

## Climate Centre – 2010 annual report, summary

The year 2010 began in the shadow of the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen, where the failure to come to a global agreement on climate change and the lack of trust between developed and developing countries had a major impact on policy. But decisions taken at the end of the year at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of the Parties (COP 16) in Cancun, Mexico underpinned significant progress in addressing the challenges of climate change.

Although the outcome of COP 16 is still not sufficient to mitigate the increase in climate-related disasters and the suffering of millions of people, we believe that a solid step towards a legally binding agreement was taken. An adaptation framework was established, as well as a Green Climate Fund.

Extreme-weather events like the Russian heatwave and the Pakistan floods illustrated the massive impacts climate and weather risks can have, highlighting the need for more proactive risk management.



The development of tools and services to anticipate climate risks across timescales is improving and funding to make climate information more accessible to decision-makers is increasing. The understanding that disaster risk reduction (DRR) is an important strategy for climate change adaptation (CCA) is enabling the DRR-CCA link to become better established.

Over the past eight years, and again in 2010, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (“the Climate Centre”) has contributed significantly to this progress.

The majority of the Climate Centre’s activities in 2010 were focused on the implementation of the second phase of the Preparedness for Climate Change Programme (“PfCC2”) which supports 25 National Societies and IFRC zones, and the Climate Change and Health programme, underway in two African and two Asian countries with support from the Rockefeller Foundation.

A lot of progress has been made in the delivery of tools and services to support climate-informed decision-making across timescales within the Red Cross Red Crescent. The partnership between the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has facilitated improvements to the IFRC map room and help desk; led to the development of the Haiti weather and climate risk website; and provided La Niña updates, scientific inputs on climate variability and changes to PfCC background documents, as well as a third year of the summer internship programme.

In June 2008 the Climate Centre, the IFRC, and a number of key international humanitarian organizations jointly established the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Climate Change, funded by the Danish government. The task force provided substantial input in global policy processes like UNFCCC and found climate-informed DRR to be a very successful approach to climate risk.

The Climate Centre invested considerable time in 2010 to the development of the Partners for Resilience (PFR) programme – an alliance between the Netherlands Red Cross, the Climate Centre, CARE Netherlands, Cordaid and Wetlands International, which have joined forces to increase the resilience of vulnerable people through DRR-CAA. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded the alliance 36 million euros for work in nine countries in Africa, Asia and Central America up to 2015. So far the Partners for resilience programme is worldwide the largest



programme of its kind.

The Climate Centre also received funding from the Canadian Red Cross to produce a training kit to facilitate education within the Red Cross Red Crescent on climate-risk management.

Additionally, with the Austrian Red Cross the Climate Centre participated in EU programme development in Central Europe, engaged in programme development with the IFRC on a major EU-ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) programme on DRR-CCA (now on hold), and provided technical advice to the Chinese and Finnish Red Cross to set up a pilot programme on DRR-CCA in south-east China.

The main donors to the Climate Centre in 2010 were the Netherlands and Danish governments and the Rockefeller Foundation. In addition, nine participating National Societies (PNS) and the Norwegian company Statkraft have contributed either to core costs or to the specific activities of the Climate Centre.



Progress in 2010 toward its main aim of increasing awareness in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement ("the Movement") of the humanitarian consequences of climate change and DRR-CCA included these developments:

- The Climate Centre website was maintained and updated and now provides access to more than 40 films from all over the world; it had more than 20,000 hits in 2010.
- Four newsletters have been distributed to

approximately 1,700 subscribers.

- A guidance document was developed and translated into Spanish to help National Societies approach stakeholders for expertise and partnering to manage climate risks.
- Two articles were published in peer-reviewed journals.
- A FAQ web page on climate change and disasters was developed.
- Seven videos were made on climate-risk management.
- Three games were designed to support learning about the challenges and opportunities posed by science-based forecasts.
- The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Guide was made available in Arabic, Russian, Spanish and French.
- There was increased recognition of our work in the international media.

General support to the National Societies with PfCC2 was primarily given by the IFRC and backed up by technical support from the Climate Centre, thus mainstreaming the programme within the IFRC. The programme was extended to early 2011.

A web-based guide for National Societies has been completely rewritten for PfCC2. Guidance and best practice are being shared on the website. A guidance booklet was produced for the IFRC zone offices and translated into Spanish and French.

All countries participating in PfCC2 received background information on the longer-term climate change projections for their country, along with information on any natural climate variability that tends to affect their region, and resources for monitoring both seasonal and shorter-term forecasts.

PfCC 1 and 2 will eventually have reached at least 65 countries, and several other societies have also taken the initiative to implement similar activities, or are integrating concepts from PfCC into their programmes.



Early on in PfCC2, a small Innovations Fund for National Societies was set up to support ten small-

scale pilot projects aimed at reducing climate risks.

In close collaboration with several IFRC zone offices, the IFRC disaster services department and the IRI, additional work in 2010 was initiated on the use of climate information across timescales, including inputs into the new contingency-planning training materials and workshops and the provision of La Niña updates.

