



Disasters and Displacement in a Changing Climate:

The Role of Asia Pacific
National Societies

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Saving lives, changing minds.



Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the IFRC to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade. Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world.

Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
 2. Enable healthy and safe living
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace
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² IFRC Migration and Displacement Coordinator, Asia Pacific.

³ IFRC Disaster Law Coordinator, Asia Pacific.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMCDRR	Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction	ISET	Institute for Social and Environmental Transition
APMN	Red Cross Red Crescent Asia Pacific Migration Network	MICIC	Migrants in Countries in Crisis
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CCA	Climate change adaptation	PCBA	Participatory cost-benefit analysis
CEA	Community engagement and accountability	PCCM	Pacific-EU Climate Change and Migration
CPP	Cyclone Preparedness Programme of Bangladesh	PGI	Protection, gender and inclusion
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund	PMI	Indonesian Red Cross / Palang Merah Indonesia
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	RCCC	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
EVCA	Enhanced and electronic vulnerability and capacity assessments	RFL	Restoring family links
FbF	Forecast-based financing	The Movement	The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
FRDP	Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific	UN	United Nations
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome	UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
HLP	Housing, land and property	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change
IDP	Internally displaced person	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IOM	International Organization for Migration	VCA	Vulnerability and capacity assessments
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union		

Executive Summary

Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change has been described as one of the greatest humanitarian challenges of the 21st century.⁴ Asia Pacific Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have a vital role and are already active in addressing this challenge, including through initiatives to prevent and prepare for displacement, to respond to displacement and to support recovery and the attainment of durable solutions for those displaced. National Societies and the IFRC also have a key role in undertaking humanitarian diplomacy in support of those most at risk in the context of disaster displacement.

On average, more than 20 million people are newly displaced every year by sudden-onset hazards including floods, storms, wild fires, extreme winter conditions, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and landslides.⁵ The vast majority of such displacement occurs in the Asia Pacific region.⁶

Displacement can have devastating impacts on those displaced, as well as the communities that receive and support them. Many who are displaced have critical assistance and protection needs, ranging from emergency shelter, health and psychosocial support, access to fresh water and sanitation, protection against violence (including gender-based violence), child protection and longer term support to recover and realize durable solutions. Displacement often disproportionately affects already marginalised and ‘at risk’ groups, including women, children, the elderly, minority groups and those living with disabilities or serious health conditions. Those who are in situations of prolonged or protracted displacement often have serious ongoing needs, and require support to realize durable solutions.

The challenges of disaster displacement, and the humanitarian impacts on those affected, are expected to be amplified by the effects of climate change. The increase in frequency and intensity of sudden-onset hazards is widely expected to lead to increasing levels of displacement and humanitarian need.⁷ Slow-onset hazards linked to climate change are also expected to directly and indirectly lead to further displacement, including those related to increasing temperatures, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, salinisation, glacial retreat, land and forest degradation, biodiversity loss and desertification. Sea-level rise alone is predicted to displace up to 90 million people in the Pacific and East Asia.⁸

It is increasingly recognized that displacement in the context of sudden- and slow-onset hazards will not be the only type of population movement linked to disasters and climate change. Increasing numbers of people migrating in response to the impacts of disasters and climate change and people moving in the context of planned relocations are also widely expected. Asia Pacific National Societies have an important role and are already active in addressing migration and planned relocation in the context of disasters and climate change.

Migration, displacement and planned relocation (often referred to collectively as “human mobility”) linked to disasters and climate change are increasingly addressed in a range of national,

⁴ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

⁵ Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

⁶ See, for example, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Global Internal Displacement Database: <http://internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>.

⁷ See, for example, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Assessment Report, Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg2/index.php?idp=450>.

⁸ Dasgupta, S., Laplante, B., Meisner, C., Wheeler, D., Yan, J., *The impact of sea level rise on developing countries : a comparative analysis (English)*, 2007. Policy, Research working paper; no. WPS 4136. Washington, DC: World Bank, available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/156401468136816684/The-impact-of-sea-level-rise-on-developing-countries-a-comparative-analysis>.

regional and international laws, policies and strategies. These documents and initiatives often recognize that human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change is not only a cross-sectoral challenge, but also requires a cross-sectoral solution. National Societies and the IFRC have important roles and are increasingly engaged in humanitarian diplomacy⁹ initiatives linked to these national, regional and global processes and dialogues.

This report is designed to enhance the collective understanding of Asia Pacific National Societies and the IFRC on the trends, dynamics and humanitarian needs of people on the move in the context of disasters and climate change. The report focuses on the role of Asia Pacific National Societies in the context of displacement, but also addresses the related human mobility trends of migration and planned relocation.

Beyond enhancing knowledge and understanding, the report is also designed to provide guidance for National Societies to individually and collectively enhance their humanitarian action in the context of disasters, displacement and climate change. The report builds upon the latest understanding and expertise on human mobility linked to disasters and climate change. The report also builds on relevant International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement policies, guidance and commitments related to climate change, disaster risk management, disaster law, resilience, protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), migration and displacement. The report contains examples of existing initiatives by Asia Pacific National Societies, demonstrating the diversity and strength of Red Cross Red Crescent action to address this emerging and critical challenge. The examples capture practices from all parts of the Asia Pacific region – from East Asia, from South Asia, from South East Asia, and from the Pacific.

The report is intended to be beneficial across Red Cross and Red Crescent National Society departments, from leadership to disaster management, climate change, health, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), restoring family links (RFL), welfare, migration and beyond. The report is also intended to be useful for representatives from government, regional and global institutions, academia, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies to deepen their understanding of the core mandate and strengths of Asia Pacific National Societies in addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.

⁹ "Humanitarian diplomacy is persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles". IFRC Humanitarian Diplomacy Policy, available at: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/humanitarian-diplomacy>.



Displacement in The Context of Disasters and Climate Change

Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change has been described as one of the greatest humanitarian challenges of the 21st century.¹⁰

Already, on average, more than 20 million people are newly displaced each year by sudden-onset hazards including floods, storms, wild fires, extreme winter conditions, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and landslides.¹¹ In 2017 alone, there were 18.8 million people newly displaced by disasters across 135 countries.¹²

The Asia Pacific region frequently dominates headline figures – with the South and East Asia regions typically the most affected. In 2017, China and the Philippines had the highest numbers of people displaced globally. However, on a per capita basis, Pacific small island states experience some of the highest levels of displacement.¹³ In 2015, Tropical Cyclone Pam displaced approximately a quarter of Vanuatu’s population and more than 50 per cent of the population of Tuvalu.

Currently, the vast majority of displacement is within countries – in other words, most people affected are Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)¹⁴. In 2015, the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda identified at least 50 countries that in recent decades have received or refrained from returning people in the aftermath of disasters.¹⁵ However, the Nansen Initiative equally noted that “current evidence is not sufficient to determine how many people have crossed international borders in disaster contexts”.¹⁶

The vast majority of new displacement is also linked to weather-related hazards – particularly floods, storms, and tropical cyclones.¹⁷

It is important to note that displacement is often driven by a combination of exposure to hazards – both slow-onset and sudden-onset – and levels of vulnerability. This means that, globally, low and lower-middle income countries often suffer disproportionately from new displacement.¹⁸ In 2016, the majority of new displacements took place in high-risk environments characterised by low coping capacity, high levels of socio-economic vulnerability, and high exposure to natural and human made hazards.¹⁹

Population Growth and Urbanization

In the Asia Pacific region, exposure and vulnerability (and resulting displacement) is driven by population growth²⁰ and urbanization – including to highly hazard-prone urban areas. In East Asia and the Pacific, the number of people and assets exposed to floods and cyclones is thought

¹⁰ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

¹¹ “In the nine years since 2008, 227.6 million such displacements have been recorded, or an average of 25.3 million per year.” IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

¹² IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

¹³ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

¹⁴ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

¹⁵ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

¹⁶ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

¹⁷ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

¹⁸ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

¹⁹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

²⁰ Currently, 4.4 billion people – 61 per cent of the global population – live in Asia, a further 39 million people live in the Pacific. Behind Africa, Asia is projected to be the second largest contributor to future global population growth, adding 0.9 billion people between 2015 and 2050. See, for example: United Nations Population, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/population/index.html>.



to have increased by around 70 per cent between 1980 and 2015, largely as a result of urban expansion driven by the region's economic growth.²¹

Exposure and risk in Asia Pacific are also linked to the increasing numbers of people living in low-lying coastal cities and delta regions in South East, South and East Asia.²² This risk is also expected to rise, as the regional coastal population is predicted to double in Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Viet Nam by 2060. The population living in urban floodplains in Asia is also estimated to rise from 30 million to 188 million people by 2060.²³

In the Asia Pacific region, the vulnerability of urban populations – particularly the urban poor – has also increased. Inadequate governance, unevenly distributed economic development and poorly managed urbanization have contributed to the growth of informal settlements and entrenched poverty. In some countries, more than half the population resides in densely-populated slums prone to flooding and which lack basic infrastructure, increasing displacement risk. Overall, an estimated 25 per cent of urban residents across East Asia and the Pacific live in slums and other settlements less able to withstand the impacts of sudden- and slow-onset hazards.²⁴

Cyclical Displacement

A large proportion of displacement in the Asia Pacific region is also cyclical in nature, linked to recurrent hazards such as flooding or other extreme seasonal phenomena. Cyclical displacement can have debilitating effect on resilience, progressively eroding capital including livestock and savings.

Assistance and Protection Needs for those Displaced

Many of those displaced have critical assistance and protection needs, ranging from emergency shelter, food and nutrition support, health and psychosocial support, fresh water and sanitation to longer term support to recover.

²¹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

²² Low-lying coastal cities and deltaic regions in the Southeast, South and East Asian regions are considered to be at particular climate-related risk. Some face high or medium risk from multiple hazards, including seasonal flooding or cyclones. For example, Manila is at high risk from cyclones, earthquakes and flooding, while Kolkata is at high risk from flooding and drought, and medium risk from cyclones.

