**PRESS RELEASE**

**VIETNAM RED CROSS SOCIETY GETTING READY**

**TO RESPONSE TO DISASTER SEASON 2017**

*Hanoi, 28/6/2017* – Vietnam Red Cross Headquarters organizes the Pre-Disaster Season Meeting 2017. The meeting aims at updating forecast information of the natural disasters in 2017, mapping resources, capacity and the Society’s readiness to take part in emergency response. The meeting focuses on the discussion on the framework cooperation agreement between the Vietnam Red Cross Society and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Partner National Societies for the period of 2017 – 2022 in order to identify the roles and responsibilities of each party, as well as to provide coordination mechanism for more rapid, flexible and effective response to the needs of disaster victims in Vietnam, by optimal utilization of the expertise and capacities in certain areas of each party.

The meeting is attended by leaders of the Vietnam Red Cross Headquarters, Central Steering Committee for Disaster Prevention and Control, National Meteorological and Hydrological Forecast Center, Disaster Management Center (DMC) , The National Committee for Search and Rescue, representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Partner National Societies in Vietnam, international organizations (UN OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, USAID ...) and some provincial/municipal branches of the Vietnam Red Cross from disaster prone areas.

As a member of the Central Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, over the past years, the Vietnam Red Cross Society has focused on the effective implementation of preparedness activities[[1]](#footnote-2) such as: Awareness raising for communities and schools on disaster preparedness and response; Vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA); Development of contingency and risk mitigation plans; Plantation of mangrove forests and watershed forests; Setting up and equipping for disaster response teams at all levels; conducting simulation exercises.

Being well prepared, in 2016 the Vietnam Red Cross Society has responded effectively to disasters with the total value of 189.38 billion VND, including: household kits, cash, water tanks, clean water, disinfectants, water filtration devices ... (of which 70.7 billion dongs were transferred directly to the provincial chapters and to the households); Timely and effective implement emergency response activities as well as the recovery and reconstruction after natural disasters and catastrophes.

Only in the first 6 months of 2017, the VNRC HQ and local chapters have timely provided emergency reliefs for families affected by natural disasters in Khanh Hoa, Lai Chau and Hoa Binh provinces. The VNRC Headquarters has implemented 14 programs and projects on disaster preparedness and response, including 10 development projects, 4 emergency relief projects with a total value of over VND 55 billion[[2]](#footnote-3).

New evolutions in the VNRC disaster preparedness and response in 2017 include:

i) The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Vietnam Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which focuses on the cooperation and collaboration in Natural disaster prevention, protection forest plantation and management, the new countryside development program implementation, and providing support for poor fishermen, the cooperation in promoting the Law on natural disaster prevention and control for the period 2016 – 2020 between VNRC Head Quarter and Central Steering Committee on Disaster Prevention (signed in 2016). It’s a basis for the development of cooperation agreements between some Provincial Red Cross chapters and the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/ Provincial Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Search and Rescue within the scope of work agreed at the central level;

ii) For the first time, the Vietnam Red Cross Headquarters hosted the First regional forum on Forecast based Financing. This forum brought together over 100 national and international experts on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to share and learn from each other the innovative humanitarian financing mechanisms that allow early actions based on improved forecast information, prioritizing preventive and preparedness action and the application of standard procedures when natural disasters occur.

At the present, the Vietnam Red Cross Society has the financial resource of more than VND 102 billion (of which 62 billion VND from its own emergency response fund, VND 20 billion of the IFRC and VND 20 billion reserved at provincial/municipal Red Cross chapter) 2,632 Household kits, 3,150 boxes of water filtration tablets, 1,700 household water filters, 1,879 house repair kits, 1,950 tarpaulins, 70 temporary shelters (tents), 30 mobile latrines, 8 water filtration units, 36 Hygiene promotion kits ... In addition, at all levels, VNRC is reviewing the membership of the existing response teams, and setting up new response teams at provincial and communal levels, and developing disaster preparedness plan for 2017 in order to timely respond to emergency events.

VIETNAM RED CROSS HEADQUARTERS

1. The National Disaster Response Team (NDRT), 33 Provincial Disaster Response teams, 200 Communal Disaster Response teams have been set up by the VNRC in 62 districts of 23 provinces/cities. The VNRC has a pool of 745 trainers and facilitators including 122 of Community-based Disaster Management (CBDRM), 251 of VCA; 123 of Community Action for disaster response (CADRE), 68 of cash transfer program, 181 of contingency planning, livelihoods,water and sanitation, need and damage assessment; 585 rural and urban communes (accounting for over 1/3 of communes approached by the Program 1002 of Vietnamese Goverment) in 142 district of 36 provinces/municipals have benefited from the CBDRM program of the Vietnam Red Cross, of which 300 communes have had the VCA done. VCA has been developed into the Community based Disaster Risk Assessment (CBDRA). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. As examples: the UNICEF funded project providing water and sanitation support to children and their families affected by the drought and salt water intrusion which was implemented in 12 communes, 24 schools in 6 provinces of Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Ben Tre and Soc Trang (11/2016 - 3/2017) from which 4,000 benefited directly and 66,000 others indirectly benefited, of which 1/3 are children. The project contributes to raising the community awareness on water and sanitation, building the management capacity for communities, families and schools in order to take up initiatives to enhance their resilience before droughts; The livelihood recovery project supported by the New Zealand Government through the IFRC with the 3 month time frame (March-May 2017) implemented in 7 communes of 2 districts in Binh Dinh province has provided direct support (cash for cows) to 1,037 families (3,644 people). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)