



Addressing the Humanitarian Challenges of Climate Change

Regional and National Perspectives

Preliminary Findings from the IASC Regional and National Level Consultations



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1. Study context

I.1 THE HUMAN FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

“Until now, the global discourse on climate change has tended to focus on the physical or natural impacts of climate change... it is time to redress this imbalance by highlighting the human face of climate change”

*Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed, Maldives Ambassador
to the UN in Geneva, March 2008*

Climate change is one of the major global challenges for humanity in the 21st century; and yet it is only in the last few years that the “human face” of climate change – the socioeconomic and humanitarian dimension - has been fully acknowledged. While climate change has global repercussions, the most vulnerable communities will experience the greatest impacts from climate and disaster risk; climate change is threatening the lives and livelihoods of these communities, eroding their resilience and undermining opportunities for sustainable development. As a result, climate change threatens to overwhelm the current capacity of the humanitarian system to respond effectively by increasing hazards, vulnerabilities and response costs.

I.2 A CALL FOR ACTION

The time to act is now; climate change is clearly happening and we must prepare for the increased number and intensity of global disasters. The challenge is to adapt and scale-up local disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts to better incorporate climate risk into humanitarian, recovery and devel-

opment action. There is no “one size fits all” approach to climate change adaptation (CCA) – rather it requires a community-led process and an understanding of local changes and vulnerabilities.

National and local actors are fundamental to achieving real impact on the ground and improving resilience in the face of climate change. We need to listen to their experiences to-date in implementing solutions; we need to understand the challenges that these actors face and identify steps to negotiate these; we need to mobilise action where progress has been limited; we need to work closely with other actors, notably government and communities, to ensure our actions are appropriate and sustainable; and most of all we need to replicate good practice. Specifically, we need to build up DRR, preparedness and early warning - early action (the “first line of defence”) as key elements of adaptation, and forge closer links between humanitarian, development and other climate change actors.

Historically, there has been a division of tasks and responsibilities between agencies responding to hazards and those creating an enabling environment for development. Over the past several years however, the focus of both communities has converged towards addressing the underlying risk factors that make people and their livelihoods more vulnerable to both slow and rapid onset disasters. More recently, climate change has been identified as one of the main underlying risk factors for disasters and sustainable development.

“Humanitarian actors and development communities are too often in two separate and different worlds, not only for issues relating to climate change but for any situation (earthquakes, social conflict, war)”

(OCHA, Latin America and Caribbean)

Protecting vulnerable communities is the common entry point for humanitarian and development actors, and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is the common agenda though at times not fully developed or integrated into either humanitarian action¹ or development strategies. However, humanitarian agencies have been undertaking DRR activities for years, through enhancing preparedness, contingency planning, and early warning - early action, and this experience needs to be harnessed and shared alongside common tools and approaches used by both communities, to reinforce their converging agendas. On a global level, it is now widely recognized that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are inextricably linked – both in terms of the types of hazards they address, and the responses needed to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. Responding to the humanitarian challenges of climate change and addressing the root causes of vulnerability will therefore require greater coordination between the humanitarian, development and climate change communities.

1.3 AN INTER-AGENCY COORDINATED RESPONSE

Addressing climate change demands a multi-faceted and coordinated response at all levels. To raise awareness of the humanitarian implications of climate change and to promote action, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), composed of key humanitarian agencies, established an Informal Task Force on Climate Change in June, 2008 (see Box 1.1).

⁽¹⁾ *The General Assembly Resolution 46/182 identifies “prevention”, “preparedness” and “standby capacity to respond” as the three pillars of humanitarian work.*

Box 1.1 Mandate and Activities of the IASC Informal Task Force on Climate Change

Mandate:

- Lead the preparation of high-quality analytical inputs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.
- Provide guidance as appropriate to the IASC on integrating climate risk management into agency policies, operations and relevant guidelines and tools.

Activities:

- Raise awareness of the humanitarian impacts of climate change, taking into account the long-term consequences, for example on health, food security, livelihoods, migration and displacement.
- Provide information and technical advice to the negotiators at the UNFCCC sessions in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Conference in Copenhagen (COP15) in December, 2009.
- Promote action at the regional, national and local levels through the provision of technical guidance and dissemination of best practice on how to address the humanitarian implications of climate change.

