



Statement by Xavier Castellanos

Director IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office

Honourable Chair,

Today, I would like to start by recognizing the spirit of collectively among the stakeholders in the AMCDRR 2018.

We feel encouraged for this sense of shared future, where everyone counts, to ensure that most at risk and vulnerable people in Asia Pacific are in the centre of our collective attention to enhance their resilience and we advance on the global commitments to achieve local impact, including a more sustainable development.

The Red Cross Red Crescent remains committed to build resilience from the bottom up, while recognising, respecting and empowering communities. Speaking on behalf of our 39 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific with 135,000 local branches and 10 million volunteers working with the most vulnerable communities to enhance their own resilience, we see progress.

We are putting early warning into early action across the region and working with at risk communities and government to ensure early actions happen, and systems and funding mechanisms are put motion before disaster strikes based on improved use of weather forecasts and hazard projection.

We are working with governments to support revision, development of implementation of climate smart disaster risk management laws which mandate and more meaningfully engage community, and at risk and marginalised groups in DRR decision making at all levels.

Yet, more needs to be done with regards to those who are best place to serve their communities: local actors.

We want to see more investment in local systems and people-centred action. Climate-smart DRR cannot be achieved through infrastructure projects alone, we need to strike the balance and work in all aspects of DRR, including social protection with our communities and local organisations.

In Asia Pacific, disasters and crisis are forcing millions of people to flee their homes. It is a choice that most of them had not wanted to make. The humanitarian challenges they encounter are enormous. Still they are met by indifference, even in relation to their needs.

We call upon governments and stakeholders to support activities that reduce displacement and address the drivers of displacement as part of our planning, policy and programming development. In this regard, we welcome the stronger reference and committed actions to better address population displacement as part of DRR in this year's Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Action Plan and we stand ready to support and advocate for populations displaced by climate, disaster and crisis.

As we commit to scale up evidenced based climate-smart DRR programmes to have greater impact, through collective approaches in the 2018-2020 Action Plan, I will take this opportunity to renew our call for individuals, organizations and governments to join the commitment we made in Sendai called the 'One Billion Coalition for Resilience'. This new partnership model is bringing together governments, private sector, academia, CBOs and diverse actors to deliver practical initiatives that enhance personal, household or community resilience.

Honourable Chair,

Another concern is that vulnerable and at-risk groups that are hit hardest, many of whom are women and girls, are not included in the decision-making process. But an ambitious agenda like disaster risk reduction, which is both multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary, will not move without a leadership that involve all.

Female leadership is crucial in building resilient communities, and women are eager to shoulder responsibility, as noted by the Bolormaa Nordov, Secretary General of Mongolian Red Cross Society, in a Thomson Reuters op-ed on 26 June.

The Red Cross Red Crescent is committed to work with partners throughout the region, advocating to governments to better integrate protection, gender and inclusion measures in disaster law frameworks to prevent and reduce the risks in disaster.

Still, I do cherish this impatience, as I also do with the youth, often described as leaders of tomorrow. The youth composes a great number of our Red Cross Red

Crescent volunteers, and their role as agents of behavioural change in their communities must be elevated already today. I am proud to see them as genuine participants in the AMCDRR 2018.

Finally, our common knowledge is a source of inspiration to action and will chart the way forward to build resilience and reduce disaster risk across the Asia region. To find out more find out more about how we have been working with communities in Asia Pacific these past two years, I recommend our evidenced based case studies “What Works at Local Level”, prepared for the 2018 AMCDRR. It is available in our Red Cross both or through any of your Red Cross counterparts.

Thank you.