



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

Press release

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT CALLS FOR BETTER PREPAREDNESS AS NEW REPORT WARNS OF INCREASE IN EXTREME WEATHER

18 November 2011, Geneva — The Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is urging governments and civil society organisations to better prepare populations following the release of a report summary that links climate change to an increase in extreme weather events.

The IFRC highlights the fact that their field reports are consistent with the findings of the summary, published today by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The summary warns that the world is likely to face increasing extreme weather, which could have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable communities.

“If we look at Thailand, which is currently battling devastating flooding, or the Pacific island nation of Tuvalu which is in the midst of a drought, there can be no doubt that governments and populations need to better adapt and prepare for extreme weather,” said Bekele Geleta, Secretary General of IFRC.

“The IPCC report is a stark reminder about the urgency of making communities more resilient to climate-related disasters,” added Geleta. “Our Red Cross Red Crescent staff and volunteers are playing a critical role in promoting a culture of disaster risk reduction in their communities.”

In recent years, the IFRC, through its network of 186 National Societies, has responded to increasing numbers of weather-related disasters, and will always continue to be ready to assist the most vulnerable when they are hit.

However, in light of the growing challenges, response is not enough. It is more effective and efficient to invest beforehand, anticipate disasters before they happen, and reduce the risk facing vulnerable communities. Therefore, the Red Cross Red Crescent societies are focusing on disaster risk reduction and community resilience.

In Uganda, where the IPCC is being launched, years of investments in disaster risk reduction by the Uganda Red Cross have helped communities to be better prepared for the impacts of floods and landslides in 2011. Initiatives such as building flood resistant huts, tree planting and efforts to restore and conserve forest cover in areas prone to landslides, have all contributed to community adaptation and preparedness for extreme weather events. Fuel-efficient stoves have also been introduced with the aim of reducing the use of firewood.

“A likely increase in extreme weather events, as predicted in the IPCC report, reinforces the importance of preparedness for both the short-term recovery and long-term development of populations affected by droughts, floods and other extreme weather events,” said Geleta, adding that the Red Cross Red Crescent is committed to working with partners, including governments, civil society and other humanitarian organisations to ensure effective adaptation and disaster risk management in the face of climate change.

For more information, or to set up interviews, please contact:

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PLEASE NOTE THAT FIELD TRIPS AND VISITS TO PROGRAMMES CLOSE TO KAMPALA CAN BE ORGANISED FOR JOURNALISTS. PLEASE CONTACT CATHERINE NTABADDE TO FIND OUT MORE.