

## Strategic Consideration: Environmental Change

### i. Environmental Change

#### Why is this important?

Addressing environmental issues and in particular, climate change is arguably the single greatest challenge affecting humanity at this time. There are direct and indirect implications for humanitarian needs; climate change and environmental pressure are drivers of natural and man-made crises; humanitarian crises themselves can impact the environment as can the nature of humanitarian response to the needs generated. However, while there is no question of the importance of environmental issues, organisations struggle to find the best way to practically integrate them in what they do and how they do it. There is a case to be made for improving coordination and support to assist humanitarian actors on this journey.

#### What is the current situation?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has issued a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives pledged included targets in the Sustainable Development Goals related to resilience to disasters and climate change. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction highlighted the importance of promoting “the coherence and further development, as appropriate, of national and local frameworks of laws, regulations and public policies”.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. The Paris Agreement objectives include, inter alia, “increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production”. The Paris Agreement includes the potential interplay between disasters, climate change, environmental degradation, and fragility, the catalytic role of disaster risk reduction in scaling up action on climate adaptation, and the critical role of disaster risk reduction in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. There was a focus on resilience and adaptation at the 2019 UN Climate Summit and the COP25, within the Global Commission on Adaptation’s “Preventing Disasters” Action Track and the establishment in September of the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership. A number of initiatives exist and are being developed including the initiative of the IFRC, together with academic partners, to undertake

research on best practice in the effective integration of disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change. To note also the Disaster laws and policies that leave no one behind resolution adopted at the IFRC conference on 12th December 2019.

The influence on Climate Change issues is coming from non-traditional movements and actors i.e. climate change activists, Extinction Rebellion etc... Youth are playing an unprecedented role in the civil society movements.

Other important contributions in this area to which ICVA and its members are associated include the Platform for Disaster Displacement - PDD, the Climate Action Network - CAN, the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction - GNDR, implementation aspects of the GRF and GCM... Others were engagement and/or support to existing civil society engagement should be considered include initiatives with the World Meteorological Organization, the World Bank, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS), national and regional plans among others.

#### ICVA’s potential added value:

- ICVA supports NGO engagement at national, regional and global level in policy, plans and finance mechanisms relevant to climate change and its impacts
- ICVA to connect, convene, influence & advocate, support as well as analyse & explain (ICVA 5 ways of working) for ICVA to adopt a long-term and sustainable approach for NGOs (ICVA members) to partner and connect with those working on climate change in order to better respond to climate issues.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- a) How have member organisations integrated issues related to environmental change into their humanitarian action? What are some examples of how actors are limiting negative environmental impact? How are crises linked to environmental change impacting the scale and nature of interventions and/or advocacy? Are there implications for humanitarian principles?
- b) Should environmental change and its impact on the creating and alleviation of humanitarian needs be a core focus for ICVA? If so, how best to frame that focus area and what would be the most urgent issues to address?