1.4 CONSULTING WITH HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

The IASC Task Force, together with ISDR, has started a process of regional and national level consultations among the IASC agencies. The aim is to support the development of policies and operations at the regional, national and local levels, encourage an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA), and promote linkages between humanitarian and development action.

The first consultation phase, between May and early June 2009, brought together practitioners from the IASC agencies to reflect on the humanitarian challenges of climate change already being felt and to discuss approaches and good practices for addressing these (see back cover for a full list of participating agencies). Meetings were held in seven regions: Asia; Central and East Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; Middle East and North Africa; the Pacific; West Africa; and Southern Africa. Similarly, consultations were held in ten countries: Argentina; Colombia; Mexico; the Cook Islands; Laos; the Solomon Islands; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Gambia; Niger; and Yemen.

Humanitarian agencies have been working on DRR and DRM and strengthening preparedness for years across most regions. However, in some regions, the consultations were the first step towards stimulating an interest and subsequent action on the “human face” and humanitarian implications of climate change. In these countries, these initial discussions constitute a springboard for further action and engagement on these issues. Conversely, in other regions, the consultations are a “snap-shot” of work in progress, and agencies are already taking steps to address the humanitarian impacts of cli-

mate change.

Although the consultations specifically focused on understanding challenges faced by humanitarian actors, much of the response was mixed between humanitarian and development approaches. This is in part a reflection of the wide range of IASC participants involved in the consultation meetings, the combined mandate of some agencies, but also may indicate that the gap is closing between these two areas of practice.

1.5 THIS DOCUMENT

These preliminary findings capture the initial outcomes of the first round of regional and country level consultations. They are presented as follows:

- a “**stocktaking**” of current activities discussed during the consultation meetings;
- an **overview of the challenges** faced by humanitarian actors as they respond to the humanitarian implications of climate change;
- **opportunities** for galvanising action over the next three years as identified by participants; and
- **next steps**.

It is important to note that the information for this report was gathered in discussions and follow-up reporting across a range of agencies, regions and countries. As a result, it presents a more general summary of the common themes and messages described by participants. However, each individual country and indeed locality will have a variety of experiences and challenges, and therefore it should be acknowledged that the findings elaborated here are not necessarily held by all participants.

In order to fully document the consultation findings, these preliminary findings will be supported by a more detailed report. This will be finalised after the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, June 2009.



2. The role of humanitarian actors: stocktaking of existing initiatives

“Saving lives is only one part of the equation. We should also strive to rebuild the lives of communities more quickly, which implies an emphasis on livelihoods”

Caritas Internationalis, Asia

“[It is] important not to sell it [climate change adaptation] as a new thing, but explain that it’s something that has already been done and is now simply being properly acknowledged”

Oxfam, Pacific

Feedback from the IASC member agencies suggests that initial steps to incorporate climate change into humanitarian work are generally focused on gathering climate knowledge, updating policies and strategies and developing research agendas to complete knowledge gaps. These activities are relatively common across the regions. Some IASC agencies are further mainstreaming climate change by adapting and developing tools, programmes and projects with demonstrable progress on increasing preparedness and building climate resilience/reducing vulnerabilities, albeit on a small-scale. This section provides an overview of this progress and documents initiatives showcased by IASC agencies during the consultations.

2.1 INTEGRATING CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH INTO PROGRAMMES

Most agencies are integrating climate knowledge into their work by drawing upon new resources (e.g. seasonal forecasts) and networks (e.g. meteorological offices). Some are also involved in research to close gaps in their understanding of climate change impacts.

For example, a Regional Information Management Working Group (RIMWG) in Southern Africa has been established to focus on: 1) how hazards compound vulnerabilities; 2) how indicators of vulnerability (e.g. malnutrition, HIV/AIDs) and hazards (e.g. floods, epidemics) interact; and 3) how other potential risks such as climate change and migration/ displacement could impact the humanitarian situation and response programmes in the region.

