

ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

□ PREVENTING DISASTER RISK: PROTECTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT □

● 03 – 06 July 2018 ● Ulaanbaatar ● Mongolia

Statement of Action: Red Cross Red Crescent Stakeholder Group

Over the next two years, we need to work together to ensure that global commitments, especially Sendai, translate into local action and impact. Individuals and communities are hardest hit by disasters and crises, exacerbated by climate change. For the Red Cross Red Crescent, communities all over the world are the “first mile” for effective climate risk management, early action and preparedness. The affected population must be at the centre of and engaged in genuine partnerships to protect their lives and livelihoods and determine, lead and strengthen their own resilience.

Our 39 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific comprising 135,000 local branches and approximately ten million volunteers work every day with and for the communities.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Stakeholder Group has made substantial progress since the last AMCDRR across all priority areas of the Sendai Framework for DRR and Asia Action Plan 2016 -2018.

Our key achievements include the following:

- Our network of community based volunteers annually supports millions of the most vulnerable communities members in the region identify their own risks and determine local actions to build their own resilience.
- As community based and auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field our volunteers belong to the communities they work with, strengthening local systems and resilience, to ensure that resources reach those who need it the most.
- We know that disasters impact people differently based on gender, age and disability. We have improved the way we collect and use data to better target those most at risk in disasters and crisis. However more needs to be done by the Red Cross Red Crescent and all stakeholders including government, to meet the needs of women and girls and those at risk of sexual and gender based violence in disasters.
- We are working with the most vulnerable communities to act before disaster strikes, based on improved use of weather forecasts and the projection of hazards. We are working with partners to take forecast based action and financing to scale

- We all must do more to prevent and reduce displacement due to disasters and climate change, that is why we are mobilising our local networks to respond to this growing challenge.
- We are adapting our policies, plans and programmes to better address the needs of communities living in a rapidly growing urban environment.
- We aim to continually minimize the environmental footprint of our work, starting with humanitarian response, to ensure accountability to communities and the environment.

Key Achievements against the 2016 – 2018 Action Plan include:

Priority Area One: Understanding Disaster Risk

We continue to support communities to understand and act on risks through participatory approaches such as the vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA). This is well illustrated by the work of Indonesian Red Cross' community based action teams who have been working with their local authorities and the science community to conduct VCAs and analyse the results to bring about effective targeted action. Progress has been made adapting tools traditionally designed for rural settings to be used in more complex urban contexts. Nepal Red Cross is another good example of this, working alongside community-based organizations together with municipal authorities and vulnerable urban populations to ensure more meaningful DRR interventions, suited for the urban context.

Finally, we know that to understand risk we need to better understand underlying vulnerabilities. Over the past two years, we have strengthened our data collection and analysis to ensure that the data we collect is sex, age and disability disaggregated so we can better address these underlying vulnerabilities. We have proven examples of how we have strengthened data literacy, including data collection on the prevalence of sexual and gender based violence during disaster amongst local actors in several South East Asian countries.

Priority Area Two: DRR Governance

We have worked with governments and partners, at subnational, national and regional levels to ensure that climate smart DRM laws and policies are gender sensitive and provide an enabling regulatory environment for local action and inclusive community engagement. Nepal, Samoa and Lao Red Cross' have supported their authorities to integrate protection, gender and inclusion approaches in climate and disaster related laws and policies. Progress has also been made in community engagement and dissemination of relevant laws and policies by Vietnam, Philippines and Cambodia Red Cross'.

Priority Area Three: Invest in DRR for Resilience

We have engaged leaders in the private sector as champions of DRR and encourage them to channel investments to where it is needed most - at the local level. The Australian Red Cross involvement in the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer communities is an excellent example of this. Bangladesh Red Crescent, Indonesian Red Cross and Mongolian Red Cross have been working with the private sector and financial service providers for effective cash transfers, among others. In Mongolia, besides piloting Forecast-based Financing (FbF), we have worked with herder communities to reduce livestock loss and safeguard their livelihoods through the construction of winter shelters for livestock, which also contributes to long term community preparedness.

Priority Area Four: Preparedness and Build Back Better

Managing heightened risk between a climate or weather forecast and the potential disaster event is one of the innovative approaches that we promote to ensure effective disaster preparedness for response in support of at risk communities. In Bangladesh, the Early Action protocol of the FbF was activated and an unconditional cash grant was released to assist over one thousand households by the Bangladesh Red Crescent which allowed flexibility for individuals and communities to prepare and to take the necessary measures to reduce the impact of the impending flood. For the first time ever, FbF was activated in Mongolia before the peak of the last winter season, in anticipation of dzud. Mongolia Red Cross assisted 2000 vulnerable herders before their animals became weak thereby avoiding livestock loss and reducing negative impact on herders' livelihoods.

Our recent experience in Nepal demonstrates that an integrated, risk informed approach to community centred recovery works. The approach combined durable shelter solutions, improved access to WASH, reduction of health risks, restored livelihoods and strengthened institutions at the local level. The recovery work of Nepal Red Cross since 2015 provides some excellent examples of a balanced approach between hard and soft recovery measures, to truly 'build back better'.

