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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) DPR Korea: Drought and Food Insecurity

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF n° MDRKP013	Glide n° DR-2019-000042-PRK
For DREF; Date of issue: 6 May 2019	Expected timeframe: 3 months Expected end date: 6 August 2019
Category allocated to the of the disaster or crisis: Yellow	
DREF allocated: CHF 76,946	
Total number of people affected: 331,967	Number of people to be assisted: 22,129
Host National Society's presence (105,609 of volunteers, 173 staff, 209 branches): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS), with its auxiliary mandate to the public authorities in humanitarian affairs, has a presence across the country through its 17 permanent branches (9 provincial, 5 municipal, 3 county branches), and has approximately 200 non-permanent county level branches and volunteer network (approximately 105,609), including 25 National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) and 95 Provincial Disaster Response Team (PDRT) members.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: The State Committee on Emergency and Disaster Management (SCEDM)	

A. Situation analysis

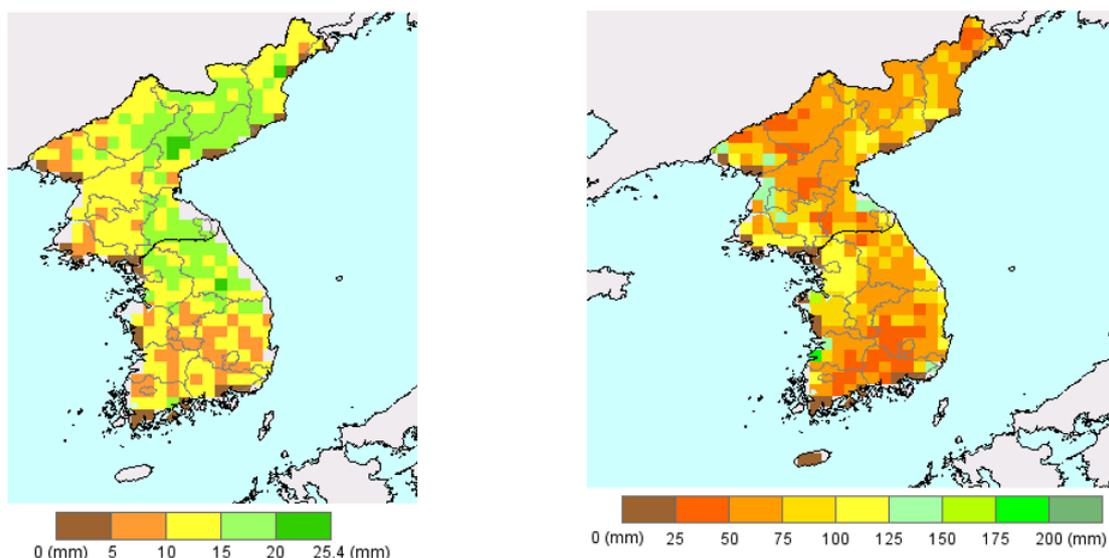
Description of the disaster

DPRK is currently experiencing a challenging food insecurity situation. Unusually little precipitation during the winter and spring so far is posing a serious threat to the spring harvest, at a time when the harvest in 2018 was the worst in a decade.

DPRK is suffering from droughts that have occurred consecutively in recent years. In 2014, a dry spell that persisted for over 18 months caused drought, affecting agricultural production and access to water, and left 18 million public distribution system (PDS) dependents at risk of food insecurity, malnutrition and illness. In June 2017, the Government declared a national emergency following a dry spell that affected key food producing provinces in the south-west of the country. The 2017 dry spell stressed the early season crops and constrained planting and early growth of main season crops. The Government mobilized communities and resources to provide irrigation, to reduce any impact from the dry spell. In 2018, emergency response was declared due to unusual high temperature and drought. The response of the Government and Red Cross Society of DPRK was focused on preserving the crops from the heatwave and drought like weather conditions.