For example, IOM (Latin America and Caribbean) has developed a research agenda to improve understanding of the link between population movements and climate change and is developing project proposals, building on field research, to develop activities to increase resilience to climate change as part of adaptation strategies.

2.2 DEVELOPING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

“For many years, the international community in the LAC [Latin America and Caribbean] region has been working with national counterparts on issues related to DRR and Disaster Management. In the past few years what has changed from the international community is the coordinated approach”

OCHA, LAC

Increasingly, partnerships with climate change related knowledge centres are being forged to facilitate the integration of climate knowledge into humanitarian work. In particular, the use of seasonal forecasts to enhance early warning of climate risks, linked with local community-based vulnerability and capacity assessments and DRR measures, is an important area of interaction with huge potential.

Furthermore, in some regions, the humanitarian and development communities are regularly interacting on climate change issues, although elsewhere there is scope for much more engagement between humanitarian, development and environmental actors.

For example, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre and Cook Islands National Society are currently involved in a study to review the range of climate information available to decision makers with a particular focus on how this is being used or could be used in programming. The study will also identify how linkages can be built between the Cook Islands Meteorological Office and humanitarian stakeholders.

For example, UNDP Pacific and AusAID held a workshop to bring humanitarian and development actors together to discuss the Gender Dimensions of climate change and DRM in the Pacific region.

2.3 POLICIES, SCOPE OF WORK, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

“There is not necessarily a similar distinction or disconnect between CCA and DRR at the operational level in the same way as at the global/ policy level. For instance in Bangladesh, CCA has been done for years, although it has not been called [this] but rather seen as DRR.”

OCHA, Asia

Most agencies are explicitly: 1) updating their policies and strategies to recognise the challenge of climate and disaster risk to humanitarian and development activities; 2) expanding their scope of work to deal with arising issues that impact humanitarian action; and 3) building capacity to deal with these new issues and to prepare for the increased number and intensity of climate disasters.

For example, UNDP Samoa is establishing an internal climate change team (“think tank”) comprising DRR and CCA expertise to support the integration of CCA and DRR as two key practice areas within their Country Programme Action Plans (CPAPs).

2.4 ADVOCACY

“It is not contested whether climate change is occurring or not, it is irrefutable. But the link from evidence to the disasters we are experiencing is not clear”

OCHA, Asia

IASC agencies noted that they are increasingly involved in advocacy work to mainstream CCA and DRR into national and international agendas and to raise the profile of the “human face” of climate change. This work generally focuses on advocacy in preparation for COP15 and in relation to the development of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) or National Action Plans (NAPs) on DRR.

For example, the Kenyan Climate Change Working Group (KC-CWG) is an alliance of over 40 different stakeholders, with an overall aim of addressing climate change in Kenya and advocacy around the UNFCCC process. Specific objectives are to: 1) formulate a Climate Change Law for Kenya; 2) formulate a Climate Change Policy for Kenya; and 3) to have a strong African Position in the UNFCCC negotiations. The reported outcomes of this alliance include civil society in Kenya working as a “unified front” and eight research pieces, notably the gathering of community level “climate change hearings/ testimonies.”

For example, WFP is supporting the development of NAPAs using vulnerability analysis and mapping to help identify priority areas of action in Bangladesh and Bhutan; the Red Cross (as one member of the Climate Change Country team) is very engaged with the government of the Solomon Islands on the development of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs); and World Vision is providing DRR input into the National Plan of Action (NAP) in Swaziland.

2.5 PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND TOOLS

“The introduction of the climate change concept is not something new happening in the region; it is just more of the same”

OCHA, LAC

A range of current and planned projects was showcased during the consultation meetings. Many of these projects focus on increasing disaster preparedness and raising local awareness; although some are taking a more holistic approach towards reducing vulnerability. Relatively few actors are building climate resilience throughout their activities. Examples of some of the many projects described by consultation participants are documented in Table 3.1 beside.

