



# Disaster Law in Asia Pacific



Asia Pacific is the world's most disaster prone region. In the past 45 years,

**88%** of all people affected by natural disasters have lived in Asia Pacific.



These disasters have resulted in an economic loss of over **US\$1.15** trillion



Every year, **26.4** million people globally are displaced by natural disasters

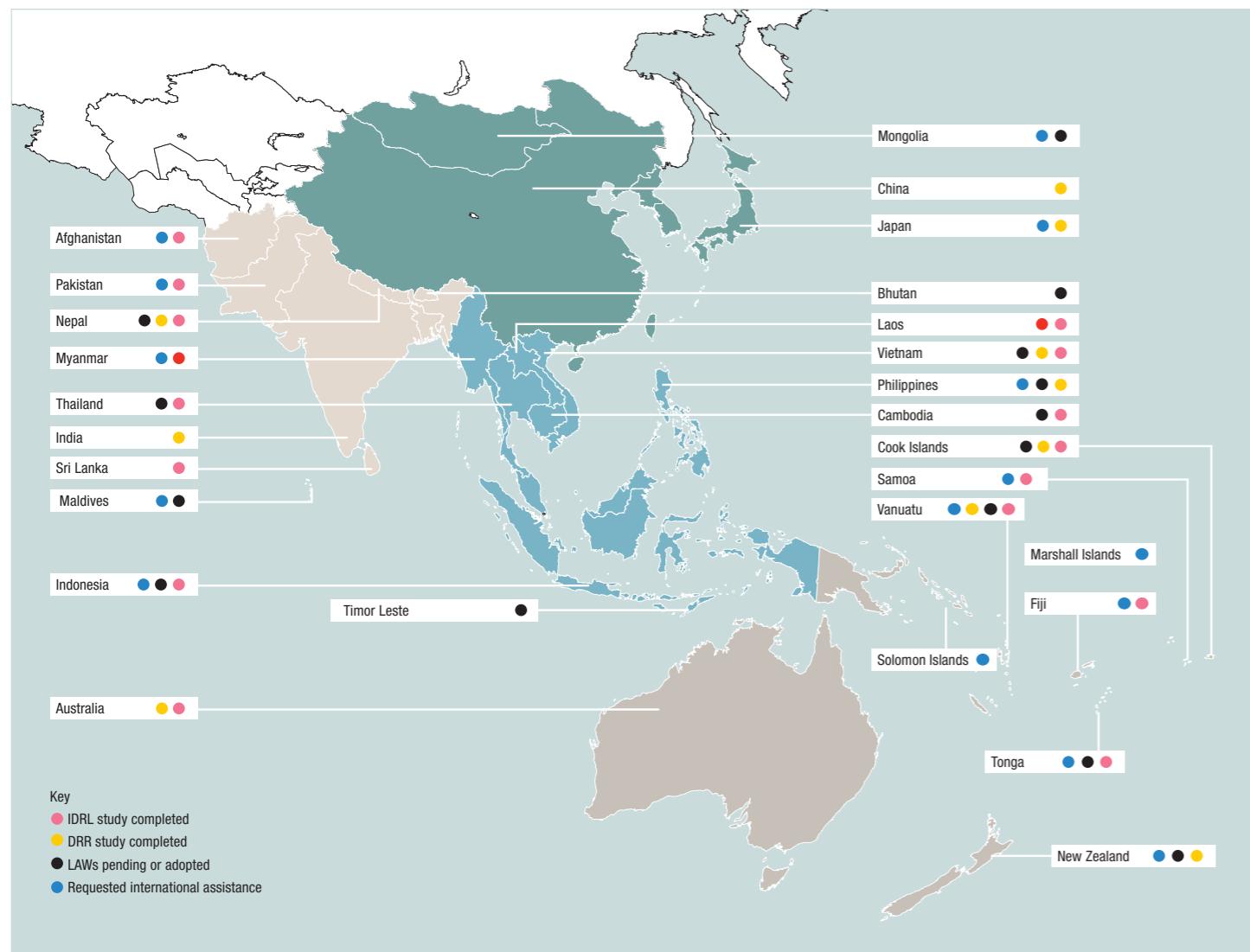


Women, boys and girls are **14** times more likely to die during a disaster than men

