



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS STATEMENT TO THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION MAY, 2011

Resilient and prepared communities are key components to mitigating the potentially devastating impact of disasters. That is why capacity strengthening in the field of disaster management, to improve emergency response by national and local actors and reduce the vulnerability of affected populations, is central to International Medical Corps' mission and mandate. By integrating risk management and disaster preparedness approaches into its programs, International Medical Corps improves capacity—from the national to the community level—to identify hazards and risks, and respond to emergencies.

As a health-focused organization, International Medical Corps strives to enhance the abilities of communities and governments to respond to health crises brought on by natural disaster, conflict, or disease, thereby increasing the resilience of vulnerable populations. Working in nearly 30 countries, International Medical Corps helps to strengthen the capacity of health systems and personnel to respond effectively and appropriately in emergencies.

For instance, recognizing the need to mitigate the impact of future disasters and emergencies in Indonesia, a country prone to cataclysmic seismic and oceanic activity, International Medical Corps developed SEPRI, the Strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Response in Indonesia project. This program improved emergency preparedness by building the technical, administrative, financial, and logistical capabilities of Ambulan 118, an Indonesian nongovernmental organization, to respond rapidly and effectively to disasters anywhere in the country. Ambulan 118 did so successfully during the Jakarta floods and the West Sumatra Earthquake in 2007. It also provided training to communities in emergency response and disaster management through International Medical Corps' support in order to give communities the skills they need to respond immediately before help arrives.

Currently, International Medical Corps has embarked on PREPARE, a global initiative funded by the US Agency for International Development that focuses on 16 countries in Africa and Asia. Beginning in 2009, this multi-year project aims at strengthening the readiness of target countries to respond to public health emergencies with pandemic potential. This initiative applies a whole-of-society approach to disaster management and promotes sustainable integration of public health emergencies preparedness into the general all-hazard disaster management. PREPARE assists target countries with incorporating pandemic preparedness into core strategic plans and policy frameworks, and into broader, whole-of-society disaster management plans. PREPARE is developing a meta-toolkit that will provide practical guidance to countries at different stages and levels of their preparedness continuum.

International Medical Corps strongly believes that a comprehensive whole-of-society approach involving public, private, and civil society sectors – and incorporating critical services, such as water, law and order, transportation, telecommunications, and finance – best leads to truly prepared communities ready to respond to a wide range of disasters.

From Relief to Self-Reliance