

Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022

Statement of Action:

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific (*IFRC Network*), we are pleased to join with states and stakeholders across Asia and the Pacific at this key juncture for the region. The APMCDRR 2022 theme ‘From Crisis to Resilience: Transforming the Asia Pacific Region’s future through disaster risk reduction’ is not only relevant, but urgent, as the region tackles current shocks, including the unprecedented climate-induced Pakistan floods and continued waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, and positions to proactively prepare for and address future risks, including those exacerbated by climate change.

Addressing the challenges of current and future disaster risk reduction (DRR) requires coordination of multiple stakeholders across regional, national and local levels. Our IFRC Network of 38 Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC/RC) National Societies in Asia Pacific and RC/RC Reference Centers commits to working with governments, communities, and other stakeholders to meet the Sendai Priorities and to serve those most vulnerable and disadvantaged. In our role as auxiliary to public authorities, and our presence in local communities across the region, we will leverage our network to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Asia Pacific, to ensure more inclusive and locally-led action for DRR.

In the face of increasing frequency, magnitude and complexity of disasters and crises, and mounting pressure on traditional humanitarian resources, we must move from reactively responding, to strengthening individual and community capacities to anticipate, prepare for, and reduce their impact before they happen. This demand focus on people-centered, inclusive risk reduction strategies and increased and targeted disaster risk financing for locally-led action. We call on governments and stakeholders to join us.

Red Cross & Red Crescent Achievements and Priorities Areas of Action

In line with the outcome documents of the 2022 APMCDRR, the Brisbane Declaration and Asia Pacific Action Plan 2021-2024, the IFRC Network remains committed to advancing progress made across the Sendai Framework for DRR Priority Areas, ensuring no one is left behind:

Priority Area One: Understanding Disaster Risk

Individuals and communities are hardest hit by disasters and crises. Communities are the “first mile” for effective risk management, early action and preparedness. Ensuring support to strengthen understanding of risk is central to strengthening preparedness and readiness to act before as well as respond to climate exacerbated shocks and stresses. This is important for local communities, governments, and donors. Our recent Early Warning – Early Action (EWEA) research in collaboration with Palau Red Cross, the RC/RC Climate Center, and the University of the South Pacific, identified best practices for EWEA to the South Pacific conditions and will help shape the Green Climate Fund program enhancing climate resilience, initially, in five Pacific Island nations.

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We remain committed to listen to the science and use it to plan for and protect against future risks.

In 2020, the IFRC Network across Asia Pacific, and our 9.4 million volunteers reached almost 546 million people through community-focused DRR, development, and response activities. Integrating the latest climate science and weather information, the IFRC Network continues to deliver the RC/RC Framework for Community Resilience through participatory risk assessments in rural and urban contexts to support communities to analyse their risks and identify solutions.

We remain committed to being guided by the communities we serve, incorporating local perception and insights for meaningful DRR engagement and acting on what they share with us. Through Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) driven-insights, we continue to improve understanding of risk, underlying vulnerabilities, local capacities, and to build trust for enhanced multi-level decision making.

We call on governments and stakeholders to join us to increase investment in local systems and people through harnessing science, and community driven insights to strengthen awareness and understanding of changing climate, disaster, social and health related risks. We call upon your support to galvanize our collective understanding of the multiple risks faced by people in the region affected and the impacts of disasters, crises and climate change, on individuals and communities for strategic and programmatic multi-level and inclusive decision-making.

Priority Area Two: DRR Governance

As community based and auxiliary to public authorities, our volunteers and staff continue to strengthen local systems and resilience, to ensure that resources reach those who need them the most.

As auxiliary to our respective public authorities, RC/RC National Societies serve as an interlocutor between communities and governments. We foster inclusive DRR governance, expand leadership in the field of Disaster Law, and support government authorities to develop, revise and implement inclusive, risk informed DRR and adaptation strategies, policies and plans. In terms of disaster management, already over 80% of RC/RC National Societies in Asia Pacific play an important role supporting or supplementing the work of their government at decision-making levels. For example, RC/RC National Societies consistently sit on their national disaster management councils and ensure the needs of those most at risk are included in national and local policies and plans, including National Adaptation Plans.

Women, at-risk and marginalized groups must be engaged as key decision-makers in multi-level governance processes to ensure their specific needs are considered, and capabilities are harnessed. For example, the Women's Empowerment initiative supported by the Kuwait Red Crescent, implemented in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Viet Nam strengthened resilience and improved the livelihoods of 15,582 marginalized and underprivileged women, positively impacting over 75,000 lives. The initiative involves strong collaboration with local governments to foster livelihood activity support, as well as raising awareness about sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

We call on governments to strengthen the auxiliary role of RC/RC National Societies and to engage stakeholders in the revision, development and implementation of integrated, inclusive and effective climate and disaster relevant laws, regulations and plans (including sectorial laws) at national and

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subnational levels. These frameworks must prioritise climate-smart DRR governance, 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.

