



Report on the work of Commission E:

Building resilience by scaling up local action and strengthening legal frameworks

SESSION 1: BUILDING RESILIENCE: LAUNCH OF THE ONE BILLION COALITION FOR RESILIENCE

9 December 2015, 10:00 – 12:00

Chair: Dr. Seyed Amir Mohsen Ziaee, President, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Rapporteur: Mr. Harold Brooks, Senior Vice President for International Operations, American Red Cross

Panellists:

- Ms. Sung-Joo Kim, President of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross
- H.E. Ambassador Thani Thongphakdi, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva and Co-Chair of the Main Committee of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Mr. Abbas Gullet, Secretary General of the Kenya Red Cross Society
- Mr. Neil McFarlane, Chief of Regional Coordination and National Implementation Unit, UNISDR
- Ms. Natasha Issa, Group Head of Corporate Responsibility, Zurich Insurance Company

Panel discussion

The session began with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (International Federation) invitation to join the One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC). Robert Tickner, International Federation Acting USG for Partnerships, reminded the participants of the objective of the 1BC and emphasized what could be achieved through collective efforts for the 1BC, as strengthening resilience is the right thing to do from both a humanitarian and an economic perspective. Elhadj As Sy, International Federation Secretary General, then highlighted the fundamentals and importance of the 1BC and invited all like-minded stakeholders to join the 1BC to "walk the talk" in acting and investing in prevention which is better and cheaper than cure.

In their presentations the five panellists welcomed the International Federation's 1BC initiative and expressed their commitment to support it, detailing:

- community resilience work in their organizations/countries;
- opportunities created through the 1BC;
- their commitment for engagement with the 1BC;
- recommendations on how to advance the 1BC;
- types of support to the 1BC.

Twelve members of the audience took the floor, putting forward ideas and recommendations and pledging support and commitments to advance the 1BC.

Summary

The session addressed the resilience agenda and presented an open invitation to join the One Billion Coalition for Resilience (1BC). It provided an opportunity for participants to discuss a range of resilience issues and make pledges to support the 1BC. Convening and facilitating the 1BC is the voluntary commitment of the International Federation to building the resilience of people and communities in line with the post-2015 global agendas, namely the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the World Humanitarian Summit. By 2025 this new initiative aims to have engaged and inspired one billion vulnerable people – in high, middle and low income countries – to take active steps to enhance their resilience. Participants in the session welcomed the 1BC initiative and agreed to work together to engage not only the Red Cross Red Crescent, but also governments, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and academia, in creating a world where people in every community can survive and thrive in the face of increasing risks and vulnerability.

Discussion highlights

“Prevention is better and cheaper than cure”. DRR and resilience save not only people’s lives but development gains and investment made by individuals, families, communities, governments and the private sector as well. Resilience-building is the right thing to do from both a humanitarian and an economic perspective. It protects human dignity in a fundamental way. It is time to take our understanding of vulnerability, risks and resilience and move towards doing something practical and meaningful on a significant scale. We have to work together to improve capacity to reduce risks, bounce back and advance forward to protect development progress and well-being. Resilience is a way of bridging the gap between the needs and expectations of our communities and our response to those needs. Resilience is a journey in which we accompany communities as they grapple with the challenges they face. Building resilience is about decreasing risk with preparedness and mitigation measures and decreasing vulnerability by increasing human, social and economic capital.

“Partnerships” are crucial for resilience. The objectives of the 1BC can only be achieved through effective and true partnerships. Through the 1BC, the International Federation aims to join forces with 20,000 institutional partners worldwide from the corporate sector, academia, civil society and national and local governments. Together with these partners, we will work to strengthen grassroots organizations and support community-led activities that empower individuals and build capacity for self-organization. We invite each and every one of you, national and local governments, the United Nations, civil society organizations, academia and the business community, to join us in the 1BC to optimize efforts to achieve a shared vision of local action for individual and community resilience.

Resilience “is about self-awareness, self-reliance and self-organizing”. The 1BC will contribute to empowering vulnerable communities and strengthening local actions for resilience. Governments need to create an effective enabling environment for these local actions by adopting and implementing relevant legislation. Strengthening resilience requires multi-sectoral and “all of society” approaches and the shared responsibility of stakeholders at all levels. Understanding risks and spreading risk awareness are a key foundation to designing simple and practical local and self-driven solutions.

“Effective communication and advocacy”, as well as public awareness and public education, play an important role in engaging stakeholders in strengthening resilience.

“Innovative solutions”, in an increasingly inter-connected and inter-dependent world, should be sought to reach out and engage people and communities at risk. As shown by the examples of the Kenya Red Cross Society and the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, IT solutions help engage and connect people in

much wider ways to address our resilience challenges through improved efficiency, effectiveness, capacity building, outreach, resource mobilization, etc.

“The 1BC is about utilizing the International Federation’s convening and mobilizing power and actions for change” to achieve resilience outcomes. The 1BC is the International Federation’s commitment to remain relevant in the light of the changing faces of vulnerability and risks across the globe. It is about putting the safety and prosperity of the world’s most vulnerable at the heart of all that we do. It is about one billion people, from different backgrounds, cultures and geographic locations, taking active steps to reduce their vulnerability and strengthen their resilience in the face of adversity. We will work with our 190 National Societies, who together have 160,000 local branches and 17 million volunteers working with communities, and the partners who join us in the 1BC to advance our commitment to “protect dignity and improve the lives of the most vulnerable by mobilizing the power of humanity”.