Table 2.1 Good Practice Examples Shared by IASC Agencies



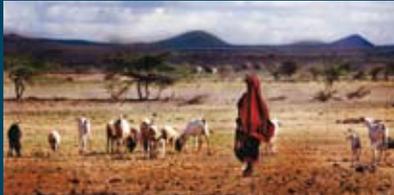
WFP
(Central and East Africa; Asia; Latin America and Caribbean)



IOM *(Cambodia)*



IFRC *(world-wide)*



OCHA *(Central and East Africa)*



UNHCR *(West Africa/ Asia)*



The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRC)



ACT *(Indonesia, Myanmar and Bangladesh)*



WVI *(Southern Africa)*



WFP *(MENA)*

Reducing underlying risk. WFP is implementing its community based programmes with a view to strengthening livelihood systems. This includes implementing activities to better prepare and adapt to the expected impacts of climate change, most notably through natural resource management activities (e.g. water harvesting and storage, irrigation and drainage ditches, land rehabilitation, reforestation, terracing, carbon credit and adaptation).

Understanding vulnerabilities. In the provinces, IOM is implementing a project that maps the vulnerabilities of indigenous communities in order to prepare for, and mitigate climate change impacts and assess whether migration can be a response solution.

Increasing preparedness. Through its Climate Centre, the IFRC has rolled out its preparedness for climate change programme in 40 countries. It involves: 1) national level workshops to identify climate change risks; 2) prioritising climate risks in the context of national priorities and programs; 3) capacity building to support climate change resilient Red Cross programs; and 4) the implementation of climate change resilient Red Cross programs. For example, in Tuvalu, the Red Cross has “joined forces” with government and civil society to address climate change by inter alia improving response capacity, training volunteers, distributing satellite phones to facilitate emergency coordination and establishing school children awareness raising programmes. Similarly, in the Solomon islands, the Red Cross is working to enhance community awareness on climate change using information materials (posters, pamphlets, t-shirts and most recently a film documentary) and carrying out awareness raising activities (forums, radio talk-back shows and school competitions).

Increasing preparedness. OCHA is currently facilitating inter-agency consultations on the humanitarian impact of climate change on pastoralist communities. Specific goals are to promote preparedness and prevention, to reduce future vulnerability, and to advocate for increasing capacity (for both the humanitarian and pastoralist community) to predict, monitor and respond to impacts.

Integration of CCA and DRR into humanitarian relief. UNHCR is working on climate change induced displacement issues and the increasing vulnerabilities of refugee camp occupants to climate related disasters. At a global level, it is also building its central response capacity (including mobilisation of basic supplies and equipment) to prepare for longer-term change and to mobilise at short notice.

Incorporating climate change knowledge. SIRC has been working to increase community awareness of the public health risks associated with climate change and promote adaptive behaviours. This has involved training of ‘health dissemination volunteers’, community discussions to identify changes (e.g. new cases of malaria, water borne diseases) and agreeing solutions (e.g. use of mosquito nets and sanitation solutions).

Building climate resilience. ACT is working in Indonesia with local partners in the distribution of salt-tolerant traditional paddy varieties from India (with local farmers’ union IPPHTI); mangrove planting and watershed management along the Irrawaddy river in Myanmar with local NGO FREDAs; and risk mapping as a first step in a DRR project in flood-prone and cyclone areas in Bangladesh (with implementing agency Prodiplan).

Adapting tools. World Vision is using an adapted Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment tool (developed by Care International) to incorporate climate risk into their projects in Swaziland.

Adapting tools. WFP is using GIS and remote sensing to identify areas vulnerable to floods and landslides in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. These maps are merged with food insecurity maps to identify insecure groups vulnerable to emergencies caused by climate change. In a separate project, WFP are identifying emergency preparedness responses through food and climate change vulnerability analysis in Syria.



3. The challenges faced by humanitarian actors

Humanitarian actors identified a number of challenges during the regional and national consultation meetings that limit preparations for, and response to, the humanitarian implications of climate change. It is important to contextualize these preliminary observations, which were gathered over a very short period (the consultation period lasted approximately six weeks). These observations should therefore be viewed as a first step in understanding the ongoing challenges to integrating climate change into humanitarian work and are more or less applicable to the different regions and sample countries (depending on level of engagement). These challenges are briefly described below.