Entering 2019, DPRK has experienced unusually erratic weather conditions with little precipitation, limiting the soil moisture for growth of winter and planting of spring crops as well as replenishment of water reservoirs for irrigation. The temperatures over the last couple of months have also been higher than normal. Early spring precipitation has so far not been enough to redress the imbalance and only very good late spring/early summer rains will do so. The conditions for soil moisture and irrigation are at an alarming level. The current lack of precipitation and soil moisture will not only affect winter and spring-planted crops, but also the planting of subsistence crop as well as the main crop to be harvested in September.

Figure 1 : Surface (l) & Subsurface (r) Soil Moisture



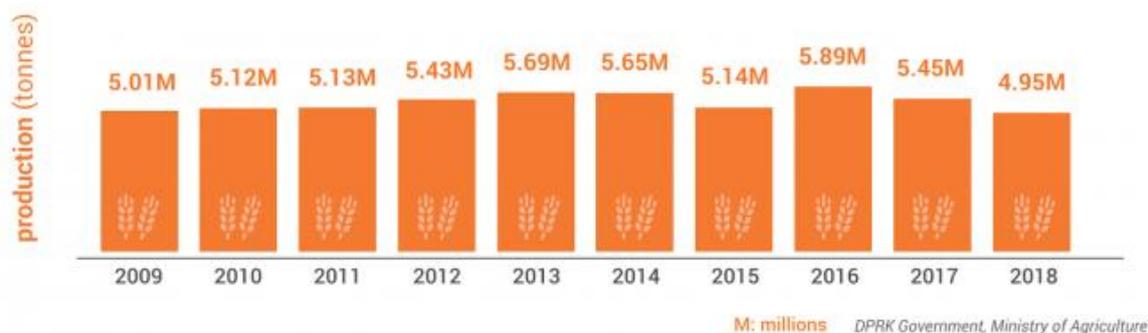
This lack of precipitation will affect the planting of the main crop, since inadequate soil moisture conditions exist across much of the country (optimum: 20 mm). Subsurface soil moisture conditions are also suboptimal and will not support the full development of the wheat and barley winter crops (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe).

According to FAO, winter and spring-planted crops are important for the food security in DPRK, although they account for only 8 percent of total annual cereal production in DPRK. The winter and spring-planted crops backup the food supplies until September, when the main season harvesting begins. Thus, the winter and spring harvest is crucial in the lean season summer months. If the early season crop production would suffer, the food insecurity situation in DPRK will be further aggravated.

Any threat to food security will have a serious effect on an already stressed population in terms of food availability and the risk of increased malnutrition which will affect the most vulnerable of the affected population – children, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and those with underlying illness.

While the reduction in food production in 2018, as seen below, may not look too severe in comparison to previous years, it is important to remember that DPRK is already suffering from a protracted food crisis, making the population vulnerable to any further loss of harvest and food. Food production in 2018 in DPRK was 4 951 025 tons, which was the lowest over the past decade. It was 9.22 percent less than in 2017 and 10.66 percent less than the previous six-year average (2012-2017). According to FAO, the sharp decline of production was due to a decrease in total cropped area as well as yields. The yields suffered badly during the disasters in DPRK in 2018: heatwave, floods, and landslides.

Figure 2: DPR Korea Crop Production (2009 – 2018)



Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

The current priorities of the DPRK RCS are centered at first conducting a detailed assessment in coordination with IFRC CO to verify the result of the initial assessment and recommend further actions. The assessment will be conducted 6 – 9 May 2019.

Based on available information, it is clear that the need for irrigation support is urgent, especially to protect subsistence crop. The National Society is therefore planning to deploy mobile water pumps for irrigation in the most affected communities. This was also successfully tried out for the first time during the heatwave in 2018.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea Red Cross Society (DPRK RCS) is meeting with government agencies, such as the State Committee for Disaster and Emergency Management (SCDEM) to coordinate activities and better understand the needs and gaps.

