

Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

Strategic Plan

2008 – 2011

Mission of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

The Climate Centre supports the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its partners in reducing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on vulnerable people.

Together for Humanity

**Key messages from the declaration adopted at the
30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent¹
30 November 2007**

“We are deeply concerned that people everywhere, especially the poorest of the poor, face an increased burden due to the rise in disasters and the scarcity of resources induced by multiple factors such as environmental degradation and climate change, contributing to poverty, migration, health risks and aggravated risk of violence and conflict.

We are resolved to work with partners to raise awareness about these serious humanitarian concerns, including their causes, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people, in particular in affected developing countries.

We will capitalize on the community base of National Societies to decrease the vulnerability of communities where environmental hazards and degradation are severe and adaptive capacity is low.

We reaffirm that preparedness for disasters is a key element in the management of response, and will seek to improve individual and collective capacity to respond swiftly to humanitarian challenges induced by environmental degradation and climate change.

We are resolved to ensure that environmental degradation and adaptation to climate change are integrated, where relevant, in disaster risk reduction and disaster management policies and plans. We will seek to mobilise the necessary human and financial resources to implement them, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people.”

¹ The International Conference, which meets every four years, is the highest deliberative body of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the States that are party to the Geneva Conventions. The Movement is made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

INTRODUCTION

There is now a clear scientific consensus that climate change is already happening and influencing the risk of extreme weather. Political and public attention for climate change has grown tremendously. There is wide agreement that climate change is and will continue to be one of the main global challenges for humanity in the coming century.²

The Red Cross and Red Crescent has already been confronted with a sharp increase in weather-related disasters, and there is an urgent need to better manage the rising risk of extreme weather events, including through better early warning, enhanced disaster relief, increased efforts on disaster risk reduction and better and smarter programs in health & care, water & sanitation, and food security. In addition, there are rising concerns on the potential impacts of climate change on migration patterns.

Besides these operational challenges, the Red Cross and Red Crescent also needs to speak out for the most vulnerable, those who have contributed least to the problem but will suffer most. Measures to reduce the impacts of climate change are being implemented in the richest countries that can afford to do so, rather than for those people that need them most. These imbalance need to be addressed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In that context, 2008 and 2009 are crucial years for negotiations to arrive at a successor to the Kyoto protocol, which needs to enter into force in 2012. This agreement needs to include clear mechanisms to provide resources to reduce the risks facing the most vulnerable people.

However, transfer of resources is not enough, we also need strengthening of human capacities to develop and implement climate risk reduction for the most vulnerable people. The Red Cross and Red Crescent must face up to that challenge, both internally and externally, building on our global movement with strong local presence – matching the scope of climate change: a global problem with local impacts.

In November 2007, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent expressed a clear concern about the humanitarian impacts of climate change, and a strong commitment to address them.

Commitments by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at the 2007 International Conference

The urgency of addressing the humanitarian consequences of climate change is evident and actions to address these risks need to be ambitious. As reflected in the declaration “together for humanity” the Movement has committed to

1. **raise awareness** on climate change
2. **provide humanitarian assistance**
3. **improve capacity to respond**, including through better disaster preparedness
4. **decrease vulnerability** of communities most strongly affected
5. **integrate climate risk management** into policies and plans.
6. **Mobilise human and financial resources**, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people

² Decisive elements of this breakthrough were the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), which offered convincing evidence to confirm that warming of the climate system is ‘unequivocal’, and very likely due to human actions. Moreover the IPCC confirmed observed trends of increased extreme weather events and changes in climate variability. In addition climate change climbed very fast on the political agenda with an increasing number of world leaders taking the issue serious, fired up by Al Gore’s film ‘an inconvenient truth’. The Nobel Peace prize for the IPCC and Gore and the UN Bali Action Plan concluded this remarkable year.

The Climate Centre: General approach

In the coming four years, **the Climate Centre aims to support the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in meeting the commitments made at the International Conference, by strengthening the ability of all components of the Movement to understand and address the rising risks related to climate change, climate variability and extreme weather events.**

Our strategy to address these rising risks is to **integrate climate risk management into existing Red Cross and Red Crescent priorities and programs**, rather than to develop stand-alone climate change activities.

The climate change problem is new and technically complex, and therefore requires **raising awareness and building capacity** throughout the Movement, especially in individual National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Our focus is particularly on developing countries, which are most vulnerable to climate change.