* A detailed session report is available upon request.

SESSION 2: STRENGTHENING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

9 December 2015, 13:30 – 15:30

Chair: Fabrizio Curcio, Head of the Department of Civil Protection, Italy

Rapporteur: Robert Kwesige, Secretary-General, Uganda Red Cross Society

Panellists:

- Fine Tuitupou-Arnold, Secretary-General, Cook Islands Red Cross (5 minutes)
- Bernardo Castro, Chief of Staff, National Emergencies Office, Chile
- Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director of Strategy, Policy and International Co-operation, ECHO
- Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Crisis Response Unit, UNDP
- Pascal Cassan, Head, Red Cross Red Crescent First Aid Reference Centre

Panel discussion

Session 2 started with a brief ceremony for the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the International Federation and the UNDP. The representatives of the two organizations signing the MoU, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for UNDP and Mr. Robert Tickner, International Federation Acting USG for Partnerships, for the International Federation, each recognized the MoU as an important milestone for their ongoing partnership. The signing of the MoU was recognized as an opportunity to reflect on what the organizations had already achieved by working together in the area of law and disaster risk reduction, as well as an opportunity to scale up, broaden and strengthen their ways of working together in the future.

The Chair, Mr. Fabrizio Curcio, set the scene for the panel discussion by explaining the background to the three topics of focus for the session: strengthening legal frameworks for international disaster response; law and disaster risk reduction; and law and first aid. He then handed over to the speakers who shared their experience and insight in these areas, as set out below:

- Ms. Fine Tuitupou-Arnold noted that while most would agree on the importance of strengthening national legal frameworks for disaster risk reduction, the real challenge lies in how that can actually be done in practice. In that respect, she shared her experience in using the Checklist on Law and

Disaster Risk Reduction to analyse the legal framework for DRR in the Cook Islands and explained how they discovered a need to bring a stronger legal backing to many policies and plans.

- Mr. Bernardo Castro shared the legal developments in Chile to better manage international support in disasters. He referred to previous disaster situations in his country in which unnecessary relief items were sent by international actors and highlighted the usefulness of the IDRL Guidelines and cooperation at a bilateral and regional level to address these kinds of issues.
- Ms. Florika Fink-Hooijer welcomed the launch of the Checklist and the Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the One Billion Coalition, and emphasized how we can all learn from the experiences of other countries in preparedness and legislative advancements. She noted that hazards in Europe also cause economic and life losses and referred to the European Union's experience in developing guidelines for States on risk assessment and planning.
- Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu explained how legal frameworks are essential to achieving the objectives of understanding, reducing and managing risk, referring to the findings of the multi-country research undertaken by the International Federation and UNDP. To guide the process of review or revision of legislation, she introduced the Checklist and the Handbook on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction as key new resources.
- Mr. Pascal Cassan focused his intervention on the lack of legal protections for first aiders, the need to legally mandate first aid training in certain circumstances and the need to improve the standard of first aid training. In particular, he spoke of the reluctance of citizens to provide first aid in part due to fears of liability if their efforts are unsuccessful.

Following the panel interventions, the Chair asked the members of the panel to reflect on global progress in these areas and how we should both measure achievements and plan for the future. The panel members noted that progress is often slow when it comes to legislative changes, but there has still been significant movement to date. In moving forward, it will be essential to properly understand risk and vulnerabilities, involve communities, in particular youth, in the development and implementation of legislation and partner more widely with private-sector and other stakeholders. In addition to the panellists, the International Federation, National Societies and States – including Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Ethiopia, The Netherlands, Japan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran and Brazil – participated in the discussion.

Summary

Session 2 addressed the progress achieved by States with the support of partners – such as National Red Societies, the International Federation and UNDP – in strengthening legal frameworks for disasters and emergencies and explored ways in which to accelerate progress in the future. The discussions were focused on three main topics: (1) a reflection on the progress of the IDRL Guidelines since 2007 and the need for more countries to strengthen their rules and procedures to regulate international disaster relief; (2) the role of domestic law in promoting disaster risk reduction and how the Checklist on Law and Disaster Risk Reduction and its Handbook can provide guidance in assessing and strengthening domestic legal frameworks; and (3) existing gaps in domestic law related to the training and delivery of first aid by laypersons. Following the sharing of country and institutional experiences and perspectives on these topics, the Chair concluded by summarizing that a comprehensive approach is needed to strengthen legislation for disasters and emergencies, involving many different stakeholders and taking into account existing policy, culture, community voices and available resources.

Discussion highlights

The discussion between the members of the panel and representatives from the audience reinforced a number of key points:

- Partnerships between different actors at the international and national levels are necessary to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to legal issues, especially when international disaster relief and cross-border assistance is required.
- In order to promote more effective legal frameworks, it is important to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in development and review processes, in particular community members, youth, the private sector and politicians.
- There is a widespread need to enhance awareness and promote a culture of understanding for the regulation of disasters and emergencies.
- National laws have an important role in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction through different sectors, and legal gaps can have a negative impact on the resilience of communities.
- To be effective, legislative developments need to be backed by the necessary resources for their implementation.
- All National Societies and countries should be prepared for the influx of people and goods that can arrive following a disaster and cause unforeseen problems. Learning from the experience of other countries and putting in place rules and procedures to regulate international aid will ultimately benefit affected communities.
- States and National Societies should work together to develop enabling legal frameworks for the delivery of first aid training and assistance.