3.1 GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING, INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

“Anyone with internet has access, but the main problem is the plethora of information out there so it becomes labyrinthine even for people who understand CCA and DRR”

UNICEF, Latin America and Caribbean region

Although most regional participants were generally comfortable with the concepts of DRR and CCA, there is still in some regions confusion over concepts, terminologies and awareness of the linkages. Access to relevant regional and national climate information to enhance this understanding is

reportedly patchy, timescales of data are not always relevant for preparedness and response, and rarely is information downscaled to a local level, or tailored to stakeholder-specific requirements. This is in part a reflection of the weak links between climate change knowledge centres and humanitarian actors. “The translation of technical climate information into risk analysis and project implications in practical terms that can be used to better inform decision-makers, is necessary” (WFP, Central and East Africa). Gaps in climate baseline data when combined with gaps in socioeconomic vulnerability data are reportedly further limiting effective response.

Finally, the role of traditional knowledge in validating climate science and the barriers to communicating with communities on climate change, for example language, perception and culture were identified as needing more research: “*traditional knowledge should be used more effectively to respond to climate change in the same way we are using traditional knowledge to respond to other hazards*” (Oxfam, Pacific).

Consequences for humanitarian actors

Poor communication and understanding between the scientific and humanitarian communities can limit integration of climate change knowledge into humanitarian work.

Climate change scenarios are usually too general and uncertain to inform humanitarian action. The ‘certainty of increased uncertainty’ is a complicating factor for effective humanitarian action, specifically for risk analysis, disaster preparedness and contingency planning.

Gaps in understanding the vulnerability of different communities to climate change can hinder effective risk reduction and preparedness.

Gaps in understanding of specific regional and national level impacts including indirect impacts need further research (e.g. migration, relocation, poverty, health, urbanisation).

Traditional knowledge could be used more effectively by humanitarian actors.

3.2 DIFFERING PRIORITIES

The “human face” of climate change is not always on government agendas. Governments are however, starting to recognize linkages between their current priorities and climate change, but this requires strong leadership and adaptability. For humanitarian actors and communities, the need to balance immediate humanitarian needs with more long-term development warrants further investigation.

Consequences for humanitarian actors

Linking short-term humanitarian action and longer-term climate change issues may be limited by a lack of government support.

Humanitarian actors are faced with the challenge of reconciling short-term relief work with the more long-term disaster risk reduction, sustainability and climate change agendas.

3.3 INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

“DRR and CC currently inhabit separate silos. This disconnect between humanitarian and environment actors is especially visible during disasters, when planning, allocation of funds and implementation are done without consulting climate change counterparts” (UNDP, Asia).

Climate change discussions at the policy level are often led by different focal points mostly embedded in environmental institutions. Furthermore, climate change adaptation tends to be institutionally isolated from the poverty reduction, sustainable development and DRR communities. As a result, relevant policy documents (such as national development strategies, NAPAs and sectoral policies) and work in the field tend to reflect this institutional disconnect.

Consequences for humanitarian actors

No common entry point for dialogue with national governments.

Humanitarian community not always involved in key political discussions on these issues.

National level disconnect often reflected in humanitarian agency work.

3.4 DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

The findings suggest that the humanitarian community is not yet consistently involved in the national debate on the humanitarian consequences of climate change. It was identified that humanitarian and development actors increasingly need to work together on DRR (including preparedness) and recovery, both of which are transition areas traditionally falling between the cracks of both development and humanitarian agendas. In some regions this is happening. Actors are beginning to engage together on these issues, whilst in other regions dialogue between the humanitarian and development communities is still limited; and this division is mirrored in the field.

While the number of CCA initiatives has substantially increased, greater coordination between these initiatives is required to bring together learning and provide integrated action. Strengthening linkages between humanitarian and environmental actors could support this.

Consequences for humanitarian actors

Lack of structured coordination with development actors makes understanding of the risk reduction and sustainability issues associated with humanitarian response and preparedness more difficult.

National level disconnect between DRR and CCA actors can be reflected in the field, particularly during disasters (for example environmental actors are not always involved in planning, allocation of funds etc.) and this disconnect is further reinforced by funding divides.

