

SMCC in Action in Haiti: collective Movement response to the humanitarian consequences of Hurricane Matthew

Movement partners in Haiti had just been sensitized to the SMCC agenda and plan of action when disaster hit the whole south and west side of Haiti on October 4th 2016. It has meant changing the focus of the SMCC implementation from capacity building, development and preparedness, to immediate response as the scale of the emergency proved rapidly to overwhelm the authorities, disaster response agencies and humanitarian actors present in the country.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has generally proved its capacity to very quickly activate its disaster management tools and procedures to provide assistance and capacities. The process of getting together and acting as a Movement is a story that started 150 years ago and is still being written. In Haiti, the Haitian Red Cross, the two international components of the Movement and nine Participating National Societies, are today pen-holders to a positive chapter. It is not enough to display a SMCC spirit that no one ever contests having; the minimum requirement for this operation was to apply the collaborative and non-competitive spirit to the ACTION.

The mini-summit constitutes one of these tools translating good will into practice. Supported by a Movement Coordination Agreement signed prior to the disaster in April 2016, it proved to reinforce the decision-making process at a strategic level, to make sense of a trilateral Movement coordination mechanism to provide the most important orientations of the response, to allow the Federation to act as a Secretariat as much as a membership organization and to offer concrete evidence of the complementarity of the Movement components' mandates.



Volunteers of Haiti Red Cross – Picture by Haiti Red Cross

The mini-summit composed of the Haitian Red Cross President, the Federation Head of Cluster team and the ICRC Head of Delegation took place on October 10th 2016 followed by another one and another one and... materializing the need for such a strategic platform. A Joint Declaration was issued on October 16th 2016 formalizing the Movement mechanisms established for the response and allocating the responsibility of coordination to the Haitian Red Cross and the Federation, supported by the ICRC.

The mini-summit developing into a strategic decision-making platform and its ensuing joint declaration are considered important milestones and processes in Movement coordination. At the operational and sectorial level, efforts were particularly deployed to coordinate capacities, geographical interests and programmatic plans of Movement partners, ultimately consolidated into a plan of action.

Among the critical decisions to take, the choice of a fundraising model reveals the level of coordination. Consensus to mobilize financial resources through a 'One International Appeal' was reached naturally in the field, recognizing that it would provide a conducive environment for a concerted Federation and ICRC approach to donors and further testing the example set by the Nepal earthquake response. The Federation/ICRC Funding Modality Agreement, signed in September 2016, has been implemented to smooth out the intricacies of different financial systems with the 'One International Appeal' embodied by the Federation Revised Emergency Appeal which integrated some of ICRC and PNS's activities and was launched on November 11th 2016. A transparent and participatory process has been established for the attribution of additional resources coming in the appeal (with prioritisation, formalisation and documentation criteria).

Those SMCC tools and other innovative approaches used in the context of the Movement response to the Hurricane Matthew will eventually have to be assessed for their relevance and effectiveness in the response. The purpose of investing in tight coordination and communication remains to enhance impact of the humanitarian action on beneficiaries. In Haiti, definitely, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was the first to respond, the first to reach places to provide assistance to a wide-range of people in dire straits.

“Hoorah, Hoorah, Hoorah!” – An Armenian SMCC experience

What happens if you put a group of 45 people, consisting of different backgrounds of nine Movement components, together in a retreat for two days? How likely is it that the outcome be the premises of a Movement Contingency Plan and solid friendship!

The Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), the IFRC and the ICRC were determined: After the recent escalations in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict in April 2016, the Movement realized that there are challenges and difficulties to meet and overcome jointly. In case of the conflict affecting Armenia, we have to respond more efficiently and in a well-coordinated manner. It required a new level of closer cooperation and coordination between the Movement components. So the decision was taken to develop a Movement Contingency Plan for conflicts affecting directly or indirectly Armenia.

The mixed Red Cross and Red Crescent group gathered in a hotel in a rather remote mountainous region of Armenia, famous for its skiing possibilities. The participants couldn't be more different: There was Emmanuel, a volunteer of the ARCS with 40 years of Red Cross experience. Beside him was Gayane, the newest member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent family, she had just been appointed the new ARCS Head of Tracing. Language problems? Not at all! Although some spoke only English and others only Armenian, with the help of multi-lingual colleagues, professional translators, hands and feet and a bright smile, all important messages could be transferred. Six National Societies sent colleagues from their headquarters and regional offices to support the process. Among them were Mario from German Red Cross, Arne from Danish Red Cross, Jina from Swiss Red Cross, Thierry from Austrian Red Cross, Saeed from Iranian Red Crescent and Jon from Icelandic Red Cross.