²³ Foresight, UK Government Office for Science. *Impact of migration on urban destination areas in the context of climate change*, September 2012, available at: <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/documents/foresight-mgec-paper---ec-development-impacts>

²⁴ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

People displaced in the context of sudden-onset hazards may lose family members, endure family separation, lose important documents which limits their access to public services, lose housing, land and property which may take years to recover or receive compensation for, and they may experience immediate and ongoing trauma and psychosocial needs.²⁵

The Importance of Protection, Gender and Inclusion

Displacement and disasters often exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities: gender and other diversity factors, including age, ability, sexual orientation, migration status, health – including both mental and physical health, HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses, social status and ethnicity often shape the extent to which people are at risk and affected by sudden-onset hazards and disasters.²⁶ These challenges can be further entrenched in the aftermath of a disaster where there is unequal access to assistance; discrimination in aid provision; sexual and gender-based violence;²⁷ trafficking; enforced relocation; and unsafe or involuntary return or resettlement.²⁸

Specific support, and enhanced understanding, is also required for those persons in situations of prolonged or protracted displacement following sudden-onset hazards.²⁹ For example, two years after Nepal's major earthquake disaster in 2015 more than 70 per cent of the affected population were estimated to still be displaced and living in temporary shelters.³⁰

Beyond the needs of displaced people, host communities and those who receive and support displaced people also require specific understanding and support.³¹

It is also important to recognize that displaced people may not always be the most at risk. Those left behind may be just as vulnerable or even more so. For example, flooding in Mumbai has revealed how many urban poor cannot afford to move out of dilapidated buildings which are at risk of collapse during flood events, leading to loss of life. These individuals and communities are sometimes referred to as “trapped populations”.

Human Rights, Security and Sustainable Development Impacts

Although not specifically addressed in this report, it is also noted that beyond immediate and ongoing humanitarian needs, high levels of displacement may also have negative impacts on sustainable development and may undermine broader development gains.³²

Displacement may also have negative impacts on human rights, negative security consequences³³ and may in some cases, have existential consequences – especially for small island states.³⁴

²⁵ Ferris, E. 'On the Record: Displacement, Natural Disasters, and Human Rights'. *Brookings*, October 2008, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/displacement-natural-disasters-and-human-rights>.

²⁶ IFRC. *Protection, Gender, Inclusion and Disaster Law: Snapshot 2018*, available at: <http://www.rcrc-resilience-southeastasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PGI-and-DL-Snapshot-2018.pdf>.

²⁷ See, for example, IFRC. *Unseen Unheard: Gender-Based Violence in Disasters – Asia Pacific Case Studies*, available at: <http://www.rcrc-resilience-southeastasia.org/document/unseen-unheard-gender-based-violence-in-disasters-asia-pacific-case-studies>.

²⁸ Ferris, E. 'On the Record: Displacement, Natural Disasters, and Human Rights'. *Brookings*, October 2008, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/displacement-natural-disasters-and-human-rights>.

²⁹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

³⁰ See, for example, The Conversation. *Two years after the earthquake, why has Nepal failed to recover?* May 2017, available at: <https://theconversation.com/two-years-after-the-earthquake-why-has-nepal-failed-to-recover-77552>.

³¹ Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement. *IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of persons in Situations of Natural Disaster*, January 2011, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ecd1e733be.html>.

³² See for example, UNISDR. *Words into Action guidelines – Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience* (Public consultation version), available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/58821>.

³³ Much debate has surrounded the link between climate and environmental change and conflict, but it is generally agreed that while these changes do not singularly cause conflict, they have the potential to “exacerbate or catalyse conflict in conjunction with other factors”. See, Mixed Migration Platform. *Migration, displacement, and the environment: A Perspective from the Middle East*, April 2017, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/migration-displacement-and-environment-perspective-middle-east-briefing-paper-03-april>.

³⁴ See, for example, *UN Human Rights Council Resolution on Human rights and climate change*, 22 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/35/20.



Climate Change as a “Threat Multiplier” for Displacement

The challenge of addressing the needs of individuals and communities in the context of displacement driven by sudden-onset hazards is set to be further compounded by the effects of climate change. Climate change is recognized as the ultimate “threat multiplier” in the 21st century.³⁵ In 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recorded “high agreement” that climate change is projected to increase the displacement of people over the 21st century.³⁶

Already, the vast majority of displacement is linked to weather-related hazards,³⁷ particularly storms and floods. The increase in frequency and intensity of sudden-onset hazards linked with climate change is expected to lead to higher levels of exposure and decreased resilience, resulting in increased displacement and humanitarian need. The Asia Pacific region already includes many of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. A recent study has found that typhoons affecting South and Southeast Asia have intensified by 12-15 per cent over the past 37 years, with the proportion of category 4 and 5 storms having doubled or tripled.³⁸

Life-Saving Evacuations

Importantly, however, not all displacement in the context of sudden-onset hazards has negative humanitarian consequences. A significant proportion of the 25 million people newly displaced each year are part of necessary and life-saving evacuations.³⁹ Many of those displaced return home within a matter of days.⁴⁰ For these people, displacement is short-term and occurs in a relatively safe and orderly manner. Indeed, global mortality rates in the context of sudden-onset hazards have declined as more effective early warning systems and evacuations centres are invested in.

³⁵ IFRC. *Climate change and the Red Cross and Red Crescent*, 2015, available at: <https://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/files/1297200-IFRC-climate%20change%20report-EN-MD.pdf>. ³⁶ IPCC. *Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers*, available at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>.

³⁷ In 2016, 24 million people were newly displaced by disaster. Ninety-seven percent of this displacement was related to climate- and weather-related hazards. IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

³⁸ See, for example, The Guardian. Asian typhoons becoming more intense, study finds, 5 September 2016, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/05/asian-typhoons-becoming-more-intense-study-finds>.

³⁹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

⁴⁰ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

However, evacuations may still take a toll on people's physical and psychological well-being.⁴¹ Around 100,000 evacuees fleeing an impending volcanic eruption in Bali, Indonesia in 2017 were reported to be suffering from fatigue and stress, and from cold and uncomfortable living conditions in their shelters.⁴² Evacuations may also separate people from their livelihoods, homes and other assets.⁴³

Slow-Onset Hazards and Displacement

Further, the current global data on displacement linked to disasters (revealing that on average more than 20 million people per year are newly displaced) only includes those affected by sudden-onset hazards. Global data does not include those displaced in the context of slow-onset hazards, such as drought, environmental degradation, sea-level rise, increasing temperatures and glacial retreat.⁴⁴ Global data also does not count those affected in the context of technological and biological hazards, such as industrial accidents and epidemics (except when they are triggered by a natural hazard).⁴⁵

Although robust data does not exist, there is an increasing understanding that slow-onset hazards linked to climate change will directly and indirectly lead to further displacement, including through increasing temperatures, sea-level rise, ocean acidification, salinisation, glacial retreat, land and forest degradation, biodiversity loss and desertification. Slow-onset hazards may turn into sudden-onset hazards (for example when sea-level rise turns into flooding) driving displacement. Slow-onset hazards may also erode a community or environment's capacity to withstand sudden-onset hazards, leading to displacement. Slow onset hazards can also hinder the availability of and access to land, livelihoods and basic services, including fresh water, food and shelter, also leading to displacement.

Current estimates demonstrate the scale of the challenge related to slow-onset hazards and displacement. Sea-level rise alone and the resulting loss of land and livelihoods is expected to force tens or hundreds of millions of people away from low-lying coastal areas, deltas and islands. In East Asia and the Pacific, a World Bank study has revealed that a one-meter sea-level rise may displace approximately 37 million people, and a three-metre rise would displace 90 million people⁴⁶ – equivalent to the entire population of Vietnam. It is further estimated that rising global temperatures will mean that – by the end of the 21st century – 30 to 60 million people will be living in areas too hot for the human body to function if the average temperature rises by 1.5°Celsius. The effects of ocean acidification and ocean warming pose an increasingly serious threat to marine ecosystems in the Coral Triangle, on which more than 100 million people living in the region rely for coastal protection and food security.

⁴¹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

⁴² IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

⁴³ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

⁴⁴ UNFCCC. *Technical Paper: Slow Onset Events*, 26 November 2012, UN Doc. FCCC/TP/2012/7.

⁴⁵ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

⁴⁶ World Bank. *Risk of sea-level rise: high stakes for East Asia & Pacific region countries*, March 2018, available at: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/risk-of-sea-level-rise-high-stakes-for-east-asia-pacific-region-countries>.



The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies in Addressing Displacement in The Context of Disasters and Climate Change

Asia Pacific Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have a critical role to play and are already active in addressing displacement in the context of disasters and climate change. The role of Asia Pacific National Societies is centred around: prevention and preparation for displacement; response to displacement; support for recovery and the attainment of durable solutions; and, humanitarian diplomacy initiatives.

Preventing and Preparing for Displacement

The Movement's primary goal is to protect people against arbitrary displacement and to reduce the risk of displacement caused by natural and man-made hazards – Movement Policy on Internal Displacement (2009)

As a key strategy to reduce migratory pressures on disaster-prone communities, National Societies and the International Federation shall focus on disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness – IFRC Policy on Migration (2009)

Preventing Displacement

The initiatives of Asia Pacific National Societies in the context of prevention reflect the primary goal of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the context of displacement – which is to protect against displacement, and reduce the risk of displacement.⁴⁷ More specifically, the approach of the Movement is that “displacement should be avoided and that affected communities should be supported to remain where they are – as long as their safety, physical integrity and dignity are not jeopardized and that staying is in accordance with their wishes.”⁴⁸

The approach of Asia Pacific National Societies to prevent displacement in the context of disasters and climate change includes initiatives linked to Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA), through taking steps to reduce exposure to hazards and enhance resilience through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) initiatives.

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments

A key initial step in preventing displacement is through integrated risk assessments that are displacement-sensitive and ‘climate-smart’.

Globally, it is increasingly recognized that evidence and data collected on disaster displacement as part of DRR, preparedness, response and recovery activities “provide a vital evidence-base for addressing disaster displacement risk. It is used to inform risk and impact assessments, early warning systems, preparedness and response plans, humanitarian interventions, development plans, land-use plans, climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, environmental management, migration management and the promotion of human rights”.⁴⁹

A key tool that Asia Pacific National Societies can use to assess a community's risks of displacement are Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA).⁵⁰

Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments use various participatory tools to gauge exposure and capacity to resist natural hazards. VCA can be an integral part of disaster preparedness and can

⁴⁷ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁴⁸ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁴⁹ UNISDR. *Words into Action Guidelines – Disaster Displacement: How to Reduce Risk, Address Impacts and Strengthen Resilience* (Public consultation version), available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/58821>.

⁵⁰ IFRC Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA): <http://www.ifrc.org/vca>.



contribute to the creation of community-based disaster preparedness programmes at the rural and urban grass-roots level. VCA enables local priorities to be identified and appropriate action taken to reduce disaster risk and assists in the design and development of programmes that are mutually supportive and responsive to the needs of the people most closely concerned.