This capacity building is best provided in a decentralized manner, through existing structures, in particular support by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Participating National Societies (PNSs). Hence, the Climate Centre focuses primarily on **provision of guidance and tools, exchange of experience, training and technical backup** for IFRC and PNS Disaster Management (DM) and health delegates, so that they can include climate change in their support to the National Societies (NSs).

The enhanced capacity needs to be matched by increased resources to address the rising risks. The Climate Centre facilitates **access to climate-change related channels of funding**, generally not yet used by the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and **advocates for support to the most vulnerable people** in the international climate policy arena, especially the UNFCCC.

Finally, the Climate Centre supports **global planning, policy development, operations and communication work related to climate risk management**, particularly with the IFRC Secretariat, PNSs and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

In all of these efforts, we emphasize the need for **partnerships**, with governments, knowledge centres and civil society including the private sector. First of all to improve the quality of the programs of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC), for example by cooperating with knowledge centres on early warning systems (a very effective way to deal with the increased risk of disasters), or by working with the private sector to implement risk reduction measures such as water tanks. Secondly, we need to work with partners to foster risk reduction beyond the scope of the RC/RC, particularly with respect to development planning and government policies and programs. Thirdly we need partnerships to shape the global policy response to the risks of climate change, in particular in the context of the UNFCCC, as well as through multilateral and bilateral development organizations.

Areas of work

The Climate Centre's activities comprise six key areas of work, all of which are interconnected, as shown in Figure 1 (for instance, successful capacity building relies on analysis of experiences, resource mobilization, awareness raising, etc.).

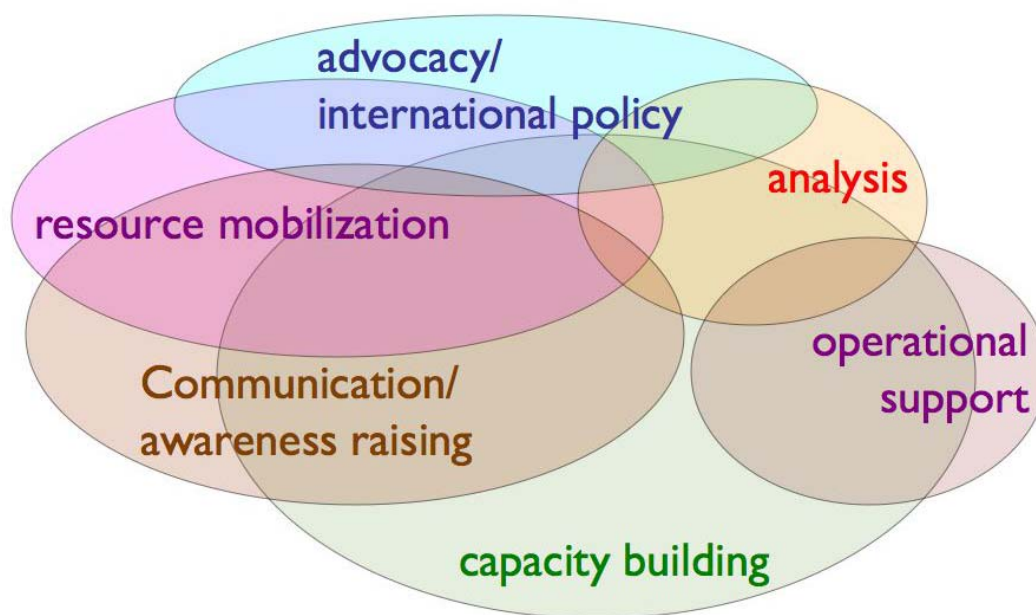


Figure 1: Areas of work - Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre

1. COMMUNICATION / AWARENESS RAISING

GOAL: Significantly increased awareness within and outside the Movement about the humanitarian consequences of climate change and about opportunities for and good experiences with climate risk reduction.

Expected outcomes:

- Publications, videos, presentations and other awareness-raising materials capturing key experiences and guidance, are widely circulated among and utilized by Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers and the vulnerable communities they serve.
- Partnerships are established between components of the Movement and knowledge centres, civil society and media organizations working at the global and regional level to communicate the challenges of climate change and opportunities for adaptation.
- Global media campaign on humanitarian consequences of climate change.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL: Significantly increased number of staff at national societies, zones, regional delegations and the secretariat are well equipped with climate change related knowledge, and use that knowledge in their work

Expected outcomes:

- All national societies, zonal offices, regional delegations and relevant departments at secretariat in Geneva have appointed a climate change focal point.
- Climate Centre guidance and tools, exchange of experience, training and technical backup serve as key resources for these focal points and others dealing with climate risk management within the Movement.

3. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES

GOAL: Mobilization of significantly increased financial and human resources for climate risk reduction, in particular for the poorest people in the poorest countries

Expected outcomes:

- By 2012, at least 25 national societies have secured new funding for the implementation of climate change related programmes.
- By 2012, IFRC has secured financing for climate risk management programs from at least 2 major multilateral funding sources.
- Opportunities for partnerships with the private sector explored
- Mobilization of resources for Climate Centre core programs and budgets, including build-up of reserve (25% of the budget by the end of 2011)

4. ADVOCACY: INTERNATIONAL POLICY

GOAL: RC/RC concerns and proposals reflected in the post 2012 agreements under the UNFCCC and other international policy processes. More governments, donor agencies, civil society organisations and scientists acknowledge (i) the potential impacts of climate change on the risks of natural disasters and on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (ii) the value of mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation (iii) the need for more programs on climate risk reduction; and (iv) the role civil society organizations, in particular the RC/RC have in implementing these programs.

Expected outcomes:

- Major international policy processes such as the UNFCCC informed and enhanced by key messages and recommendations from the RC Movement
- Climate Centre recognized as a key resource for processes and ad hoc groups defining policy on global climate change issues, such as the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change.
- Well established and well informed network with key RC NSs and the Federation, involved in efficient advocacy at national and international level

5. ANALYSIS

GOAL: Capacity building, communications, and advocacy on climate related issues supported by high-quality analyses of knowledge and experiences on climate risk management

Expected outcomes:

- Partnerships are established with knowledge centres at the global and regional level in order to tailor climate-related information, knowledge and methodologies to the needs and capabilities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
- Lessons learned documented by the Climate Centre are used to enhance new Red Cross and Red Crescent programs.
- Climate Centre analyses on humanitarian consequences of climate change are recognized as valuable inputs to international policy making on climate change.

6. OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

GOAL: Reduced impacts of climate variability and extreme events through enhanced use of climatic information and related expertise by Red Cross and Red Crescent

Expected outcomes

- Short to medium-range forecasts for extreme weather events are better communicated, understood and used for disaster preparedness and response.
- Increasing integration of seasonal climate predictions into food security and health-related operations.
- Expected conditions associated with climate change are mainstreamed into planning and implementation of a growing number of RC/RC programs at all scales.

Organizational setup

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre is an independent foundation, established by the Netherlands Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and based at the Netherlands Red Cross.

The board of the Climate Centre consists of two representatives from the IFRC, one representative from the Netherlands Red Cross, and a President nominated by the Netherlands Red Cross.

The Climate Centre core staff is a small group of people, mostly based in the Netherlands, with a mix of skills and expertise, including climate science and policy, advocacy, communications, and capacity building. In addition, the Climate Centre fosters a large network of practitioners in all parts of the RC/RC (and even outside it) who somehow deal with climate change in their daily work, and also contribute to the work of the Climate Centre.

The Hague, January 2008

Annex 1: Observations 2002-2007

Summary of the evolution of climate change as a humanitarian issue within the Red Cross/Red Crescent and the role of the Climate Centre in the period 2002-2007

General

1. The humanitarian consequences of climate change are acknowledged and the Climate Centre is well established as the global reference centre on this subject within the Red Cross and Red Crescent.
2. The unique position of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, its worldwide network and presence at local, national, regional and global level is fully reflected in the activities of the Climate Centre.
3. Programs of the Climate Centre are well received. By the end of 2007, more than 30 NSs in developing countries participated in the Preparedness for Climate Change programme. More than 10 Partner National Societies address climate change either domestically or in the international programs. The Climate Centre has contributed to the development and implementation of programs like DIPECHO in the Caribbean.
4. Because vulnerable people in developing countries will be hit worst by the impacts of climate change, the main focus of the activities of the Climate Centre is on developing countries.
5. Most of the RC National Societies in industrialised countries show an increased interest in climate change but have not taken up their potential role to mobilize resources for climate risk reduction/adaptation in developing countries.

Integration in operations

6. Although climate change is increasingly acknowledged as an important humanitarian risk, the main challenge within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement remains to address this risk in an operational manner. However, it is clear that climate change must not be seen as a new area of work, but that the notion of changing risks should be integrated into existing areas of work, such as disaster management, health and food security.
7. While gaining knowledge and experience on dealing with the rising risks, many National Societies have also built valuable new networks with in-country partners.