Participants worked in mixed teams to assess the potential needs that would arise in Armenia, in case of an escalation of conflicts. Whilst from the international representation, there was a good contribution of ideas for global and regional surge capacities and resources, the profound, practical experience from ARCS branch level made the content of the discussion more realistic and was essential.

The Movement partners discussed scenarios, assessed existing capacities and gaps, and came up with first-response activities. The end result will not be a shiny book on a shelf, but a slim living document featuring a toolbox of standard operating procedures, checklists, questionnaires and guidelines. Notably, the entire process is embedded in the Safer Access Framework and the SMCC approach.

While the results of the group work were constructive, the overall mood became more and more cordial by the minute. Altogether the event took place in an atmosphere of cordial partnership and of operational pragmatism.

And the evening? Some things will remain forever confidential, but let's just say the peak was reached late in the night. After praising the Movement, Henri Dunant and peace for the world, all participants complimented themselves and the strength of the Movement with a triple “hoorah, hoorah, hoorah”!



Participants of the Movement Contingency Plan Workshop in Armenia

It is true, sometimes, the way is the goal and in the case of the Movement Contingency Plan, the process provides already more outcome than the document ever could.

For more background information about the Movement Contingency Plan, please read here: http://redcross.am/en/newsroom/%D4%B3%D5%AC%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%BE%D5%B8%D6%80/4/6/0/0/1/news_more/200

Gabon Post-Election Violence: Movement Cooperation Ensures Outstanding Response

For the Gabonese people, 27 August 2016 was supposed to be a day of national celebrations. Instead, the announcement of the results of the presidential elections, indicating the victory of incumbent president Ali Bongo, plunged the country into weeks of violent confrontations between supporters of the opposition candidate, Jean Ping, and security forces. There were several deaths, including one policeman, dozens of injured and more than 600 protesters arrested.

Outstanding work by the Gabonese Red Cross

Arguably, the only humanitarian organisation that responded efficiently during the crisis was the Gabonese Red Cross. A few days later, it was joined by the country's civil protection agency and other national medical emergency teams.

Red Cross teams were allowed on both sides of the road blocks and barricades and administered first aid on the spot, evacuating the most serious cases to clinics and hospitals. They were able to facilitate the restoration of family links between people detained by the police and their families and treat the injured among the detained. Furthermore, the Gabonese Red Cross staff and volunteers were able to persuade authorities to free a number of minors that were caught in the police net.

The outstanding work of the Gabonese Red Cross was hailed by both national authorities and the opposition. It was further appreciated by the representatives of UN OCHA, ECHO and the whole Central Africa regional Humanitarian Coordination Team, based in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Support from ICRC and IFRC

At this point, it is important to take the time and reflect over the preconditions that made the Gabon intervention possible.

Months ahead of the presidential elections a contingency plan was being put in place by the Gabonese Red Cross with the support of experts of the Central Africa regional offices of the ICRC and IFRC, the latter using resources from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). Looking at various scenarios a mapping of the hot spots allowed for the prepositioning of action teams as well as stocks of first aid kits, tents and other specific pieces of equipment. In addition, a series of training sessions, in which UN OCHA was also involved, were offered jointly to Gabonese Red Cross and key civil protection representatives. Finally, advocacy visits were conducted at all levels of government, opposition parties and the police to reiterate the role and mandate of the Gabonese Red Cross in the eventuality of unrest.



Gabon Red Cross volunteers provide emergency assistance to people caught in the protests – Picture by Gabon Red Cross

Movement cooperation and coordination

Movement coordination continued throughout the emergency. Besides joint meetings, respective resources were used in complementary ways with for example supplies provided by ICRC and IFRC being transported jointly to Libreville in the same shipment from Yaoundé, thus reducing operational costs to a minimum.

This Gabon case is not the only success story. The same close cooperation characterizes the relationship and the attention given to other National Societies in Central Africa such as Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea or Congo Brazzaville. And in DR Congo, where the ICRC has a country delegation, the dialogue is just as open, aiming for a coordinated Movement approach, in an effort to strengthen the capacity of the National Society.