The specific aims of VCA are to:

- Assess risks and hazards facing communities and the capacities they have for dealing with them;
- Involve communities, local authorities and humanitarian and development organizations in the assessment from the outset;
- Draw up action plans to prepare for and respond to the identified risks;
- Identify risk-reduction activities to prevent or lessen the effects of expected hazards, risks and vulnerabilities.

VCA is complementary to national and sub-national risk, hazard, vulnerability and capacity mapping exercises that identify communities most at risk. A VCA is then undertaken in these communities to diagnose the specific areas of risk and vulnerability and determine what action can be taken to address them. To complete the circle, what a VCA unearths at the local level can provide a valuable indication of national and sub-national vulnerabilities and capacities.

Support is also being provided by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre for VCA practitioners who wish to consider climate change in their work with communities.⁵¹

⁵¹ Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. *Considering climate change in Vulnerability Capacity Assessments (VCAs)*, October 2010, available at: <https://climatecentre.org/news/289/considering-climate-change-in-vulnerability-capacity-assessments-vcas>.



Recently, the enhanced and electronic VCA (EVCA) has been developed, which moves the assessment process from a tools-centred approach to a risk-determinant centred approach. Additionally, the EVCA more systematically mainstreams climate and gender and diversity considerations, contingency planning and includes further guidance on how National Societies can support the implementation of the community resilience plan.⁵² The draft EVCA specifically includes the importance of considering the needs of migrants, including regular and irregular migrants and stateless migrants. The EVCA also notes displacement as a specific impact of disasters and hazards.⁵³

A number of National Societies are already including past and future displacement risk associated with disasters and climate change in VCA [see *VCA and displacement risk in the Pacific*].

VCA and displacement risk in the Pacific

In the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (VCA) carried out by the **Solomon Islands Red Cross**, the risk of forced displacement linked to the effects of climate change has arisen on a number of occasions. For example, the displacement or relocation of Pileni islanders arose as a potential climate change adaptation measure to address concern that, at current rates of erosion, the island will not be able to sustain continued habitation in twenty years' time.

⁵² See, for example: IFRC. What is EVCA? 2018. <https://www.ifrcvca.org/what-is-evca>.

⁵³ See, for example: IFRC. What is EVCA? 2018. <https://www.ifrcvca.org/what-is-evca>.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Initiatives

The importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) to preventing displacement was underscored by the chair of the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico:

*The development of disaster risk reduction strategies should consider regional and cross-border perspectives and include provisions that aim to prevent displacement attributed to disasters and reduce displacement risk, address the protection needs of displaced people and promote durable solutions to displacement.*⁵⁴

In implementing DRR initiatives to prevent displacement, it is important to recognize that displacement is often driven by a combination of exposure to the hazard and levels of vulnerability. This means that initiatives by Asia Pacific National Societies to prevent the conditions that lead to displacement can be targeted to reducing exposure to natural hazards and by reducing vulnerability or enhancing resilience of individuals, households and communities.

The IFRC has three main strategies to reduce disaster risk:

- i) To strengthen the preparedness and capacities of communities so that they are in a better position to respond when a disaster occurs;
- ii) To promote activities and actions that mitigate the adverse effects of hazards; and
- iii) To protect development projects such as health facilities from the impact of disasters.⁵⁵

The IFRC Framework on Community Resilience has the principle objective of: “establishing a foundation on which all IFRC programmes, projects, interventions and actions, across the contexts, which contribute to the strengthening of resilient communities can be created, developed and sustained”.⁵⁶ The IFRC Framework on Community Resilience is supported by the Road Map to Community Resilience.⁵⁷

The IFRC Climate Guide provides step-by-step guidance for disaster risk management and community risk reduction and takes into account displacement risks.⁵⁸

The IFRC and the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) guide on *Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation Planning: Tools for Prioritizing Potential Solutions* complements the IFRC Climate Guide and provides step-by-step instructions for the implementation of an approach for prioritizing solutions where the Participatory Cost-Benefit Analysis (PCBA) is a tool that allows communities to compare the costs and benefits of several identified disaster risk reduction measures, including migration and relocation.⁵⁹

The Tools for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction, produced by IFRC and the ProVention Consortium provides a series of 14 Guidance Notes for use by development organizations in

⁵⁴ UNISDR. Chair's Summary: From Commitment to Action, Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, Cancun, May 2017, available at: http://www.unisdr.org/files/53989_chairsummaryofthe2017globalplator.pdf.

⁵⁵ The IFRC's approach to disaster risk reduction: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/risk-reduction>.

⁵⁶ IFRC Framework for Community Resilience, 2014, available at: <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/ifrc-framework-community-resilience/>

⁵⁷ IFRC. Road map to community resilience: Operationalizing the Framework for Community Resilience, 2016, available at: http://preparecenter.org/sites/default/files/1310403-road_map_to_community_resilience-en-04.pdf.

⁵⁸ IFRC. Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Guide, 2007, available at https://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/files/RCRC_climateguide.pdf.

⁵⁹ IFRC & ISET. Community-based disaster risk reduction and adaptation planning: Tools for prioritizing potential solutions, 2015, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/community-based-disaster-risk-reduction-and-adaptation-planning-tools-prioritizing>

adapting programming, project appraisals and evaluation tools to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development work in hazard-prone countries.⁶⁰ It looks at displacement both as an underlying vulnerability factor and as a risk related to development and to hazards.

In some cases, National Societies are already engaged in integrated community-based DRR that promotes resilience to hazards, in an effort to reduce displacement [see *Multi-Level Community-Based DRR*].

Multi-Level Community-Based DRR to address displacement risk

The **Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)** is involved in multi-level community-based DRR aimed at preventing the displacement of nomadic herders to urban centres arising from the combined adverse effects of drought and severe winters (Dzud). At the household level, the MRCS has sought to promote resilience and reduce displacement through the building of better livestock shelters to prevent livestock deaths during winter. MRCS also encourages herders to stockpile hay and feed for the winter months. At the community level, MRCS has organized groups of up to 11 households to pool resources during the winter months. Other DRR activities have included livelihoods diversification, teaching sewing and barber skills, as well as how to make dairy and leather products to provide alternative livestock-based income streams.⁶¹

The importance of Protection, Gender and Inclusion perspectives for displacement sensitive DRR and CCA

When assessing vulnerabilities it is important to consider people who are likely to face higher displacement risk as well as those who face high levels of disaster risk more generally.⁶²

The approach of the IFRC is that “we cannot remain true to our principles unless we are able to reach all vulnerable people effectively and in a non-discriminatory and equitable manner.” This approach is reflected in the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013–2020, which reflects the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.⁶³

The IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues (and its Explanatory Note) provides direction to IFRC Secretariat and all Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies to ensure that all actions promote gender equality and respect for diversity, and are non-discriminatory towards people of all ages and backgrounds. The Strategic Framework complements the IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2010–2020.⁶⁴

Further guidance for National Societies is contained in the IFRC Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity.⁶⁵ Specific to DRR, the IFRC Note on Gender and Diversity in Disaster Risk Reduction provides further support to National Societies.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ IFRC & ProVention Consortium. Tools for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction: Guidance Notes for Development Organizations, 2007, available at: <http://www.proventionconsortium.net/?pageid=37&publicationid=132#132>

⁶¹ IFRC. *Red Cross Red Crescent Disaster Risk Reduction in Action Case Studies: Winter shelters for rural herder communities*, June 2018, available at: http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/06/CaseStudy2_Mongolia-Resilience-Final.pdf

⁶² UNISDR. *Words into Action Guidelines – Disaster displacement: How to reduce risk, address impacts and strengthen resilience*, 2018.

⁶³ IFRC Inclusion: Gender and diversity: <http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/inclusion/inclusion-gender-and-diversity/>

⁶⁴ IFRC Inclusion: Gender and diversity: <http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/inclusion/inclusion-gender-and-diversity/>

⁶⁵ IFRC. *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming*, 2015, available at: <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Photos/Secretariat/201505/Gender%20Diversity%20MSCs%20Emergency%20Programming%20HR3.pdf>

⁶⁶ IFRC. *Snapshot: Focus on gender and diversity in disaster risk reduction*, available at: http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/Snapshot_Web.pdf



Some National Societies are undertaking DRR initiatives in complex displacement contexts, including for example reaching displaced and host communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh [see *DRR in Complex Displacement Contexts*].

DRR in Complex Displacement Contexts

As of March 2018 more than one million displaced people from Myanmar are estimated to be living in the coastal area of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar is prone to disasters and has been hit by more than three cyclones in the past three years. The majority of the displaced people have sheltered under tarpaulins and bamboo structures on steep slopes and in low, flood-prone areas. The difficult terrain of the hills, combined with the clearing of forest cover has increased the likelihood of erosion, landslides and floods which are likely to bury or wash away the flimsy make-shift shelters and their inhabitants when monsoon and cyclone seasons arrive. Evacuation for the displaced persons is currently not an option due to scarcity of land, difficulty to move a large population and lack of strong structures to serve as cyclone shelters. Therefore, disaster readiness and emergency preparedness interventions are being considered as life-saving assistance in this context.

In this complex context, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, with support from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has:⁶⁷

- Engaged the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) of Bangladesh, to expand the current existing preparedness systems to the camp settlements.
- Established and expanded the CPP system within the camp settlements and recognized the camp residents as temporary CPP Camp Volunteers.
- Supported coordination systems for temporary CPP camp volunteer units, within the overall humanitarian and camp coordination structures.
- Identified camp volunteers and provided training on basic disaster preparedness and community risk assessment; early warning system protocols within the camps; preparedness actions and role of CPP camp volunteers in disaster preparedness efforts in the camps. This has included conducting mock drills.

⁶⁷ IFRC. *Red Cross Red Crescent Disaster Risk Reduction in Action Case Studies: Preparing and reducing risks of disasters to displaced communities*, June 2018, available at: http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/06/CaseStudy17_Bangladesh_Cox-Bazar-Final.pdf.

The importance of ‘climate-smart’ and displacement-sensitive DRR

As the vast majority of displacement in the Asia Pacific region is linked to weather-related hazards, it is critical that DRR initiatives should be “climate smart” and integrate risks associated with a changing climate.⁶⁸

Climate Smart Disaster Risk Reduction

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre has developed a range of tools and resources to help National Societies be climate-smart in their decision-making and risk-reduction work.⁶⁹ These include the Minimum Standards for Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which serve as an essential bridge between national climate policy and local capacity for DRR. These can be used by national actors to incorporate community action on DRR into national adaptation strategies.