In terms of livelihoods and food security, IFRC and DPRK RCS do implement some annual activities through the Integrated Community Resilience Program (ICRP). Such activities primarily include provision of vegetable greenhouses, mushroom production facilities, and relevant trainings. Additionally, through an EU/DevCO funded pilot project, led by the Swedish Red Cross, an exchange program is held between DPRK agricultural experts from Academy of Agricultural Science, State Academy of Science, and Ministry of Environment and Land Protection, as well as four target communities, and agricultural experts at the Research Institutes of Sweden. DPRK RCS is present throughout the country but primarily implements its ICRP in the provinces of North Hamgyong, South Hamgyong, North Phyongan, and South Phyongan. Activities through the ICRP may also start in North Hwanghae in 2019.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC has a country office in DPRK for over twenty years and currently has five delegates in-country comprising of the Head of Country Office, National Society Development/Programme Coordination, Health/WASH, Finance, and Disaster Risk Management Delegate. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also has an office in DPRK and there is close collaboration between IFRC and ICRC.

IFRC was, together with ICRC and the UN, called to a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK on the 14 February 2019. In the meeting, the government briefed the delegation on the food production in 2018. According to the government, it was the worst harvest in over a decade, and this was primarily due to the many disasters in 2018. In the meeting, the government requested support from the international organizations to address the situation.

IFRC has monitored the food shortage situation throughout the winter and spring. As it became increasingly clear that the precipitation during winter and spring was far from enough for the coming spring and summer harvest, the efforts by IFRC have increased. The IFRC Country Office has closely coordinated with IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office and have received advice from the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. RCRC Movement partners have also been briefed regularly.

IFRC has and is continuously coordinating its assessments and plans with other international organisations in DPRK, including some of the NGOs and WFP. This coordination is done primarily through the Food Security and Agriculture Sector Working Group, the Interagency Meetings, and through bilateral contacts. Coordination is done to share information and to avoid duplication of activities.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The main government actor is the State Committee for Emergency Disaster Management (SCEDM), with whom DPRK RCS is coordinating with. The most important UN actor in this response is the WFP and FAO, and IFRC maintains regular communication with them, as well as with other relevant international organizations in DPRK. A WFP/FAO assessment report on the food shortage is planned to be published early May and once that is done it may become clearer if WFP and others will plan any additional activities. Most discussions in terms of response so far have been around reducing the food shortage through food assistance, while IFRC is the only organization planning irrigation activities to reduce the negative impact the low soil moisture levels will have on the highly important spring harvest.

The government requested assistance by the international organizations on the 14 of February to address the food shortage. The government will also take the following measures¹:

1. Import food of 200,000 MT
2. Concentration on farming of early crop to produce 400,000 MT

¹ Based on information provided by DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 14 February 2019.

3. As an emergency measure, the government will distribute 300 g of food per person per day, which is less than the level set by the government of 550 g per person per day. In July they will increase 10 g so the ration will be 310 g/day.

Needs analysis, targeting, scenario planning and risk assessment

Needs Analysis

The agricultural production this year in DPRK is seriously affected by the aftereffect of the droughts occurred consecutively in the past 5 years. To make the situation worse, there was little snow fall last winter and almost no rainfall in the 1st quarter of this year. As a result, the water levels in the reservoirs is much lower than the standard. As winter and spring crops are important in the daily intake of the people in DPRK until September when the main season harvesting begins, there is an urgent need to ensure the productivity of the winter and spring crops. There is also an urgent need to ensure the survivability of the main crops to be sowed as the humidity of soil is very low in most of the country and there is not enough water for irrigation thus contributing to averting a bigger crisis.