Reawakening the Sleeping Giant: How Our Concerted Approach for Africa is Yielding Results

South Sudan and Somalia

There is a growing sense of optimism, with regards to collaboration within the Movement. Lilli Heinrichs, Supra-Regional Cooperation Coordinator, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is one of those who are hopeful. In her opinion: “Our renewed commitment to enhanced coordination in Africa will enable us to make the most effective use of the collective resources available, and maximize the impact of our work as the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, for the people who need it most.”

The goal of this new collaborative approach is to operate more effectively as one Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to assist communities in need.

It is not just Heinrichs who is enthusiastic. Colleagues in South Sudan and in Somalia echo her sentiments. Although the Concerted Approach for Africa is still a new initiative—the two countries are already making headway towards seamless cooperation.

Dr Michael Adekunle Charles is the South Sudan Head of Country Office for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). He is happy about the cooperation between the IFRC



South Sudan Red Cross during a distribution in Lobonok, South Sudan – Picture by South Sudan Red Cross

and ICRC, and noted the improved cooperation after violence broke out in South Sudan, in July 2016. He said: “The recent July crisis is a case in point. Collaboration worked well. Joint internal and external communication activities were conducted in a timely manner, with the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC) taking the lead in this. There were joint Movement statements, always ensuring that the National Society is well profiled and is the focus of all communication. Conference calls on the situation were held with Movement partners fortnightly.”

In the wake of that July violence, there was a cholera outbreak in Juba and its surroundings. “In the early days of the cholera response, ICRC supported the actions of the SSRC in responding to the immediate needs” said Charles.

“Simultaneously, IFRC worked with SSRC to launch a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Further activities were supported by the DREF allocation by IFRC. The cholera response was conducted from day one, in close collaboration and communication with all Movement partners” added Charles.

From ICRC’s perspective, as well, the cooperation was a success.

Bayram Valiyev, the ICRC cooperation delegate in South Sudan, noted: “During and right after the violent events in July in Juba, together with the South Sudan Red Cross, we quickly responded, providing food and water to the displaced and helping people separated from their families to contact them. We also helped collect and bury, in a dignified manner, the human remains, while ICRC surgical team treated the wounded.”

Thanks to this collaborative approach, between ICRC, SSRC and IFRC - the Movement was seen as one “family” according to Valiyev, who explained: “The Movement response during the events in Juba was a concerted effort between Movement partners. The ICRC, SSRC and IFRC worked together in good coordination to assist those who were affected, and we were seen as the Red Cross family,” he added; “communication was and remains key in working together as Movement partner.”

South Sudan is one of the countries that have been identified to serve as a “Country Lab” for SMCC.

There is a Movement communication committee that meets monthly to ensure that the Movement messages are consistent. A joint press conference between SSRC, ICRC and IFRC has been held in early December 2016 to promote the collective work we do in support of the people of South Sudan.

“Further areas of engagement in the first quarter of 2017 will include a joint contingency plan and disaster preparedness plan,” added Charles.

“In the spirit of SMCC, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in South Sudan has been able to reach hundreds of thousands of victims of conflicts and natural disasters, by providing life-saving services. This has generally helped to reduce their vulnerability and improve their lives,” said John Labor, the Secretary General of SSRC.

In Somalia, the Movement partners’ meeting and technical working group on WASH and health have been re-established. This enables all partners to come together and plan on how best to support the National Society.

When asked about the benefits of the Concerted Approach for Africa - for the Movement in general, and for Somalia, in particular, the IFRC Head of Somalia Country Office, William Babumba, said: “Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation particularly in resource development and emergency response will ensure that we avoid duplication and build the capacity of African National Societies to be able to deliver effective services to vulnerable communities served.”

A strategic direction for Strengthening the Movement Coordination and Cooperation in the Philippines

The Philippines has been acknowledged as a “country lab” for the implementation of Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) initiative, following a series of consultation and discussions between ICRC, IFRC and Philippine Red Cross (PRC) in September 2016. The implementation is based on the Council of Delegates 2015, in which the Movement strongly endorsed the SMCC Resolution. The country lab terms of reference, which identifies the scope of the country lab, was developed. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the Philippines will have to report to the next Council of Delegates in November 2017. A report on the progress of the SMCC should be drafted by the end of June 2017 and should reflect what exactly has been accomplished for the improved coordination of the Movement in case of a large scale emergency.