The Minimum Standards have also been complemented by, for example, the Australian Red Cross Guidance Note on Gender and Climate Change. The Gender Guidance Note highlights that “as natural disasters become more frequent, the number of women in displacement camps may increase. Women in such camps, especially women living alone, are vulnerable to sexual violence”.⁷⁰

The IFRC and National Societies have also recently taken steps to further reinforce collective efforts around climate change, including through adopting the IFRC Framework for Climate Action that specifically includes an indicator of success as “fewer people are displaced because of natural disasters and the adverse effects of climate change” [see *IFRC Framework for Climate Action towards 2020*].

IFRC Framework for Climate Action towards 2020: addressing displacement risk

In its Framework for Climate Action towards 2020 the IFRC committed to scale-up its contribution to tackling climate change and seeks to make its programmes and operations ‘climate-smart’. This includes adaptation measures to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of communities to the impacts of climate change.

Success under the Framework’s commitment to “Support climate change adaptation and adopt climate-smart practice” includes that “fewer people are displaced because of natural disasters and the adverse effects of climate change”.

To address risks of displacement, the IFRC Framework for Climate Action promotes the following activities for National Societies:

- Support community-based actions for DRR and CCA when environmental degradation make living conditions increasingly precarious or livelihoods increasingly eroded as a result of increased climate variability.
- Support disaster preparedness and resilience building at community level to alleviate pressures that can induce people to migrate against their will and desire.
- Minimize forced displacement by consistently investing resources in food security, livelihoods, health, shelter, DRR, CCA to increase the resilience of affected communities.
- Work with partners and governments to ensure that any relocation that is planned as a climate change adaptation measure is done through a participatory and consultative process with affected communities (see *section below: Planned Relocation*).

⁶⁸ IFRC Framework for Climate Action Towards 2020, 2017.

⁶⁹ Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, How to be climate-smart: <https://www.climatecentre.org/resources-games/how-to-be-climate-smart>.

⁷⁰ Australian Red Cross Protection, gender and inclusion guidance notes, available at: <https://www.redcross.org.au/about-us/how-we-help/international-aid-resource-centre/protection-gender-and-inclusion-guidance-notes>.



Preparing for Displacement

Asia Pacific National Societies are also active in initiatives to prepare for displacement. Preparedness initiatives by the IFRC and Asia Pacific National Societies include: early warning systems and pre-emptive evacuations; Forecast-Based Financing and Disaster Law initiatives, including Housing, Land and Property (HLP) mapping.

Early Warning Systems and Pre-Emptive Evacuations

The East Asia and Pacific regions have succeeded in reducing mortality linked with disasters, in particular, as a result of the introduction of disaster risk reduction measures, including early warning systems and pre-emptive evacuations by several countries. In many instances, Asia Pacific National Societies, as auxiliary to authorities, have supported early warning mechanisms, including pre-emptive evacuations.

However, evacuations may still take a toll on people's physical and psychological well-being.⁷¹ Evacuations may also separate people from their livelihoods, homes and other assets.⁷² In these contexts, Asia Pacific National Societies have been active in supporting evacuees with protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) initiatives, psychosocial support (PSS) initiatives and livelihood support [see *Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) support to address the needs of evacuees*].

⁷¹ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

⁷² IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018*, May 2018.

Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) support to address the needs of evacuees

Around 100,000 evacuees fleeing an impending volcanic eruption in Bali, Indonesia were reported to be suffering from fatigue and stress, and from cold and uncomfortable living conditions in their shelters.⁷³ The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) provided evacuees with psychosocial support along with health awareness and hygiene promotion reaching evacuees across all nine affected districts. PSS activities for children were conducted including ‘play therapy’ and drawing while for women, PMI instigated craft sessions which were also designed to contribute to their livelihood generation and recovery. To complement the PSS activities, PMI established a temporary public library and opened a book donation programme to supplement the book collection, especially books and magazines suitable for children, receiving enormous support from other partners. PMI ensured that protection, gender and inclusion issues were mainstreamed throughout the response by adapting a checklist developed by IFRC to ensure protection, gender and inclusion issues were identified and addressed. A specific PGI expert was deployed to support the mainstreaming of protection, gender and inclusion in all sectors of the PMI operations, as well as building the capacity of PMI chapters and branches to understand and implement PGI approaches.

Forecast Based Financing

Forecast-based Financing (FbF) is one tool that is increasingly being used to prepare populations at risk to anticipate disasters based on forecasts and act before a hazard becomes a disaster. Based on improved weather forecasts, local authorities are setting up standard operating procedures (SOP) to extend humanitarian assistance to communities when a disaster threat becomes imminent.

Forecast-based Financing works on the principle of ‘early warning, early action’ and reduces the costs of humanitarian assistance as local communities improve their longer-term resilience strategies.

FbF is especially relevant for displacement linked to disasters, especially as the vast majority of displacement is in response to weather related hazards, which are to an extent predictable and able to be forecast.

Forecast-Based Financing and Cash-Based Programming in Bangladesh

The **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society** activated its Early Action Protocol for floods in July/August 2017 and distributed cash to affected people supported by its FbF project. An unconditional cash grant was chosen as the early action to give people the flexibility to prepare individually for the impending flood and take the measures they themselves consider to be appropriate, which ranged from protecting vulnerable assets and fortifying their shelter to evacuation of livestock. The cash grant was distributed based on the trigger that the flood-water level would cross the ‘Danger Level’ as defined by the communities. The post-distribution evaluation revealed that households benefiting from FbF cash were less likely to have to take out high-interest loans, were more food-secure during the disaster period, and less likely to feel stressed or unhappy. In the Asia Pacific region, FbF initiatives are also being developed and/or implemented by Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), Nepal Red Cross Society, Mongolian Red Cross, Philippine Red Cross, Solomon Islands Red Cross and Vietnam Red Cross Society.



Disaster Law and Policy for Effective Preparedness

Laws and regulations serve as a foundation for building community resilience. They are essential to reducing existing risks posed by natural hazards, preventing new risks from arising and making people safer. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls for a renewed focus on reviewing and strengthening legal frameworks.⁷⁴

Disaster Law Handbook and Checklist

Since 2012, the IFRC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have been working on a joint project to research, compare and consult on the efforts of various countries to strengthen how their laws support the reduction of disaster risks, particularly at the community level. In June 2014, a major new study was launched by IFRC and UNDP which examined 31 countries. In December 2015, a new tool, The Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction and its accompanying guide, The Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction, were launched to provide practical guidance on this area of law to lawmakers, officials, and practitioners. In particular, guidance is provided on how to review and improve laws and regulations to ensure DRR is prioritized in all sectors, including disaster-related relocation, and at all levels with clear mandates and accountability frameworks.⁷⁵

Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the IFRC are currently supporting Disaster Risk Management legislative review processes in Lao PDR and Fiji. These review processes are highlighting the importance of integrating displacement – and other human mobility considerations – into relevant disaster legislation and policy.

⁷⁴ IFRC Disaster law, see: <http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/disaster-law/>.

⁷⁵ IFRC and UNDP. *The Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction (together with the Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction)*, 2015, available at: <https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Photos/Secretariat/201511/Handbook%20on%20law%20and%20DRR%20LR.pdf>.

Disaster Law and IDRL

IFRC and OCHA's Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance is intended to assist states to strengthen their legal preparedness for international disaster cooperation.⁷⁶ It is built upon, and is intended as a supplement to, the IFRC Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance that include the review and development of immigration laws to accommodate displacement situations in disaster contexts.⁷⁷ It is a tool for voluntary use by disaster management officials and/or legislators who wish to develop domestic legislation, regulations, and/or procedures in their countries for managing potential future international disaster assistance.

Housing, Land and Property Mapping

Since September 2016, IFRC and the Australian Red Cross have conducted a mapping of housing, land and property (HLP) rights in 12 Asia Pacific countries. The main output of the HLP Mapping Project is a HLP profile for each country. The country profiles provide a quick, targeted understanding of the tenure landscape and help to identify potential HLP issues, including identifying vulnerabilities that may need to be considered in humanitarian response. The country profiles have the potential to support agencies to deliver stronger, more equitable and more consistent emergency response on the ground. To date, the country profiles have been shared by the Shelter Cluster to cluster partners in the 2018 Cyclone Gita response (Tonga), 2018 Ambae Volcano response (Vanuatu) and in draft form for the 2017 Floods in Bangladesh, to help guide prioritization of the most at risk groups in affected communities, including those displaced by disasters.

Responding to Displacement

The approach of the Movement in the context of displacement is to protect people against arbitrary displacement and to reduce the risk of displacement caused by natural and man-made hazards.⁷⁸ However, the Movement also takes the approach that:

*If people are nevertheless displaced, the Movement takes action, particularly during acute crises when essential needs are no longer met, regardless of the duration, for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of the individuals.*⁷⁹

Asia Pacific National Societies have a critical role to play and are already active in initiatives to respond to the displacement of populations in disaster contexts. This response is often centred around assistance and protection, and includes those displaced within their own country, as well as across international borders. This support also addresses the needs of those affected by displacement, including host communities.

Currently, the vast majority of displacement across the globe linked to sudden-onset hazards is within countries – in other words, most people affected are Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).⁸⁰ However, smaller numbers of people displaced across borders in response to disasters have also been identified.⁸¹

⁷⁶ IFRC, IPU and OCHA. *Model Act for the Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance*, March 2013, available at: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/IDRL/MODEL%20ACT%20ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁷⁷ IFRC. *Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance*, November 2007, available at: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines/>.

⁷⁸ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁷⁹ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁸⁰ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

⁸¹ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.



Internal Displacement

We in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement serve all those affected by internal displacement — the people actually displaced, host communities and others — and make decisions according to the most pressing needs for humanitarian services – Movement Policy on Internal Displacement (2009)

Asia Pacific National Societies regularly provide assistance and protection to those displaced internally by disasters. This includes responding to people displaced and living dispersed within host communities or grouped in evacuation centres, camps or camp-like settings, and whether in rural or urban environments.

In many assistances, National Societies explicitly view and list displacement as a priority criterion for assistance and protection [see *Responding to the needs of displaced communities in China*].

Responding to the needs of displaced communities in China

In July 2018, heavy and continuous rainfall caused flooding in most parts of Sichuan and the southeast of Gansu Provinces in China. The flooding has affected more than 1.3 million people, with more than 220,000 people being evacuated and resettled. In response, the **Red Cross Society of China (RCSC)** provided assistance and relief to affected communities, noting that priority would be given to “families most affected by the floods and landslides and displaced from their homes”.⁸²

During the emergency phase of displacement, initiatives to support displaced people often include emergency shelter, access to fresh water and sanitation, emergency health services, protection of the most at risk and restoring family links (RFL).