A specific tool we created this year was a website<sup>1</sup> for disaster managers in Haiti to monitor rainfall and hurricane forecasts. It also features information on vulnerability, helping disaster managers take into account factors such as flood and landslide risk when deciding where to place longer-term shelters.

Also in 2010, the third round of IRI summer internships in Red Cross Red Crescent offices occurred around the world. As with the previous two years, the students have made valuable contributions to preparedness for changing climate risks and extreme-weather events.

Five global La Niña updates were written with the help of IRI and distributed within the Red Cross Red Crescent, providing tailored information on likely impacts region by region.

A research project entitled “Health Risk Management in a Changing Climate” was launched, seeking to define ways to address the health effects of climate change within Red Cross Red Crescent operations. The work, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, is being carried out in four countries: in Vietnam and Indonesia the focus is on dengue fever and in Kenya and Tanzania it is on the health effects associated with extreme rainfall.

In 2010 the focus of international climate change negotiations was on the mechanisms of a global agreement and it was vital for the most vulnerable people to be served by them. As at previous COPs, in Cancun the Red Cross Red Crescent was present with a large IFRC delegation, collaborating closely with the IASC task force on climate change.

Funding for the IASC task force in 2010 was provided through the Climate Centre. Though the task force ended in 2010, the Climate Centre will continue cooperation on advocacy with the IFRC secretariat. The focus of this cooperation is likely to shift from global policy processes to an emphasis on regional and national processes.



Connections with key institutions are strong and growing, with the potential to leverage partnerships in the context of the PfR programme and in collaboration with IFRC zones. Relevant information gathered through these networks is shared with the appropriate National Societies and the IFRC.

After the disappointing conclusion of COP 15 in Copenhagen, the negotiation process continued with inter-sessional UNFCCC meetings, of which the Climate Centre participated in two.

The Climate Centre also participated in a number of relevant conferences and meetings, including the World Bank and the Asian ministerial conference on the intersection of DRR and CCA. We also contributed to the development of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS).

The Climate Centre helped facilitate the September 27–30 Climate Change Conference convened by IFRC Americas zone in Panama, aimed at building capacity of National Societies in CCA and DRR, ahead of COP 16 and IASC task-force meetings.

In 2010, the Climate Centre engaged in the “High-Level Taskforce” (HLT) towards the GFCS – established by the World Climate Conference-3 in Geneva the previous year. In close collaboration

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<sup>1</sup> <http://iri.columbia.edu/haiti/>

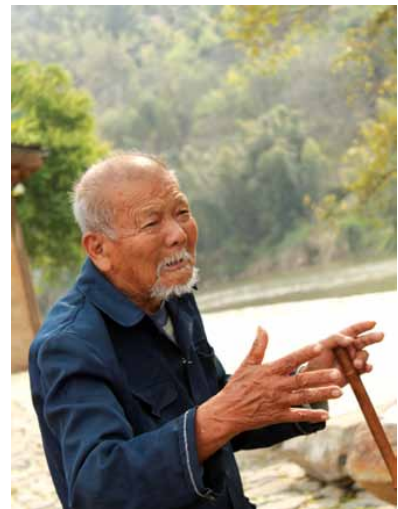
with the IFRC secretariat, contributions were provided to HLT reports, and discussions were held with key partners such as IRI and several governments.

The IPCC selected the Climate Centre's associate director and lead climate specialist, Maarten van Aalst, as lead author of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. He is already engaged as coordinating lead author in the IPCC Special Report on Extreme Events, which will be launched in 2011.

Partnerships with knowledge institutes are growing rapidly. The year saw further linking to major universities in the Australia, Canada, Iceland, South Africa, the UK and the US. The Climate Centre recruited advanced students from a number of these universities; in addition to performing desk studies, students worked in Africa (Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda), the Americas (Belize, El Salvador, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Asia/Pacific (China, Mongolia, Thailand) and MENA (Lebanon, Jordan).

Several scientific contributions have been produced for academic journals, and the Climate Centre has also contributed to publications such as the World Resources Report, the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Strengthening Climate Resilience programme of the Institute of Development Studies, the KCL Humanitarian Futures programme, and IRI technical reports.

In late 2010 the Climate Centre was involved in a successful proposal to contribute a case study on the climate change-related work of the Solomon Islands Red Cross to a large climate change study on the Pacific funded by the Australian government. The research will be based on the implementation of a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment that considered the impacts of climate change at community level. The case study is being produced in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, the Solomon Islands Red Cross, the IFRC Pacific office as well as the University of the South Pacific and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.



The Climate Centre also participated in the preparation of several other proposals for major research, including one on climate resilience linked to PFR and another on health and global climate change, particularly dengue fever. The Climate Centre's role in those proposals is to foster bridges between research and application and document best practice.

Further development of innovative tools for promoting climate-risk management was achieved, including games and audiovisual communication. Examples include the participatory activities created by the Climate Centre and the Parsons New School for Design (with funding from the IFRC's West and Central Africa zone in Dakar) aimed at exploring the opportunities and constraints in linking early warning with early action.

The work of the Climate Centre is implemented by a team of 8 people (6 FTE) working together from different corners of the world. The workbudget in 2010 was Euro 520.000.