**70%** of countries in the Asia Pacific remain legally underprepared to manage a large scale disaster

## What are the benefits of a good Disaster Law?

- Increased safety and reduced vulnerability of people and infrastructure
- All resources sent to a disaster affected country are requested and appropriate
- Gender perspectives are integrated in all disaster-related policies and practices, and women's leadership at all levels of society is promoted, ensuring a more inclusive and holistic disaster risk management approach
- States are empowered to lead and coordinate disaster response operations in their country, including international assistance, and facilitate efficient and effective response to people affected by disasters
- Adequate funding, accountability and engagement mechanisms for disaster risk reduction decision-making are ensured
- Creates a legal enabling environment for strong disaster risk management, with clear roles and responsibilities assigned across agencies from national to local level
- Ensure engagement of communities, civil society, the private sector and scientific institutions in disaster risk management decision making and activities



Without an adequate legal framework to facilitate international assistance, challenges can arise that negatively impact the disaster response:

**Nepal:** "Business as usual" customs procedures led to bottle-necks in the 2011 earthquake response.

**New Zealand:** Strict quarantine rules hindered the entrance of some urban search and rescue dogs following the 2011 earthquake.

**Samoa:** Unsolicited goods sent during the 2009 tsunami are still being disposed of at cost to the Government.

**Vanuatu:** Demonstrated the necessity to clearly request international assistance based on national needs.

Learning from experience: the Red Cross Red Crescent supporting governments on disaster law

**Indonesia:** The experience from the 2004 earthquake and tsunami triggered radical changes in Indonesia's legal and institutional framework for disaster response. The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) has been instrumental in this process and worked closely with its government to improve preparedness for international assistance as well as DRR in its law. As a result, Indonesia is now considered a global leader on disaster risk management.

**Philippines:** The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 recognises that vulnerable and marginalized groups face higher exposure to disaster risk and poverty. The Act ensures that women, social welfare representatives, as well as Philippine Red Cross have a seat at the table and can take an active part in the decision-making in national and local councils.

**Extra support in times of disaster:**  
 The Disaster Law Programme can provide additional support in-country during times of disaster through emergency deployments to provide legal and policy advice to in international disaster response. Such support was provided in Typhoon Haiyan (Philippines), Tropical Cyclone Pam (Vanuatu), the Nepal earthquake and the Myanmar floods.

**Vietnam and Bangladesh:** Both Vietnam and Bangladesh have made a legislative 'paradigm shift' from a response driven model to a greater focus on DRR. This shift has had a startling impact in both countries and dramatically reduced mortalities from disasters.

**Cook Islands:** With technical input from Cook Islands Red Cross, their government adopted standing operating procedures and a model emergency decree drawing on the IDRL Guidelines in 2014. This experience will soon be replicated in Tonga who are embarking on a similar process.





## How the IFRC supports development of disaster law: Resources and Tools

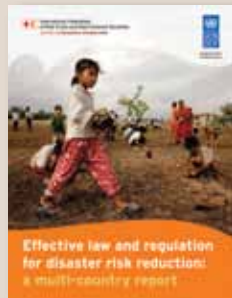
## Further Resources



The IDRL Guidelines



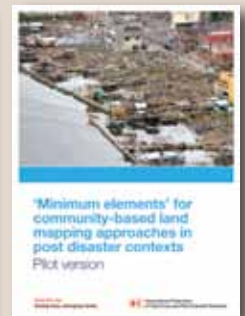
Model Act on IDRL  
& Model Emergency  
Decree



Effective law and  
regulation for disaster  
risk reduction



Rapid tenure  
assessment



Minimum elements for  
community-based land  
mapping



The Checklist on  
Law and Disaster  
Risk Reduction



The Handbook on  
Law and Disaster  
Risk Reduction



Gender-sensitive  
approaches for  
Disaster Management



Minimum standard  
commitment to  
gender and diversity in  
emergency programming



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