



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

Characteristics of a Well Prepared National Society for Situations of Disaster¹ and Conflict²

(WPNS Checklist (2001) *adapted* to integrate the ICRC Safer Access Framework)

Goal: National Societies are well-prepared to respond to disaster and conflict situations

Strengthened preparedness capacity of National Societies will help them to prevent hazards turning into disasters, wherever possible, and to respond to and cope with the effects of both disasters and conflicts in a timely and effective manner, reducing the impact of these events on vulnerable communities.

1) Emergency³ preparedness, policy, plans and laws

1.1) A well-prepared National Society ensures that Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement policies and guidelines are reflected in its emergency preparedness plans and are adhered to⁴.

1.2) It has emergency response security guidelines for staff and volunteers which is context specific and supported by management systems and training programmes.

1.3) Its governing board has a disaster committee that oversees the National Society's policy/plan development and implementation.

1.4) It has a National Society emergency preparedness policy that reflects its role in full compliance of its legal base and by-laws.

1.5) It has systems and relevant trainings that reinforce an appropriate standard of personal conduct and behaviour that reflects a positive image of the National Society, the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief (CoC), Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Statement, the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC Movement) and policies.

1.6) It actively strives to adhere to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE).

1.7) It uses the 'Safer Access' model for conflict preparedness.

1.8) It has a department and/or a focal point at headquarters level responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness and response activities.

1.9) It has a clearly defined role in emergency preparedness, response, humanitarian assistance and protection. This role is recognized by the government.

1.10) It has a mandate in the Government's national emergency plan which includes the coordination of international disaster response.

1.11) It is represented and active in the national and local coordinating body for disasters and conflicts, while adapting its relationship with the Government when in conflict⁵situations.

1.12) It has structures, systems and procedures in place that enable it to respond efficiently and

effectively in situations of disasters and conflicts according to its defined role and responsibilities in the plan.

1.13) It has positioned itself in time of non-disaster or conflict situation to be viewed by all actual or potential internal/external stakeholders and beneficiaries as a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian agency. Further, the National Society is able and willing to provide service throughout the country, to those in need irrespective of their religious beliefs, political opinion(s) or ethnicity.

1.14) It has an appropriate level of actual and perceived independence from government (and other potential parties in a conflict), while still being auxiliary to the government.

1.15) It has updated records and information related to situations of disaster and conflict especially when it has been involved in emergency response.

2) Damage, Needs, Hazard/Risk/Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment

2.1) A well-prepared National Society has the system and competencies to carry out and utilize damage, needs, hazard/risk/vulnerability and capacity assessment(s).

2.2) It focuses on and prioritizes its emergency preparedness activities through an ongoing process of various assessment and risk analysis tools such as vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA), better programme initiative (BPI), project planning process (PPP), well-prepared national society (WPNS), GIS/risk maps, etc.

3) Coordination

3.1) A well-prepared National Society coordinates with other organizations and agencies active in preparedness, response, coordinating activities, resource sharing, information and expertise⁶.

3.2) Its emergency preparedness and response structures are linked to and a part of regional and international disaster response mechanisms such as regional disaster response teams/units, early emergency response units, field assessment and coordination teams and tracing.

3.3) It cooperates and coordinates with the International Federation, ICRC and other National



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Societies to ensure effective preparedness and response mechanisms are in place to deal with situations of disaster and conflict as outlined in the Seville Agreement (1997).

4) Information and Report Management

4.1) A well-prepared National Society has access to and utilizes relevant data and information on hazards and risks, including early warning systems, the International Federation's DMIS website and GIS mapping data.

4.2) It has someone on call 24 hours a day to receive notification of a disaster and to activate disaster response procedures.

4.3) It has standard operating procedures in place to notify the International Federation if a disaster is of international scale.

4.4) It regularly monitors, reviews and evaluates the quality and impact of its emergency preparedness and response work carrying out reviews at various stages to assess National Society performance, making adjustments to the plans and activities in order to reflect the lessons learned.

4.5) It has effective information/communication procedures in place to ensure effective coordination between preparedness and response for disaster/conflict and other National Society programmes such as health, internally displaced people, refugee and migration, restoring family links (RFL) and relief.

5) Resource and response mobilization

5.1) A well-prepared National Society has effective disaster management capacities at branch/chapter levels.

5.2) It recruits staff and volunteers from communities and vulnerable groups. It is independent of state and other affiliations.

5.3) It has internal training programmes related to situations of disasters and conflict.

5.4) The systems and training in place reinforce appropriate standards of personal conduct and the positive image the National Society wants to portray.

5.5) It has sufficient numbers of trained staff/volunteers to carry out its mandate.

5.6) It has personnel with sufficient skills and knowledge⁷ necessary to fulfil its mandate, role and responsibilities in responding to both situations of disaster and conflict. The staff and volunteers are tested annually.