Finally, youth centred action and engagement as agents of behaviour change is critical if we want to continue making a difference tomorrow. Red Cross Red Crescent South East Asia Youth Network has been taking the lead in piloting the Youth in School Safety Programme, promoting safety in school and communities- results of which are available in the South-East Asia school safety mapping.

Refer to our evidenced based case studies *What Works at Local Level* prepared for the 2018 AMCDRR find out more about how we have been working with communities in Asia Pacific these past two years. The full case studies are available [here](#).

Red Cross Red Crescent Commitments to support the implementation of the 2018 – 2020 Action Plan include:

In the 2018 - 2020 Action Plan we commit to scale up evidenced based climate-smart DRR programmes to have greater impact, through collective approaches and partnerships.

This includes:

Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risk

We call on governments and stakeholders, to join us, to increase investment in local systems and people to strengthen awareness and understanding of changing climate, disaster, social and health related risk. This includes addressing through community led action, the different impact disasters can have on diverse groups, taking into account gender, age and disability. We collectively need to better understand the risk of people being displaced by disasters, crises and climate change, and the impacts on individuals and communities.

The Red Cross Red Crescent commits to achieve the following by 2020:

- 50% of National Societies will have strengthened volunteer networks and systems to collect and analyse sex and age disaggregated data, to carry out more inclusive programming and advocacy for legislative and policy change.
- We will better understand disaster, social, health and displacement risks and their impact through supporting volunteers to undertake community level climate-smart risk and vulnerability assessments.
- We will always involve local stakeholders in public awareness, campaigns and public education and action that enhances knowledge to reduce current and prevent future disaster risk. As local volunteer-based organisations, we will continue to champion local expertise and knowledge sharing through peer to peer exchange in the region.

Priority 2: Disaster Risk Governance

We call on governments to engage stakeholders in the revision, development and implementation of effective climate and disaster relevant laws, regulations and plans (including sectorial laws) at national and subnational levels. These frameworks must prioritise holistic risk reduction and provide meaningful engagement and leadership opportunities for communities, particularly women, at risk and marginalised groups in decision making, as well as provide for budgetary allocation to support local level action in the context of changing risk patterns.

For its part the Red Cross Red Crescent commits to achieve the following by 2020:

- All National Societies will engage with their governments and key stakeholders at national and subnational levels, to support the development, revision and implementation of relevant laws and regulations as well as DRR strategies, thereby contributing to achieving Target (e) by 2020.
- All National Societies and IFRC will significantly increase their efforts to identify, support and promote women into 50% of senior leadership and governance positions and decision-making platforms.
- National Societies will meaningfully engage women, at risk and marginalised groups in disaster risk management decision making processes, to ensure that their specific needs are considered and potential optimised in planning and programming. We will provide support to governments to review and develop relevant laws, regulations and plans to incorporate protection, gender and inclusion concerns, with a focus on sexual and gender based violence in disasters.

Priority Area Three: Investing in DRR for Resilience

We call on governments and stakeholders to double their investment in locally led climate-smart DRR action and livelihoods. We further call on governments to establish and/or operationalise DRR budgetary allocations, in accordance with their legislation. In addition, budgets and mechanisms to operationalise evidence – based innovative approaches such as Forecast-based Financing must be formalised in national and local systems.

The Red Cross Red Crescent commits to achieve the following by 2020:

- Under the One Billion Coalition for Resilience we will engage youth and diverse groups from the public, business, and academia and in governments to champion community resilience and invest in local action, enabling National Societies to double our initiatives in community led climate-smart DRR action and livelihoods.

- We will establish partnerships in ten countries to support the development of innovative local level risk financing mechanisms, including insurance, Forecast-based Financing and social protection schemes.
- We will scale up our community led urban disaster risk reduction programmes with the support of our Manila based Urban Hub and the Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Centre to support communities in cities to meet the challenges of an increasingly urban Asia Pacific.

Priority Area Four: Preparedness and Build Back Better

We call on governments and stakeholders to strengthen systems and to enable evidence informed early warning early action, preparedness for effective response, and build back better in recovery that engages and is accountable to communities and protects and includes those most at risk of disasters.

For its part the Red Cross Red Crescent commits to achieve the following by 2020:

- We will double our investment in people-centred, evidence informed early warning early action, this will include development of Early Action Protocols by ten National Societies to make them FbF ready.
- We commit to ensuring environmental sustainability of emergency response by protecting the environment which communities depend on, thereby reducing risk and vulnerability to future disasters and the impacts of our changing climate. We will continue to advocate and mobilize communities, humanitarians, conservation practitioners, government officials and donors to incorporate environmental sustainability aspects into disaster and complex emergency responses.
- We will enable and promote our youth leaders to act as agents of behavioural change to reduce risks in their own communities and to take active part in developing youth-led school safety initiatives.
- We will strive to ensure our preparedness for response and recovery activities consider the specific needs of displaced persons, refugees and migrants and other at-risk populations, including sexual and gender-based violence survivors.
- We will work with communities to build back better, through risk-informed approaches ensuring engagement and accountability to them, as well as support local pre-disaster recovery planning.
- We will invest resources to ensure that all National Societies are cash ready to undertake anticipatory action prior to disaster and crises, timely disaster response and community led sustainable recovery.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent is a local to global organisation committed to achieving action, results and impact for the most vulnerable. We will continue to work collaboratively to achieve our shared Sendai commitments over the coming two years and beyond.