

## Briefing note

### UN conference on Climate Change (COP13)

**Bali, Indonesia, 3-14 December 2007**

From December 3–14, 2007, Indonesia will host the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP). This Conference brings together governments (at ministerial level), UN bodies, non-governmental organisations, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and other interested parties. The Conference focuses on climate change, and address mitigation (limiting the emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change), adaptation (ways to deal with the negative consequences of climate change), financing (of both mitigation and adaptation) and development of technology . The RC/RC Climate Centre and the International Federation of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent (IFRC) see this Conference as an important opportunity to advocate to governments and other partners the urgency to address the negative impacts of climate change on the vulnerability of people around the world, in particular in developing countries, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent vision on what elements need to be part of a global adaptation support strategy. A detailed position paper will be circulated within the RC/RC later in October.

#### About the UNFCCC

In 1988 the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as a response to growing scientific concerns on climate change. The IPCC's First Assessment Report (1990) confirmed that climate change was indeed a problem, and that human actions likely play a role in contributing to it, noticeably adding to the natural process already taking place. In June 2007 IPCC produced its Fourth Assessment Report. This report states that it is now "unequivocal" that climate change is already happening, and very likely that it is mostly caused by human actions. Various aspects of extreme weather all around the world are already changing..

The United Nations organised a conference on Environment and Development (the 'Earth Summit') in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At this conference governments agreed on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The convention was been signed and later ratified by 192 countries and thus enjoys universal membership.

All countries that have signed and ratified the UNFCCC have been meeting annually since 1995 in the so-called Conference of Parties (COP). Attended by all members, these meetings are the highest decision-making authority of the Convention. They are used to reach, at a global level, agreements on ways and means to address climate change. At COP 3, held in Kyoto, countries agreed on a Protocol with legally binding targets to limit the emissions of greenhouse gasses for the period 2008-2012. Though most of the countries signed the Kyoto-protocol, not all ratified it. However, enough countries did, so in 2005 the Protocol entered into force, including legally binding commitments for those who have ratified it. In Bali negotiations will focus, among others, on the mandate to the negotiation for a second protocol, to follow up on Kyoto. These negotiations will continue during the next two years, so that the second protocol will be ready for signing at COP 15 in December 2009 in Copenhagen (Denmark).

Apart from governments, participants in Bali will come from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross/Red Crescent, knowledge centres, and companies. Besides the formal negotiations, it is also a networking event for many actors dealing with climate change. It is expected that approximately 10,000 people will attend this Conference.

### **The International Federation of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent and COP13**

In the past 15 years climate change has been treated primarily regarded as an environmental problem for the future, to be addressed by actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recently however, the evidence and awareness is mounting that climate change is already happening and that GHG mitigation actions are no longer sufficient. This challenge has now also turned into a humanitarian and development problem, that requires global as well as local actions. In addition to addressing present climate related extreme events, climate change adaptation will be needed for the decades to come, with huge public investment requirements and social awareness on its social impacts.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent is the world's largest humanitarian organisation. As such it sees the effects of climate change in its work: the temperature-rise as the manifestation of climate change will lead to an increase in intensity and/or frequency of heat waves, floods, storms, drought, diseases and sea-level rise. It will disproportionately affect the poorest people in the poorest countries. Within its mandate the Red Cross/Red Crescent focus is on adaptation, i.e., ways to deal with the negative humanitarian consequences of climate change. RC/RC also believes actions to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases are important, and it will contribute to these within its possibilities. It is however not the focus of RC/RC work on climate change.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness (' RC/RC Climate Centre') was established in 2002 to raise awareness within the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement on the humanitarian consequences of Climate Change and to assist National Societies in addressing these through disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities.

In the view of the International Federation the second protocol to the UNFCCC should therefore address clear commitments and ambitious targets to assist vulnerable people to address the impacts of climate change, in particular to reduce the risk of climate change related disasters. Agreements should establish appropriate and flexible funding mechanisms for implementing such measures. A draft position paper will be circulated within the RC/RC later in October, to be finalised after the General Assembly and International Conference in November.

The Federation will take the outcome of the *International Conference of the Red Cross/Red Crescent*<sup>1</sup> (26-30 November) to COP13. The expected outcome commits governments to address so-called environmental risks, which include climate change. Also the Hyogo Framework of Action will serve as an important agreement which commits governments to take necessary actions to reduce the risk for disasters for vulnerable communities.

Within the history of the COPs there have been 'good Cops and bad Cops'. Bali has the potential to become a 'good Cop', because the global public pressure on governments is now very high to show their commitments to address one of the main global issues—and to move beyond rhetoric to real tangible actions. But it will also be a very complicated COP. The interests of governments are high, the implications of any measure are big. The main focus of the discussion will be on the willingness of powers like the US, Russia, EU, China, India, and to a lesser extent South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Brazil to come to an agreement on greenhouse gas reduction, while equal sustainable economic development remains assured .

The most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change, the least developed countries and the small islands states, hardly play a role in these negotiations, because they hardly contribute to the emissions of greenhouse gases and they have small voices to plea. For them support to adapt to the impacts of climate change is the key concern. But because they emit so few greenhouse gases, their 'bargaining power' is very limited.

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<sup>1</sup> Issues relating to environmental hazards, including climate change, will be addressed in the International conference under Objective 1 "Highlight the need for collaborative action and partnerships between States, the components of the Movement, and other stakeholders in addressing humanitarian challenges of common concern."

At these conferences the big picture often gets lost with all the detailed discussions in contact-groups etc. It takes a lot of human capacity to follow, let alone influence all the negotiations. This the RC/RC does not have, so it will have to prioritise *which negotiations* it wishes to follow, *what the message* is with which it will approach governments, and *how* it wants to communicate the RC/RC position during the COP13.

Next to the official negotiations the COPs have a very rich tradition of side-events, at which governments, scientists, private sector and NGOs present their views, their programs, their reports etc. Moreover there are many opportunities for meetings, catching up with people etc. Therefore, to have an intensive course on all the aspects of climate change and what the main developments are – COP13 is the place to be to get the full picture.

Two weeks are a very long period and the first few days are often a slow start, but therefore also helpful to get into the rhythm of this event. The hectic time of the COP is in the final three days when Ministers and their entourage are flown in to finalise the negotiations. On those days there is no day or night, just coffee...and a lot of 'horse trading'. In the middle of the two weeks there is a good tradition of the 'development and adaptation days' organised by the IIED in London. Here people interested in these climate adaptation issues gather, share information, make new plans.

### **More information**

For more information please go to the below mentioned websites or call//email the persons below.

- on UNFCCC [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)
- on COP13 [www.unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_13](http://www.unfccc.int/meetings/cop_13)
- on IPCC [www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)
- on Climate Centre [www.climatecentre.org](http://www.climatecentre.org)
- on Hyogo Framework of Action [www.unisdr.ch](http://www.unisdr.ch)

For more information on the Federation position at COP, please contact Madeleen Helmer at the Climate Centre: [mhelmer@redcross.nl](mailto:mhelmer@redcross.nl) or call +00 31 70-44.55.703.

For Red Cross/ Red Crescent participation and registration, please contact Raimond Duijsens at the Climate Centre:  
[rduijsens@redcross.nl](mailto:rduijsens@redcross.nl) or call +31 70 44.55.702.