Protection, Gender and Inclusion Responses to Internal Displacement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement seeks to ensure a response that covers assistance and protection needs and identifies sectors of the population that are particularly vulnerable to the risk and effect of displacement and whose specific needs and rights must be promptly recognized and responded to. Special attention should be given to age, gender and other factors of diversity that increase their vulnerability – Movement Policy on Internal Displacement (2009)

To further guide National Societies in the importance of undertaking a protection, gender and inclusion-sensitive approach to internal displacement, the IFRC Minimum Standard Commitments to Gender and Diversity in Emergency Programming provide relevant guidance to National Societies.

As recognized by the ‘Migrants in Countries in Crisis’ (MICIC) initiative⁸³ a protection, gender and inclusion-effective response may also include responding to the displacement of migrants, including irregular migrants. This is particularly important as the Asia Pacific region is a region of high mobility of temporary, low-paid migrant workers.

Access to assistance for migrant workers in Thailand

During the 2011 floods in Bangkok, the **Thai Red Cross Society** ensured that hundreds of migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR who worked in local factories and on construction sites in affected areas received much needed supplies. “Migrant workers are the most vulnerable. Because they sometimes work illegally, they are not on lists. They don’t exist, so they don’t get help,” Dr Pichit Siriwan, former Deputy Director of Thai Red Cross Society, Relief and Community Health Bureau.⁸⁴

Beyond the emergency phase, initiatives of Asia Pacific National Societies include, for example, support to access basic services for displaced populations, social cohesion, livelihoods and education support [see *Access to Services for Displaced Persons in Mongolia*].

⁸² See, IFRC Emergency Plan of Action – China: Floods, DREF No. MDRCN006, July 2018, available at: <http://adore.ifrc.org/Download.aspx?FileId=207064>.

⁸³ Migrants in Countries in Crisis, more information available at: <https://micicinitiative.iom.int>.

⁸⁴ IFRC, Thai Red Cross supports migrant families following floods in Bangkok, November 2011, available at: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/asia-pacific/thailand/thailands-invisible-flood-victims>.



Access to Services for Displaced Persons in Mongolia

The **Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)** has assisted displaced nomadic herders to obtain national identity cards so that they can access educational, health and other services from the government. As the displaced herders live in traditional tents which are very thin, MRCS also provides fuel and insulation. Volunteers have been trained to provide psychosocial support services (PSS) to vulnerable boys and girls who have experienced fear and anxiety due to their displacement.

Cross-Border Displacement

Currently, the vast majority of displacement across the globe linked to sudden-onset hazards is within countries – in other words, most people affected are internally displaced persons (IDP).⁸⁵ In 2015, the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda identified at least 50 countries that in recent decades have received or refrained from returning people in the aftermath of disasters,⁸⁶ however, equally noted that “current evidence is not sufficient to determine how many people have crossed international borders in disaster contexts”.⁸⁷

Although there are currently only small numbers of people crossing borders in the context of disasters and climate change, there are two key concerns for these individuals. The first is that as the effects of climate change intensify, more people are expected to be displaced and it is possible that we will also see increasing numbers of people displaced across borders. The second is that there is a legal “protection gap” for those people displaced across borders by disasters and climate change [see *Climate Refugees?*].

⁸⁵ IDMC. *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017*, May 2017.

⁸⁶ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

⁸⁷ The Nansen Initiative. *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015.

Climate Refugees?

Although the phrase “climate refugees” has become quite common in political and media discourse, it is important to note that the vast majority of people who are displaced by disaster and the effects of climate change are not “refugees”. This is because the term refugee has a specific legal definition and meaning that does not cover the majority of people fleeing disasters and climate change. In part, this is because most people who are displaced and displaced within their own country, and to be recognized as a refugee an individual must have already crossed an international border. This is also because the majority of people fleeing disasters and climate change cannot be said to be fleeing “persecution” as it is understood under international law. This has led to a number of organizations – including the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) advising that the term “climate refugee” is misleading.

Although it is important to recognize the legal protection gap for people displaced across international borders by disasters and climate change, it is equally important to recognize that this should not preclude Asia Pacific National Societies offering assistance and protection to those displaced. This is because the approach of the Movement to those displaced across an international border is strictly humanitarian and based on need – the approach of the Movement is to provide assistance and protection “irrespective of a person’s legal status, type or category”.⁸⁸

Although the Movement acts irrespective of legal status, type or category, it is important to recognize that on either side of the border, the circumstances and humanitarian needs of the displaced populations will be different.

The approach of the Movement also emphasizes the importance of coordinated and cooperative action between National Societies on both sides of a border:

In contexts where an association exists between internal displacement and displacement across international borders, National Societies shall aim at a humanitarian response that is coordinated under a cross-border strategy. Cross-border coordination is essential in order to ensure that relief provided on either side of the border aims at durable collective solutions.

Supporting Recovery and the Attainment of Durable Solutions

Supporting Recovery

Recovery programming includes initiatives that go beyond the provision of immediate relief and, for example, assist with the rebuilding of homes, lives and services, with the aim of strengthening resilience and capacity to cope with future disasters.

It is recognized by the IFRC that “just restoring the pre-disaster status quo may inadvertently perpetuate vulnerability”.⁸⁹

The approach of the IFRC is that whatever the nature of the disaster – flood, earthquake, industrial accident or civil disturbance – there is an opportunity to link and integrate relief, rehabilitation and development. To do so effectively requires an analysis of the broader political, social and economic context. In structural crises, for instance, the provision of emergency relief should not create social or economic distortions. In a protracted disaster, there may be a need to

⁸⁸ IFRC Policy on Migration, 2009.

⁸⁹ IFRC, From crisis to recovery: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/recovery>.



rehabilitate livelihoods even while the emergency is ongoing. Root causes need to be identified and exposed.⁹⁰

For some Asia Pacific National Societies, recovery phase interventions have specifically included a range of activities to prevent future displacement.

Resilient Housing for Displaced People

In recovery-phase operations following the 2010 mega-floods, the **Pakistan Red Crescent Society** engaged local skilled people to build more hazard-proof houses with Pakistan Red Crescent volunteers' support. Houses were built with raised platforms and constructed out of timber instead of mud-brick, making households more resilient to future displacement. In response and recovery to Tropical Cyclone Winston, **Fiji Red Cross Society** initiated a 'build back better' programme for those affected and displaced by the cyclone. This programme involved 'core shelters' designed and built to withstand future tropical cyclones. Fiji Red Cross also arranged for a tour by a puppeteer to put on shows for around 1,000 children, many of whom had lost their homes in the cyclone and were attending school in tents after their schools were also badly damaged. The show incorporated messages about keeping safe and healthy.

Resilient Infrastructure for Displaced Communities

In response to flooding in 2016, the **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society** installed elevated tube wells and toilets in some villages, ensuring that people can have access to clean drinking water and sanitation during future flood events, and limiting the number of people who are displaced. One villager interviewed about this work indicated that these interventions mean she will feel less likely to have to move in the future.

⁹⁰ IFRC, From crisis to recovery: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/recovery>.



Supporting Durable Solutions

[The Movement] must promote durable solutions based on voluntary, safe and dignified choices for the people affected – Movement Policy on Internal Displacement (2009)

Beyond protection against displacement, reducing the risk of displacement, meeting basic needs and supporting recovery, the aim of the Movement in the context of displacement is that:

When basic needs are covered by existing services and infrastructure but insufficiently so, such as in chronic crises, the aim is to facilitate progress towards a durable response to the victims' plight.

The Movement approach follows the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,⁹¹ and highlights three primary durable solutions to displacement:

1. Return and reintegration: the person returns to where he or she lived before the crisis
2. Local integration: the person integrates into the local community in which s/he found themselves following displacement
3. Relocation: the person relocates to yet another location within the country and integrates into the community there.

⁹¹ Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 22 July 1998.

The Movement notes that these solutions to displacement must be “safe, voluntary and dignified”.⁹² The approach of the Movement is also to support the ability of people and communities affected by displacement to make informed decisions on the basis of the options available and encourages opportunities for affected communities to participate fully in the planning and implementation of the solutions they select.⁹³

Planned Relocation

Planned relocation⁹⁴ is generally understood as a process whereby a community is physically moved from one location to another and resettled there. This is distinct from evacuations as planned relocations are often intended to be permanent.

Planned relocations can be undertaken in the context of both disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Where planned relocation occurs for communities who have been displaced and for whom places of origin are no longer habitable, planned relocation can also represent a durable solution.

Planned relocations are increasing in the Asia Pacific region and are being undertaken both before and after a sudden-onset or slow-onset hazard or disaster. For example, in Vietnam, the ‘Living with Floods’ programme is one of the largest planned relocation programmes in the world to date. The scheme relocated 200,000 households, comprising more than one million people, living in the permanently flooded areas of the Mekong delta, to more than 1,000 resettlement clusters.⁹⁵ Also, widely reported as one of the first pre-emptive community relocations due to climate change, in 2014, the village of Vunidogoloa in Fiji moved 2 km inland to a new site named Kenani. The relocation occurred after the construction of seawalls failed to prevent inundation and salt water intrusion onto community gardens occurring due to the combined effects of heavy rain and high tides.⁹⁶

However, in general, planned relocations must be approached with caution.

The approach of the Movement follows the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which state that:

Evacuation and permanent relocation must be used as measures of last resort predicated on absolute necessity, imminent threat to life, physical integrity and health. They should be taken in keeping with international humanitarian law and human rights.

A persistent problem with relocation schemes, often development-related, has been the lack of participation in the decision-making process by both the relocating and host communities. This has led to poor outcomes, giving rise to a number of humanitarian concerns including the disruption of livelihoods and loss of income, socio-economic networks and cultural heritage. As with all IFRC and National Society interventions in the context of disaster displacement, community engagement and accountability (CEA) must be at the centre. CEA is the process

⁹² International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁹³ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

⁹⁴ There is no universally-accepted definition of planned relocation, however, a useful approach is: “Planned Relocation is understood as a solutions-oriented measure, involving the State, in which a community (as distinct from an individual/ household) is physically moved to another location and resettled there. Under this schematic approach, evacuation is distinct from planned relocation and does not fall within its scope. Planned relocation may, of course, play a role following evacuations in circumstances where places of origin are no longer habitable and continued presence in the place of evacuation is not feasible.”

