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Strengthening anticipatory action in the Movement: Our way forward

PROGRESS REPORT

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PROGRESS REPORT

Strengthening anticipatory action in the Movement: Our way forward

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides a progress update on the implementation of the 2022 Council of Delegates resolution (CD/22/R2) “Strengthening anticipatory action in the Movement: Our way forward”. Significant progress has been made since the resolution’s adoption. More National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) are implementing anticipatory action, and more people, geographical areas and hazards are covered by anticipatory action taken ahead of predictable hazards and events.

There has been a significant shift in the policy landscape, with the establishment of new regional and national frameworks for strengthening anticipatory action. Some examples are the Political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (A/77/L.70); the African Union’s Institutional and Operational Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development’s Regional Roadmap for Anticipatory Action; the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action, the G7 statement on strengthening anticipatory action; the EU Council Conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap (9598/23); the launch of the Grand Bargain caucus on anticipatory action; and the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative.

Building on the momentum around anticipatory action, there is a proposal for the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (International Conference) to consider the resolution “Protecting people from the humanitarian impacts of extreme climate and weather events: Working together to strengthen anticipatory action.” The aim of the proposed resolution is for States and components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) to further institutionalize anticipatory action as part of disaster risk management, so that people and their livelihoods are protected from predictable climate and weather extremes.

1) INTRODUCTION

The increasing frequency, intensity and complexity of disasters is driving a paradigm shift in humanitarian, climate and development action. It is a shift towards the concept of anticipatory action which involves acting ahead of hazards when early warning information indicates an imminent event and/or peak impact, before the hazard materializes, with a view to minimizing and mitigating potential harm. Anticipatory action works best when there is a pre-agreed plan with pre-arranged financing. Since the adoption of the 2022 Council of Delegates resolution on anticipatory action, there has been notable progress in implementing and expanding proactive measures within the Red Cross and Red Crescent network. This document provides a comprehensive progress update, highlighting achievements, challenges and future directions for anticipatory action within the Movement.

Significant strides have been made in increasing the engagement of National Societies in anticipatory action. The number of National Societies with pre-agreed anticipatory action plans or Early Action Protocols (EAPs), covering more geographical areas and a broader range of hazards, has risen substantially, as has the number of National Societies requesting allocations from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund of the International Federation of Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies (IFRC-DREF) to act ahead of hazards on the horizon, without pre-agreed plans. Between June 2022 and June 2024, 27 new EAPs from 19 National Societies and 36 IFRC-DREF imminent crisis operations from 28 National Societies were approved. A total of 7,725,425 people were covered, and allocations amounted to CHF 17,836,743.

This document delves into various aspects of anticipatory action, including the increase in engagement by National Societies, the response to slower-onset and less visible hazards, the focus on compounding risks, the application of anticipatory action in conflict settings and the exploration of new hazards and risks. It also discusses the importance of sustainable funding mechanisms, the integration of anticipatory action into disaster risk management systems and the role of the Anticipation Hub as a key platform for knowledge exchange and advocacy.

The analysis and progress outlined in this document underscore the Movement's commitment to scaling up anticipatory action. As we move forward, the recommendations provided aim to guide further actions and ensure that anticipatory action continues to protect and support people at risk globally.

2) BACKGROUND

This is the first progress report on Resolution CD/22/R2. Given that the resolution was proposed jointly by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the German Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (Climate Centre), consultations were conducted with these organizations.

Furthermore, the [IFRC Operational Framework for Anticipatory Action 2021–2025](#) served as an effective tool for steering progress, with specific indicators and targets to demonstrate the scale-up of anticipatory action. By 2025, the IFRC network aims to engage 80 National Societies in anticipatory action, reach 3.5 million people through these efforts and allocate 25% of IFRC-DREF funds to anticipatory action.

