

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IFRC Statement at the ASEAN Conference on School Safety / Bangkok / April 2019

Dear ASEAN Member States, ASEAN Secretariat, Partners, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First and foremost, on behalf of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 11 member National Societies in Southeast Asia who represented here, I would like to congratulate ASEAN Member States, ASSI Consortium partners, and all the participants on the fruitful Conference. Our sincere gratitude goes to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), Thailand, for hosting this event.

It is almost a decade since the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) Work Program was put into force by the Member States, in which school safety was identified as a strategic component. During the years, significant efforts have been made by all of us.

The region counts 172 million children and youth, age between 5 to 24, spending half of their waking hours in schools. We all own the collective responsibility to make them aware of the risks which they are exposed to, and to enable them to apply their knowledge and practice for their safety as well as for their family and community, in the face of disasters or daily health risks such as traffic accidents. We also recognise the urgent and critical need to intensify our efforts in addressing increased risks stemming from climate change or growing trends towards radicalization.

There is no way for one single actor to make a difference alone. Reflecting ASSI spirit, we believe in the importance to establish a coalition of partners at country and local level, bringing together capabilities and resources to enable all of us to scale up our reach. National and local governments are at the core of any school safety collaboration, complemented by academia, corporate sector, NGOs, school students, teachers, families, and communities. Because school safety matters to all.

The Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in the region, as auxiliary to their public authorities, reach around 10,000 schools and more than 1 million children in a single year. We are now committed to bring our contribution to scale in concert with other partners to achieve ASEAN goal in building safe and resilient communities.

Today, we are very honored to make four concrete commitments at this conference:

1. To strengthen and broaden the engagement of children and youth by mobilizing 3.6 million youth members.
2. To scale up our contribution for nation-wide impact by engaging with public authorities through result-based and structured partnerships building on existing best practices in the region.
3. To institutionalise partnerships around ASSI as an inclusive and long-term platform whereby we bring our results together and demonstrate our collective impact.
4. To facilitate multi-stakeholder collaboration, with a specific call on the corporate sector, including innovative actors and start-ups, to more significantly engage in school safety as a cost-effective and societal contribution.

We look forward to taking this important initiative to new and tangible levels. And we believe we can make a difference for the current and future generations that will in return contribute to realising the socio-cultural and socio-economic aspirations of the ASEAN Community, building on values governments and citizens are ready to connect to and stand for.

Thank you very much.