⁹⁵ See, for example, UNDP Vietnam. *Migration, Resettlement and Climate Change in Vietnam: Reducing exposures and vulnerabilities to climatic extremes and stresses through spontaneous and guided migration*, March 2014, available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/vietnam/docs/Publications/Migration%20&%20Climate%20change%20-%20Eng.pdf>

⁹⁶ See, for example, Al Jazeera. *In Fiji, villages need to move due to climate change*, February 2018, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/fiji-villages-move-due-climate-change-180213155519717.html>.

of and commitment to providing timely, relevant and actionable information to communities. The *Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA): Improving Communication, Engagement and Accountability in all we do and the IFRC Community Engagement and Accountability Toolkit* are designed to support the CEA approaches of National Societies.⁹⁷

Planned relocation schemes often take time to implement and are resource intensive. Poorly done, planned relocation can therefore lead to greater impoverishment and increased vulnerability.

Patterns of land ownership may also complicate planned relocation exercises. For example, in the Pacific, over 80 per cent of land is customarily owned limiting relocation site selection. Permanent settlement of non-kin groups on kin group land creates potential for conflict.

Issues of cultural loss may also present particular challenges for planned relocation of communities. The Fijian government has identified a number of other villages that need relocating. These plans are facing difficulties where, due to customary beliefs, values and obligations, some villagers are refusing to be relocated.

The approach of the Movement is that:

*Before taking part in any return or relocation programme, we must first make sure that the displaced persons concerned are informed of the details of the programme, in particular the living conditions and risks. Components of the Movement must also seek to obtain adequate knowledge of the situation in the place of return or relocation so as to avoid supporting any steps that might harm the persons concerned during and after their return.*⁹⁸

Where planned relocation is being contemplated, being simultaneously anchored in the community and existing in auxiliary relationship with the government, National Societies have a potentially vital role to play in ensuring community participation throughout the relocation process and ensuring the voices of both the relocating and host communities are heard.

At the same time, it is imperative that National Societies leverage their links to the IFRC and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement so as to promote and ensure compliance with global standards and good practices in the implementation of particular activities associated with planned relocations such as shelter, health, WASH and livelihoods, as well in relation to cross-cutting fundamentals such as gender and diversity.

Post-Tsunami Relocation in the Maldives

In the Maldives, the IFRC and National Societies supported the Government of the Maldives to respond to the displacement caused by the 2004 Tsunami. One response included the planned permanent relocation of some 4,000 people, comprising the entire population of Kandholhudhoo, to neighbouring Dhuvaafaru, a previously uninhabited, but safer island. With the destruction of their home island, the population of Kandholhudhoo was displaced to over five separate islands, living with host families for four years while their new community was built. The new community comprised some 600 houses together with schools, a health centre, roads, water and sewage systems and an independent electricity supply.

⁹⁷ IFRC, *Community Engagement and Accountability*: <http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/community-engagement>.

⁹⁸ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

Post-Typhoon Relocation in the Philippines

In the aftermath of Typhoon Bopha (locally named Pablo) which decimated villages in Compostela Valley and other provinces in the Philippines in December 2012, the **Philippine Red Cross** leadership engaged with local authorities to identify land outside 'no build zones' on which to rehouse communities that had experienced protracted displacement in tent cities for up to a year after the disaster. The Philippine Red Cross built homes, installed critical infrastructure and advocated on behalf of the relocated community to ensure that the community were connected to essential services provided by the local municipality such as health and education.

Post-Flood Relocation in Myanmar

In response to flooding in 2015, the **Myanmar Red Cross** built over 1,000 houses in relocation sites chosen by the government for displaced riverine communities. More hazard-resilient homes were built, with houses now elevated on poles and constructed with corrugated iron sheet roofing, this being more durable than bamboo which had been used previously for roofing.





Migration in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change

It is increasingly recognized that displacement in the context of sudden- and slow-onset hazards will not be the only type of population movement linked to disasters and climate change.

Increasing numbers of people migrating in anticipation of and in response to the impacts of disasters and climate change are also widely predicted. In this context, migration is understood as predominantly voluntary movement.⁹⁹

As early as 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that the greatest single impact of climate change could be on human migration – with millions of people moving linked to shoreline erosion, coastal flooding and agricultural disruption.¹⁰⁰

Migration – whether internally or abroad – may be the only or the best option for those who anticipate that, in the long-term, their homes will become uninhabitable or lost as a consequence of increasing disasters and climate change impacts such as sea-level rise or desertification.

At present there is limited data on the number of people migrating in response to disasters and the effects of climate change. In part this is due to the absence of regular migration pathways for those moving in response to disasters and climate change, which means that those who move are often captured under general migration, or labour migration data sets.

Reflecting the limited options for, and difficulty of, cross-border migration for the people of Kiribati, data collected under the Pacific-EU Climate Change and Migration (PCCM) project indicates that the number of people who migrated internally in Kiribati was more than five times the number who migrated internationally.¹⁰¹ This may in turn increase vulnerability to disasters where, as in the case of both Kiribati and Tuvalu, internal migration is to already over-populated capital cities experiencing high unemployment, water insecurity and which are highly vulnerable to effects of climate change.

As with displacement, however, the financial cost of migration may present an insurmountable hurdle for some households, further contributing to pockets of ‘trapped populations’. For example, despite recognizing the potential for migration to be a necessary adaptation measure in response to the worsening effects of climate change, according to one study, only 25 per cent of households surveyed across Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu believed that they would have the financial means to migrate.

One of the most important developments in recent years in relation to disaster-related human mobility has been recognition that migration may in some contexts constitute a climate change adaptation strategy at the individual or household level. Such voluntary adaptive migration does not mean permanent out-migration but includes any form of movement occurring at the individual or household level whether temporary or permanent, seasonal or circular, undertaken for the purposes of adapting to, or helping others to adapt to, the adverse effects of disasters so as to reduce the risk of being displaced in the future.

The ability of individuals and households to increase their resilience to hazards through voluntary adaptive migration, both internally and across international borders so as to reduce

⁹⁹ This is distinct from the “deliberately broad” approach of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, who takes the approach that “migrants are persons who leave or flee their habitual residence to go to new places – usually abroad – to seek opportunities or safer and better prospects. Migration can be voluntary or involuntary, but most of the time a combination of choices and constraints are involved”, IFRC Policy on Migration, 2009.

¹⁰⁰ UNDP. Climate change and forced migration: Observations, projections and implications. Human Development Report 2007/2008.

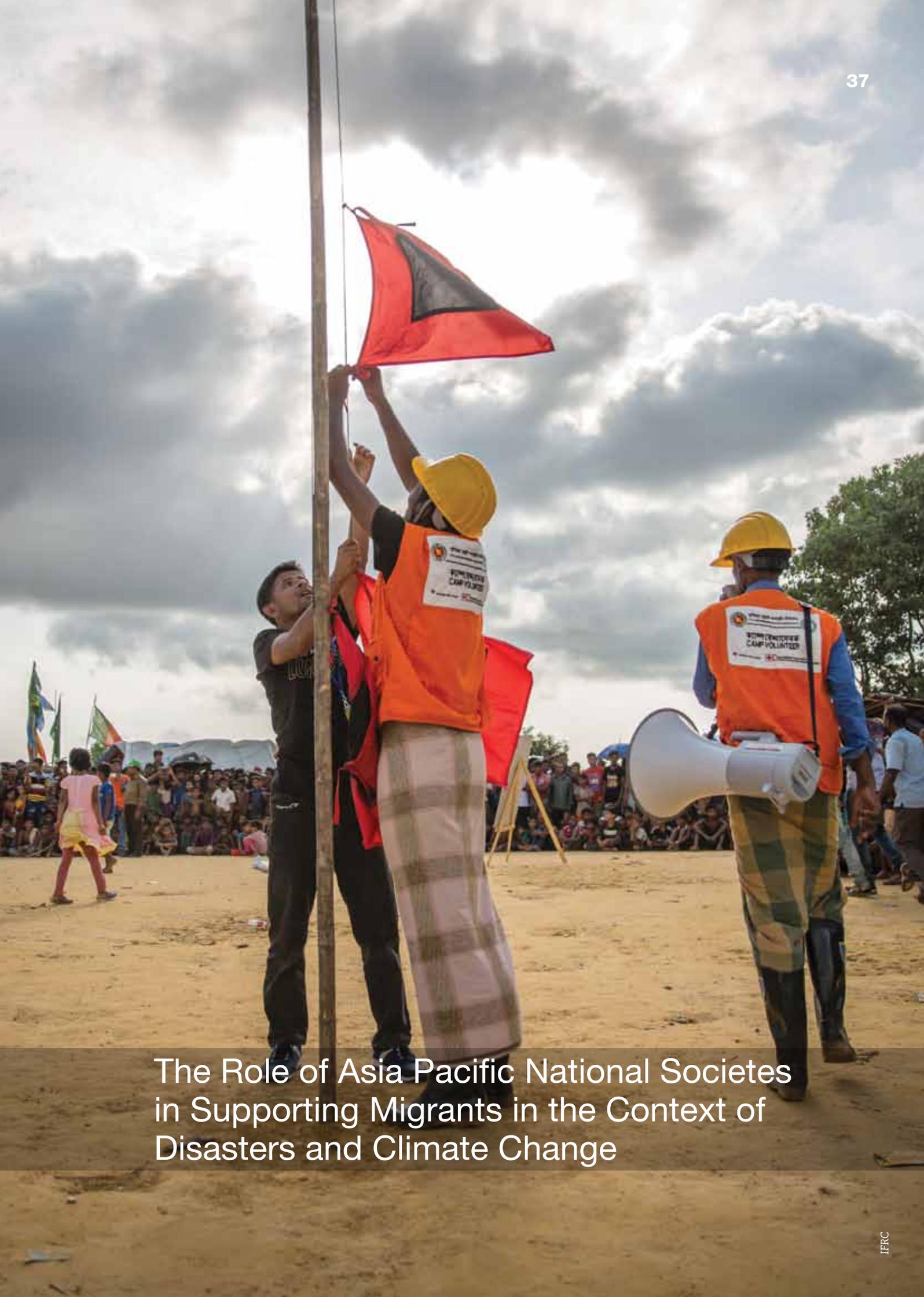
¹⁰¹ UNESCAP. *Kiribati: Climate Change and Migration, Relationships Between Household Vulnerability, Human Mobility And Climate Change*, Report No.20, 2016, available at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/kiribati-climate-change-and-migration-relationships-between-household-vulnerability-human>.

the risk of future displacement may, in some settings, be a critical component of an overall adaptation strategy. Circular or temporary migration can be an important means for livelihood diversification. Remittances, skills and knowledge acquired abroad, have the potential to significantly increase the resilience of communities. Temporary or permanent migration often occurs in the aftermath of a disaster when displaced people or those otherwise affected conclude that protection, assistance, and recovery measures are insufficient.

