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FOLLOW-UP TO THE 28TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**PART 3:
Implementation on General Objective 3 of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action:
Minimize the impact of disasters through implementation of disaster risk
reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms**

**Document prepared by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red
Crescent Societies**

Geneva, October 2007

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PART 3:

Implementation on General Objective 3 of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action: Minimize the impact of disasters through implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms

The aim is to protect human dignity, lives and livelihoods from the devastating impact of disasters, by fully integrating disaster risk reduction into national and international planning and policy instruments and implementing appropriate operational measures to reduce risks, and by implementing appropriate legal, policy and operational measures to facilitate and expedite effective responses to disasters, in order to reduce the risks and effects of disasters on marginalized and vulnerable populations.

1. Introduction

Altogether 62 National Societies and 29 Governments provided feedback under General Objective 3, and the majority of both provided information related to both the final goals under this objective. Many provided specific information related to each of the proposed actions, but some limited their description of implementation to one or several of these.

At a general level, it can be noted that National Societies tend to report specific actions at local and national levels, as well as internationally, while Governments tend to refer to general matters and to set their reported actions in the context of other, intergovernmental, frameworks and settings.

Another broad generalization is that whilst National Societies tend to emphasize highlight taken in co-operation with Governments, the reports of the latter have much fewer references to National Societies or to other, specific, organizations. Exceptions to this include a number of references to intergovernmental co-operation mechanisms specifically designed for disaster-related action.

FINAL GOAL 3.1 – ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF DISASTER-RISK REDUCTION AND UNDERTAKE MEASURES TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF DISASTERS ON VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Disaster risk reduction linkages continue to be strengthened with States, UN agencies and other international organizations through the International Federation Secretariat's¹ participation on the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (IATF).

Among those States that have

3.1.1 States should, in accordance with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, review their existing legislation and policies to fully integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into all relevant legal, policy and planning instruments in order to address the social, economic, political and environmental dimensions that influence vulnerability to disasters.

¹ For the sake of simplicity, the Secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including its field representations and structures, will be referred to, mostly, as the "Secretariat" in this paper.

provided information related to this item, most report that they have reviewed legislation and applicable policies. In many of these cases, it appears that the focus of these reviews have been improving response capacities while introducing risk reduction thinking as a dimension of this, particularly with reference to civil defence and similar organisations.

Several highlight action taken to link response and risk reduction to environmental matters and the protection natural resources, while some also have taken into account the need to reduce exposure to technological disasters and terrorism events.

While some States report new legislation related to disaster management and risk reduction, several emphasize the work they have done to achieve integration of the rules and regulations that are in force at different levels of their respective countries, such as federal law, regional arrangements and local ordinances all governing the response to emergencies. In one case, the changes introduced were specifically designed also to achieve greater local community involvement in risks reduction and emergency response.

Similarly, a number of States mention the involvement of their respective National Societies in risk reduction and emergency response mechanisms, and the co-operation they have with Civil Defence, noting that the Civil Defence system relies to a great extent on contingency planning and preparedness in co-operation between emergency services, local authorities and NGOs.

A number of those who responded make explicit reference to the World Conference on the Disaster Reduction (WCDR), Kobe, Hyogo in Japan², and the “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015³” (HFA) agreed there as an important inspiration for their domestic initiatives, and make a link between this and high-level political interest in risk reduction issues in their respective countries. Hyogo seems to have stimulated both debate and action, and made more explicit the linkages between domestic priorities, international co-operation and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) as an instrument.

For a large number of States, the review of the legislation and policies on the disaster risk reduction follows international meetings and agreements, as well as internal analyses, assessments and research activities. Efforts have been made through inter-ministerial and inter-sectorial coordination mechanisms that have been materialised and reported both by the States representatives and the National Societies.

At the World Conference on the Disaster Reduction (, 168 participating States endorsed a ten-year plan suggesting guiding principles, priorities of action and practical methods that vulnerable communities can put into practice to become resilient against risks. In line with Final Goal 3.1.1 and the HFA related to the ISDR, several States have undertaken studies on hazard estimations. Furthermore, special studies concerning the vulnerability of societies and their lifelines (so called “Critical Infrastructures”) have been and are being conducted (Germany).

Legal and organizational steps have been taken to protect people, national territories and natural wealth, with a special emphasis put on emergency management (Cook Islands, Belgium, Japan) and disaster reduction (Nicaragua, Guatemala, Bulgaria, France, Austria). Activities like risk identification, monitoring, early warning systems and training programs are expected to be put into practice by the essential services, local authorities and NGOs. Often, a national centre might be given a mandate for general responsibility in coordinating supervision of activities, objects and enterprises with a potential for large accidents or disasters (as the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning, in Norway).

² World Conference on the Disaster Reduction (WCDR)

³ The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)

Operational measures to reduce disaster risk at the local and national levels (e.g. management of natural resources, the environment and land use, and urban planning and building codes).

