



CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE **FUTURE OF OUR SEAS.**

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The fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

- **Humanity**
- **Impartiality**
- **Neutrality**
- **Independence**
- **Voluntary service**
- **Unity**
- **Universality**

RC/RC Climate Change Centre.

- The International Federation first addressed climate change in 1999. It was tackled in the annual World Disasters Report at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, where a commitment was made to study the impact of climate change on the frequency and impact of disasters.

- In 2001 the International Federation, in collaboration with the Netherlands Red Cross, established the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre in The Hague. The centre supports National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, particularly in developing countries, to decrease the vulnerability of people hit by the negative impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.

WHY the concern?

- The International Federation is concerned about the humanitarian impacts of climate change.
- Climate change is a humanitarian issue as much as it is an environmental and economic one. The people hardest hit by these effects of climate change will be the world's most vulnerable; the poorest people in the poorest countries where economies are heavily dependent on industries vulnerable to changes in climate (such as agriculture and fishing) and where communities already struggle to address the needs resulting from natural disasters.

Global implications of Climate Change for the Red Cross Movement.

- Increased number of weather related disasters – response.
- Threatens capacity to cope at all levels – coping with extreme weather events.
- Threatens livelihoods eg; Loss of traditional knowledge
- Health implications – of disasters, disease distribution and frequency, heat stress, nutrition

- Potential to fuel conflict eg; Glaciers, desertification
- Causes increased migration (internally & externally).
- Threatens work towards Millenium Development Goals.
- Increases the number of people needing assistance overall.

- The only option for meeting this challenge is to invest in disaster risk reduction in making communities stronger and more resilient in the first place. We are fast approaching a point where the international community won't be able to find enough money to reactively respond to the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and extreme weather brought about by climate change.
- **The RC/RC Climate Centre "Preparedness for climate change" program supports National Societies in developing countries to improve their understanding of the negative impacts of climate change.**

- Pacific countries are considered amongst the world's most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many of the inhabited atolls are very narrow and low lying, bordered on either side by lagoons or the open ocean. These nations have expressed feeling threatened by rising sea levels and changes to weather patterns and extremities.
- The Red Cross Societies in the Pacific have a growing concern for the impact this is having on the people they serve.

PACIFIC RED CROSS WORKING ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

- Samoa and Tuvalu Red Cross Societies lead the way with pilot projects which has been funded with assistance from the Canada Fund, Japanese Red Cross, IFRC and RC/RC Climate Centre. The project began with a capacity building component ; increasing knowledge and interpretation of climate change science within National Societies.
- Solomon Islands, Tonga, Kiribati and Cook Islands Red Cross Societies have taken on the RC/RC Climate Centre's 'Preparedness for Climate Change' program, which involves up to 4 integral steps.

PREPAREDNESS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE 4 STEPS.

1. This involves a workshop for staff and volunteers on climate change impacts and adaptation, as well as building a network with other actors working on climate change such as government departments, including the met office and environment ministry, as well as NGOs.
2. A document assessing how climate change is likely to impact the country, as well as disaster risk reduction and the work of the National Society is produced and distributed.
3. A regional meeting is attended.
4. Develop activities that address climate risks in the context of regular programs and priorities of the National Society.

Why Tonga Red Cross Society got involved?

- TRCS has signed up for this program because there has been observed changes in the community, particularly in the outer islands, and are related to climate change.
- Also an integral part of “Disaster Preparedness”, which is one of the fundamental services of the RC/RC Movement.

What TRCS is doing?

- TRCS is up to step 2 now of the program, which is writing up of a background document on climate change and disaster risk reduction in Tonga.
- It has also started integrating climate change in other programs of the National Society, such as first aid training and other community awareness trainings.

Opportunities;

- Climate change also provides opportunities to reinvigorate TRCS work, especially on disaster risk reduction.
- It forces us to ask the question, what can we do differently, more or better?
- It also reinforces the network between TRCS and other climate change stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Environment and other NGOs.

Some of the plans for the future.

- Implement Step 4 of the “Preparedness for climate change” program.
- Become more active in simple adaptation methods such as educating children on what to do in emergencies, planting trees and mangroves along the coastal areas.
- Also provide assistance in more complex adaptation steps such as early warning systems, building foreshores, earthquake-safe construction and urban planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

- Network of all the climate change stakeholders, in national and regional levels.
- Other National Societies in the Pacific to join the RC/RC Climate Centre's "Preparedness for climate change" program.
- Climate change is here, therefore we need to pre-empt its impact and we need to act now!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!