The issue of voluntary adaptive migration is also not without complexities.¹⁰² First, migration is not always risk-free and may increase vulnerability. Migrants may lack adequate information about the migration process, face uncertain legal status, may encounter inadequate housing and living conditions in the country of destination, and may struggle to find decent employment there sufficient to meet their needs and provide an adequate remittance flow. These conditions may in turn cause significant anxiety and stress to both the migrant and their families at home.

Further, there are concerns that an over-emphasis on migration may 'normalise' the loss of Pacific Island atoll states at the expense of expanded climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and may also decrease community viability by hollowing out the productive age groups in the population, or otherwise reducing overall population levels to below a minimum required to sustain community life.

¹⁰² See, for example, IFRC. *Addressing the humanitarian consequences of labour migration and trafficking: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies*, 2018, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/addressing-humanitarian-consequences-labour-migration-and-trafficking-role-asia-pacific>.



The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies
in Supporting Migrants in the Context of
Disasters and Climate Change

Although this report focuses on displacement in the context of disasters and climate change, it is also notable that Asia Pacific National Societies have an important role to play and are already active in addressing the needs of migrants in the context of disasters and climate change.

The approach of the Movement to migration in the context of disasters and climate change is expressed in the IFRC Policy on Migration (2009). The Policy notes, for example, that situations of displacement of populations are often linked to migration. The Policy also notes that, for both, displaced populations and migrants, National Societies play an essential humanitarian role. This can involve individual action as well as action in partnership with the ICRC, the International Federation, or other National Societies.

Often the support that National Societies provide for migrants in the context of disasters and climate change is not labelled as such. This is because, in the absence of specific migration pathways for those moving in response to disasters and climate change, these migrants often fall under general migration categories, or labour migration arrangements.

For example, existing bilateral agreements between Pacific island states including Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu, and New Zealand and Australia provide seasonal labour migration opportunities for Pacific islanders.¹⁰³ These provide alternative income sources, reduce pressure on the environment and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills. Although not explicitly framed around climate change, or disasters, these provide a migration pathway to Pacific islands who may be wishing to migrate in response to intensifying impacts of climate change. There are some calls for these programmes to be extended, to further enhance migration options for Pacific Islands facing climate change,¹⁰⁴ however, there have also been concerns expressed around worker exploitation associated with these programmes.¹⁰⁵

The approach and strengths of Asia Pacific National Societies initiatives in the context of labour migration is expressed in the 2018 IFRC report entitled *Addressing the humanitarian consequences of labour migration and trafficking: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies*.¹⁰⁶

The humanitarian initiatives of National Societies can focus on those who have migrated in response to disasters and climate change, as well as those migrants who are inadvertently caught up in disasters. This approach can be supported by the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, and specifically the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster (The Guidelines). The Guidelines apply to situations in which migrants are present in a country experiencing a conflict or natural disaster and provide concrete and practical guidance to stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and international levels on how to prepare for and respond to crises in ways that protect and empower migrants, leverage their capacities, and help migrants and communities recover from crises.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ See, for example, IFRC. *Addressing the humanitarian consequences of labour migration and trafficking: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies*, June 2018, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/addressing-humanitarian-consequences-labour-migration-and-trafficking-role-asia-pacific>.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, The Guardian. *World Bank: let climate-threatened Pacific islanders migrate to Australia or NZ*, 8 May 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/may/08/australia-and-nz-should-allow-open-migration-for-pacific-islanders-threatened-by-climate-says-report>.

¹⁰⁵ See, The Guardian. *Hungry poor exploited: alarm over Australia's import of farm workers*, 2 August 2017: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/aug/03/hungry-poor-exploited-alarm-over-australias-import-of-farm-workers>.

¹⁰⁶ IFRC. *Addressing the humanitarian consequences of labour migration and trafficking: The Role of Asia Pacific National Societies*, 2018, available at: http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/23052018-Labour-Migration-and-Trafficking-Guidance-for-Asia-Pacific-National-Societies_Spread_lores.pdf

¹⁰⁷ Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC), <https://micicinitiative.iom.int/guidelines>.



A number of National Societies are undertaking initiatives in the context of disasters that are specifically designed to reach migrants (see text box).

Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness for migrants in Australia

In 2013, staff in the Brisbane office of the Australian Red Cross (ARC) recognized that some clients receiving migration support and living in the community, had reduced disaster resilience. A community education programme was developed in partnership with volunteers from ARC's migration support programmes, which focused on hazards awareness, sources of warnings (the role of uniformed emergency services in evacuations) household planning and building emergency kits. Volunteers were trained in 'Rediplan' content and public speaking skills, and then conducted a range of formal and informal sessions within their own communities. Over 900 people participated in the pilot programme, which was deemed a success through positive shifts in knowledge in the following areas:

- Knowing who to call in an emergency;
- Knowing what hazards might affect them;
- Knowing which radio service to turn to for information; and
- Knowing how to develop a household plan and kit.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Richardson, JF., Sivalingum, C., Mau, V., Van Son, J. 'Land of Flooding Rains: Building the Disaster Resilience of Asylum Seekers at High Risk' in Migrants in Disaster Risk Reduction: Practices for Inclusion, International Organization for Migration & Council of Europe: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrants_in_drr.pdf.

Supporting Migrants during Emergencies in the Maldives

The Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) is among the very few organizations in Maldives that directly work with migrants. Furthermore, Maldivian Red Crescent openly allows migrants to be a part of their volunteer and membership base, and also focuses on identifying and meeting migrants' needs during emergency response initiatives, like in the case of house fires that frequently break out in the capital city of Male. During every emergency situation, MRC makes a special effort to ensure that the relief needs of migrants, such as proper clothing and housing, are met, in addition to serving the affected local population. In one instance, MRC provided temporary shelter for 32 migrants for two weeks when their accommodation was completely destroyed by a fire, and their employer was unable to arrange for alternative accommodation immediately.

Accounting for and engaging migrants in disaster and emergency preparedness services is essential for ensuring that no one is left behind in the event of a disaster. With this in mind, the Maldivian Red Crescent Governing Board has appointed a sub-committee to focus on integrating migrant issues into programmes and services, given the urgent need for migrant programmes in the country.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ MICIC. *From Assistance to Engagement: Involving Migrants in Health Emergency Planning Best Assures Their Safety*, February 2018, <https://micicinitiative.iom.int/blog/assistance-engagement-involving-migrants-health-emergency-planning-best-assures-their-safety>.



Humanitarian Diplomacy

The decision to engage in humanitarian diplomacy is not a choice, but a responsibility. It is a responsibility that flows from the privileged access enjoyed by National Societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. It flows from the independence of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, from the breadth of its humanitarian activities across the globe, its community base with tens of millions of volunteers and the observer status at the United Nations General Assembly enjoyed by the International Federation and the ICRC – IFRC Policy on Humanitarian Diplomacy (2009)

The IFRC approach to humanitarian diplomacy is that it involves “persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles”.¹¹⁰

The network of Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers are both anchored in the community and often have privileged access to decision-makers. Being viewed as relevant, credible and sure to deliver on promises is crucial for the acceptance of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement by all concerned and for obtaining access and providing protection and assistance to those who need it most.

Specifically in the context of displacement, the role of the Movement includes taking “appropriate measures to support States in their effort to incorporate international humanitarian law and human rights law in their national law and practice applicable to IDPs, and recognizing that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement constitute an important international framework that can give guidance for that purpose”.¹¹¹

Regional and Global Developments in Disaster Displacement

In addition to dialogue with decision makers at the local and national level, the IFRC and National Societies also have an important role in the context of increasing recognition and action related to disaster displacement at the regional and global levels.

Regional Engagement

At the regional level, a number of recent initiatives, including the formulation of the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)¹¹² and statements by ASEAN¹¹³ demonstrate increasing attention to this issue.

The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management notes:

ASEAN is [...] the most natural disaster-prone region in the world. [Between 2004 to 2014]... about 191 million people were displaced temporarily and disasters affected an additional 193 million people [...] If ASEAN does not reduce disaster risks, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will unlikely achieve its target by 2030, while the Sustainable Development Goals will remain unmet.

The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management 2017 to 2030 (FRDP) notes:

¹¹⁰ IFRC Policy on Humanitarian Diplomacy, 2009.

¹¹¹ International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Policy on Internal Displacement, November 2009.

¹¹² The FRDP notes “both rapid- and slow-onset events can result in displacement of affected people and communities, as a result of land degradation and loss, and of serious declines in water and food security, health and educational opportunities”.

¹¹³ The ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management notes “ASEAN is...the most natural disaster-prone region in the world...[Between 2004 to 2014]...about 191 million people were displaced temporarily and disasters affected an additional 193 million people”.



“Climate change is increasing the risk of weather-related disasters in the Pacific, especially in combination with sea-level rise and associated flood, wave, tide, storm surge, wind intensity, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers and the potential worsening of water scarcity and drought... Both rapid- and slow-onset events can result in displacement of affected people and communities, as a result of land degradation and loss, and of serious declines in water and food security, health and educational opportunities”. Addressing human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change is seen as an aspect of the inter-related goals of “strengthened integrated adaptation and risk reduction to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters” and “strengthened disaster preparedness, response and recovery”.

International Developments in Disasters, Displacement and Climate Change

At the international level, considerable steps forward to address displacement in the context of disasters and climate change have been taken in a range of global policy agreements and forums.

In 2012, the Nansen Initiative on Cross-Border Disaster-Induced Displacement was launched. From 2013 to 2015, the Nansen Initiative conducted a number of sub-regional consultations gathering examples of good practices by States, culminating the *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change (Protection Agenda)*. Focused on the voluntary measures states could adopt, the Protection Agenda was endorsed by 109



governmental delegations in October 2015. Implementation of the Agenda is being coordinated by the successor to the Nansen Initiative – the Platform on Disaster Displacement – with the IFRC being a member of the expert Advisory Committee.

Climate Change Policy

The 2010 *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Cancun Agreement on Climate Change Adaptation*¹¹⁴ called for “measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels”.

The 2015 Paris Agreement,¹¹⁵ although it does not contain an explicit mention of human mobility, urges States to “respect, promote and consider” their human rights obligations when taking action to address climate change, including by reference to the rights of migrants and other vulnerable groups.

