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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

IFRC Regional Office for Europe | HD and Communications Playbook

1 June 2025

About this document:

This is a guidance document only. It is one of a series of Humanitarian Diplomacy (HD) and Communications "playbooks" primarily intended to support IFRC staff and leadership, but also National Societies (as needed), to communicate a strong humanitarian case under IFRC's thematic influencing priorities.

*The playbooks can be used to promote and reinforce our messaging and brand in the region ("**one message many messengers"**) and to guide IFRC network engagement with governments, institutions, media, and other key stakeholders. Of course, the content will need to be locally contextualised and supported by strong data (evidence) to be relevant to the specific needs and challenges of the respective National Society. IFRC Is available to support this work.*

This document will be reviewed periodically (six-monthly minimum). It should be read in conjunction with the regional Climate Action Roadmap 2025 as well as other key resources listed in the Annexes..

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1. IFRC approach to climate and environmental crises

Global approach

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has identified the climate crisis and environmental degradation as a critical humanitarian priority for the coming decade.[1] The IFRC Strategy 2030 identifies climate and environmental crises as one of the biggest global challenges of our time and lays out our priorities in addressing these crises, with a focus on reducing their current and future humanitarian impacts and supporting people to thrive in spite of it. These priorities are translated into global goals in the IFRC Plan and Budget 2021-2025. Externally, they align with global, multilateral frameworks including: the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals (See Annex 1).

IFRC climate action is part of the disaster risk management continuum – helping communities anticipate, prepare for and adapt to climate change, responding to its humanitarian impacts, and supporting people to recover faster from crises while building resilience for the future. Areas of expertise include disaster law, climate-smart disaster risk reduction and anticipatory action. This work is strongly supported by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, which provides knowledge and advice on climate science and climate-smart practices to the entire IFRC network.

Well placed to support communities, and driven by principles for locally led adaptation, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies provide a bridge between the people most at risk and the national authorities in their respective contexts. They are well positioned to influence and contribute to national climate legislation and action plans.

Regional approach

The Tbilisi Commitments of the European Regional Conference 2022 reflect the dedication of National Societies in Europe and Central Asia to lead on and address the climate and environmental crises with urgency and at scale.

To reaffirm these commitments and to support National Societies in scaling up their climate and environmental action efforts and capacities, the IFRC network developed the Regional Climate Action Roadmap 2025.[2] The Roadmap lays out different climate action pathways, which show how National Societies can turn their commitments into prioritized actions. It inspires collaboration and peer-to-peer exchange and rationalizes the necessary investment to scale up climate action in the region. National Societies can commit to different targets and milestones, depending on their level of ambition, identified priorities, capacities and resources. The pathways of a National Society can evolve and expand over time, can build on each other and are not mutually exclusive.

[1] 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, 2019, Commission Report on Shifting Vulnerabilities
[2] The roadmap was co-created by 30 National Societies, with the IFRC Regional Office for Europe and its delegations, the Climate Centre and the Red Cross EU Office.

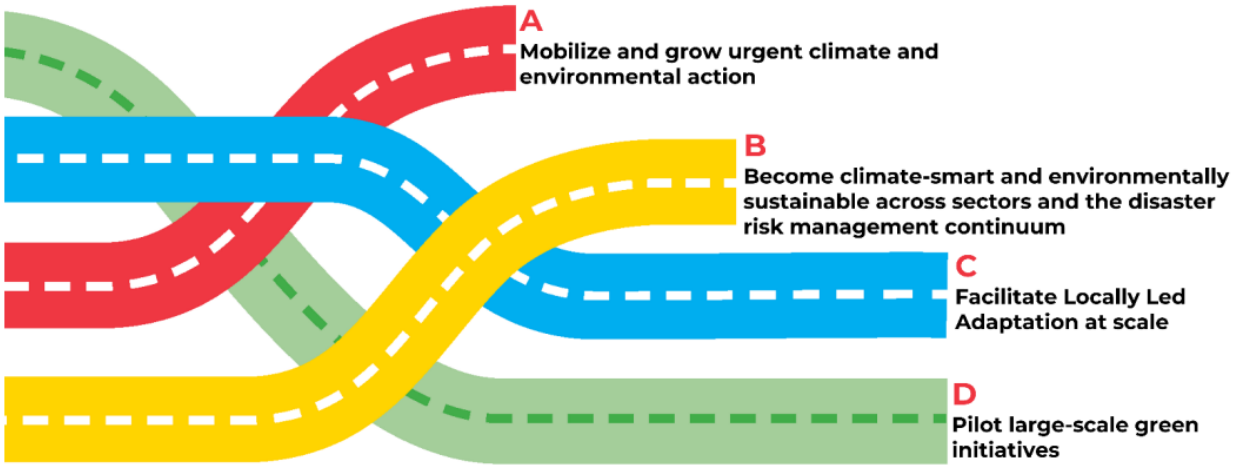

Figure 1: Climate pathways - Regional Climate Action Roadmap

IFRC has established a *Community of Practice* for the Climate Action Roadmap, where we are collecting and consolidating practical examples of the wide range of activities in progress by National Societies.

2. Regional context and needs

Europe and Central Asia are facing a stark reality of climate and weather extremes, which are striking more often and with greater intensity than ever before – and this is only expected to accelerate. In recent years, climate-related hazards in the region have included wildfires, heatwaves, cold waves, droughts and floods. Home to some of the world's oldest populations[3], the region is expected to face more heat-related deaths, health impacts, loss of livelihoods, biodiversity and ecosystems, and flood damage to homes, infrastructure and industries.[4][5] In addition, continued environmental degradation impacts natural resources including food, water and clean air.