Chronic food insecurity, early childhood malnutrition and nutrition insecurity are widespread in DPRK. According to the 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI), which measures and tracks hunger worldwide, DPRK ranks 109 out of 119 qualifying countries. With a score of 34.0, DPRK suffers from a level of hunger that is 'serious'.² Around 10.9 million people, or 43 per cent of the total population, are food insecure.³ There are many complex and intertwined reasons for the high rates of food insecurity in DPRK. This includes mountainous terrain, with only 17 per cent of land good for cultivation. Farming is largely reliant on traditional farming methods, and a lack of agricultural inputs, such as quality seeds, proper fertilizer and equipment. In addition, changing weather patterns have left DPRK vulnerable to droughts and floods, which often result in reductions in agricultural production.

IFRC is the only organization planning irrigation activities to reduce the negative impact the low soil moisture levels will have on the highly important spring harvest. While the spring harvest only pose for 8 per cent of the annual harvest, it is very important for people's food intake during the lean season. If the spring harvest would suffer significant damage, the humanitarian situation will likely to deteriorate significantly. This would be at a time when the country is currently suffering from the worst food shortage in over a decade. Protecting the spring harvest may therefore have a life-saving impact and contribute to averting a bigger crisis.

The total number of affected people, 331,967, is based on the entire population in the two most vulnerable provinces. This figure may be revised once the detailed assessment is done and more information is available.

Targeting

Based on available information, the DPRK RCS has conducted an initial assessment on 25 and 26 April through its county branches in South Hamgyong province. Through the initial assessment, three communities were identified as the most vulnerable. These three communities are in two different counties, Jongpyong county and Hongwon county, South Hamgyong Province. These two counties are in the northern, mountainous, parts of South Hamgyong province. While the North Hamgyong province generally is considered to be the most vulnerable, the northern parts of South Hamgyong are considered to also be particularly vulnerable. The two targeted counties in particular have sand soil which requires more frequent irrigation, while North Hamgyong often has a different type of soil, less vulnerable to drought. The two targeted counties also have their fields in an elevated area, compared to the more southern parts of the province, which makes irrigation more difficult. In the flatlands it is easier to use channels for irrigation. The criteria for targeting thus includes soil condition, elevation of the field, more prone to natural disasters than other communities, operational capacity, and availability of water sources (other areas have a better access to rivers, but the targeted communities do not). Additionally, DPRK RCS has a good volunteer network and program infrastructure established in the area, which will allow quick and efficient start of activities.

The provincial branches have identified the three 3 most vulnerable communities, Ryulsong-ri, Jongpyong county, and Unha-ri and Unpo-ri, Hongwon county, in South Hamgyong province. Through this operation, the plan is to reach 5,831 households (22,129 people).

Operation Risk Assessment

There is a risk that the drought conditions will continue in the coming months and that the situation will get worse. DPRK RCS has a limited capacity to increase its irrigation activities without a procurement process of more mobile water pumps, which may take time. Such procurement processed could take time due to the necessary approvals for exemptions by the 1718 Sanctions Committee. The assessment will provide more information of the situation and the soil conditions and weather will be carefully monitored in the coming months.

² Global Hunger Index 2018: <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/north-korea.html>

³ DPR Korea Needs and Priorities 2019

B. Operational strategy

Proposed strategy

The DPRK RCS, in close coordination with IFRC, will conduct a detailed assessment 6 – 9 of May on the current situation and decide response actions based on the needs identified. The main activity currently being planned is the deployment of mobile water pumps and fuel for pumping up water to fields to protect livelihoods of 5,831 households. The DPRK RCS will mobilize field-based volunteers and community people to the response actions.

The lessons learned workshop after the heatwave DREF operation in 2018 showed that the operation started a bit late and that it would have been more successful if it would have started earlier. Based on that lesson, IFRC DPRK CO and DPRK RCS deems it necessary to start irrigation activities as soon possible to protect the spring harvest. Volunteers and community members also expressed in the lessons learned workshop that the first training on operating the mobile water pumps was insufficient. Last year the trainings on how to operate these were conducted in two phases, but people expressed that they would have needed the information from the second training already from the start. DPRK RCS will therefore conduct one, more in depth, training instead of two. Additional support and guidance for operating the mobile water pumps throughout the operation can also be provided through DPRK RCS as needed.