5.7) It has well-trained, organized and equipped response teams and leaders able to meet the needs of those affected, rapidly and efficiently in accordance with Movement policy.

5.8) A well-prepared National Society has an emergency fund in place. It also has a fund-raising plan to ensure continued financing of long-term programmes/projects.

5.9) It has systems in place for record keeping, reporting and auditing for financial accountability.

5.10) It has adequate logistics, procurement, management systems and disaster response material capacity in accordance with Movement policy.

5.11) It has supply agreements in place.

5.12) It has emergency stocks pre-positioned in strategic areas, with appropriate replenishment and warehouse management plans to ensure rapid response to emergency situations.

5.13) It has established internal communications and telecommunications systems that facilitate effective communication during disasters and conflicts.

6) Community-based disaster preparedness, mitigation and disaster risk reduction

6.1) A well-prepared National Society ensures the active participation of the local population in the design and planning of community-based activities⁸, ensuring that programmes appropriately reflect community needs and strengthen existing local coping strategies.

6.2) It raises awareness of disaster/conflict risks, hazards and preparedness measures through public education.

6.3) It ensures that volunteers are a part of and integrated into branch/chapter community disaster awareness/education programmes. Further, it ensures that disaster education programmes are targeted at groups in high-risk areas.

7) Advocacy

7.1) A well-prepared National Society in situations of conflict, it will advocate in the appropriate diplomatic manner, in close cooperation with ICRC, government and other stakeholders for measures, which assist and protect those affected by the conflict.

7.2) A well-prepared National Society advocates where necessary with government, donors and other stakeholders for mitigation and emergency preparedness measures, ensuring that all key stakeholders are aware of the need for emergency preparedness interventions before, during and post-disasters/conflicts.

7.3) It has tools for risk management including mechanisms to ensure compliance with and applicable to national and international laws in place.



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Explanatory Notes

¹Disaster(s) refers to natural events (non-conflict related) that affect populations causing injury, loss of life and livelihood(s).

²Conflict(s) refers to international armed conflict, internal disturbance, tension or strife as defined in various ICRC documents and in reference to the Geneva Conventions.

³Emergency refers to both natural disaster(s) and conflict(s).

⁴As indicated in the further reading list.

⁵As required to ensure adherence to the Fundamental Principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

⁶Whilst ensuring it respects the Minimum Elements to be included in Operational Agreements between Movement components and their External Operating Partners as well as the Fundamental Principles and other Movement policies and guidelines.

⁷Skills and knowledge may include:

Relief Management; first aid and evacuation; RFL; disaster planning; context analysis skills; understanding types of conflict and their respective characteristics; the seven pillars to gain and maintain Safer Access; mandate and legal base of the National Society in responding to disasters and conflict; risk analysis; basic knowledge of IHL and its use as a tool in conflict response; Movement policies and guidelines relating to situations of disaster and conflict; Psychological health preparedness to act in time of conflict and/or disaster; and guidelines in protection and advocacy.

⁸Community-based activities are not linked to conflict preparedness.

Further Reading:

- *Emergency Response Policy*, IFRC, November 1997
- *Regulations on the use of the emblem of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent by the National Societies*, ICRC, Geneva, July-August 1992
- *Food Security and Nutrition Policy*, IFRC, October 2003
- *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*, ICRC, 1996, 2nd ed.

- *Statutes and Rules of Procedures of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*, October 1986
- *Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Disaster Relief*, 1995
- *'Movement Action in Favour of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons'*, Report on the implementation of resolution 4 of the 2001 Council of Delegates - Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Geneva, 30 November - 2 December 2003, Document prepared by ICRC and IFRC
- Policy and Cooperation within the Movement : extract from ICRC Annual Report 2003, *'Minimum elements for agreements between components of the Movement and outside operational partners'* (sub-heading within a chapter), ICRC, 2004
- *Restoring Family Links, a guide for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*
- *Standard Operating Procedures in case of natural/manmade disasters*
- *Strategy 2010*, IFRC, 1999
- *The Sphere Project: humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response, 2000 Handbook for Delegates*, IFRC, 19989
- Meyer, M. Some, *Reflections on the National Society auxiliary role and relations with governments*, 1999
- *Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*", adopted by the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross at Geneva in October 1986
- *Strategic Work Plan Progress report: implementation by National Societies*, 1996
- *Protecting Refugees: A Field Guide for NGOs*, a joint NGO-UNHCR publication
- *Guiding principles on the internal displacement*, OCHA, 2000
- *Goal 3 of the Agenda for Humanitarian Action adopted by the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent*, Geneva, December 2003
- *International disaster response laws, rules and principles (IDRL) Programme Fact Sheets*, www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/idrl
- *International disaster response laws, principles and practice: reflections, prospects and challenges*, IFRC, Geneva, 2003