The biggest climate impact drivers for Europe and Central Asia are **extreme heat** and wildfires, drought, water scarcity, as well as **extreme precipitation** with associated flooding, **sea level rise** and glacier melt

Key trends and resources

HEAT:	• Over the past decades, Europe has faced more frequent and severe heatwaves. Europe is the fastest warming of all the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) regions, warming twice as fast as the global average since the 1980s.[6] Central Asia, too, has warmed more than the global average.

[3] UN World Social Report 2023: Leaving no one behind in an ageing world
[4] IPCC, 2021: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis.* Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
[5] IPCC, 2022: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
[6] WMO: State of the Climate in Europe 2022

	• Over the next four decades, regardless of emissions scenarios, we expect that Europe and Central Asia will continue to experience increases in temperatures – resulting in more frequent and extreme heat extremes and heat waves, and less frequent cold extremes.
PRECIPITATION:	• In northern Europe, long term average rainfall is expected to increase. • In southern Europe, cycles of wetter seasons and drier seasons will continue. However, we expect that long term average rainfall will decline - particularly in the Iberian Peninsula and Mediterranean. • In the whole of Europe, snow cover extent and snow season duration will continue to decrease (also related to glacier melt). • In Central Asia, ongoing changes in rainfall are expected, with significant variation and uncertainty across the region. Projections suggest overall increasing rainfall is possible, though summer rainfall may decrease and winter rainfall may increase. • Furthermore, in Central Asia annual maximum snowfall is expected to continue to reduce.
SEA LEVEL RISE & GLACIER MELT:	• In both Europe and Central Asia observed glacier and permafrost melt is projected to continue and accelerate. In Central Asia, a third of glacial areas has already been lost since 1930.[7] Glacier melt is a major contributor to water and habitat loss and can impact water cycles, causing earlier onset of spring flows and higher risk of summer drought. • Globally, sea levels are projected to rise another 20-30 centimetres by 2050, posing a significant threat to coastal communities and infrastructure in Europe and Central Asia.

NOTE: While heat extremes and floods are critical climate impact drivers common across the whole Europe Region, the reality is more nuanced: climate impacts and risks vary across and within sub-regions, coastal and mountainous areas, countries, cities, sectors and societal groups.

See **regional and country factsheets** from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)[8] and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre.

Prominent issues facing Europe and Central Asia:

1. **Climate and environment risks already pose major challenges to Europe and Central Asia, and these will intensify in the future.**

[7] RCRC Climate Centre, Regional level climate fact sheet: Central Asia
[8] The IPCC is the United Nations body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation. The Sixth Assessment Report (2022) assesses the impacts of climate change, looking at ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels.

Hazards	Europe	Central Asia
Heat	• 2023 highest number of days with extreme heat stress on record. • Record temperatures during April 2023 in the Western Mediterranean were 100 times more likely to occur due to climate change.[9] • 2023 warmest marine heatwave in the Northeastern Atlantic on record (June), with marine heatwaves occurring all summer.	• 2023 above average temperatures (second highest mean temperature on record compared to 1991-2020 average). Record warm year in Kazakhstan.[10] • 2024 extreme temperatures and reduced rainfall (water scarcity) cause concern relating to heatwaves, drought and wildfire.[11]
Floods, landslides, mudslides	• 2023 severe floods in the Mediterranean during September 2023, caused by heavy rain from storm Daniel, were up to 10 times more likely to occur and up to 40% more intense due to climate change.[12] • 2024 severe flooding in Central Europe, including Poland, Czechia, Austria, Romania, Hungary, Germany and Slovakia, following exceptionally heavy rainfall over a number of days. The likelihood of such short-term, intense rainfall in this region has doubled and become 10% more intense since the pre-industrial area.[13]	• 2024 Spring, severe flooding caused by heavy rainfall and rapid snowmelt in Russia and Kazakhstan, inundated homes and caused displacement. Meanwhile landslides, mudslides, floods and flash floods in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan resulted in casualties, displacement and severe damage.[14]
Drought	• 2024 climate change a key driver of prolonged extreme drought conditions experienced in Sicily and Sardinia in Summer.[15]	
Wildfire	• 2023 largest wildfire on record in the EU (Greece), spanning around 96,000 hectares - an area larger than New York City.[16] • 2024 widespread wildfires in Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, North-	

[9] Similar research was done in 2024 for heatwaves in July in the Mediterranean. Attribution research also suggests that it would have been virtually impossible for the maximum heat during the Jul-2023 heatwaves in Southern Europe to occur without climate change.
[10] WMO, State of the Climate in Asia 2023
[11] EU Global Drought Overview September 2024
[12] World Weather Attribution report (2023), *Interplay of climate change-exacerbated rainfall, exposure and vulnerability led to widespread impacts in the Mediterranean region*
[13] World Weather Attribution report (2024), *Climate change and high exposure increased costs and disruption to lives and livelihoods from flooding associated with exceptionally heavy rainfall in Central Europe*
[14] EU Global Drought Overview September 2024
[15] The likelihood of drought has increased by 50% due to climate change. The increase in drought severity is primarily driven by increase in extreme temperatures due to climate change. World Weather Attribution report (2024), *Climate change key driver of extreme drought in water scarce Sicily and Sardinia*
[16] WMO & Copernicus Climate Change Service, European State of the Climate Report 2023

Hazards	Europe	Central Asia
	Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and Slovenia in July, caused by heatwaves.[17]	
Rainfall & river flows	• 2023 highest December river flows on record; indicated as 'exceptionally high' in almost a quarter of the European river network. • 2024 extreme downpour (late October) in southeastern Spain. Daily rainfall extremes have increased in likelihood and intensity due to climate change.[18]	• 2023 substantially less than normal precipitation in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan (but unusually high precipitation totals in the Kazakh Steppe).
Snowmelt		• 2023 lower than average snow extent in Northern Central Asia.