The deployment of mobile water pumps will at first utilize existing water sources and based on assessment findings, develop new water sources as required. That could include digging ditches and wells. Such activities are coordinated with the DPRK RCS WASH department.

The DREF operation is planned for three months and covers the following proposed activities:

- Detailed assessment
- Deployment and operation of 15 mobile water pumps
- Procurement of relevant items for proper maintenance of mobile water pumps
- Training volunteers and community people on the usage and maintenance of mobile water pumps
- Procurement of spare tires for vehicles used for transportation of mobile water pumps
- Mobilization of DPRK RCS staff, PDRT members, volunteers including insurance, and per diem
- IFRC operational support including logistics, procurement, detailed assessment, monitoring and reporting
- Additional activities, including WASH and Health, will be considered and planned based on the assessment findings
- Distribution of family tents for cover for the farmers and RC volunteers operating the mobile water pumps
- Deployment and maintenance of water onion tanks
- Lessons learned workshop

Operational support services

Human resources

The director of the Disaster Management Department of DPRK RCS has overall operational responsibility and reports to the Secretary General. To support DPRK RCS with this operation, the IFRC CO will ensure that the funding and the operations are well coordinated.

Logistics and Supply Chain

Logistics activities aim to effectively manage the supply chain, including procurement, fleet, storage and transport to distribution sites in accordance with the operation's requirement and aligned to IFRC's logistics standards, processes and procedures.

The Logistics Department of the DPRK RCS, with the support of IFRC DPRK CO logistics and in coordination with IFRC DRM Delegate, will facilitate the in-country transportation of available resources. The IFRC DPRK CO, in coordination with DPRK RCS, will conduct local procurement of spare parts and oil for the mobile water pumps and if necessary, some items will be procured internationally. The IFRC will consult the DPRK RCS regarding technical specifications of necessary items.

The IFRC Asia Pacific Operational Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain Management (OLPSCM) Department in Kuala Lumpur will provide technical support to DPRK RCS and IFRC CO, as needed.

Security

The IFRC DPRK Country Office has a standard country security plan in place, including contingency plans for Medevac, Relocation and Critical Incident Management. International delegates and local staff are familiar with the security procedures and contingency plans, which were revised and updated in March/April 2019. The DPRK RCS has easy access to the affected areas and enjoy excellent levels of cooperation with the government. Standard security measures such as fire extinguishers, fire management and evacuation plans are maintained in DPRK RCS warehouses.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER)

Both the DPRK RCS and the IFRC DPRK Country Office have well-functioning PMER processes to support the implementation of this DREF. At least one update will be issued during the operation timeframe and a final report within three months of the end of the operation.

The DPRK RCS and IFRC DM team will conduct monitoring visits to the affected areas throughout the operation. A lessons-learned workshop on the response will be conducted at the end of the operation.

The DPRK RCS keeps a gender and diversity balance in Human Resources (Red Cross staff and volunteers), making it easier to approach both male and female community members. This also makes it easier to ensure Community Engagement and Accountability in the operation. The DPRK RCS further applies a systematic approach from branches to HQs regarding reporting system, while Red Cross volunteers are delivering information about feedback and comments from community people to branches via volunteer leaders. The DPRK RCS staff and IFRC delegates have good access to the communities to obtain feedback through household visits for cross-checks which can be included in the revised operation plan and implementation.

Administration and Finance

The IFRC CO Finance and Admin (FAD) unit will oversee procurement, quality control of materials and equipment to be procured, and all financial matters and reports. The FAD unit, in coordination with IFRC Asia Pacific regional finance and logistics units, will extend support and guidance to the DPRK RCS logistics department in the procurement, as per the IFRC procurement standards.