Implementing disaster risk awareness and public education programmes, early warning systems, contingency planning and other mitigation and preparedness measures, based on risk, vulnerability and capacity assessments.

3.1.2 State authorities should take appropriate operational measures to reduce disaster risks at the local and national levels, including sustainable natural resource, environmental and land-use management, appropriate urban planning, and enforced building codes. States should, in cooperation with National Societies and other concerned agencies, implement disaster risk awareness programmes, public education programmes, early-warning systems, contingency planning, disaster management training and other mitigation and preparedness measures, based on risk, vulnerability and capacity assessments.

A significant number of National Societies carried out “Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments” (VCAs). National Societies have used VCA as a risk assessment, risk analysis and planning tool for preparedness and local level disaster risk reduction programming. There are over 150 VCA facilitator/practitioners worldwide who are acting as resource persons for National Societies to undertake VCA. In practical terms many VCAs act to inspire National Societies to reinforce action in disaster preparedness and response.

Community VCAs were carried out in high-risk areas in Central America and the Caribbean, which in turn enabled National Societies to implement appropriate mitigation measures in the communities. The assessments were linked to disaster response planning at the national level. Other projects include backyard gardening or small-scale food security household projects in areas with high HIV prevalence in Lesotho, Swaziland and small-scale infrastructure projects in rural Nepal.

The Secretariat identified Branch Disaster Response Teams (BDRT), National Disaster Response Teams (NDRT) as priorities for 2006 and 2007. With support from DFID, a framework for National Societies to identify their needs and a basic training package were developed which are currently being piloted.

In order to strengthen Early Warning systems, Secretariat staff has continued to engage in the ISDR International Early Warning Platform (IEWP), the Indian Ocean Consortium (IOC) and are also working with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Specific steps are being considered to strengthen the linkage between the global elements of a multi-hazard early warning system and the scaling up of early warning at the local and national levels. Cooperation between National Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations and national Meteorological offices is regarded as one important way forward.

Further, through the support of ECHO thematic funding, early warning systems, flood shelters and pre-positioned stocks of relief goods at the local level enabled National Societies in South Asia to come to the aid of communities affected by floods caused by monsoon rains. National Societies in countries affected by hurricanes in the Caribbean, carried out extensive early warning measures to bring people to shelters and provided for the needs of those who had lost their homes and/or belongings.

The Secretariat is also an active member of the Knowledge and Education Cluster of the ISDR System. The cluster has worked to share good practice, influence policy and to coordinate efforts to support local and national level initiatives. National Societies, such as the Red Cross of Viet Nam, have not only expanded their disaster risk reduction work through schools but have also shared this experience, at a number of global fora, including the ISDR System Global Platform in June 2007.

The Secretariat, in 2005, began a process of strengthening contingency and disaster response planning in National Societies. Contingency planning was carried out by regional

delegations and National Societies in several regions in cooperation with the UN and ensuring that National Societies were in a good position to help the in-country InterAgency Standing Committee (IASC) planning process. It participated in several UNDAC disaster preparedness-planning missions carried out at the request of Governments, in close cooperation with the National Societies in the countries concerned (Georgia and Tajikistan). The Secretariat participated in the IASC Working Group Task Force on Natural Disasters, which submitted a report and recommendations to the IASC Working Group in June 2005. A self-assessment tool and guidelines, largely based on the International Federation's model was produced to promote joint regional and country level disaster and contingency planning amongst IASC members.

By responding effectively to disasters (420 in 2006), the International Federation and its Secretariat has illustrated the great strength of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in being present at community level and providing support to communities in disaster risk reduction. The full array of disaster response, preparedness, logistics and other training tools were used together in a cohesive way to positively impact and support National Societies in their response capacities.

An example of how several components of the Movement is the initiative of the ICRC to have manual on "Building Methods, confined masonry for one and two storey buildings" produced in Pakistan, in the aftermath of the earthquake. This was translated to assist the local community in earthquake resistant construction.

The various risks identified are taken into account and accompanied by documents charted and/or indexed in databases. The mapping system is widely developed in France, Belgium and Congo. The monitoring of the phenomena is ensured by structures and systems of measurement. As per volcanoes, earthquakes, avalanches, underground cavities and sea levels in France. In Iceland, various computer simulations programs have been developed enabling all stakeholders to assess how much time is needed to respond to natural disasters, e.g. volcano eruption.

Measures have been implemented and strengthened, including the promotion of housing and building retrofitting, the improvement of the flood control infrastructure and the promotion of projects to make communities resilient to disasters in the field of land use and urban planning.

As an auxiliary to the public authorities, the National Societies are using disaster preparedness and relief modules. Their actions tie in with the planning policies of the country's civil defence system, of which in the most cases the National Societies are part of, and incorporate the approach set out in the Movement's strategies. Operational measures are based on feedback from government bodies responsible for environmental protection and urban planning. Contingency planning is implemented at local branch level, based on vulnerability and capacity assessments. For example, in 2007 Finnish Red Cross is developing a new VCA-tool for the branches, in order detect the vulnerable groups and to find tools to work not only in the event of a disaster, but to also strengthen the capacity of vulnerable groups before the disaster.

