

21st Annual Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent Leaders Meeting

Stronger Together for Climate Resilience and Recovery

4 September 2024

IFRC - National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies engagement with ASEAN

Session B Overview


<u>Session Title</u>	
Learning from response to disasters in SEA region: Enhancing Preparedness and Response to Heightened Risks of Climate Change	
Chair	IFRC Support
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Key Objectives of the Session
The session will focus on key learnings from response to disasters in SEA region, considering heightened risks related to climate change.
The perspective of IFRC in a form of presentation from Regional Director, ASEAN counterparts and NSs will serve as inputs to the discussion and shared learning.

Background and Current Issues - *Key Insights & Contextual Factors*

Southeast Asia faces an alarming increase in the intensity and frequency of disasters, a trend directly linked to climate change. This escalation, driven by rising temperatures, shifting weather patterns, and extreme weather events, underscores the urgent need for a more robust approach to disaster management. To effectively address these challenges, a multifaceted strategy is essential.

First and foremost, enhancing analysis is crucial. This involves improving the collection and analysis of climate data to better understand and predict how climate change is impacting the region. Comprehensive risk assessments should be conducted to identify vulnerable



areas and populations, integrating climate projections with socio-economic factors to anticipate future disaster scenarios more accurately.


The importance of learning from our responses to disasters cannot be overstated. Each disaster offers valuable lessons that can significantly improve future preparedness and response efforts. By systematically analyzing how we respond to various events, we gain critical insights into what worked well and what could be improved.

This process involves reviewing response strategies, resource allocation, and communication effectiveness, and gathering feedback from affected communities and responders. Learning from these experiences helps refine emergency plans, enhance training programs, and adapt strategies to better address emerging challenges. This continual improvement loop ensures that our disaster management systems become more robust and resilient over time, ultimately leading to more effective responses and reduced impact on communities in future events. Embracing a culture of reflection and adaptation enables us to better anticipate and navigate the complexities of increasingly severe disasters driven by climate change.

Coordination among various stakeholders is equally important. Strengthening collaboration between government agencies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community groups will ensure a more unified and effective response to disasters. Developing and maintaining robust communication systems is also essential for real-time information sharing and coordination during emergencies. This includes establishing early warning systems that are accessible and actionable.

Preparedness must be increased to cope with the heightened intensity of disasters. Emergency plans should be updated and refined to account for these changing conditions, with clear protocols established for evacuation, resource distribution, and emergency response. Regular training and simulation exercises for emergency responders and community members are necessary to ensure readiness and effectiveness during actual events.

Anticipatory action is key to mitigating disaster impacts. Investing in advanced early warning systems can provide timely alerts about impending disasters, enabling communities to take precautionary measures. Also, enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure, such as flood defenses, transportation networks, and utilities, is essential to withstand climate change's more severe effects.



Community engagement plays a vital role in this strategy. Increasing public awareness about climate change and disaster preparedness will help residents protect themselves and their property from extreme weather events. Encouraging community-based solutions and local innovations can complement broader strategies and enhance overall resilience.


Addressing the growing intensity of disasters in Southeast Asia requires a proactive, integrated approach that encompasses these key areas. By focusing on enhanced analysis, improved coordination, increased preparedness, anticipatory action, and community engagement, the region can better manage and mitigate the impacts of climate change, ultimately reducing vulnerability and strengthening resilience.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies play a crucial role as first responders in disaster situations, especially in the context of increasing disaster intensity driven by climate change. The NSs are often the first on the ground, leveraging their deep-rooted presence in communities to provide immediate assistance and mobilize critical resources. Their unique position allows them to act swiftly and effectively, bridging the gap between affected populations and larger, often slower-moving, governmental and international response mechanisms.

Furthermore, the NSs are instrumental in the learning process following a disaster. Their frontline experience provides valuable data and feedback on response efficacy, resource distribution, and community needs. This information is crucial for improving future disaster response strategies and ensuring that preparedness plans are continually updated and refined.

As integral parts of their communities, Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies are well-versed in local needs and conditions. Their local presence enables them to offer timely and culturally sensitive support, from first aid and emergency relief to more long-term recovery assistance. Their established networks and volunteer base allow for rapid deployment of aid and resources where they are most needed. This grassroots involvement is essential for effective disaster response, as it ensures that help is provided quickly and in a manner that aligns with the community's specific needs and circumstances.

By developing early warning systems, assessing vulnerabilities, and focusing on climate risk assessments, National Societies can continue to enhance community resilience. Empowering communities through community-based climate action has been central to



building resilience, while capacity building initiatives have strengthened the ability of staff, volunteers, and community members to address climate change challenges.

National Societies have been actively involved in conducting detailed climate risk assessments and creating adaptation plans tailored to their specific contexts.

- Training programs, workshops, and certification courses are regularly conducted to equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to address climate change.
- Facilitating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among National Societies.
- Promoting the integration of climate change considerations into national and international policies.

Integrating the role of Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies into the broader strategy of disaster management, as discussed earlier, underscores their value in enhancing analysis, coordination, preparedness, and anticipatory action. Their on-the-ground insights and learning within SEA region contribute to more accurate risk assessments and help refine emergency preparedness plans. Their coordination efforts link local needs with larger response frameworks, ensuring that disaster management is both locally informed and globally supported.

Annex A: Learning and Trends within the Humanitarian Sector