelled as such.
- There is a need to do further research on how to provide the general public and at-risk populations with information on the drivers and impacts of climate change. The information should be easy to understand but still accurate.

III. Urban Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

- Several NS are engaged in various activities related to urban DRR and DM which include a number of areas such as preparedness, disaster monitoring and early warning, risk assessment, building resilience of urban communities to disasters, etc.
- The IFRC conducted regional studies on urban DRR/DM in the Americas and Asia and Pacific which contributed to better understanding of urban context of DRR and DM, identifying the priorities and needs as well as the areas for the improvement of IFRC engagement. Moreover, a number of NS have carried out studies and surveys regarding different aspects of urbanization, humanitarian assistance, DRR and DM.
- In the framework of the Partnership agreement between the IFRC and the Iranian Red Crescent concluded in February 2013, a two year global programme is being implemented which aims at developing the IFRC approach as well as NS capacities in urban DRR and DM. Based on this Partnership, several regional and national level consultations were conducted in 2013. Furthermore, city level pilot projects on urban DRR and are being implemented in Jakarta, La Paz, Nairobi, Yerevan and Tehran. The outcomes of the pilot projects and regional consultations will contribute to developing the IFRC Approach and Guidelines for Urban DRR/ and DM in 2015. Also within the framework of this partnership, online library and data base on urban DRR and DM are developed which are accessible through FedNet.
- Urban Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery is part of the AP zone DM agenda for 2014 to be built into a new 2015-2018 DM strategy
- IFRC attended the 7th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 7) in Medellin, Colombia in April 2014. About 40 participants from NS and the secretariat participated at the various sessions and events of the Forum and presented the community as well as humanitarian dimensions during the deliberations of the Forum.
- GDPC as well as some PNS such as the British Red Cross and Austrian Red Cross have also taken the initiative to support urban resilience workshops in different regions.

3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats analysis from National societies on the issue

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Branches, chapters, volunteers able to reach beneficiaries 2. Awareness and understanding of urban risks is increasing 3. Many NS already have a presence in urban areas and experience with urban and climate change programming 4. IFRC is a major humanitarian actor with experiences on urban DRR that can be 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited NS capacity to adapt and address new trends or challenges 2. Difficult to master a good understanding of the complexity of urban settings 3. No clear picture of IFRC position (scope and focus) in the urban DRR agenda 4. Limited access to long term resources and project funds to implement the urban and climate agendas

<p>shared peer to peer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Many NS already identified the urban and climate agendas as priorities in the future 6. Several initiatives to revise or update current tools and methodologies are already on-going. 7. Results from IFRC global initiatives on climate change and urban DRR is / will be available for the NS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Most DRR programmes and approaches so far have been designed for rural communities or adapted from rural experiences 6. Sector tools and methodologies also need to be better tested and adapted to incorporate urban and climate risks. 7. Complex or difficult to understand information relating to the science or implication of climate change
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good avenues for collaboration with technical agencies, academia and private sector to enhance knowledge on urban Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and climate change 2. Existing public education and awareness campaigns and VCA processes have fostered relations with communities 3. Increased access for programs and funding schemes to work with the urban DRM and climate change agendas 4. New or existing partnerships with subject matter experts can help revise or update tools and methodologies for urban DRM and climate change 5. Chances to broaden the community's or government's perspective of the relevance and role of NS 6. Potential to expand beyond traditional service delivery role to influence local development and urban and climate planning through advocacy, strategic alliances, and active partnering. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New unfamiliar types of social networking in urban areas may limit access to urban communities 2. Delicate balance between good working relationship with governments and the undertaking to advocate on the risks and needs of the most vulnerable 3. Competition and poor coordination with other stakeholders within the urban DRM and climate change agendas due to silo based approaches 4. Limited access due to safety and security situations or contextual (physical, infrastructure, health etc.) conditions 5. The rapid pace of change: migration, urbanization, climate change and development 6. Integration of DRM and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) may cause political resistance in some of the Pacific countries

4. Reflections and lessons learned

It is evident that the issues of climate change impacts and need for adaption measures are high on the agenda in the Pacific, especially for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The NS forming the AP zone DM Reference Group-Urban, recently did a priority ranking, where the following thematic areas were identified and ranked as high priority and of high interest:

- Top three discussion topics on preparedness in urban areas:
 1. Contingency and preparedness planning
 2. Urban risk assessment
 3. Volunteer management and youth engagement
- Top three discussion topics on response in urban areas:
 1. Needs assessment and data collection
 2. Volunteer and staff communication

3. Cross-cutting issues like gender and environment, protection etc.
- Top three discussion topics on recovery in urban areas:
 1. Population movement – targeting/registering the most vulnerable
 2. Identifying appropriate recovery activities
 3. Integrated programming
 - Additional top discussion points
 1. Mandate/field of work for IFRC in urban DRM
 2. Understanding and defining DRR and DM concepts e.g.: community, vulnerability, risk assessments, etc.
 3. Our position on IFRC involvement in reconstruction in cities
 4. Urban emergency shelter and settlements

Further, a recent study commissioned by the AP zone, undertaken by the Earthquake and Megacity Initiative, used a ten-step approach to capture high priority interest based on an extensive input from NS in the Zone. Three distinguished strategies to tackle the urban DRM issues are discussed in the report:

i. Multi-stakeholder partnerships:

Adopt a participatory and inclusive approach and reinforce partnerships with local authorities. Define IFRC's role in Urban Risk Reduction based on country contexts and NS structure and solidify partnerships/coordination with urban stakeholders. IFRC should explicitly position itself as an informed and neutral advocate for vulnerable and marginalized populations in the overall planning, implementation and evaluation of urban development programmes.

ii. Emergency response and preparedness:

Build on existing core competencies in emergency response and preparedness and expand them to the urban context through a campaign to recruit/mobilise and train volunteers, especially the youth. NS can optimize resources and increase their impact in urban areas by forging partnerships with technical agencies especially on multi-hazard risk assessment to inform their emergency response and preparedness planning.

iii. Institutional capacity:

Improve existing institutional knowledge and capabilities on risk profiling and risk mapping. Adopt simple self-assessment and indicator tools that can quickly build knowledge and skills in the urban context.