In the context of their disaster preparedness program, the National Societies organize regular trainings for volunteers and staff. On disaster management and coordination in case of disasters, with elements of risk analysis needs assessment and practical exercises (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, France, Chile). A large number of National Societies are involved in activities concerning disaster-risk awareness and education programmes for the general public, through teaching aid, TV reports, other mass media tools and conferences. To provide some examples, the Canadian Red Cross first aid training programs reach over 500.000 Canadians each year, while the Finnish and Croatian Red Cross have their own handbooks on disaster relief.

Some States and National Societies are involved in supporting programs abroad. The British Red Cross actively helped the Secretariat and National Societies risk reduction programming

in South Asia, Southern Africa and the Middle East, including disaster management. The Australian RC supports a variety of disaster preparedness and response programs in the Asian Pacific Region, mainly through the capacity building of the National Societies in the region.

The Barbados and Armenian Red Cross reported a limited action for the moment (due to the lack of funds), and the impossibility to continue VCA activities which had already started.

While progress has been made in ensuring disaster risk reduction is addressed through the International Federation's disaster management policy – a draft is currently under review – National Societies have stepped up efforts to include disaster risk reduction strategies in their own programming as well as in the plans of local and national government. In

3.1.3 States, in cooperation with National Societies, are urged to incorporate risk reduction as a central feature in national development plans, poverty-reduction strategies and post-disaster recovery plans, be it on their own territory or through their development and cooperation assistance in a bilateral, multilateral or regional context, with a special emphasis on reducing the vulnerability of populations in hazard-prone areas or otherwise at risk owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion or discrimination.

Latin America and Caribbean region, for example, 'safer and healthy' communities is at the centre of the RC/RC regional development strategies while 'building back better' to reduce future risk is now a central strategy of recovery planning in operations ranging from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami to the 2007 floods in Mozambique. Steps have also been taken by the Secretariat, including through training in relief and recovery, to see how response strategies can be adjusted to address longer term risk.

In order support government processes, the Cambodian Red Cross took steps to lobby for disaster risk reduction to be included in the PRSP. Since the WCDR in January 2005, States in the Andean region have developed strategies– that include National Red Cross Societies – to establish national platforms to follow-up on the HFA.

Apart from providing continual support to strengthening global, regional and national capacities in order to respond to disasters, the Secretariat has made considerable investment in working at the household and local level to reduce the risk of disasters. The community-based disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness programmes represent long-term investment in building capacity and reducing disaster risk. They are designed to support communities in the assessment of their capacities as well as their vulnerabilities and to initiate measures to reduce risk, for example, by promoting disaster risk reduction in schools and establishing community-centred early warning. Further, contingency planning and disaster response planning has enabled National Societies in countries in West and Central Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Central Europe and in Central and South East Asia affected by disasters to be better prepared.

Within the strategies of both States and National Societies, and on the basis of national risk surveys, the various risk reduction aspects are incorporated into country response and development planning. The UK, Mexico, Bulgaria, Germany, Ukraine, Norway, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have introduced the risk reduction issues in their National Development Plans. Thanks to thorough mapping, surveillance and early warning systems, abnormal situations can receive extra emergency preparedness and, depending on the risk assessment, different alert stages can be effectuated. Others main goals: to strengthen the capacities of effective assistance for the population affected by disasters, to increase the capacities of the local population (local communities), to mitigate the effects of disasters by creating efficient disaster management system.

National Societies' strategies promote and support focused and effective programmes based on local knowledge and experience within a Federation framework, supported by its Secretariat in Geneva, regional delegations as well as national delegations when appropriate. They are involved in most national and local activities: from the community based disaster reduction, disaster preparedness and mitigation activities to assisting affected populations (e.g. Bulgaria, Lithuania), prevention of vulnerability by implementing livelihood projects (Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Swaziland and Rwanda) and empowering the people themselves by capacity building (Finland).

Post-disaster recovery plans (Congo, Belgium, Iran and Pakistan) are mainly focused on infrastructures and affected people reintegration (program for the return of the displaced population and kit supply for the revival of the agricultural activities, building safer schools, health facilities and community-based disaster preparedness). Modifications made in 2005 to the Belgian laws on natural disasters make it possible to allow a much faster compensation to people affected.