3) ANALYSIS/PROGRESS

A) INCREASING ENGAGEMENT ON ANTICIPATORY ACTION

Since the adoption of the Council of Delegates resolution in 2022, the number of National Societies engaging in and implementing anticipatory action has increased drastically. In 2021, eight National Societies had developed EAPs. By June 2024, 22 National Societies had active EAPs, with a total of 61 EAPs developed, activated and closed, compared to nine in 2021. While external stakeholders conduct anticipatory action mainly for droughts, the majority of National Society EAPs were for floods and cyclones. Given that EAPs are hazard-specific, a National Society can have more than one EAP.

Moreover, many National Societies are implementing anticipatory action without pre-agreed plans by using weather forecasts, technology and risk information to act ahead of predicted hazards. For instance, in March 2023, the National Societies of Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar took life-saving measures prior to Cyclone Freddy, which included evacuating at-risk populations, disseminating early warning messages, playing a critical role in overall coordination mechanisms from warning to response and distributing critical items at evacuation centres. In addition, National Societies have utilised the IFRC-DREF for imminent events facility to act ahead of forecasted hazards, with 36 operations in 28 countries.

Between June 2022 and June 2024, 7,725,425 people were supported through the IFRC-DREF anticipatory pillar, which includes support through EAPs, simplified EAPs and the IFRC-DREF for imminent events facility.

B) TAKING STRONGER STEPS TO ADDRESS SLOWER-ONSET AND LESS VISIBLE HAZARDS THROUGH ANTICIPATORY ACTION

As a result of El Niño, several countries experienced severe and intense heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods and cyclones between 2022 and 2024. In particular, slow-onset hazards, which develop gradually over weeks and months rather than occurring suddenly, present a significant opportunity for anticipatory action. A slow-onset hazard that has become common in many parts of the world is heatwaves. In the first half of 2022, persistent heatwaves affected parts of Europe, Asia and North America, causing evacuations, killing tens of thousands and affecting hundreds of millions with implications for health, well-being, food supplies, etc.¹

As a result, National Societies have developed EAPs for droughts in Guatemala, Honduras, Niger, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Eswatini and Lesotho, and heatwave EAPs have been put in place in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Greece and Nepal, in addition to an existing one in Vietnam.

In 2023, the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society activated its drought EAP, helping 500 households to mitigate the negative impacts of droughts by disseminating early warning messages, distributing drought-tolerant seeds and dosing livestock. When, in 2024, a state of emergency was declared, the National Society started delivering cash assistance. Similarly, the Honduran Red Cross activated its EAP in June 2023, ahead of an anticipated drought and heatwaves by deploying volunteers to distribute water purification kits and distributing cash for at-risk populations.

In April 2024, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society activated its heatwave EAP to support 123,700 people, which involved disseminating early warning messages about dehydration and forecasts, distributing safe drinking water, setting up cooling stations and delivering multipurpose cash assistance. In June 2024, the Hellenic Red Cross took anticipatory action, based on National Observatory of Athens forecasts, to mitigate scorching temperatures, helping 2,000 people to cope with the heat by distributing bottled water, isotonic drinks and food and checking on people in vulnerable situations, such as older people and homeless people.

C) INCREASING THE FOCUS ON COMPOUNDING RISKS

As hazards increase in frequency and intensity, there is less time to recover between them but also multiple hazards happening at once, resulting in compounding risks. Acknowledging the need for concerted action in this area, the Anticipation Hub launched a multi-hazard working group, led by the Climate Centre and ACAPS, to develop specific disaster risk management tools and guidelines for stakeholders. In 2024, the working group's focus country is Colombia, where the Colombian Red Cross is in the process of enhancing its capacity to anticipate complex crises and develop an EAP that takes into account the dynamic and evolving nature of risk which, in practice, means exploring more phased approaches to trigger development.