2. Climate and environmental crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities and stretch our existing humanitarian capacities.

The impacts of the climate crisis are felt disproportionally by the most vulnerable and marginalized groups among women, men, girls and boys, including older persons and people on the move. People living experiencing poverty and those practising traditional livelihoods, like agriculture, are particularly exposed and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These groups often also face barriers adapting to climate risks, due to institutional barriers and a lack of financial resources.[19]

More specifically, since women constitute the majority of poor communities in the European Union, they are amongst the worst affected by climate change.[20] They are considered to be highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihoods, particularly in rural areas where the effects of climate change and climate hazards have unequal impacts.[21]

3. Multiple, interconnected hazards and their impacts generate new, cascading and compounding risks and vulnerabilities.

The interactions between multiple hazards (multi-hazards) and their impacts, including non-climate related hazards, exacerbate existing underlying vulnerabilities, generate new vulnerabilities and worsen differential human vulnerabilities. This results in compounding overall risk and cascading risks across systems, sectors and boundaries. For example, mega-

[17] World Weather Attribution (2024), Deadly Mediterranean heatwave would not have occurred without human induced climate change – World Weather Attribution
[18] World Weather Attribution (2024*), Extreme downpours increasing in southeastern Spain as fossil fuel emissions heat the climate*
[19] *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability (Europe chapter)*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
[20] EQUINET, 2024, *Gender Equality and Climate Change Mitigation: How Can the Two Go Hand in Hand?*
[21] European Greens, On women's rights, gender and climate change in Europe (EPG resolution adopted at the Copenhagen Conference 2022)

droughts can lead to water and food insecurity, disruptions to critical infrastructure, and threats to financial markets and stability.

Climate and health: Climate hazards and climatic conditions change and affect human health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies. All aspects of health are affected by climate change, from clean air, water and soil to food systems and livelihoods.[22] The wide-ranging health and livelihood impacts of the climate crisis, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, population movement and the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, have resulted in increased vulnerabilities, which in turn compound people's overall risk to climate change in the Europe Region.[23]

Climate and migration: The impacts of climate change are among multiple stressors influencing migration and displacement, generally interacting with other factors, such as armed conflict, political and economic instability, lack of employment opportunities, poverty, inequalities and human rights violations. As adaptation becomes more challenging, especially in places of high exposure and low adaptative capacities, this will continue to grow. At present, most displacement associated with climate and weather-related hazards takes place *within* countries[24]. Climate related displacement and migration is complex and different across countries and communities. It leads to diverse humanitarian needs and can perpetuate vulnerability and undermine resilience. In some situations, people cannot move out of harm's way. Those experiencing the most vulnerability (and most needing support) are people trapped or left behind.

4. European and Central Asian countries are ill-prepared to address the climate and environmental crises, and the increasing risks they pose to communities.

The 2024 European Climate Risk Assessment by the European Environmental Agency states that Europe is not prepared to cope or address the changing climate risks in the region – such as risks to energy and food security, ecosystems, infrastructure, water resources, financial stability and people's health.[25] Whilst countries in Europe have made significant steps at state level to understand climate risks and how to prepare for them, their assessment is that *societal preparedness* is still too low, as policy implementation is lagging substantially behind the quickly-increasing risk levels in Europe.[26] Significant barriers and challenges remain for implementing adaptation policies, such as financial, technical and human capacities. In many countries, the lack of policy coherence and clear responsibilities, added to complex coordination systems, hinder adaptation efforts.[27]

In Central Asia, a lack of research into the risks that climate change poses for specific regions may hinder these countries from taking the right steps to adapt to a changing climate.

[22] WHO Climate Change impacts on health
[23] IPCC, 2022, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
[24] Clement et al. 2021; Rigaud et al. 2018, Groundswell [Parts 1 & 2]: Acting on Internal Climate Migration, Washington, DC: World Bank, cited in World Bank, *World Development Report 2023*, pp2-3.
[25] European Environment Agency, 2024, *Europe is not prepared for rapidly growing climate risks*
[26] European Environment Agency, 2024, *European Climate Risk Assessment*
[27] European Environment Agency, 2023, *Is Europe on track towards climate resilience? Status of reported national adaptation actions in 2023*

"Limited knowledge about climate change impacts and consequences may result in greater than necessary human, environmental, and economic costs for the region."[28]

3. Our messages

IFRC's 10 topline asks:

Focus on the most vulnerable in climate adaptation.

i. Climate change hits the most vulnerable hardest—older people, women, migrants, rural communities, and those living in poverty face the greatest risks from heatwaves, floods, and wildfires across Europe. Yet, they are often left out of climate planning.

ii. The IFRC network work directly with vulnerable communities to ensure they are informed, included, and prepared, providing risk awareness, preparedness activities, and tailored support to meet local needs.

Increase finance for locally-led adaptation and resilience.

iii. Local communities know best how to adapt, but they struggle to access the funding they need. In Europe and Central Asia, complex procedures and insufficient local-level finance slow efforts to tackle extreme heat, water shortages, and displacement.

iv. The IFRC network supports locally driven solutions with community-based volunteers, ensuring funding reaches the people who need it most to implement timely and effective adaptation projects.