International cooperation programs (U.K., Switzerland, Greece) aim to assist governments of disaster-prone developing countries with mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into their planning processes. Including Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes (PRSPs): a) development of strategies to effectively manage disasters in particular areas, b) purchase and distribution of seeds-food security c) reduction of vulnerability of population in disasters. Amongst the concerned areas are Zimbabwe, Malawi, Congo, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

The Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Centre (the Climate Centre) based in the Netherlands, has made several contributions to the global debate; it has participated in all major Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction conferences and a number of regional follow-up forums. In addition, collaboration in specific countries such as Bangladesh,

3.1.4 States are strongly encouraged to prioritize and provide resources to implement comprehensive disaster risk reduction measures, including measures to address issues relating to climate change and variability. National Societies will increase their cooperation with States and experts in the area of climate change in order to limit the potential negative impact on vulnerable populations. In so doing, they may draw on the recommendations outlined in the report "Preparedness for climate change" as requested by the Plan of Action of the 27th International Conference in 1999.

Mozambique, Nicaragua and Viet Nam continue. New opportunities have also advanced through a capacity building initiative launched in mid-2005.

The Climate Centre continues to offer National Societies in developing countries opportunities to improve their understanding of the negative impacts of climate change and how extreme weather events could take its toll on vulnerable populations. To this effect, it launched 'Preparedness for climate change – understanding and addressing the risks of climate change' a four step programme which was implemented in 2006–2007. The programme is flexible, adapting to the needs of each National Society, and is carried out in close coordination with regular Disaster Management activities. Upon completion of each step National Societies can decide if and when they would like go to the next step. For further information visit: <http://www.climatecentre.org/>

A significant number of States are in the process of establishing a national framework for cooperation between sectors and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in an effort to fill the knowledge gaps and identify what is needed to adapt to a changing climate.

Raising awareness of the general public as well as decision makers (Germany, France, Japan, Congo, Belgium, Norway, Panama, Republic of Korea) is a main challenge for all relevant authorities and National Societies, thus influencing the effects of the climate change outside and inside a national territory. Financial instruments intended to help the disaster prevention and preparedness, national land conservation, disaster recovery and rehabilitation, also include climate change related issues. A few States (France, U.K., and

The Netherlands) are committed to a more integrated approach between the disaster risk reduction and climate change agendas. The Netherlands have a Climate Assistance Programme and also supports the Least Developed Countries Fund for climate adaptation and the Special Climate Change Fund, both managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (together EUR 12,600,000). The UK has integrated the DRR concerns under the climate change chapter. Furthermore, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is carrying out joint climate change/DRR risk assessments in several disaster-prone countries to identify gaps and possible areas for funding (DFID is providing over £14 million to strengthen the international system's capacity to support DRR and over £13 million for the DRR work of NGOs).

Even if climate change issues are recognized all around the world, they could need further reflection and action planning for future activities, both in social services and disaster response. Lack of funds or lack of a consolidated policy for the moment (Ecuador, Georgia), are still preventing some States and National Societies from a relevant approach.

The WCDR brought together states, the international humanitarian community, including the International Federation and its Secretariat, to discuss implementation of risk reduction. The resulting HFA proposes to strengthen the capacity of disaster-prone countries to address risk and invest in disaster preparedness. The Governing Board of the International Federation endorsed the framework and in November 2005 at the General Assembly in Seoul, risk reduction was

3.1.5 States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the field of disaster management, should negotiate clearly defined roles and responsibilities with their respective National Societies in risk reduction and disaster management activities. This may include National Society representation on relevant national policy and coordination bodies as collaborative partners with States. States should also take specific legal and policy measures to support and assist National Societies in building sustainable volunteer and community capacity, particularly promoting the participation of women, in the areas of risk reduction and disaster management..

agreed as one of the key areas of focus for the International Federation's Global Agenda⁴.

Since 2005 a number of National Societies, particularly those in Latin America & the Caribbean and Asia and Pacific, have engaged in national, regional and global processes to follow up the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific are participating in a regional disaster management plan coordinated through SOPAC⁵ and, for example, the Bangladesh Red Crescent is engaged in the national Government's Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan (CBMP).

Coordination, cooperation and strategic partnerships with key stakeholders within the humanitarian community have been strengthened, with particular focus on information exchange in emergencies: The Secretariat has been actively involved in various Inter-agency Task Forces designed to share information on disaster risk "hot spots", early warning systems, and improved coordination during times of disaster. The Secretariat is represented in several Inter-Agency Standing Committee groups, notably the sub-working group on contingency planning and disaster preparedness. One important result of this cooperation is a humanitarian early warning website (HEWSweb), which displays the latest forecasts, reports and alerts on drought, floods, tropical storms, locust infestation, El Niño, earthquakes and volcanic activity. Another main task is the co-chairing of the Task Force on Natural Disasters with OCHA. The aim of that task force is to improve coordination in natural

⁴ The International Federation's "Global Agenda" includes four Goals: reduction the number of deaths, injuries and impact of 1) disasters and 2) of diseases and public health emergencies; 3) increasing capacity to address urgent cases of vulnerability, and 4) to reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

⁵ Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission

disasters among UN agencies, the Federation and NGOs, building on the outcome of five pilot studies undertaken.

Legal and policy measures to support National Societies in building sustainable volunteer and community capacity, particularly in promoting participation by women, risk reduction and disaster management remain a priority.