Priority Area Three: Invest in DRR for Resilience

RC/RC National Societies across Asia Pacific are working with communities experiencing greatest vulnerability, supporting governments and partners to act before disaster strikes. The scaling of innovative, risk financing mechanisms, including insurance, Forecast-based Financing and adaptative/shock-responsive social protection schemes, is critical to locally-led resilience strengthening.

We are committed to take scale up ex-ante investments for DRR, climate adaptation and resilience.

A growing number of RC/RC National Societies in Asia Pacific have established strategic partnerships to support the development of innovative risk financing mechanisms, and impact-based forecasting for a range of hazards to anticipate disasters and strengthen long-term resilience. This includes addressing new and emerging urban risks. For example, in 2021, Bangladesh Red Crescent reached over 466,219 people via forecast-based early actions including awareness raising and multipurpose cash grants to safeguard communities from heatwaves. Blended initiatives such as the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience in Australia, enable Australian Red Cross to work alongside the private sector to secure increased annual investments of \$320 million in DRR per year from the Preparing Australia Fund and the Disaster Ready Fund.

We remain committed to supporting communities to invest in their own understanding of risk, responsibilities and development of actions for enhanced risk reduction and resilience. We are achieving this through multi-hazard community disaster preparedness, including epidemic, school safety, youth climate action, and community level early action and response mechanisms, and risk communication and community engagement mechanisms. Currently, 23 RC/RC National Societies in Asia Pacific have committed to implementing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) by 2025 in vulnerable communities to reduce risks, adapt to climate change and increase resilience. For example, since 1994 in Vietnam, 237,00 individuals have benefitted from NbS solutions via mangrove restoration, reducing the risk of flooding, increasing their resilience and generating mitigation and economic co-benefits from carbon-capture and livelihood opportunities.

We call on governments and stakeholders to increase their investment in locally led climate-smart DRR action and livelihoods, including investments in School Safety/ School-based DRR, resilient infrastructure (health infrastructure, Nature-based solutions and urban resilience). We further call on governments to establish and/or operationalise DRR and climate 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.

Priority Area Four: Preparedness and Build Back Better

RC/RC National Societies continue to foster community-led risk-informed preparedness and recovery programming. Ensuring we build back better collectively and inclusively, with communities, national and local authorities, regional partners and stakeholders to enhance preparedness for future shocks and forge a safer, more resilient future as a region, is paramount.

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We remain committed to scaling up preparedness, embedding DRR into the Disaster Risk Management continuum, from early action, emergency response, early and long-recovery to ensure that no one is left behind. For example, working with multiple relevant partners, to promote comprehensive and accessible services and referral mechanisms for at risk groups, particularly those at risk of SGBV and displaced populations. The RC/RC National Societies in the Maldives, Philippines, Fiji, and Cambodia for example, are working closely with government to establish Migrant Support Centres, Humanitarian Service Points including healthcare and psycho-social support, legal support, food, shelter and information. In addition, the RC/RC National Societies of Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands are leading various initiatives to strengthen resilience at the local level and support communities adapt and prepare for a changing climate and reduce risks of compound disasters for the most vulnerable.

We call on governments and stakeholders to strengthen systems and to enable evidence informed early warning early action, invest in capacity building and 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. This includes the prioritisation of the adoption and development of joint delivery models and methodologies at the national level, supported by multiple partners to enable implementation of anticipatory action at scale, ensuring multi-sector engagement in integrated programming for preparedness for recovery, and CEA and PGI tools and approaches are integrated throughout.

IFRC Network Call for Accelerated Action: APMCDRR 2022- COP27 and Beyond

For enhanced policy coherence between disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development, the IFRC Network calls upon governments at all levels and stakeholders to join us in the achievement of the following key areas:

1. **PRIORITIZE THE MOST VULNERABLE:** Recognize the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis, prioritize support for those facing most vulnerability, focus on protection and inclusion of all in laws, policies, and plans.
2. **PROMOTE LOCALLY-LED DRR ACTION:** Ensure meaningful engagement and participation, co-design with communities, adopt and implement principles for locally-led action.
3. **INCREASE THE AMOUNT AND ACCESSIBILITY OF CLIMATE AND DRR FINANCE:** Increase attention and finance for adaptation and resilience as well as Loss and Damage, prioritize funding for the countries and communities facing the most vulnerability, including fragile and conflict-affected countries and communities, and make finance more locally accessible
4. **SCALE UP EFFECTIVE DRR ACTION:** Strengthen domestic climate and disaster regulatory frameworks, increase investment in multi-hazard integrated risk management, make action more anticipatory and innovative, develop heatwave action plans and use of nature-based solutions for DRR.

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