Promote coherence across humanitarian, development, environment, and climate approaches.

v. Effective climate action requires joined-up planning across sectors. Yet, in Europe, fragmented policies and slow implementation leave communities exposed to multiple, overlapping risks like floods, droughts, and displacement.

vi. The Red Cross and Red Crescent help governments align climate, disaster, and development plans, strengthen early warning systems, and turn global commitments into local action that protects communities.

Enable more anticipatory and early action.

vii. Climate disasters are becoming more frequent and severe. While early warnings exist, they often fail to reach communities in time—especially for rapid events like floods or slow-moving threats like droughts.

viii. The IFRC ensures early warnings lead to early action, with National Societies implementing life-saving protocols for heatwaves, floods, and cold spells that protect lives and livelihoods.

Promote environmental sustainability within the humanitarian sector

ix. As climate-related disasters increase in Europe, the need for greener humanitarian responses is urgent.

[28] Central Asian Survey 2023, A void in Central Asia research: climate change, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp 1–20.

x. The IFRC is greening its operations through the Green Response Framework, focusing on sustainable logistics, waste reduction, and low-carbon solutions to reduce emissions and protect natural resources.

More detailed messaging specific to the regional context and needs (articulated in section 2: regional context and needs) are as follows:

1. Climate and environment risks already pose major challenges to Europe and Central Asia, and these will intensify in the future.

Objective: Ensure the urgency of climate and environmental crises in Europe and Central Asia is widely understood and that immediate action is taken.

Key messages:

1.1. We must urgently scale up climate adaptation action - including locally led approaches and strengthening local capacities - and build preparedness and resilience.
1.2. Many risks for human health and well-being could be reduced and some potentially avoided with proactive, timely and effective adaptation.
1.3. Ambitious and urgent climate mitigation efforts are required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to prevent worsening humanitarian impacts.

Calls to action:

Governments and institutions:

1.4. Act urgently to address the (humanitarian) impacts of the climate crisis.
1.5. Endorse and implement commitments under COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health which highlights the severe health implications of climate change [29].
1.6. Endorse and implement commitments under COP29 Declaration on Water and Climate Action, in recognition of the climate impacts being experienced worldwide through floods, droughts, glacier mass loss, landslides, degraded water quality, water scarcity and changing water availability.[30]
1.7. Pursue steep and immediate emissions reductions to keep below the 1.5°C limit. This is the clearest way to prevent further rising humanitarian impacts and wider climate-related losses and damages.

Humanitarian organizations:

1.8. Promote environmental sustainability within the humanitarian sector by protecting the environment and reducing emissions from humanitarian operations.

2. Climate and environmental crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, and stretch our existing humanitarian capacities.

Objective: Ensure the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis are evidenced and recognized, prompting urgent action by a wide array of actors.

Messages:

[29] COP28 Declaration on climate and health
[30] COP29 Declaration on Water for Climate Action

2.1. Climate change is contributing to humanitarian crises (IPCC, 2022).
2.2. Humanitarian impacts will continue to escalate without steep and immediate cuts to greenhouse gas emissions and investment in adaptation (IPCC, 2023).
2.3. Climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation/pollution are increasing the vulnerability of the people already experiencing the most disadvantage. The world's poorest and most marginalised people are disproportionately affected and suffering. These include older people, women, girls, people living with disabilities and outdoor workers.
2.4. If urgent action to tackle climate change is not taken, the number of people in need of international humanitarian assistance due to climate change could double by 2050 – also leading to a steep rise in the funding that is needed for this aid (IFRC, 2019).

Calls to action:

Governments and institutions:

2.5. Acknowledge the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis and increase immediate support for the most vulnerable people, countries and communities, including capacity strengthening, technical support and finance.
2.6. Put people at the centre of defining and measuring success; the number of lives saved, people protected, livelihoods and dignity restored from climate-related events.

3. Multiple, interconnected hazards and their impacts generate new, cascading and compounding risks and vulnerabilities.

Objective: Apply an integrated approach to the interactions of various hazards and vulnerabilities, which minimises their potentially compounding effects.

Messages:

3.1. Climate-driven impacts do not appear in isolation. These impacts are exacerbated by compounding risks and issues such as poverty, inequality, degradation of natural resources, urbanization, and marginalization.
3.2. The climate crisis is one of the greatest threats to public health. Climate change is impacting people's physical and mental health, and access to water across the world. Climate change multiplies existing health vulnerabilities, including limited access to safe water, sanitation, food security, and education (IPCC 2023).
3.3. A change towards improving the resilience of those affected by compounding, repeated and protracted crises is needed – including through working with nature.
3.4. Heat and heatwaves are one of the most imminent threats associated with climate change and pose serious health risks for everyone, particularly those living in urban areas (where heatwave intensity and associated risks are increased) and people experiencing vulnerability including older persons, pregnant women and children.

Calls to action:

Governments:

3.5. Recent crises, like COVID-19 and climate disasters, have shown that we must step up investment in community-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness to make communities safer and more resilient.

3.6. Strengthen national planning on health, water and climate change including through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)/ National Adaptation Plans (NAPs),[31] enhance coordination, cooperation and action across government and with local authorities and districts.
3.7. Strengthen climate resilient health systems investing in primary health care, WASH systems and community level preparedness to respond to evolving climate risks.
3.8. Climate mobility and impartial assistance must be considered in relevant national and regional laws and policies relating to disaster management, climate adaptation, risk reduction and development.
3.9. We must work towards solutions for displaced people, helping people recover in the aftermath of disasters and providing the longer-term support needed to rebuild and sustainably integrate into the places they settle.