Between 2022 and 2024, the Climate Centre has gathered information on how complex crises have unfolded, carrying out an in-depth investigation into the causes and impacts of disasters (i.e. forensic investigation of disasters). By gaining a better understanding of how complex events have unfolded in the past and considering the additional complexities that the changing climate brings and the consequences for the most vulnerable, it will be possible to adapt and improve the decision-making process for anticipatory action, and this will be reflected in the implementation of anticipatory action in the future. In Honduras, the complexities of tropical storms Eta and Iota were studied in detail, looking at how lessons learned from previous hazards, including COVID-19 and systematic violence, could be used to strengthen anticipatory action processes. A similar process has been undertaken for Cyclone Kenneth, which affected conflict areas in Cabo Delgado in Mozambique, while in Zambia, the Zambia Red Cross Society played a key role in a forensic investigation of disasters conducted by the Climate Centre and the International Water Management Institute, which aimed to unpack the connections between

¹ <https://climate.copernicus.eu/heatwaves-grip-parts-europe-asia-and-north-america-first-half-2022>

multiple hazards and dynamic risks that led to the 2022 humanitarian crisis. A similar analysis is taking place for the 2022 floods in Pakistan.

D) STRENGTHENING ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN CONFLICT SETTINGS

Anticipatory action has primarily been applied in the context of climate- and weather-related events, including storms, floods, droughts and similar occurrences. The current humanitarian landscape is complex, with many regions experiencing the compounded effects of climate and weather extremes in fragile and conflict-affected settings. These conditions have severe repercussions for already challenging humanitarian situations. According to the World Bank, 33 countries classify as fragile and conflict-affected in 2024.²

Within the Red Cross and Red Crescent network, there are ongoing efforts to address this issue through two main approaches: 1) anticipating climate- and weather-related hazards in conflict settings and 2) anticipating the impacts of conflicts. In 17³ of the 33 countries classified by the World Bank as fragile and conflict-affected, the National Societies are undertaking early warning, early action and anticipatory action efforts through risk analysis, EAP development and/or measures to activate such protocols.

In October 2023, in partnership with the Somali Red Crescent Society and the Climate Centre, for the first time, the ICRC used El Niño forecasts in Somalia to adapt operations, providing timely alerts, implementing anticipatory action and improving preparedness in conflict areas.

From April to May 2024, in anticipation of heatwaves in Niger and Mali, the ICRC included messages on this subject in its dialogue with detention authorities and supported preparedness actions.

The Anticipation Hub working group on conflict has worked over the past years to increase understanding of how to anticipate crises in complex settings and set realistic expectations for the implementation of measures to this end. It should be recognized that implementing anticipatory action in conflict settings is a more complex endeavour than in fragile contexts, due to compounding risks and unpredictable conflict dynamics. However, a new tool kit is under development as part of a partnership with CGIAR aimed at supporting National Societies and partners in integrating conflict sensitivity and other conflict aspects into the EAP design process.

In parallel, the broader humanitarian community made some efforts to understand the humanitarian system's capacity to anticipate conflict. A 2023 report published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) contained an extensive assessment of conflict prediction tools, to which the Anticipation Hub conflict working group contributed. It was concluded that prediction systems are not currently effective enough to be able to apply the full spectrum of anticipatory action, in particular, funding for the implementation of early action based on forecasts. However, partners agreed that it is crucial to focus on anticipating the impacts of conflict, such as displacement. On the other hand, election violence continues to be a type of event that National Societies tend to anticipate well and for which they often use the IFRC-DREF for imminent events facility.

E) EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES TO ANTICIPATE AND ACT AHEAD OF OTHER HAZARDS AND RISKS

As reflected in the Council of Delegates resolution, the Movement components are committed to expanding anticipatory action to hazards and risks beyond climate- and weather-related risks.

² <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/608a53dd83f21ef6712b5dfef050b00b-0090082023/original/FCSListFY24-final.pdf>

³ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Burundi, Chad, Lebanon, Timor-Leste and Zimbabwe

Notable achievements within the reporting period 2022 to 2024 include developments in anticipating the impacts of population movements and epidemics.

In November 2023, the German Red Cross and the IFRC convened more than 70 practitioners from National Societies, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and academia to share experiences and findings on anticipating displacement. A major achievement in the Red Cross and Red Crescent network is the development and approval of the EAP on population movements in January 2024 by the Honduran Red Cross. It aims to reduce negative health impacts for people on the move by anticipating peak population movements across the border and the capacities required for government stakeholders and the National Society to accommodate the increased needs of people on the move.