National Societies are recognized as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field under by national legislation or agreements. From this position and with regard to risk reduction and disaster management activities, most of them participate in regular dialogue and planning processes at national, regional and local level, operating disaster preparedness and relief modules.

Generally recognized as a public utility and in close cooperation with governmental bodies, National Societies fulfil subsidiary roles for States (national emergency preparedness and civil protection authorities). A significant number are involved in national policy and coordination bodies: Bosnia and Herzegovina Red Cross have been included in the preparation of laws on protection and rescue at state level; Panamanian Red Cross is integrated within the National System of Civil defence; Australian Red Cross is a member of the Community and Disability Ministers Advisory Council Disaster Recovery Sub-committee.. Other National Societies, which are not *directly* involved in the national policy formulation (Cyprus), work closely with governmental and private stakeholders, reducing risks and managing disasters.

Several proposals have been made to governments in order to define more clearly the Societies' roles and responsibilities in the governments' disaster plans. The Canadian and Belgian Red Cross have undertaken broad consultations on the National Society auxiliary role to government responsibilities. Canadian RC aims towards a revised statute and appropriate legislation, which support the role of the National Society to undertake this work. Additionally, the main Belgian outcome is intended to be a long-term investment plan with a budget to update the disaster management infrastructure.

The participation of staff and volunteers, and hence their training, is a component of every operational support facility within National Societies. In a large number of National Societies, the proportion of women within the volunteer base is particularly high. Within the scope of organisational strengthening, attention is paid to the recruitment and training of capable volunteers.

In the Bulgarian Red Cross Law, adopted by the Bulgarian parliament, the role of the Bulgarian Red Cross in building sustainable volunteers and community capacity, particularly in promoting participation by women, risk reduction and disaster management is clearly defined.

The disaster response capacities of National Societies have been strengthened through training and the development of response tools, logistics stocks and systems. Further, the Secretariat has developed and strengthened existing disaster assessment tools, in certain cases, in cooperation with the ICRC to enable National Societies to improve their disaster management capacities.

3.1.6 The components of the Movement, in cooperation with States, will prioritize and scale up efforts to build sustainable capacity and improve performance in the area of disaster risk reduction, including disaster management, awareness-raising and advocacy activities at the local, national and regional levels. This will include an emphasis on building effective and inclusive partnerships with populations that live in hazard-prone areas or are otherwise vulnerable owing to poverty, marginalization, social exclusion or other forms of discrimination and will involve all relevant partners..

The Secretariat has developed a number of specific programmes to build capacity in disaster risk reduction. This has included supporting a three year UK Government (DFID) and British Red Cross funded disaster reduction programme implemented in Southern Africa and South Asia, Support is provided to seven National Societies to build capacity in local level mitigation and other community based measures, to strengthen local, national and regional preparedness for response as well as to strengthen networking and knowledge sharing internally and outside of the Red Cross Movement. Two additional capacity building initiatives are the ECHO (Thematic Funding) programme that now in its second phase aims to build capacity in disaster response and the DFID supported IS III (Institutional Strategy) that seeks to build wider disaster management capacity over four years (2007 to 2010) with a focus on Africa.

Furthermore, and in line with the Governing Board's decision in Addis Abba, February 2007, to set up the Global Programme for Africa, advanced plans are underway to launch longer term food security programme with 15 Africa National Societies. The Programme will be for a five years pilot period, and will be formally launched on 9th October 2007 to coincide with the World Disaster Reduction Day.

Several National Societies, with support from the Secretariat of the International Federation, carried out real time reviews of their disaster response operations. The conclusions from these reports indicate that community-based disaster preparedness in these countries saves lives. National Societies mobilized funding to further develop their programmes and to make them sustainable.

Tools like the "Characteristics of Well Prepared National Societies" (WPNS) provide snap shot of the preparedness of members of the International Federation and allows each user a systematic way of measuring their own preparedness. The success of the tool lies in the fact that it is designed as a working as well as a monitoring tool for National Societies, and it is being used by them as a checklist to help planning and programming in disaster preparedness and response. It is also used by the Secretariat for planning, drafting regional appeals and highlighting gaps and priorities. The tool attracted interest from ECHO and has been used as a model for providing disaster management data and information in the UN IASC study on Natural Disasters as well as to the OCHA Humanitarian Response Review.

Capacity development is the core issue of disaster risk reduction. It involves individual education starting within the education system (primary schools) up to training at expert level and general awareness raising through public campaigns, as well as institutional capacity building.

Training activities are the most common measures reported by National Societies. An important aim is for each branch of a National Society to have adequate numbers of trained disaster response personnel – volunteers as well as staff These focus mainly on such matters as basic rescue, humanitarian relief operations, and logistics and needs assessment (Armenia, Egypt, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, etc.).