4. European and Central Asian countries are ill-prepared to address the climate and environmental crises, and the increasing risks they pose to communities.

Objective: Prioritise and scale up anticipatory action and locally led climate action to prevent climate-related hazards from becoming disasters and to save lives and livelihoods.

Messages:

4.1. Locally led climate action recognises the need to put local actors and communities at the heart of decision making, including across the full disaster continuum: preparedness, response, resilience, recovery, rehabilitation, as well as for longer-term locally led adaptation.
4.2. Despite communities being at the frontline of the climate crisis, local communities are rarely leading the design and implementation of urgent climate action needed to increase climate resilience and adaptative capacity.
4.3. Locally led climate action can be extremely effective. Communities and local actors know the vulnerabilities, needs and capacities at the local level. Investments in community-based climate action and disaster risk reduction are therefore highly cost effective in terms of mitigating losses and reconstruction costs and can have a profound impact when disasters strike in terms of saving lives and protecting livelihoods.
4.4. 'Early warning and early action' – also known as anticipatory action – is needed to save lives and livelihoods. This action enables funds to be rapidly used ahead of disasters and can be integrated into wider systems and partnerships to strengthen adaptative capacity and resilience of communities.
4.5. A particular focus on local community capacity and preparedness is needed to ensure that early warnings translate into early action at community level.

Calls to action:

Governments and institutions:

[31] Nationally determined contributions (NDC) are key to the achievement of the Paris Agreement's long-term targets and define domestic mitigation and emissions reduction measures. The National Adaptation Plans (NAP) process seeks to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and strategies, informed by the latest climate science to address vulnerabilities. These processes can provide avenues for open dialogue to frame NS priorities towards climate and environmental action to align agendas and address humanitarian needs and impacts.

4.6. Adopt and implement the principles for locally led adaptation action. Recognize the role of local communities and local actors in climate policies, plans and programmes and ensure that the most vulnerable people and those in crises (especially women, children and other vulnerable groups) are reached and included in global, national and local decisions and plans (including in NDCs and NAPs) to meet their needs, particularly about how climate finance is accessed and channelled.

4.7. Strengthen partnerships, coordination, coherence, and technical assistance to enable more joined-up action between climate, development, and humanitarian activities, across short to longer timescales to build resilience to climate related risks and disasters. This should include seeking to strengthen layered financing approaches with the private sector and from innovative sources to leverage support to scale adaptation action.

4.8. Ensure funds reach the local level. Invest in locally led climate action and enable local actors to access funding to harness the expertise of affected people, invest in local capabilities, scale up decentralized and devolved financing. Streamline reporting and enable flexible and unearmarked financing that suits the local context.

4.9. Enable more anticipatory action to reduce the impacts of rapid and slow-onset climate shocks and stressors. Invest in early warnings and other systems for early action at the local level.

4.10. Integrate and strengthen anticipatory action in national climate frameworks (e.g. NDCs, NAPs), disaster risk management, development strategies, policies and plans.

4. Our resources (by topic/theme)

Note: Please contact IFRC Europe for access to links not publicly accessible:

BY TOPIC	KEY RESOURCES
COP28	Thematic key messages - annex to COP28 messaging Topics: *Climate & Environment Charter*, displacement and mobility, DRR and preparedness, early warning and anticipatory action, food security and livelihoods, fragile crisis and conflict, health, heatwaves, housing and urban contexts, nature-based solutions, social protection, water security and climate, women and the climate crisis, youth.
COP29	Synopsis of COP29 outcomes Internal Thematic key messages for COP29 COP 29 | Trello (Comms assets) Topics: Health and wellbeing, investment in people and communities (locally-led climate action), getting ahead of disasters (scaling up early action), comprehensive risk management.
Climate and migration	Migration and Displacement, HD/Comms Playbook**:** Regional resource identifying climate related mobility an emerging concern. Includes key messages and calls to action on climate related displacement (objective: to scale up support to persons at risk of displacement related to disasters and climate change).
Climate and health	Reducing the Health and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Impacts of Climate Change (2021): IFRC resource outlining the adverse

BY TOPIC	KEY RESOURCES
	impacts of climate change on human health and seeking to unpack the second pillar of the Movement Ambitions to Address the Climate Crisis, focusing on reducing the health impacts of climate change.
	Under the weather: Stories from communities on the frontline of climate and health adaptation (2024): Norwegian Red Cross and RCRC Climate Centre publication, which shares first-hand accounts of communities facing the health impacts of a changing climate.
	The 2024 report of the *Lancet* Countdown on health and climate change: facing record-breaking threats from delayed action Romanello, Marina et al. The Lancet, Volume 404, Issue 10465, 1847 – 1896.
Climate and CEA	CEA Guide and Toolkit Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Platform The success of climate adaptation and resilience efforts hinges on ensuring that society, community and individuals change their behaviour and take action to adapt and protect themselves and the environment from the impacts of climate change. Often people underestimate or struggle to translate knowledge and perceptions into action. Promoting climate safe behaviours requires understanding of public perceptions about the climate risks they face. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) practices can help in co-designing adaptation priorities, and building trust and ownership over the adaptation solutions and strategies.
Heatwaves	Comms Key Messages: Heatwaves in Europe and Central Asia (May 2025)
	Heatwave guide for cities (2019) offers urban planners and city authorities an authoritative summary of the actions they can take to reduce the danger of heatwaves
	#BeatTheHeat | Trello**:** Communications assets that support National Societies in responding to and communicating about heatwaves. It includes helpful resources and action kits, talking points, social media assets, among others.
Locally led adaptation	The importance of scaling up locally led action (2024): IFRC Policy brief on the importance of scaling up locally led adaptation and explanation of the steps to get there.
	Locally led adaptation – Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre: Climate Centre webpage with explanation of locally led adaptation and links to practical tools, partners and related topics.
Weather hazards	Learn about different hazards: IFRC webpages on different weather-related hazards and how to prepare for each.
Green response	Green response: IFRC webpage outlining the "green response" – what, why and how.