C. Detailed Operational Plan



Livelihoods and basic needs

People targeted: 22,129 people (5,831 HH)

Male: to be determined

Female: to be determined

Requirements (CHF): 55,250

Needs analysis: DPRK is currently experiencing the worst food shortage in a decade, with over 10 million people in need of urgent food assistance. Unusually little precipitation during the winter and spring so far is posing a serious threat to the spring harvest and if the spring harvests suffers the humanitarian situation will deteriorate further. These interventions are to improve the soil moisture levels to avert crop failures. Any further crop failures will have a serious effect on an already stressed population in terms of food availability and the risk of increased malnutrition which will affect the most vulnerable of the affected population – children, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and those with underlying illness. Deployment and operation of mobile water pumps to include distribution of family tents to provide farmers and RC volunteers operating the pumps with a place to retreat and rest, as the pumps should be operated for more than 15 hours a day.

Population to be assisted: 22,129 people (5,831 HH)

Programme standards/benchmarks: *Relevant standards will be adhered as necessary.*

P&B Output Code	Livelihoods and basic needs Outcome 2: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods	# of drought-affected people with livelihood and basic needs assistance (Target 5,831 HH)		
	Output 2.1: Basic needs assistance for livelihoods security is provided to the most affected communities	# of targeted households that have enough food to meet their survival threshold (Target 5,831 HH)		
	Activities planned (month)	1	2	3
AP026	Deployment and operation of mobile water pumps for irrigation	x	x	x
AP026	Deployment and maintenance of water onion tanks	x	x	x
AP026	Train RC volunteers and community people on proper use and maintenance of mobile water pumps	x		
AP050	Procurement of engine oil for mobile water pumps	x		
AP050	Maintenance of pumps and fleet	x	x	x

Strategies for Implementation

Requirements (CHF): 17,000

P&B Output Code	S1.1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform	% of NS disaster response teams equipped for proper disaster response		
	Output S1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected	Safety and wellbeing of staff/volunteers are ensured (target: yes)		
	Activities planned (month)	1	2	3
AP040	Ensure staff/volunteers' safety and wellbeing	x		
P&B Output Code	Outcome S2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured	% of disaster response operation supported by effective maintenance and support services (target: TBD)		
	Output S2.1.4: Supply chain and fleet services meet recognized quality and accountability standards	Delivery of procured items according to schedule (target: yes) Demonstrate proper maintenance (yes / no)		
	Activities planned (month)	1	2	3
AP050	Procurement of fuel for vehicles	x	x	x
AP050	Maintenance of pumps and fleet	x	x	x
P&B Output Code	Outcome S3.1: The IFRC secretariat, together with National Societies uses their unique position to influence decisions at local, national and international levels that affect the most vulnerable.	% of operations covered by proper decision-making, monitoring and evaluation methods (target: TBD)		
	Output S3.1.1: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted and effective advocates on humanitarian issues	% of volunteers properly equipped for visibility purposes (target: TDB)		
	Activities planned (month)	1	2	3
AP053	Ensuring effective communications for disaster response	x	x	x
P&B Output Code	Output S3.1.2: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming.	# of monitoring visits conducted (target: TBD) # of review and lessons learned workshop conducted (target: 1)		
	Activities planned (month)	1	2	3
AP055	Monitoring by IFRC CO	x	x	x
AP055	Detailed Assessment	x		
AP055	Conduct of Review and Lessons Learned Workshop			x

Budget

DREF OPERATION

06/05/19

MDRKP013 DPR Korea: Drought and Food
Insecurity

		DREF Budget CHF
	Budget Group	
570	Other Supplies & Services	55,250
	Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	55,250
593	Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,000
	Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	4,000
661	National Staff	1,000
662	National Society Staff	2,000
	Total PERSONNEL	3,000
680	Workshops & Training	6,000
	Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	6,000
700	Travel	2,000
740	Communications	2,000
	Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	4,000
599	Programme and Services Support Recovery	4,696
	Total INDIRECT COSTS	4,696
	TOTAL BUDGET	76,946

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Information bulletin](#)

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.