

## Red Cross/ Red Crescent Climate Centre NEWSFLASH 1- UNFCCC Climate Conference, Poznań Poland 2008.



2 December 2008 - A first impression by Fleur Monasso

**Poznan, a Polish city between Berlin and Warschau is slowly getting crowded in the run up to the Climate Conference. Overwhelmed by the size of the conference, I am slowly moving my way to the strict security gates at the entrance of the conference centre. The magnitude of the event, with up to eleven thousand participants well reflects the common concern that climate change is one of the most pressing problems humankind is facing today.**

### **The Copenhagen countdown**

At this conference the next steps have to be sorted to come to a solid agreement in Copenhagen next year. In Copenhagen a post 2012 agreement on mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance needs to be defined. Dozens of meetings take place every hour and participants are zooming like bees around coffee tables to quickly exchange their common or divided ideas. In the corridors you can hear NGO representatives ask each other: "do you know which country will make an intervention during the negotiations?" all in order to understand who they have to influence to try to get their message into the official negotiations.

Almost all speeches during the opening session of the conference emphasized how difficult the task ahead of us will be in these negotiations. We have to hope for a good spirit of compromise in the coming two weeks....

### **The focus on climate change adaptation**

"Disaster risk reduction is our frontline defence against climate change" stated by Ban Ki Moon, and "risk reduction not only saves lives, it is also less expensive than responding to a disaster".

The Red Cross/ Red Crescent is present at the conference with a 20 strong delegation and amongst us is also the Secretary General, Mr. Bekele Geleta of the IFRC. Together with a large number of other humanitarian organizations we have set up an informal task force on climate change within the Inter Agency Standing Committee to join forces in the Poznan negotiations. With these joint efforts we hope to be able to influence the negotiation processes and exchange ideas of good adaptation practice in the future.

**Time is running out...**

To avoid the worst impacts drastic measures need to be taken. However, discussions are still running in every direction and during a meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) the tone was set by a very astonished delegate asking rightfully: "why do people have to take a shower for 15 minutes every day"? Indeed we have a long way to go, but on the road via Poznan to Copenhagen the world's future needs to be shaped and as UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo the Boer positively stressed: "in every difficulty lies opportunity, if you focus on what unites you rather than what divides you".

*For updated information, please visit the UNFCCC website at: [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)*