Advocacy

8. The Red Cross and Red Crescent has positioned itself in the international arena as a strong advocate for policies and measures to address the humanitarian consequences of climate change. The RC/RC Climate Centre is frequently invited to make presentations at global, regional, sectoral and national events on climate change organized by international organizations, governments and NGOs. Its feedback is also sought for the formulation of programs and policies.
9. The RC could increase its influence on the post-2012 negotiations in the UNFCCC through more tailor-made position papers and pro-active dialogues with key countries.

Communication and media

10. The communication and media strategy of the national and international RC components regarding climate change is hardly developed. Media have not yet found their way to the RC on climate change related issues.

RC/RC Climate Centre finances and capacity

11. The RC/RC Climate Centre has a highly qualified and devoted core team and a growing number of active partners throughout the movement. However, human and financial resources are a bottleneck to respond to the rapid rise in requests for support. Furthermore, the financial situation of the RC/RC Climate Centre remains insecure.

Annex 2: Key elements Declaration 30th International Conference

The climate change related elements of the declaration agreed by 186 RC National Societies, the ICRC and 190 governments at the 30th International Red Cross/Red Crescent Conference 26-30 November 2007

TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY

Gathered in Geneva for the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent we, members of this Conference, have focused on the humanitarian consequences of four great challenges facing the world today which affect the individual and specifically the most vulnerable:

- environmental degradation and climate change;
- humanitarian concerns generated by international migration;
- violence, in particular in urban settings;
- emergent and recurrent diseases and other public health challenges, such as access to health care.

The global scale of each of these challenges requires a collective response as it exceeds the coping capacity of individual States or humanitarian organizations. In addressing the humanitarian consequences of those challenges, and in the spirit of the slogan of this Conference, "Together for Humanity", we need to intensify operational interaction and partnerships among ourselves, and with other institutions – e.g., intergovernmental, supranational, non-governmental, academic – as well as media and the private sector. For the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) this must be in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and policies of the Movement.

Humanitarian consequences of environmental degradation and climate change

We are deeply concerned that people everywhere, especially the poorest of the poor, face an increased burden due to the rise in disasters and the scarcity of resources induced by multiple factors such as environmental degradation and climate change, contributing to poverty, migration, health risks and aggravated risk of violence and conflict.

We are resolved to work with partners to raise awareness about these serious humanitarian concerns, including their causes, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people, in particular in affected developing countries.

We will capitalize on the community base of National Societies to decrease the vulnerability of communities where environmental hazards and degradation are severe and adaptive capacity is low.

We reaffirm that preparedness for disaster is a key element in the management of response, and will seek to improve individual and collective capacity to respond swiftly to humanitarian challenges induced by environmental degradation and climate change.

We are resolved to ensure that environmental degradation and adaptation to climate change are integrated, where relevant, in disaster risk reduction and disaster management policies and plans. We will seek to mobilise the necessary human and financial resources to implement them, giving priority to actions for the most vulnerable people.

We acknowledge the commitment of States to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as the core mechanism for addressing climate change at the global level, and we affirm that aspects of the Movement's work support and complement elements of the UNFCCC.

In responding to all of these challenges, we will:

- take into consideration the varying capacities of States and National Societies;
- strengthen our operational capacity and resources accordingly;
- optimise the role of the National Society as auxiliary to the public authorities at all levels in the humanitarian field;
- capitalize on the community and volunteer base (particularly the youth) of National Societies to influence positively and act upon vulnerable communities from within, particularly in situations beyond the reach of the public authorities;
- take into account considerations of diversity;
- ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed into all programmes and activities;
- learn from the experiences and best practices worldwide of the various components of the Movement;
- promote knowledge of and respect for the relevant provisions of international law such as international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law;
- build on the unique ability of the components of the Movement, in acting at all times in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, to gain the confidence of all in order to have access to those in need;
- intensify and coordinate operational interaction and partnerships among ourselves, the members of this Conference, and with other institutions, whenever there is a clear benefit for the victims and most vulnerable.

Our work together needs to be measurable, with transparency accompanying action at the national level and through sharing best practices and experiences. The International Federation and the ICRC agree to support National Societies in their work, including through representation of their interests and concerns at the international level, and will provide the necessary knowledge-sharing mechanisms to facilitate these tasks.