National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs) originally initiated in 2002 have gained increasing prominence as a component of the National Society and Secretariat strategies for strengthening disaster response capacity. The objective of the establishment of the National Disaster Response Teams is to have available at the National society level, a core group of people, drawn from the population of the country concerned, and possessing cross-sectional expertise. National Disaster Response Teams to be maximally effective in responding to disasters work in close coordination with the agencies of their respective governments, other domestic disaster management organisations and internationally provided resources as applicable.

In several countries such as Germany, Egypt and Norway, a special focus on private-public partnerships in local, regional and central levels has been made, since private companies run much vital infrastructure. One of the main ideas is sharing best practices as well as developing new ideas between different organizations and public authorities through forums working actively on Disaster Risk Reduction. At the same time, the Secretariat continues to develop its Global Disaster Management appeal, a “from local to global” disaster management concept by facilitating global solidarity for local solutions. In order to achieve this, implementation of the new Federation operating model has started bringing disaster management support closer to Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies. The International Federation has prioritised the scaling up of actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction as well as improving local, regional and international capacities to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.

At international level, neighbouring countries (Norway, Poland) signed agreements on cooperation and assistance in the case of occurrence of natural disasters, UE funding was also provided. Several other international supporting projects (Governments, NS) have been deployed to strengthen capacities and improve performances of vulnerable communities in hazard-prone areas (Grenada, Algeria, Haiti, Indonesia, Colombia, and Madagascar).

In order to raise awareness, information is the main means to support the population and increase its resilience to all hazards. Studies concerning the factors influencing vulnerability to chosen hazards and threats are accompanied by seminars and workshops for participants from all relevant players in the field of civil protection. In parallel, arrangements have been put in place to make information available to the public about civil protection matters. As well as to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

The International Federation and its Secretariat have continued to engage with key humanitarian and development bodies, the United Nations and governments to influence policy and practice in disaster risk reduction. Having made a significant contribution at the WCDR, the

3.1.7 The International Federation will support the efforts of National Societies to strengthen their capacity in the field of disaster risk reduction through continued knowledge sharing on best practices, resource mobilization and advocacy on disaster risk reduction issues with States and other relevant international, regional and national actors, including with the private sector.

International Federation and its Secretariat has played an influential role through regional forums – including Mumbai, Beijing and three events in the Americas – as well as in national platforms on moving forward commitments made in the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Secretariat also played a significant role at the first Global Platform held in Geneva in June 2007 where it announced a significant scaling up of its work through its planned Global Alliance on disaster risk reduction. This will be launched in October 2007.

The Secretariat is a member of and fully engaged with the Management Oversight Board (MOB) of the ISDR systems, representing civil society. As well as the Secretariat is playing active role in all of the technical ISDR clusters (e.g. education). In addition, the Secretariat is supporting and actively engaged with regional RC/RC technical groups which lead strategic thinking and planning, e.g., disaster management working group (DMWG), disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DP/DRR) group, East Africa, Southern Africa, America etc.

The Secretariat has used its position as a leader in global disaster management to raise awareness of the work carried out by its members and volunteers, to highlight issues that

affect its work and generate positive discussion around these main themes. The main tool is the *World Disasters Report*.

The World Disasters Report is regarded as a high profile publication containing credible and informative contributions to the knowledge on disaster preparedness, reduction, response and recovery. It provides facts and statistics, analysis and exploration of trends.

The Secretariat has also continued to provide management oversight of the ProVention Consortium - a key body addressing the management of disaster risk - and has actively engaged in the reform of the ISDR System. The Secretariat has strengthened links to NGOs; specifically through linkages made through the DFID funded Disaster Reduction Programme.

The Secretariat continues to run programmes that strive to bring risk reduction, disaster preparedness, and disaster response and logistics programmes closer together and coordinate capacity building across regions.

The Federation, through its National Societies' local structures, is well placed within the communities to understand local reality and rapidly changing trends and to appreciate communities' capacities and vulnerabilities. IFRC provides support with know-how (tools, norms, guides, policies), human, financial and technical resources to carry out DRR activities.

IFRC has been working on capacity building of National Societies, providing human resources training and personal equipment for the emergency response teams (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina). Different programmes involving VCA and Disaster Management have been funded with IFRC support (Armenia, Panama, El Salvador, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Disaster Management centres was created and provided with basic disaster response tools, warehouse with non food DP stock, means of transport and communication systems (Tajikistan).

As well, the organization of working groups and seminars in the area of disaster risk reduction (within the Movement or along with Governmental, non-governmental and international organizations' representatives) have encouraged continued knowledge-sharing, getting participants able to learn best practices from each others.

3.2 ENHANCE INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE THROUGH SUPPORT FOR THE COMPILATION AND APPLICATION OF THE LAWS, RULES AND PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE TO INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE

It is essential to provide neutral and impartial assistance to all populations affected by disasters, without discrimination and on the basis of vulnerability and need. Experience has shown that achieving this goal depends to a significant extent on improved understanding of the regulatory framework within which international disaster response is provided. Global research conducted as part of the International Federation's project on international disaster law, rules and principles (IDRL) identified that there are many instruments aimed at improving international disaster response but that awareness of them is often lacking and implementation inconsistent.