¹¹⁴ States Parties adopted the Cancun Adaptation Framework as part of the Cancun Agreements at the 2010 Climate Change Conference in Cancun, Mexico (COP 16/ CMP 6). In the Agreements, Parties affirmed that adaptation must be addressed with the same level of priority as mitigation.

¹¹⁵ Paris Climate Change Agreement 2015, available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

The accompanying decisions to give effect to the Agreement have included the establishment of a Task Force on Displacement, under the Warsaw Mechanism for Loss and Damage, on which the IFRC now sits as a formal member. The Task Force on Displacement was specifically established to provide recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.¹¹⁶

Disaster Risk Reduction Policy

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹¹⁷ acknowledges the large number of people displaced in the context of disasters and calls, inter alia, for the promotion of transboundary cooperation to reduce displacement risk and encourages “the adoption of policies and programmes addressing disaster-induced human mobility to strengthen the resilience of affected people and that of host communities”.¹¹⁸

The 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) Ulaanbaatar Declaration,¹¹⁹ endorsed by Ministers and Heads of Delegations, expresses “deep concern at the continuing impact of disasters in the region, resulting in...displacement of people” and realizes “the need to focus on underlying, interconnected and evolving disaster risk factors such as unplanned and rapid urbanization, development, migration, population growth, and climate change and poverty”.¹²⁰

The Ulaanbaatar Declaration calls on all government and stakeholders to:¹²¹

“Ensure a human rights-based, people-centred and whole-of-society approach in development, implementation and monitoring of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies inclusive of women and girls, children and youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced and migrant populations, and those in vulnerable situations such as the poor and marginalized”.

The corresponding Action Plan 2018-2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹²², recognizes that “during 2016-2017, the region recorded over 500 disasters [that] displaced over 31 million people and affected over 162 million people”. The Action Plan also recognizes that “disasters deepen such inequalities and disproportionately affect most at-risk populations, in particular, children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced and migrant populations and those in vulnerable situations such as the poor and the marginalised”.¹²³

¹¹⁶ UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement: <https://unfccc.int/wim-excom/sub-groups/TFD>.

¹¹⁷ UNISDR. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, March 2015, available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291>.

¹¹⁸ UNISDR. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, March 2015, available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291>.

¹¹⁹ Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ulaanbaatar Declaration, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/56219_ulaanbaatardeclarationfinal.pdf

¹²⁰ Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ulaanbaatar Declaration, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/56219_ulaanbaatardeclarationfinal.pdf

¹²¹ Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Ulaanbaatar Declaration, available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/56219_ulaanbaatardeclarationfinal.pdf

¹²² Action Plan 2018-2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=59171&rid=5>.

¹²³ Action Plan 2018-2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=59171&rid=5>.

The Action Plan also includes a number of commitments specific to displacement, including:¹²⁴

- 3.1.1.b Strengthen regional cooperation including through public-private partnerships for the research, development and application of science, technology and innovation for disaster risk reduction, with particular consideration for the needs of those most at-risk, including children, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, displaced and migrant populations and those in vulnerable situations such as the poor and marginalized.
- 3.1.2.a Build capacity of national and local governments and actors to collect and record disaster risk, displacement, damage and loss data, including from at-risk communities living in geographically remote areas, with consistent levels of disaggregation for sex, age and disability.
- 3.1.2.d Assess the full spectrum of disaster risk through establishment of appropriate baseline information and comprehensive risk profiles, while capturing increasing magnitude of certain hazards (e.g., dust and sandstorms) and impact in different dimensions (e.g., displacement).
- 3.2.2.a.vi Ensure that the development and revision of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies include provisions on displacement and human mobility.
- 3.4.2.b Integrate disaster risk reduction into disaster preparedness planning, ensuring comprehensive and accessible service and referral mechanisms to promote the specific needs of women and girls, children and youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, displaced persons and other at-risk populations, including prevention of and response to gender-based violence.
- 3.4.2.e Ensure that preparedness and contingency plans take into account the specific needs of displaced persons, refugees and migrants, and other at-risk populations.

The Statement of Action: Red Cross Red Crescent Stakeholder Group¹²⁵ is an expression of the commitment of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Asia Pacific and the IFRC to work with governments and partners to achieve these outcomes by 2020.¹²⁶

The Statement of Action includes recognition that “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” and a call on governments and stakeholders to recognize that “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”.

¹²⁴ Action Plan 2018-2020 of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/policies/v.php?id=59171&rid=5>.

¹²⁵ Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Statement of Action: Red Cross Red Crescent Stakeholder Group, July 2018, available at: <https://www.unisdr.org/files/globalplatform/amcdr2018officialstatementrcrc%5b1%5d.pdf>.

¹²⁶ See, IFRC. *Red Cross Red Crescent calls for better support to displaced population*, July 2018, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/red-cross-red-crescent-calls-better-support-displaced-population>.



The Statement of Action including the following specific commitments of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies in Asia Pacific and the IFRC, related to displacement:

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 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.

Sustainable Development Agenda

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹²⁷ cites more frequent and intense disasters and forced displacement as key factors undermining development gains.

The Agenda contains a commitment “to cooperate internationally to ensure...the humane treatment, of displaced persons, and to build the resilience of those in vulnerable situations to climatic hazards and other disasters.”

¹²⁷ UNDESA. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, September 2015, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.



The Agenda, which outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also recognizes the role of migrants in contributing to sustainable development, and calls for facilitated orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies (Target 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies), and also proposes measures to address disaster risk and the adverse effects of climate change.¹²⁸

Humanitarian Policy and Approaches

The 2016 Agenda for Humanity¹²⁹ as part of a commitment to reduce forced internal displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030, includes commitments to:

- Develop national legislation, policies and capacities for the protection of displaced persons, and their integration into national social safety nets, education programmes, labour markets and development plans.
- Ensure that humanitarian and development actors, local authorities and private sector enterprises work collectively, across institutional divides and mandates and, in multi-year frameworks, to end aid dependency and promote the self-reliance of internally displaced populations.
- Adopt and implement regional and national legal and policy frameworks on internal displacement.

¹²⁸ UNDESA. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, September 2015, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

¹²⁹ UNDESA. *Agenda for Humanity, an Annex to the Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit*, 2016, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?page=view&nr=2282&type=400&menu=35>.

The Agenda for Humanity also, as part of the commitment to leave no one behind, calls for:

- [Adopting] an appropriate international framework, national legislation and regional cooperation frameworks by 2025 to ensure countries in disaster-prone regions are prepared to receive and protect those displaced across borders without refugee status.

Human Rights

The United Nations Human Rights Council has noted “the urgency of protecting and promoting human rights of migrants and persons displaced across international borders, in the context of the adverse impacts of climate change, including those from small island developing states and least developed countries”.¹³⁰

In June 2017 the Human Rights Council adopted a Resolution on Human Rights and Climate Change, which includes consideration of the human rights impacts on those displaced and migrating in the context of climate change.¹³¹

Migration Policy and Commitments

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants¹³² notes that people move for a variety of reasons, including “in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters (some of which may be linked to climate change), or other environmental factors.”

The Declaration also acknowledges the need to take steps to address the root causes of migration and displacement, including by enhancing resilience through disaster risk reduction activities, combating environmental degradation and ensuring effective responses to disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change.

The developments and negotiations towards a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration¹³³ offer an important opportunity to build on these and other global commitments to address the challenges of human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change.

The links between climate change, disasters and population movement were emphasised in the IFRC statement delivered at the second thematic consultations in relation to the negotiations towards a Global Compact on Migration, and then again during the Asia Pacific Preparatory Meetings for the Global Compact on Migration.¹³⁴

The Final Draft of the Global Compact on Migration includes a specific section on “natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation” that specifically includes commitments to:

- 18.h Strengthen joint analysis and sharing of information to better map, understand, predict and address migration movements, such as those that may result from sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, as well as other precarious situations, while ensuring the effective respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants.

¹³⁰ UN Human Rights Council Resolution, Human Rights and Climate Change, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/20.

¹³¹ UN Human Rights Council Resolution, Human Rights and Climate Change, UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/35/20.

¹³² UN Refugees and Migrants. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, September 2016, available at: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration>.

¹³³ See, Global Compact for Migration, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>.

¹³⁴ See, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Statement, available at: http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Statement_IFRC.PDF.



- 18.i Develop adaptation and resilience strategies to sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation, such as desertification, land degradation, drought and sea level rise, taking into account the potential implications on migration, while recognizing that adaptation in the country of origin is a priority.
- 18.j Integrate displacement considerations into disaster preparedness strategies and promote cooperation with neighbouring and other relevant countries to prepare for early warning, contingency planning, stockpiling, coordination mechanisms, evacuation planning, reception and assistance arrangements, and public information.
- 18.k Harmonize and develop approaches and mechanisms at sub-regional and regional levels to address the vulnerabilities of persons affected by sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, by ensuring they have access to humanitarian assistance that meets their essential needs with full respect for their rights wherever they are, and by promoting sustainable outcomes that increase resilience and self-reliance, taking into account the capacities of all countries involved.
- 18.l Develop coherent approaches to address the challenges of migration movements in the context of sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, including by taking into consideration relevant recommendations from State-led consultative processes, such as the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, and the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

Other sections of the Global Compact also include considerations relevant to human mobility in the context of disasters and climate change, including:

- 18.g Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin: Account for migrants in national emergency preparedness and response, including by taking into consideration relevant recommendations from State-led consultative processes, such as the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster (MICIC Guidelines).
- 21.g Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration: Develop or build on existing national and regional practices for admission and stay of appropriate duration based on compassionate, humanitarian or other considerations for migrants compelled to leave their countries of origin, due to sudden-onset natural disasters and other precarious situations, such as by providing humanitarian visas, private sponsorships, access to education for children, and temporary work permits, while adaptation in or return to their country of origin is not possible.
- 21.h Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration: Cooperate to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for migrants compelled to leave their countries of origin due to slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation, such as desertification, land degradation, drought and sea level rise, including by devising planned relocation and visa options, in cases where adaptation in or return to their country of origin is not possible.
- 39.b Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration: Increase international and regional cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in geographic areas from where irregular migration systematically originates due to consistent impacts of poverty, unemployment, climate change and disasters, inequality, corruption, poor governance, among other structural factors, through appropriate cooperation frameworks, innovative partnerships and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, while upholding national ownership and shared responsibility.

It is expected that the final draft of the Global Compact on Migration will be adopted by Heads of State and Government and High Representatives, in Morocco on 10 December 2018.



The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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