3.5 OPERATIONAL AND CAPACITY

“The main obstacle for DRR is to demonstrate to donors, government and other partners that the investment in prevention is better than in response”

OCHA, Latin America and Caribbean

There is reportedly a lack of a “common language” and associated practices, practical methods and tools for DRR and CCA. Thus the mainstreaming of CCA faces some significant challenges, particularly in countries where risk reduction is not well established, and therefore introducing new concepts and linkages is difficult. In some cases the impacts of climate change will require a shift in thinking – for example, “build back better” may no longer be appropriate in areas that are predicted to become non-viable for human settlement.

Finance for DRR, CCA and capacity building was identified as one of the most pressing challenges, notably because inter alia: 1) emergency funding is prioritised; 2) DRR is more “difficult to sell” than response funding; and 3) funding pools for response and recovery are separated: “the transition between recovery and livelihood strengthening is imaginary, but often donors divide the two activities for funding purposes, usually at the expense of the latter” (WFP, Central and East Africa).

Box 3.1 Case Study: The Challenge of Funding in the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRC) carried out a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) in the artificial islands of Malaita. However, after prioritizing community needs the SIRC and its partners were unable to find the funds for the water tanks identified as a priority for climate change adaptation on the islands.

Progress is further constrained by a lack of capacity (specifically a shortage of CCA staff), training opportunities and high staff turnover, and yet there is an increasing need to scale up response capacity to cope with the likely impacts of climate change. Participants also identified a need to enhance specialist capacity on key issues relating to climate change, for example migration and relocation.

Consequences for humanitarian actors

A shortage of funding and capacity limits the ability of humanitarian actors to turn efforts at linking CCA and

DRR into practical action. This is particularly evident in countries where risk reduction is not yet well established.

Lack of capacity (including staff) limits implementation of CCA/ DRR on a larger scale and the ability to respond to increasing climate related disasters and slow on-set impacts.





4. Opportunities for humanitarian actors: initial observations

“Development actors have an opportunity to establish long-term strategies that can gradually inform humanitarian response. Both areas can find some common ground in addressing the issue through the angle of vulnerability of the affected populations”

IOM, Latin America and Caribbean

“It is critical that humanitarian actors are able to tell the story of the human impact of climate change. Some of the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change are poor, marginalised and with limited voice”

Save the Children-UK, Asia

The consultation findings demonstrate that humanitarian actors from the selected countries and regions are at very different stages of engagement with climate change, and linking CCA with existing DRR work. Opportunities and next steps will therefore vary depending on whether countries are at the start of this process and have had no previous dialogue on these issues prior to these consultations, or are further advanced and have been having regular and ongoing dialogue and are already mainstreaming climate change into their work.

IASC agencies shared a number of initial observations for developing and/ or building upon existing action on the ground, notably to:

- improve understanding of climate change and associated humanitarian impacts;
- raise the profile of the “human” face of climate change;
- advocate for increased funding;
- build better linkages between humanitarian and development actors and coordinate action by consolidating experiences to-date and formalising mechanisms for exchange;
- develop and amend existing tools, standards, preparedness and response mechanisms;
- replicate good practice; and
- ensure that IASC continues to play a major role in facilitating, coordinating and strengthening the work of member agencies.

These opportunities are summarised in Table 4.1 and should help stimulate further discussion to identify and agree more concrete recommendations for action at the global, regional and most importantly local level. What is evident is the emerging consensus for the need to scale up and strengthen existing preparedness activities (specifically contingency planning, early warning - early action, and vulnerability assessments) in order to respond to the increasing number and intensity of fast and slow onset disasters.

Table 4.1. **Consultation Participant Perspectives:
 Suggested Opportunities for Action**

