



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY IBRAHIM OSMAN, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL,
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT
SOCIETIES, TO THE ISDR GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION, SESSION ON INTERVENTIONS BY HEADS OF DELEGATIONS AND
HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPANTS, GENEVA, TUESDAY 5TH JUNE 2007**

In December 2003, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, together with the States Party to the Geneva Conventions, committed itself to minimise the impact of disasters through implementation of disaster risk reduction measures and improving preparedness and response mechanisms. Adopting the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, the Movement acknowledged the importance of disaster risk reduction and undertook to promote measures to minimise the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations.

The IFRC Global Agenda, adopted in 2005, reinforced these principles, acknowledging disaster risk reduction as a programme priority and pledging to scale up actions with vulnerable communities and to improve local, national and international capacity to respond to disasters.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement has had a focus on reducing disaster risk since the 1980s, whether this has been in the form of good disaster preparedness or strengthened health infrastructure, community-based early warning or support to achieving development goals.

As our worldwide membership of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies continues to provide humanitarian support to communities and populations affected by disaster, we are increasingly conscious of the increase in the risks that are being faced.

These risks are exacerbated by climate change and other variables which seem likely to increase the intensity of the events to be faced. In response, we will ensure that our national societies are supported to provide for affected communities but in addition, we will increasingly assist them to help their governments in addressing the risks that lead to disasters occurring.

This is a key function, undertaken by National Societies in their roles as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. This role is the main reason why governments have agreed to include their National Societies as members of the national disaster management mechanism that all have agreed to create.

We recognise the compatibility of our support to national societies in disaster risk reduction with the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action and we offer our full support to the achievement of these priorities.

As evidence of our increasingly strong commitment to disaster risk reduction, we are pleased to announce that in the coming months we will launch the International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This Alliance will enable us to significantly scale up our efforts to assist in reducing disaster losses in the most vulnerable communities where national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies operate. In working to achieve this objective, the IFRC will also be consistent with the priorities of the HFA, and so will play its part in meeting these global outcomes.

Though the HFA's objectives place strong responsibilities on the heads of national governments, ultimately they can only be fully achieved if there is a significant reduction in disaster risk on the ground, among the communities that are regularly affected by disasters. The populations of these communities are also often the poorest and most marginalised. It is here that the achievement of development goals is most difficult and the constant threat and frequent impact of disasters only destroys or severely disrupts any gains that are made.

It is at this level that the IFRC and its member national societies have a distinct advantage. We work among these communities on a regular basis. We have members and branches in the communities who are able to facilitate a disaster risk reduction agenda. This contribution will go a long way to ensuring the effective implementation of the HFA and assisting governments to abide by the commitments made at Kobe.

Through its Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction, the IFRC will focus its attention initially on scaling up its activity in 20 countries identified as being most at risk. We will do this to improve the capacity and resources of our member national societies to reduce disaster risk in support of their governments' efforts and the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

We will seek to place disaster risk reduction in the forefront of the humanitarian interventions for which the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement is justly renowned.