5. Looking into the Future

- i. Climate change is contributing to the exacerbation of existing vulnerabilities and to people's ability to sustain their sources of livelihood, especially in poor and developing countries. In order to counteract these trends, climate change adaptation and mitigation activities need to go hand-in-hand with long-term investment in development. Efforts must also focus on strategies for developing effective early warning systems, promoting the wide use of safety nets, women's empowerment, improved access to markets and management of ecosystems and natural resources. ***What role could NS play in this and what is the support needed from the secretariat?***
- ii. Local action is key to adaptation and mitigation. Empowering communities through knowledge about climate change is crucial to ensure informed and appropriate action at the local level. Scientists are more confident than ever that climate change is happening and that it is caused by human activity. Developing and implementing educational and public awareness programmes on climate change is essential for ensuring that appropriate and informed action is taken, to adapt to the unavoidable impacts and to mitigate future climate change. Concrete action can take the form

of climate change related educational programmes at primary and secondary levels; public awareness campaigns; improving public access to relevant information; ensuring meaningful public participation; the training of experts; and the enhancement of international cooperation.

How could NS work to increase awareness of climate change to motivate local, national and international action?

iii. Youth engagement is pivotal for developing sustainable solutions into the future. Climate change and the measures put in place to tackle it affect the lives of young people today and have implications for their future. It is important to empower young people to be agents of behavioural change, promoting more sustainable lifestyles and they must be key partners in developing sustainable solutions. Education activities targeted at youth must also focus on the development of skills to bring about behavioural change, promote individual and collective responsibility, and inspire concrete actions and innovation at the community level and beyond. ***Do we know the ways and means to reach young people, especially in the urban setting?***

iv. Urban context is associated with several factors which require change in the DRR and DM approach, methodology and tools used by the IFRC to deliver its humanitarian mission. Some of the current and future questions to be discussed are as follows:

- The concept and definition of **communities** in urban vs rural areas, what are the differences? Is there a need for a new definition and approach for IFRC work with communities in an urban context?
- How can we improve our **understanding of risk factors** such as vulnerabilities and hazards in the increasingly complex urban context? How different hazards and vulnerability factors compound urban risks?
- The urban risk agenda is complex and not one single organisation can manage this on its own. ***How can IFRC engage and cooperate with other stakeholders in the urban environment?***
- Is there a need for improving or developing new **tools** for more effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and DRR and DM services in cities and urban areas? What are the priorities regarding tools?

Annex 1. References:

Key reference for climate change

1. [International Conference 2007: Together for Humanity \(Resolution 1\), Governments and National Societies acknowledged the threats posed in humanitarian terms by environmental degradation and climate change.](#)
2. [World Disaster Report 2009](#)
3. [Strategy 2020](#)
4. [RCRC Climate Guide](#)
5. [Guidelines on VCA in the context of urban and climate risks](#)
6. [IFRC Plan of Action on Climate Change](#)
7. [How to engage with National Adaptation plans: Guidance for RCRC NSs](#)
8. [Assessing climate finance: Guidance for RCRC NSs](#)
9. [IPCC 5th Assessment report](#)
10. [DRR and CCA mainstreaming guide](#)
11. [Managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation \(Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change- IPCC SREX\)](#)

List of references for Urbanization:

1. [World Disaster Report 2010 \(2010\)](#)
2. [No time for doubt: Tackling urban risk”, A glance at urban interventions by Red Cross Societies in Latin America and the Caribbean \(2011\)](#)
3. [Programmatic directions for the Red Cross and Red Crescent in building urban community resilience in the Asia Pacific Region \(2012\)](#)
4. [Learning from the City, \(2012\)](#)
5. [Urbanisation: Study into cases, trends and consequences of the rapid growth of cities and the impact on Red Cross and Red Crescent work \(2007\)](#)
6. [Risk in urban contexts- conceptual framework \(2012\)](#)
7. [Strategic Guidelines and methodological approach to risk in urban contexts in Central America \(2012\)](#)
8. [Risk Reduction in urban environments project identification, design, implementation and assessment checklist \(2012\)](#)
9. [Regional experience exchange workshop on urban risk management in the Americas \(2011\)](#)
10. [Sustainable Reconstruction in Urban Areas \(2012\)](#)
11. [IFRC-UNDP project on legal frameworks to support DRR, ‘Better Laws, Safer Communities?’ \(2013\)](#)
12. [Arusha workshop on “Building Urban Resilience” report \(2013\)](#)
13. [Kampala workshop on “Urban DRR in Africa” report \(2013\)](#)
14. [Bangkok workshop on “Building Urban Resilience” report \(2013\)](#)
15. [Tbilisi “Urban DRR” workshop executive summary \(2013\)](#)
16. [Panama workshop report \(2013\)](#)
17. [Beirut workshop report \(2014\)](#)