

## How to engage in the policy dialogue on climate change adaptation in your country?

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### Introduction

Policies and actions to support developing countries to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change have been developing in the last years, and accelerating since 2007.

One of the (few) achievements at the Climate Summit in Copenhagen was the commitment in the Copenhagen Accord by industrialized countries to support developing countries in 2010-2012 with \$30 billion, to be divided in a balanced way between mitigation and adaptation. In addition it was agreed that by 2020 \$100 billion should be mobilised annually in support of climate actions in developing countries.

In many developing countries climate change adaptation (CCA) programmes and policies have already been set in motion, often supported by UN agencies, bilateral donors or the World Bank. Civil society organisations are also increasingly developing and implementing CCA programmes and projects.

Climate change will likely lead to more, and more intense, weather extremes, resulting in disasters. Humanitarian actors have much experience to address and reduce these risks. Yet, in many countries humanitarian actors are not fully aware of, or engaged in, climate change adaptation policies and programme development.

Establishing the first steps of a dialogue with your government on the topic can be a bit challenging. This document has been produced at the request of National Societies and Federation staff world-wide. It aims to help get that dialogue started. To start with, we listed some **'leading questions'** to assist RC National Societies to step up their engagement in the policy dialogue on climate change adaptation.

### 1. Does your country have a national climate change adaptation policy, or is it developing one?

In most countries the leading ministry on climate change is often the Ministry of Environment, or Natural Resources or Energy. On the website of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) you can find the contact information of the **national focal points of the governments** (<http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/nfp.pl>). This is the Ministry where you can find out about the adaptation policy of your government<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that addressing **the causes** of climate change is commonly called **"mitigation"**. This is mostly about the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (easy to get confused because in the humanitarian sector we use the concept of "disaster mitigation" - be wary of this term when talking to people working on climate change). The RC/RC focus is on addressing **the impacts** of climate change, notably those leading to disasters, food insecurity and deterioration of health commonly called **"adaptation"**.

Government focal points on climate change should have a good picture of who is doing what in relation to climate change and may have produced documents on the topic in your country.

## **2. Who is the leading official of your government responsible for adaptation policies?**

Experience in many countries has demonstrated that it is always helpful to establish a good contact with the leading official(s) on a subject of interest, in this case the national adaptation policy. Formal ways of communication (like letters in which you explain the RC position) are helpful, but with informal ways of communication you can often get a better idea of the reasons behind a certain policy position. When you have a good relation it is also easier to ask a question on subjects that are not clear to you or give informal suggestions on certain issues, notably the humanitarian consequences of climate change.

Try to find out what has been published in terms of strategies and policies by your Government. Within the UNFCCC framework, some least developed countries have written a National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)<sup>2</sup>. Most countries submit National Communications to the UNFCCC. Even though the main parts of these reports are about greenhouse-gas emissions (of less relevance for the Red Cross and Red Crescent), they also describe the vulnerability of your country to climate change impacts in the coming decades<sup>3</sup>

*When your government does have an adaptation policy go to question 4.*

## **3. What do you do when there is no adaptation policy?**

Contact the leading official and try to find out why the government does not have an adaptation policy. If they are in the process of drafting one, try to find out whether there is room for consultation to which the Red Cross/Red Crescent and other humanitarian and development actors<sup>4</sup> can participate. In many initial policy commitments, like the UNFCCC, consultation with civil society in the development and implementation of national adaptation policies are highlighted, so you can refer to this.

In a growing number of developing countries there are initiatives to set up so-called 'multi-stakeholder groups' on climate change, involving NGOs, government bodies, private sector, researchers and donors. Find out if such an initiative exists in your country and whether it is relevant for you to join.

Be clear what the RC and humanitarian actors can contribute to the national adaptation policy. In particular community based disaster risk reduction, early warning/early action approaches and health and care services are good adaptation programmes when connected to climate change related risks. The IASC document for UNFCCC COP 14 in Poznan (Title: "*Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and Risk Management Practices: Critical Elements for Adaptation to Climate Change*" see: [www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc)) and the Climate Change Advocacy toolkit (<https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw184125.asp>), can be helpful.