In 2023, the Anticipation Hub Working Groups on Anticipatory Action and Health increased the number of members. The Movement-specific Working Group grew to include 97 members from 31 different institutions (National Societies, reference centres and others), while the multi-agency Working Group grew to 48 active members from 34 institutions. A noteworthy achievement during this period was that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Working Group developed a working paper on approaches to using anticipatory action for outbreaks and epidemic-prone diseases, a [two-page summary](#) of various approaches that can be taken and an example of what a simplified EAP (s/EAP) for cholera could include. The first National Society to submit an EAP related to epidemics was Sri Lanka in 2024 (dengue), and at least another four National Societies are looking to finalize s/EAPs or EAPs by the end of 2024.

F) ENCOURAGING MEASURES TO CREATE, ADAPT AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO FUNDING MECHANISMS

The IFRC-DREF has been a key instrument in funding both immediate disaster response and anticipatory action. Through its dedicated anticipatory pillar, 191 National Societies have access to pre-arranged financing to deliver anticipatory action based on a pre-agreed plan or an EAP. To further encourage National Societies to act ahead of forecasted hazards on the horizon, the IFRC-DREF imminent crisis facility also enables them to implement anticipatory action without an EAP.

Since 2018, the EAP has been a robust methodology, with rigorous hazard assessment and accurate high-quality forecast skills for National Societies to access the IFRC-DREF anticipatory pillar. Experience and lessons learned from National Societies have demonstrated that it is critical to explore simpler methodologies, particularly if there is a lack of historical data on the impact of disasters, weaker forecast skills or no in-country partner to provide support. Therefore, at the end of 2022, the IFRC-DREF recalibrated and adapted its approach by launching a simplified EAP, with a lighter and simpler approach, enabling more National Societies to pursue planning for anticipatory action independently. During the reporting period, the IFRC-DREF allocated CHF 17,836,743 for anticipatory action through EAPs, s/EAPs and IFRC-DREF allocations for imminent events.

While the Red Cross and Red Crescent network is continuously looking to support National Societies in implementing anticipatory action, a critical challenge is to build sustainable, strong and reliable systems for anticipatory action, such as by training staff and volunteers to deliver actions within a short window of time, establishing partnerships with hydrometeorological services or academia to access forecast information, aligning with government and National Society disaster risk management plans and amending legislation to enable action to be taken when warnings are triggered.

These activities to build anticipatory action systems are outside the scope of the IFRC-DREF and therefore require concerted efforts to mobilize resources. To this end, the IFRC has been exploring different funding mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative and funding provided under other bilateral and

multilateral projects and programmes, notably the Italian grant to the IFRC to strengthen anticipatory action in the Africa region and the Water at the Heart of Climate Action project funded by the Netherlands government, among others. In addition, the IFRC-DREF developed an insurance product as a new financing model for humanitarian response in a public-private partnership with Aon and the Centre for Disaster Protection.

G) INTEGRATING ANTICIPATORY ACTION INTO THE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, GOVERNMENTS

To ensure the sustainability and strong ownership of anticipatory action, it must be integrated into the disaster risk management plans and processes of National Societies. During the reporting period, the IFRC updated the National Society policy template for disaster risk management under the Preparedness for Effective Response process. As part of this update, anticipatory action has been highlighted as a key strategy for proactive response to disasters and crises.

As auxiliaries to the public authorities, National Societies have often acted as thought leaders, bringing innovative approaches to disaster risk management. In Mozambique, the Mozambique Red Cross Society, with support from the German Red Cross and the IFRC, has been pioneering anticipatory action in the country since 2015, resulting in the development and activation of EAPs for floods and cyclones. In 2024, the Mozambique government developed one of the first government-led drought anticipatory action frameworks in the region.

