



**APP-DRR Forum 9 December 2021
RCRC Stakeholder Group Statement by the
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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I am pleased to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Red Cross Red Crescent Stakeholder Group in Asia Pacific.

While countries have been preparing for and responding to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, climate-related extreme and slow-onset events have not stopped. As front-line agencies, the 38 Asia Pacific Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies have been busy supporting communities and governments across the region. Asia Pacific represents a big part of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) network's global reach in communities, with 5.1 million volunteers.

Based on current data, in 2020, 34 member National Societies of the IFRC in Asia Pacific reached almost 540 million people with response and early recovery activities including DRR and longer term community development support. This outreach will not have been possible if we have not had the networks of Red Cross Red Crescent branches and volunteers present and working alongside the communities in the last mile delivering the most local humanitarian action, despite the personal risks with COVID-19.

COVID-19 has again demonstrated, what the IFRC has always advocated for, that addressing multiple risks and impacts of – disasters, disease outbreaks and climate change – simultaneously requires greater level of shared risk understanding and coordination across regional, national and local levels. COVID-19 also exposed some of the silos that need to be addressed to deliver whole of society disaster risk reduction planning and programs – through multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral and inter-ministry collaboration. By working with local actors to design and facilitate effective anticipatory action, we empower those most affected by climate change to take action that is inclusive, tailored and underpinned by local experiences and knowledge. IFRC is committed to continuing to work with governments to draw from COVID-19 lessons to update their public health emergency preparedness and response laws, in line with the Bangkok Principles.

COVID-19 and the reduced mobility that has resulted, has underlined the importance of locally-led action and the need for countries to have the financial, technological and human resources from national to community level to design and deliver contextually appropriate disaster risk reduction action, without dependence on external actors.

While countries have experienced COVID-19 differently, we need to see all countries move into the next phase equitably – modalities for implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR and integration of DRR in poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate mitigation and adaptation efforts must help address the range of needs of low-density small island nations as well as densely populated increasingly-urbanised nations. We know the COVID-19 pandemic has had an increased burden on women and youth, and IFRC is committed to ensuring that protection, gender and inclusion, diverse leadership and mental health and psychosocial support remains at the heart of our disaster risk reduction efforts.



In conclusion, both for COVID-19 recovery and responding to the climate crisis, we need to ensure a focus on the people who face the most vulnerability, include them in planning processes and prioritise their needs; increase disaster risk financing for locally-led action; invest in preparedness and enable more preventive and anticipatory action. The Red Cross Red Crescent is committed to work alongside governments and all stakeholders to further accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework in Asia Pacific and ensure more inclusive locally-led DRR action.