In the attached Excel sheet (overview DRR and CCA initiatives, version 1 July 2010) you find an overview of a number of CCA and DRR related initiatives in developing countries. This overview is not complete, mainly missing out on bilateral initiatives and subject to regular

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<sup>2</sup> All NAPA's can be found on the UNFCCC website:

[http://unfccc.int/cooperation\\_support/least\\_developed\\_countries\\_portal/submitted\\_napas/items/4585.php](http://unfccc.int/cooperation_support/least_developed_countries_portal/submitted_napas/items/4585.php)

<sup>3</sup> National Communications can be found on the UNFCCC website:

[http://unfccc.int/national\\_reports/non-annex\\_i\\_natcom/items/2979.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/items/2979.php)

<sup>4</sup> It is recommended to look for 'likeminded' actors in this process, like IASC-members in the country, or the national disaster risk reduction platform and operate in an coordinated manner.

updates. Contacting the focal points of these initiatives in your country could also be a starting point. In case you would like to approach other stakeholders in your country you could read a 'stakeholder analysis' at the Climate Centre website<sup>5</sup> and a list of questions on what to ask different climate related stakeholders in your country<sup>6</sup>.

#### **4. If your government has an adaptation policy, are the humanitarian consequences addressed?**

Read through the adaptation policy of your government and find out whether the humanitarian consequences of climate change are acknowledged and addressed.

Look for key words like: disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, community based adaptation, most vulnerable people, food security, health, water and sanitation.

Make your judgement whether the humanitarian consequences are sufficiently addressed. In case you would like advice whether or not the humanitarian consequences are sufficiently addressed in relation to the expected trends of risk occurrence in your country, do not hesitate to contact the helpdesk of the IRI-IFRC: [ifrc@iri.colombia.edu](mailto:ifrc@iri.colombia.edu).

*When you are positive go to question 6.*

#### **5. What do you do when the humanitarian consequences are not sufficiently addressed in the adaptation policies of your country?**

From what we have seen so far there is a great variety of national adaptation policies. This depends very much on the agencies and ministries that have been involved in the development of the plans. For example in many countries water management, infrastructure and coastal protection or agriculture are key elements of the policy. Also in many countries it is not clear what the criteria are for the selection of sectors or regions for adaptation. Sea level rise is often overstated and extreme weather events understated as threats to coastal countries. In countries with a high cover of forests, forest conservation is often a key element of adaptation policies.

And often the 'hardware' (concrete visible measures like seawalls) tend to dominate the 'soft ware' (like capacity building of the most vulnerable people, and climate risk management to be integrated in DRR and health programmes, etc.)

When you believe the humanitarian consequences are not sufficiently addressed, find out what could be the best ways to raise this concern. Contact the lead official of the government to get more information and find out whether there are possibilities to include the humanitarian concerns. Bring concrete suggestions. A paper with these suggestions may be helpful at this stage. Find likeminded organisations. Use successful examples from other countries in the region to make your case.

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<sup>5</sup> Stakeholder analysis:

[http://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/programs/Stakeholder\\_analysis\\_FINAL\(21%204%2010\).pdf](http://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/programs/Stakeholder_analysis_FINAL(21%204%2010).pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Climate related stakeholders and what to ask them:

[http://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/programs/Questions%20to%20ask%20climate%20related%20stakeholders\\_FINAL\(21%204%2010\).pdf](http://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/File/programs/Questions%20to%20ask%20climate%20related%20stakeholders_FINAL(21%204%2010).pdf)

## **6. What can you do when the government addresses the humanitarian consequences of climate change in its national adaptation policy?**

Congratulations! You can move to the most essential phase: implementation. Find out how the government and other actors envision the implementation of the policy. This is often dependent on international funding and those machines don't move fast. Maybe you can use the international network of the RC, through the Federation, the Climate Centre and NSses in developed countries to speed up the process. The RC is well connected to the different international policy actors in this field.

Last but not least: develop plans and programmes on how the RC can contribute to the implementation of the policy. In some cases you can mobilise your own resources, by referring to the national adaptation policy. Of course much of the work that National Societies does occur at the branch level: involving local government in understanding and acting on climate change is important too!

***Good luck!***

### ***For more information and support:***

- The regional IFRC DM Coordinator
- The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate centre: [www.climatecentre.org](http://www.climatecentre.org) or [climatecentre@redcross.nl](mailto:climatecentre@redcross.nl).

### ***On line resources:***

- *Red Cross/ Red Crescent Climate Guide:* [www.climatecentre.org/site/publications/85](http://www.climatecentre.org/site/publications/85)
- *UNFCCC submissions:* [www.unfccc.org](http://www.unfccc.org)