Furthermore, the IFRC and National Societies supported the broader implementation of the International Disaster Response Law Guidelines in domestic instruments in 38 countries and in several regional instruments, contributing to a better understanding of the opportunities and building blocks of anticipatory action. Moreover, the IFRC Disaster Law team drafted a snapshot of how to legislate for early warning and anticipatory action. During the reporting period, snapshots, questions and guidelines were piloted in the Asia Pacific region, with a view to scaling up the use case.

In the context of its role as global lead for Pillar 4 (Preparedness to respond to warnings) of the EW4All initiative, which was launched in 2022, the IFRC is also promoting and increasing the focus on support for the integration of anticipatory action into government disaster risk management systems and processes.

In June 2024, the IFRC launched a detailed study that will look at the integration and uptake of anticipatory action by governments and explore the role of National Societies, as auxiliaries, in this endeavour.

H) USING THE ANTICIPATION HUB AS A CENTRAL PLATFORM FOR FACILITATING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, LEARNING, GUIDANCE AND ADVOCACY ON ANTICIPATORY ACTION

The German Red Cross, the IFRC and the Climate Centre have come together under the banner of the Anticipation Hub to provide a central global platform for knowledge exchange, learning, guidance and advocacy around anticipatory action.

Since 2022, 36 National Societies have joined the Anticipation Hub. These National Societies are able to access technical resources and exchange experiences with the wider humanitarian community. The Anticipation Hub partners connect in a variety of different ways, including through global, regional and national dialogue platforms, the website (providing critical technical resources) and policy, advocacy and communication activities. In 2024, a key priority is to develop learning resources for government stakeholders and Anticipation Hub partners.

In 2024, a webinar series specifically targeting those National Societies who are new to anticipatory action is being run to encourage a larger number of National Societies to engage with the resources of the IFRC network, promote global commitments, including through the Council of Delegates and the International Conference, and raise awareness about the Anticipation Hub's partner network including more than 130 organizations.

4) IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

There is a general global trend towards the improvement of anticipatory action monitoring and reporting through annual flagship reports, such as the Anticipation Hub's *Global Overview* report and *The State of Play* report published by the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), among others. The IFRC network provides continuous input, technical recommendations and substantive contributions to these reports and aims to continue doing so, in addition to its internal reporting on the Operational Framework for Anticipatory Action 2021–2025.

These global reports reveal positive trends during the reporting period in the general uptake and scaling up of anticipatory action in terms of the number of people reached, the number of countries with anticipatory action frameworks, funding commitments, regional and global initiatives and stakeholders involved in the anticipatory action arena.

In addition, if the proposed resolution "Protecting people from the humanitarian impacts of extreme climate and weather events: Working together to strengthen anticipatory action" is adopted at the 34th International Conference, reporting on the implementation of anticipatory action by the Movement components will be through International Conference procedures.

5) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the increase in disasters fuelled by the changing climate and exacerbated by the interrelated effects of economic challenges, food insecurity, armed conflict and other factors, anticipatory action is a part of the solution required to navigate this complex humanitarian landscape. The commitments outlined in Council of Delegates Resolution CD/22/R2 remain relevant today and serve as pivotal recommendations.

- Continue institutionalizing anticipatory action within the Movement components' disaster risk management strategies, plans and policies and, wherever possible, advocate with and support governments in this field.
- Increase anticipatory action evidence, understanding and practice, particularly for compounding risks, slow-onset and invisible hazards, and fragile and conflict-affected settings.
- Invest technically and financially in both operational capacity strengthening and the delivery of anticipatory action.
- Maintain thought leadership and steer the anticipatory action agenda through hosted initiatives, such as the Anticipation Hub and REAP, within the disaster risk management community, leveraging complementary strengths, connections and synergies with the development and climate sectors.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning methodologies for anticipatory action.
- Enhance the use of risk information across all stakeholders, leveraging existing information management tools, such as the GO Platform Risk Watch and the Global Crisis Data Bank.
- Promote a shift towards shared responsibility with the shared objective of acting ahead of forecasted hazards and risks with more inclusive and better coordinated processes across teams, sectors, units and levels within and across organizations.
- Propose a resolution on anticipatory action at the 34th International Conference to shift the needle towards anticipatory action becoming the norm.