5. Our programming

IFRC's key programmes and initiatives to addressing climate and environmental crises are as follows:

- **Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations:** The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations was launched in 2021 and provides a framework for action, setting out seven voluntary commitments to guide the humanitarian sector in addressing these crises. It was developed by the ICRC, IFRC and a range of representatives from the humanitarian sector. More than 470 organizations have signed the Charter to date, including IFRC and 34 NSs from the Europe Region.

  Intended to galvanize and steer collective action, the Charter sends a clear signal that humanitarian organizations have a key role to play in addressing these crises while increasing our own environmental sustainability.

- **Climate Action Journey:** The climate action journey methodology is a practical tool, which encourages National Societies to adopt an integrated approach to scaling up their climate action and ambitions.

  The journey proposes different pathways for National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, depending on their ambition, capacities and resources. The pathways range from climate awareness, through to climate-smart programming and operations, and scaling up locally led climate action and adaptation. It aligns to the Regional Climate Action Roadmap.

  To date, nine NSs from the Europe Region have started using this methodology or will start in the near future.

- **Climate Champions Initiative:** The Climate Champions initiative was launched in July 2023. It is an 18-month programme supporting 20 National Societies globally to: initiate their climate action journey, scale-up climate programming, enhance their profile as a "partner of choice" to their government on climate humanitarian action, and strengthen their climate related diplomacy.

  From the Europe region, five National Societies are currently participating in this initiative, namely: Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain. Several other National Societies from the region are involved as partners. The programme will likely extend into 2025 and welcome new champion participants.

- **EW4All Initiative:** The Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative was initiated by the United Nations and aims to ensure universal protection from hazardous weather, water, or climate events through life-saving early warning systems by the end of 2027. It is doing this by bringing together UN agencies, governments, civil society and development partners across the public and private sectors to enhance collaboration and accelerated action aimed at addressing gaps and delivering people-centered, end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems.

  The Initiative consists of four pillars: 1. disaster risk knowledge, 2. detection, observation, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting, 3. warning dissemination and communication, and 4. preparedness and response capabilities. The IFRC leads the fourth pillar and is involved in pillars 1 & 3.

  In the Europe Region, currently only Tajikistan is part of the initiative – although the invitation is open to all countries to join in, as long as there is strong government buy-in.

- **Global Climate Resilience Platform:** The Global Climate Resilience Platform is a multi-year initiative to significantly improve and expand the community-based climate action work of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world. Its overall goal is to increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change and climate-related disasters. The Platform's four target areas for 2027 are to: 1) increase the resilience of at least 500 million people to the impacts of climate change, 2) support at least 100 National Societies in developing and implementing climate resilience strategies and plans, 3) support meaningful participation and active leadership, and 4) raise one billion Swiss francs in global funding, which will be channeled into locally-led climate action and adaptation efforts.

6. Contacts

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Annex 1: Regional and international commitments

IFRC's priorities and advocacy relating to climate and environmental crises are aligned with the following critical commitments:

COMMITMENT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Paris Agreement	Global treaty to limit warming to 1.5°C, reduce emissions, and strengthen resilience. Countries update climate action plans (NDCs) every 5 years.
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	Aims to reduce disaster risks and losses through risk understanding, governance, investment, and preparedness.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	17 global goals promoting sustainability, with key climate-related targets on water (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), climate action (SDG 13), and ecosystem protection (SDGs 14 & 15).
EU Mission on Adaptation	Supports 150 EU regions to build climate resilience by 2030 through risk assessment and local solutions.
European Green Deal	Targets 55% emissions cuts by 2030 and net-zero by 2050, ensuring a just, sustainable economy.
EU Adaptation Strategy	Seeks a climate-resilient Europe by 2050 with smarter, faster, and coordinated adaptation efforts.
EU Preparedness Union Strategy	Aims to enhance the European Union's ability to anticipate, prevent, and respond to crises.

Annex 2: Reports and resources

TOPIC	REPORTS & RESOURCES
Data-driven reports that advocate on climate change	The cost of doing nothing: IFRC report (2019) looking into the humanitarian and monetary impact of climate-related disasters and the socioeconomic impact of climate change.
	European Climate Risk Assessment - EEA: Climate risk assessment done by the European Environmental Agency in 2024. What will the future bring when it comes to climate hazards?: Briefing by the EEA on analysis of climate hazards in the future in Europe (2021).
	Europe; (Central) Asia: WMO reports on the state of the Climate in Europe and Asia. The reports contain descriptions and analysis of climate conditions and variations, key events and impacts and a discussion of climate policy and action, focused on human health.

TOPIC	REPORTS & RESOURCES
Climate-smart programmes and operations	Guide to Climate-smart programmes and humanitarian operations: IFRC guide with the what, why and how of climate-smart programmes and operations (available in multiple languages, including English and Russian)
Early Action Protocol	Early Action Protocol / Anticipatory Pillar of DREF: IFRC webpage with general explanation of Early Action Protocols. EAP FbF Practitioner Manual: IFRC methodology for EAP development. Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF - IFRC - FedNet: FedNet overview with all templates for (s)EAP development and all published (s)EAPs.
Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (eVCA)	Enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment: IFRC platform with guidance, tools and resources on the EVCA. EVCA is a participatory process developed for communities to become more resilient through the assessment and analysis of the risks they face and the identification of actions to reduce these risks.
Public Awareness and Public Engagement (PAPE)	PAPE messages to help communities improve their knowledge of disaster risks and put in place measures to stay safe.

