

Preparedness for climate change

2006-2007

understanding and addressing the risks of climate change

The Red Cross/Red Crescent 'answer to a changing climate

Climate change is one of the main global issues of the 21st century, and will severely affect the Red Cross/Red Crescent. Scientists project an unprecedented warming of the earth leading, amongst others, to an increase of extreme weather events like floods and droughts, more intense hurricanes, the spread of diseases like malaria and dengue, and sea level rise. Tens of millions of people, in particular in developing countries, will be affected every year.

According to the World Meteorological Organization the year 2005 broke dozens of weather records all over the world. Each of the last ten years (1995-2004), with the exception of 1996, has been among the warmest ten years on record.

In 2002 the Netherlands Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) established the Red Cross/Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness (RC/RC Climate Centre). The RC/RC Climate Centre supports national RC/RC societies and others in understanding and addressing the risks of climate change, particularly in disaster risk reduction programs. It facilitates the cooperation between national RC/RC societies, climate scientists and policy makers, in order to improve programs, research and policies that will strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people. The

RC/RC Climate Centre is based in the Netherlands, but serves the whole RC/RC movement, especially in developing countries.

Time to prepare

The RC/RC Climate Centre now offers national RC/RC societies in developing countries the opportunity to improve their understanding of the negative impacts of climate change for their country and programs. Developing countries, and particularly their poorest inhabitants, do not have the means to fend off floods and other natural disasters. To make matters worse, their economies tend to be based on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture and fisheries, which makes them all the more vulnerable. A better understanding of climate change and how extreme weather events could affect vulnerable people will eventually lead to stronger risk reduction programs.

All national RC/RC societies in developing countries are invited to participate in the program '*Preparedness for climate change - understanding and addressing the risks of climate change*' (with financial support from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for International Cooperation). The program will be implemented in 2006 and 2007 and contains four steps. National societies can indicate after each step whether and when they want to continue with the next step. The program is intended to be flexible, fitting the needs and special circumstances of each national society, and to be carried out in close coordination with regular disaster management activities.

Step 1: Organising a workshop on the risks of climate change

The aim of this first step is to inform the RC/RC staff about the potential risks of climate change to their country and how these risks might affect their programs and mission. In cooperation with the regional disaster management delegates of the IFRC, national RC/RC societies can organise a brief workshop on the risks of

climate change for staff of the national headquarters and delegates of the IFRC. After this workshop, national societies will have a first sense of what the rising risks due to climate change may mean for their programs, and can decide whether they want to continue with Step 2.

Step 2:
A closer look at the risks of climate change in the country and on the priorities and programs of the national society

During the second step of the program, national RC/RC societies can get support to hire one staff who will prepare a first analysis of the vulnerability of ongoing programs and to develop a background document about the impacts of climate change in the country. The national societies will get a better understanding of the risks of climate change, and build a network connecting them to other organisations addressing these risks (within various sectors in the government, scientific organisations, and civil society). The development of the document will lead to recommendations on how to make the RC/RC programs in the country more resilient to climate related risks.

Step 3:
Capacity building for climate change resilient RC/RC programs

In step three staff of national RC/RC societies who have gone through the first and second steps can participate in a regional five-day workshop on climate change and disaster risk reduction. The workshop will be conducted in consultation and cooperation with regional experts on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Step 4:
Climate change resilient RC/RC programs

The last step will support national RC/RC societies in developing programs and activities and in mobilising resources needed to mainstream climate change risk reduction into the programs of the national RC/RC society, its chapters and local branches. In this phase of the program the

national RC/RC societies will continue the dialogue with national and regional climate change experts. Furthermore, the program will support the national societies to prepare funding proposals for implementation of their climate risk reduction priorities. The program will offer national societies the opportunity to hire one staff or to continue the contract of the staff member hired for Step two.

Flexible program

'Preparedness for climate change - understanding and addressing the risks of climate change 2006-2007' is a flexible program, aimed to meet the specific situations of national societies who are interested to participate. A national society can implement the program within a time frame of 6 to 12 months. A national society can step in at any time, but no later than 31 March 2007.

The role of the RC/RC Climate Centre

By working closely together with the IFRC in Geneva and the regional delegations the Climate Centre will coordinate the program and provide technical advice (where needed). Furthermore the Climate Centre will document and share experiences and will support interested national societies in finding financial resources to implement the program and activities developed during step four.

How to apply?

All RC/RC national societies in developing countries are invited to apply to participate in the program, which will be able to support a total of 20-40 countries. Specific attention will be given to Central America, Southern Africa, and South East Asia, but national societies from other regions are also most welcome to participate. For further information, please contact the RC/RC Climate Centre.

Contact details

RC/RC Climate Centre
Ph: +31 70 4455666 / F: +31 70 4455712
E: climatecentre@redcross.nl
www.climatecentre.org