Specific Actions

The first proposed action under 3.2 concerns the work led by the International Federation to "collate and examine the effectiveness of law, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response" (IDRL), an issue rooted in the practical experience of all disaster response organisations, both those that work internationally and those, like National

3.2.1 All members of the Conference welcome the work undertaken by the International Federation in cooperation with National Societies, States, the United Nations and other bodies to collate and examine the effectiveness of laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response, as noted in United Nations General Assembly Resolution on strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance (A/RES/57/150).

Societies, which have their primary role in their own countries. Insofar as IDRL touches upon legislation and relations between States, it is also a matter of strong interest among Governments, individually as well in their co-operation among themselves.

National Societies, consequently, report on a number activities and initiatives undertaken in collaboration with their respective authorities. A high proportion of the National Societies report that – based on their support for the International Federation's IDRL work – they work with their national authorities to study the current legal situation as regards disaster response related legislation, as well as with other national or international organisations active in their respective countries.

Thus, for example, the Belgian Red Cross conveyed to the Secretariat an inventory of the rules applicable in Belgium – international as well as those of the European Union and the Council of Europe, bi- and – multilateral treaties, and Belgian domestic legislation. In this context, the Belgian Red Cross also identified the national actors, and the rules applicable to these, in case of natural disasters in Belgium itself.

The IFRC has continued its work in collating existing laws, in particular through the development of a web-based, searchable database of over five hundred existing global, regional and national instruments, based on number of national societies, governments and humanitarian partners.

The proposed action called for members of the Conference to recognise that improved “awareness, clarification and development of laws, rules and principles” would improve international disaster response.

3.2.2 All members of the Conference recognize that improved awareness, clarification, application and development of laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response will assist in facilitating and improving the coordination, timeliness, quality and accountability of international disaster response activities and can therefore make a major contribution to the protection of human dignity in situations of disasters.

To that end, a considerable number of National Societies highlight their work to encourage updating domestic legislation governing disaster response.

In that context, a number of them also refer to efforts to update legislation governing the National Society itself and make linkages between this and their efforts to disseminate International Humanitarian Law.

A number of National Societies have initiated or entered into agreements with neighbouring Societies – bilaterally or on a sub-regional basis – as a framework for mutual assistance in the case of disasters. Similarly, some National Societies have established agreements with components of the Movement for international assistance in the case of emergencies. Some have also participated in the establishment, in co-operation with the relevant domestic authorities, of co-ordination mechanisms for national disaster management. This is the case, for example, in the Republic of Congo, where the National Society participates in a co-ordination mechanism established by the government, and which includes also UN agencies, NGOs and sectoral experts with a view to increase the efficiency of disaster management.

Domestically, a large proportion of the National Societies report they have initiated or participated in advocacy vis-à-vis their respective governments with a view to increase the attention given to IDRL-related issues. Within this work, some National Societies have also co-operated with other domestic organisations, academic institutions and international organisations.

Besides these advocacy-type activities, several National Societies have carried out communication and training within their own organisations, and promoted the use of standards (such as Sphere) and the Code of Conduct, and worked with the authorities to produce new manuals on disaster management based on IDRL, as well as on Sphere and other established standards.

Among Governments that have provided information on this item, several mention their participation in inter-governmental disaster-response mechanisms, and also in the context of reform of the United Nations, especially in the humanitarian field.

As in the case of National Societies, governments in a number of cases highlight efforts to establish or strengthen co-ordination mechanisms, institutionally as well as in clarifying the legislative and regulatory framework for disaster management domestically as well as internationally.

The IFRC has produced a number of publications, training materials and fact sheets on existing international norms on disaster relief. It has provided lectures, briefings and trainings to national societies, governments, NGOs and UN agencies as well as to academic groups and other stakeholders. It produces a regular newsletter as well as a weekly news service on IDRL issues. It has also commissioned or produced over a dozen intensive case studies of national legal systems and experiences of legal issues in recent disasters.

The 30th International Conference will receive a comprehensive desk study by the International Federation of existing laws and gap areas drawing from these and other

materials, including the results of a global survey it conducted in 2006 on legal issues in international relief.

Many National Societies set their activities in the context of working with United Nations agencies and United Nations co-ordination mechanisms. Several National Societies reported positively on this experience and saw it as an opportunity to promote Movement views on the application of laws, rules and principles pertaining to disaster response – internationally as well as domestically.

3.2.3 States and the components of the Movement are encouraged to work together to ensure the fullest possible consideration and application, where appropriate, of the laws, rules and principles that pertain to international disaster response, as well as the recommendations of Resolution 6 of the 23rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on measures to expedite international relief and United Nations General Assembly Resolution on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and its accompanying Annex (A/RES/46/182).