Annex 3: Red Cross Red Crescent statutory agreements relating to climate

Res	Meeting	Title
32IC/15/R6	32nd International Conference 2015	Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid
34IC/24/R3	34th International Conference 2024	Strengthening disaster risk governance through comprehensive legal and regulatory frameworks
32IC/15/R6	32nd International Conference 2015	Strengthening legal frameworks for disaster response, risk reduction and first aid

Res	Meeting	Title
CD/22/R1	Council of Delegates 2022	Endorsement of the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations
CD/22/R2	Council of Delegates 2022	Strengthening anticipatory action in the Movement: Our way forward
CD/22/R11	Council of Delegates 2022	Strengthening the resilience of urban communities: Our way forward

Pledge	Meeting	Title
OP340343	34th International Conference 2024	Locally Led Climate Action: A Collaborative Commitment to Climate Adaptation in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
SP330361	34th International Conference 2024	Humanitarian impact of climate change and environmental degradation
OP340432	34th International Conference 2024	Commitment To Reduce the Effects of Climate Change on Groups in Vulnerable Situations
OP340450	34th International Conference 2024	Climate Action: Steps to tackle the climate and environmental crises in the Europe region

Annex 4: Terminology glossary

The following glossary builds on the *RCRC Climate Centre Glossary*. In addition, *The New Humanitarian* provides a helpful guide to "climate change jargon and acronyms".

Anticipatory action: Also referred to as 'early warning early action' – is action we take before a predicted hazard hits to prevent or reduce its potential impacts. In other words, it means taking steps to protect people before a disaster strikes based on early warning or forecasts (IFRC, 2022).

(Weather) Attribution research (/ study): Research with the objective to understand how climate change influences the intensity and likelihood of extreme weather events, using weather observations and climate models (WWA 2024).

Climate action: Climate action is about taking urgent action both to tackle and reduce climate change (mitigation) and address its impacts (adaptation). This includes measures taken to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of individuals and communities to climate-related hazards. (SDG 13 & IFRC, 2023).

Climate change adaptation: The actions taken to reduce the negative impact of climate change, while taking advantage of potential new opportunities. It involves adjusting policies and actions because of observed or expected changes in climate. It involves preparing for and responding to the expected changes in temperature, rainfall, sea levels, and other climate variables. (IPCC, 2014 & 2022)

Climate change mitigation: Actions taken to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants into the atmosphere, with the goal of reducing the magnitude and/or rate of long-term climate change (IPCC, 2014).

Climate-related hazard: A potentially damaging climate-related physical event, phenomenon, or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Examples include droughts, floods, heatwaves, sea-level rise, storms and wildfires. (IFRC, 2023)

Climate-related risk: Refers to the probability that a particular climate-related hazard will occur and the potential adverse impacts for lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services and infrastructure. Climate-related risks can be assessed based on a variety of factors, including the magnitude and frequency of the hazard, the vulnerability of the exposed system, and the capacity of the affected population or organization to cope with the impacts. (IFRC, 2023 & IPCC, 2014)

Climate-related mobility: The movement of people driven by the impacts of climate change; these can range from sudden events to gradual changes; affected people may move within or across borders; and types of movement include migration, displacement, planned relocation and immobility.

Climate-smart programmes and operations: Integrating use of available climate and weather information, both: i.) short-term weather and seasonal forecasts and ii.) long-term climate projections; in designing and/or adjusting all programmes and operations to ensure that, at a minimum, they do not place people at increased risk from new climate extremes (IFRC, 2023).

Disasters: Disasters are serious disruptions to the functioning of a community that exceed its capacity to cope using its own resources. (IFRC, 2024). Do not use the term “Natural Disaster”, as natural disasters do not exist, but natural hazards do. A natural hazard, such as flood, wildfires, earthquake or drought, only become a disaster when it impacts a community that is not adequately protected, and whose population is vulnerable as a result of poverty, exclusion or social disadvantage. It is possible to reduce the risk from hazards, man-made and natural. (UNDRR).

Disaster risk management: The application of policies, strategies and other measures to prevent new disaster risks, reduce existing disaster risks and manage residual risks (through disaster preparedness, response and recovery), contributing to the strengthening of resilience and the reduction of disaster losses (IFRC, 2022) *(see also Figure 2: DRM continuum)*

Disaster risk reduction: Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks (which occur due to hazards, exposure, vulnerability capacity) and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development. In recent years there has been a growing convergence between disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), but they do not overlap completely. Broadly speaking, DRR deals with all hazards, including hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards, while CCA deals exclusively with climate-related hazards. DRR is predominantly interested in climate extremes leading to disasters whereas CCA also considers the long-term adjustment to changes in gradual changing climatic conditions, including the opportunities that this can provide. (IFRC, 2023)