Improve Understanding of Climate Change and Associated Humanitarian Impacts	
Enhance understanding, use and dissemination of climate change knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and strengthen partnerships between humanitarian actors and knowledge centres in order to make climate related data available for planning and decision-making at all levels. • Support efforts at improved data gathering, downscaling and modelling of climate change, vulnerabilities and impacts. • Initiate efforts to repackage data into forms appropriate for local actors to use effectively for decision making, and to put into operation activities that are resilient to anticipated climate changes. • Initiate research to complete gaps in our understanding of climate change impacts particularly migration, displacement, poverty, health, traditional coping mechanisms and urbanisation. • Incorporate climate change information into existing coordination platforms to enhance sharing amongst humanitarian actors. • Enhance the role of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) as an intermediary between all actors. • Promote community involvement and the use of traditional knowledge to validate climate science and ensure appropriate solutions.
Develop training on these issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of trainers on the linkages between climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness, response/ recovery, and adaptation. • Develop training to build capacity on specialist adaptation issues such as relocation, environmental migration and slow-onset disasters (e.g. drought and changing disease patterns).
Promote Wider Recognition of the “Human Face” of Climate Change	
Improve understanding of CCA policy framework and support the mainstreaming of DRR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop regional strategies to identify key issues and messages to inform advocacy and mobilise resources; to ensure that the “human face” of climate change is recognised; and to strengthen partnerships to support advocacy. • Prepare operational guidelines to inform and equip agency actors on how to actively influence the national process, building upon past advocacy experiences. • Ensure consequences of climate change are visualised and defined through research on a national basis to support communication to civil society, decision makers and local/vulnerable communities. • Prepare short videos for different audiences (e.g. government, communities) to raise awareness of the “human face” of climate change and to use in advocacy.

Advocate for increased funding

Jointly advocate with funding organisations to ensure that sufficient funds are available for implementation of DRR/CCA activities

- Organise a round table with donors to help actors link with partners; to facilitate joint lobbying for funding; and to allow donors to share guidelines for funding.
- Increase engagement with non-humanitarian donors.
- Investigate mechanisms for integrated approaches to funding for example opportunities within adaptation funds, PRSPs etc.
- Promote awareness raising with donors through scientific and economic studies.
- Ensure that funds are invested in disaster preparedness.

Build better linkages and Improve Communication to Facilitate Coordinated Action

Focus on vulnerability and DRR as common ground for addressing climate change

- Create inter-agency platforms (e.g. DRR/CCA Working Groups with both humanitarian and development actors) on DRR issues and develop common CCA adaptation activities to encourage mainstreaming.
- Use contingency planning and preparedness workshops as an opportunity to engage development actors in a humanitarian context.
- Create an annotated multi-lingual regional directory of all key DRR/CCA players to help identify key partners.
- Integrate DRR/CCA into UN Development Assistance Frameworks thereby providing a potential mechanism for greater collaboration and joint programming.
- Develop guidelines for engagement between actors including definition of roles and agendas.
- Address humanitarian activities not as a separate issue but as part of a package of assistance (e.g. health, food, security, environmental management) according to agency mandates.

Formalise and streamline mechanisms for information exchange and implementation

- Develop working groups (if not already established) to support linkages between DRR/CCA and to facilitate regional information exchange by inter alia: 1) developing regional action plans; 2) regular advocacy; 3) preparing national guidelines; 4) preparing capacity development plans; 5) channelling funds; and 6) creating strategic partnerships.
- Establish a Regional Information Management Repository (Information System) championed by a Working Group to develop an inventory on the three "W"s (who is doing, what, where) to identify best practice, tools, experiences, indicators, methodologies, research, information gaps and the relative advantages of each agency.
- Identify funding opportunities to establish Regional Information Management Repository.
- Develop inter-regional mechanisms for information sharing and mainstreaming on DRR and CCA.

Develop and Amend Standards/ Tools

Build upon and adapt existing standards, guidelines, tools, preparedness and response mechanisms

- Adapt existing tools and resources for example the current Sphere review, Vulnerability Assessments, Economic Assessments, and Social Impact Assessments.
- Conduct an audit of regional skills and tools used by humanitarian actors to identify best practice initiatives that are underway.
- Develop clear indicators for adaptation to climate change.
- Establish minimum emergency management structures with clear lines of authority and responsibility.

Replicate Good Practice

Expand existing preparedness activities and scale-up activities to address vulnerability

- Use climate change as an opportunity to build DRR programmes and integrate climate risk.
- Establish more strategic, structured and integrated approaches to community based DRR/ CCA for instance through integrating climate risk into existing programmes.
- Compile and assess best practice at a regional level to identify activities for replicating and areas where further work is required.
- Scale-up pilot projects to reach more communities.