Domestically, several National Societies reported increased participation in government-led co-ordination mechanisms, which, in one cases, also include the private sector.

An example of such participation is the Canadian Red Cross, which has continued to enhance the level of coordination with the Canadian Government in international disaster response. The Canadian Red Cross continues to work closely with the Canadian Government in large disaster response and further discussions are in train for emergency response unit deployments.

The main tools used in their work to encourage the application of existing rules, according to a number of National Societies, has been the production and promotion of specially developed documents to provide guidance to the various participants in disaster management.

Several governments that provided information mentioned their participation in inter-governmental processes at the regional and global levels, as well as the development of multilateral agreements on mutual early warning. In this context governments, like National Societies, have highlighted the importance of producing guiding and normative documentation on applicable laws, rules and principles governing disaster response, and disseminated these to participants in emergency operations.

The Secretariat has provided direct support to national societies in providing advice to their governments on the development of national law consonant with existing international norms on international disaster response.

In addition to the case studies mentioned above, it has also has co-sponsored a series of five formal regional forums (in Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East) with governmental and national society partners for high-level representatives of states, national societies, and other humanitarian organizations. The objectives of these forums have been to discuss common legal issues international disaster relief operations, examine existing normative frameworks and the global, regional and national levels and develop recommendations. The reports of these forums are available on the IFRC's website at <http://www.ifrc.org/idrl>.

National Societies, generally, have close and constructive relations with their respective authorities in the context of reviewing existing disaster management laws and operational instruments. Some have, more specifically, worked with their government to produce comments on the Federation's draft Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international relief and recovery assistance.

3.2.4 States, recognizing the importance of the independent and auxiliary role of National Societies with respect to the public authorities in providing humanitarian services in the event of disaster, are encouraged to work in cooperation with their respective National Societies and the International Federation to review existing disaster management laws and operational instruments at the national, regional and international levels so as to enhance harmonization with relevant laws, rules and principles, and where feasible, guidelines applicable to international disaster response

Governments, as under other items, emphasize their adherence to instruments developed in inter-governmental processes, including INSARAG, European Union mechanisms, and United Nations decisions. Few of Governments that have provided information make explicit reference to working with their National Society.

Action 3.2.5 addresses itself exclusively to States, but relatively few have provided specific information on steps taken or considered in implementation. A number of those that have provided information note that they are already party to the Tampere Convention, and some that they are on course to acceding to it. Several note work with National Societies to establish emergency telecommunication systems.

3.2.5 States that have not yet done so are encouraged to consider acceding to and implementing the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations in order to facilitate the effective use of telecommunications in disaster and emergency relief operations. States will, as appropriate, also implement the relevant resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, International Telecommunication Union and United Nations related to the use of telecommunications in disasters, as well as access and protection of disaster response and mitigation workers.

Some National Societies, while not addressed in this context, nevertheless note the work they co-operate with the authorities on emergency telecommunications, or have established their own systems. A variation of this is exemplified by the Ecuadorian Red Cross, which notes that while the country is not party to the Tampere Convention, in cases of emergency radio communications are facilitated by amateur radio clubs.

While not directly addressed by this section, the International Federation and its Secretariat has promoted attention to and ratification of the Tampere Convention in its meetings, training events, regional forums and through printed materials, as well as in a dedicated section of its website.

National Societies, in co-operation with the Secretariat or on their own, have worked actively with their respective governments in efforts to identify gaps in the legal and regulatory framework, and in promoting awareness and application of this.

In a number of cases, National Societies have done so in the context of formal government policy development or preparatory legislative processes, while others have had ongoing discussions and conversations with the authorities

3.2.6 The International Federation and National Societies will continue to lead collaborative efforts, involving States, the United Nations and other relevant bodies, in conducting research and advocacy activities relating to the compilation of the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response. This includes identifying any outstanding needs in terms of the legal and regulatory framework and the development of models, tools and guidelines for practical use in international disaster response activities. This also includes the active promotion of the awareness, dissemination, clarification and application, where appropriate, of the laws, rules and principles applicable to international disaster response, as well as applicable guidelines by States and the international community at all levels. The International Federation will submit a progress report to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2007.

on the same issue. In the case one National Society, the issues covered in this item was introduced in the context of preparations for the Kobe Conference in 2005.

Other National Societies see the best opportunity for promotion of awareness as part of their broader dissemination activities, as is done by Chad Red Cross when it uses its volunteers for promotion of peace and the Fundamental Principles, or the Iraqi Red Crescent which integrates its awareness raising efforts into the formats used in assessment, implementing activities and delivering services to the community.

On the basis of its research and extensive consultations with stakeholders, in particular the regional forums, the IFRC has developed a set of draft "Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance" which will be presented to the 30th International Conference for its approval along with its unofficial annotations. The Guidelines compile existing international norms relevant to the most common legal problem areas in international operations and are intended as a tool for governments considering developments for their national disaster management laws.