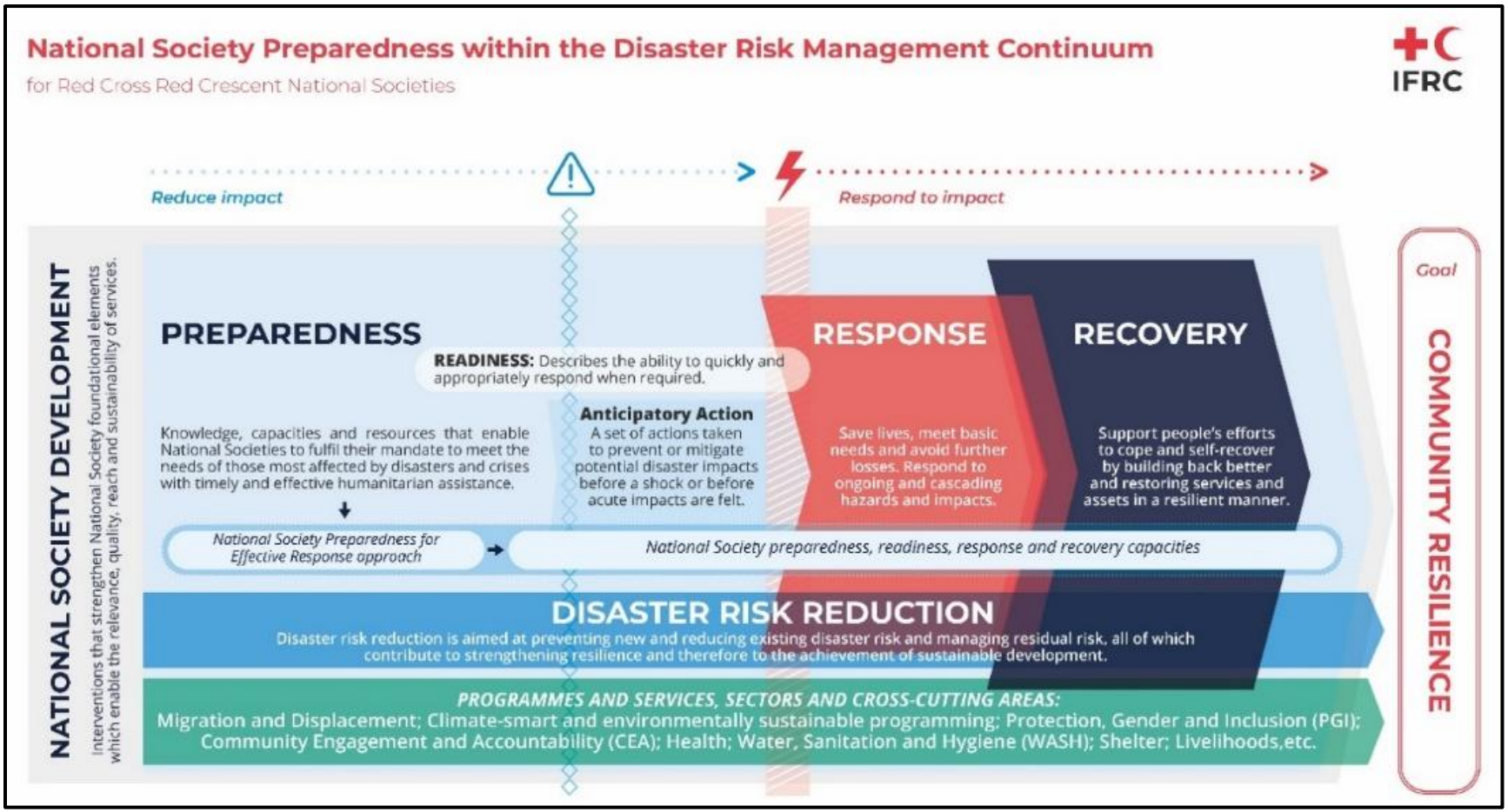

Figure 2: Disaster Risk Management Continuum

Early warning early action: *See anticipatory action*

Environmental degradation: Environmental degradation is a process through which the natural environment is compromised in some way, reducing biological diversity and the general health of the environment. This process can be natural in origin, or it can be accelerated or caused by human activities (Eionet, 2021)

Environmental sustainability: Environmental sustainability is a state in which the demands placed on the environment can be met without reducing its capacity to allow all people to live well, now and in the future (GEMET, 2020).

Green response: An approach to humanitarian disaster response that rests on environmental sustainability, making efforts to avoid, minimize, and manage potential damage to the local environment and the greenhouse gas emissions brought on by humanitarian operations (IFRC, 2023).

Locally led adaptation: Climate change adaptation is about taking action focused on increasing resilience to current and future effects of climate change; locally led adaptation is simply owned by local partners: eight principles were developed to help ensure that local communities are empowered to lead sustainable and effective adaptation to climate change at the local level (Global Centre on Adaptation, 2021).

Locally-led climate action: Broader than adaptation – it recognises the need to put local actors and communities at the heart of decision making, including across the full disaster continuum from preparedness, response, resilience, recovery, rehabilitation, as well as for longer-term locally led adaptation.

Maladaptation: Actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased GHG emissions, increased or shifted vulnerability to climate change, more inequitable outcomes, or diminished welfare, now or in the future. Most often, maladaptation is an unintended consequence. (IFRC, 2023)

Multi-hazard: Refers to i. several hazardous events threatening the same exposed elements (with or without temporal coincidence); or ii. several hazardous events happening at the same time or shortly following each other (compound and/or cascade effects); or iii. the totality of relevant hazards in a defined geographical area and their interrelations. (IFRC 2020)

Polycrisis: The coming together of multiple crises – or a cluster of related global risks with compounding effects, such that the overall impact exceeds the sum of each part (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Sustainable development: The reconciliation of environmental, social and economic demands. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (WCED, 1987 & IPCC, 2022).

Triple planetary crisis: A term and framework adopted by the United Nations system to describe the three intersecting global crises of pollution, climate crisis, biodiversity loss and/or ecological crises. This term underscores the interdependence of these issues and their collective impact on the planet's ecosystems, societies, and economies.