The Ongoing Role of the IASC: Initial observations

Ensure that there is sufficient information for agency work

- Facilitate workshops and information sharing.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and capacity and provide guidance on best practice.
- Support regional tools audit and sharing of tools and their use in projects.

Strengthen inter-agency collaboration

- Identify the need for regional guidelines to support coherence and facilitate cooperation.
- Strengthen linkages between global and regional IASC agencies, taking into account differences.

Support regional, national and local level action

- Promote high level advocacy.
- Facilitate training for advocacy, institutional capacity building and strengthening, situational preparedness and response.



5. Next steps

The IASC regional and country level consultations are the first step in an ongoing process to reflect on the “human face” of climate change and to identify how actors can best address the humanitarian challenges of climate change.

The findings from the first round of consultations clearly demonstrate that humanitarian actors are already confronting the “human face” of climate change. Climate change is already threatening the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities and changing the humanitarian landscape in terms of caseloads, scale, nature and effectiveness of response. Humanitarian actors are responding by increasingly incorporating climate knowledge into their work, forging new partnerships, amending policies and strategies and expanding their expertise to deal with these issues.

Specifically, the consultations identify the need for humanitarian actors to engage in climate change adaptation and build upon existing foundations including a wealth of experience in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management (particularly preparedness and early warning - early action) as an increasingly important element of adaptation, or “a first line of defence” against climate change.

The IASC regional and country level consultations have been an extremely positive start of an ongoing process to engage and strengthen action on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The active participation of so many agencies in the consultation process is testament to the importance of these issues and the urgent need to integrate climate change adaptation into all humanitarian activities.

There are clearly challenges to navigate in order to successfully mainstream climate change into humanitarian work, but there are also many opportunities for strengthening, expanding, adapting and replicating existing work.

The ongoing consultation process will provide further opportunities for sharing good practice and experiences, for stimulating additional dialogue on these issues, for forging partnerships and most of all for developing concrete solutions on the ground.

We need to recognise that although climate change is a new challenge with severe humanitarian consequences, humanitarian actors have the resources, experiences and skills to respond; the foundations are already in place, the challenge is to build upon these.

These preliminary findings were prepared in the context of the IASC Informal Task Force on Climate Change and present an initial overview of perspectives from the first round of regional and national level consultations on the humanitarian challenges of climate change. The consultations involved a wide range of agencies.

AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE FIRST ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS

IASC is composed of both UN and non-UN organisations, all of which have been active in the consultations. They bring to the table a wide range of experiences; some have dealt with climate change adaptation for many years, whereas for others the consultations represent the first opportunity to engage with these issues. The regional consultations primarily included IASC agencies; although additional actors were involved particularly in the national level consultations, for example research organisations and government bodies. OCHA, WFP and IFRC are the IASC agencies responsible for organising the consultation process.

Regional Consultations

ACF Spain; ACT International; CARE International; Caritas Internationalis; Australia; Church World Service; FAO; Habitat for Humanity; IFRC; IOM; OXFAM; Plan; National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; RHVP; Save the Children; UNAIDS; UNDP; UNEP; UNFPA; UNDSS; UN Habitat; UNICEF; UNIFEM; UN OCHA; UNHCR; UNISDR; USP; WFP; WHO; and World Vision International.



National consultations

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; IFRC; OCHA; WFP; WWF; Oxfam; regional and national meteorological institutes (e.g. African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development); National Environment services and Government ministries; national and local NGOs (e.g. Fundacion Madre Tierra Seynekan – Colombia; Alliance Niger Nature, EDER, Réseau de L'Environnement et Développement, CONGAFEN - Niger); science museums (e.g. Maloka – Columbia); university departments (e.g. geography and environment) and programmes (e.g. PNUD – Colombia).

These preliminary findings are supported by a more detailed report, which fully documents the variety of experiences and challenges raised in the discussions. The full report will be circulated after the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, June 2009. The IASC Task Force on Climate Change welcomes any comments you may have on either document.

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Photos: ACT International; Colombian Red Cross; IFRC; IMO; SIRC; UNOCHA; and WFP