To direct the implementation of SMCC, ICRC, IFRC, and PRC have discussed the set-up of a Steering Committee with a technical support group and with representative from each of the three components, for which members have already been identified. The steering committee would be composed of the ICRC Head of delegation, the IFRC Head of country office and the PRC Chairman while the technical support group is composed of the ICRC Head of cooperation, the IFRC Operations Manager, and key managers from PRC, including the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary General, and the Head of International Relations and Strategic Partnerships Office. The Steering Committee will ensure that



existing practices in coordination are improved and structured to serve as an example for the Movement while the technical support group will provide insight, relevant documents, and flesh out the Steering Committee's direction and vision for a better coordination in accordance with SMCC. For the successful direction of SMCC implementation, a Senior Officer of Operational Movement Coordination from IFRC in Geneva, will directly support implementation in the country along with the ICRC SMCC Project Coordinator.

“PRC, IFRC and ICRC are looking forward to the SMCC implementation during 2017 which will make us even more well-prepared for future major disasters, and to minimize risks as well as strengthening the partnership in the country. Through the SMCC, the entire coordination, cooperation and communication mechanisms will in all regards be improved,” said Kari Isomaa, Head of IFRC Philippine Country Office.

“The SMCC is a good basis for further development of our joint-action as a Movement in favor of those in need and the vulnerable people we seek to serve,” Isomaa added.

With the strong message of “One Red Cross” a Movement Coordination Agreement is being discussed and

Red Cross to pilot SMCC Resolution for 2017 – Picture by Philippine Red Cross.

Philippine Red Cross Chairman (PRC) Richard Gordon and Secretary General Oscar Palabyab, together with country heads and representatives from the ICRC in the Philippines and IFRC, as well as representatives from different National Societies and PRC managers were all gathered for a series of consultation for the implementation of the “Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) Resolution”, last September, 2016 at the Penthouse in PRC Tower, Mandaluyong City.

The Movement stoutly endorsed the implementation of the SMCC for 2017, to intensify the programs and identify new set of guidelines for the improvement of coordination in the Movement during disasters and large-scale emergencies.

submitted to Asia Pacific Regional Office for feedback. This would foster a more structured coordination in the Movement's response in the Philippines during large scale emergencies. Participating National Societies would also be invited to sign and endorse the document to efficiently coordinate programmes and initiatives, as well as building stronger partnerships in the common humanitarian mission. This

agreement is a consolidation of the Movement's existing commitment in the Philippines to demonstrate functional coordination in the spirit of the SMCC resolution of December 2015.

"With the implementation of the SMCC on 2017, this will absolutely serve as a way forward for the Movement to continue its mission in alleviating human suffering and uplifting human dignity in the face of emergencies and disasters through the power of mobilizing volunteers and generosity of our donors and partners. And since the Philippines is a disaster-prone country, with SMCC, we will be able to further strengthen guidelines and ensure effective programs not only during emergencies but most especially during large scale disasters where the coordination and cooperation of the entire Movement are vital" said Hon. Richard Gordon, Chairman and CEO of Philippine Red Cross.

ICRC, IFRC, PRC and all National Societies together with all the volunteers are the whole component of our strong movement. And as I always say, you can't beat a heart of a volunteer" added Chairman Richard Gordon.

Also, ICRC, with support from IFRC, has developed Movement Security guidelines, which also include mapping of risks in the Philippines for the Movement partners. This should soon receive the contribution of the PRC so that the Movement improves its coordination and management of security for its staff and assets.

"It has been a practice for the ICRC in the Philippines to share within the Movement its analysis with regards to the security of personnel and assets in conflict-affected areas. The envisioned Movement Security Framework, through the SMCC process, will further improve the overall management of security for all Movement partners in the country" said Pascal Porchet, ICRC Head of Delegation in the Philippines.

ICRC and IFRC were able to come up with an understanding on the shared use of non-food items during typhoon season. Building on the principles of complementarity and internal non-competition, this recognizes a more efficient use of resources as practiced during Typhoon Melor (locally Nona), in December 2015. IFRC and ICRC worked closely with the PRC to make the most of respective resources and capacities based on the identification of security risks and scale of needs.

The ICRC/IFRC Funding Modality Agreement

We are pleased to announce that the ICRC/IFRC Funding Modality Agreement was signed in September 2016. The ambition for this agreement between the two Geneva-based international institutions is to increase the overall impact of collective response through efficient resource mobilization built on principles of complementarity and internal non-competition.

The agreement stems from the 2015 Council of Delegates Resolution 1 on SMCC and its Plan of Action, where the two international institutions agreed, whenever possible, to release only one international appeal for funds in future large scale emergencies. With the Council of Delegates 2017 coming soon, this agreement is a great step forward for stronger cooperation and coordination and an example of committed leadership and sustained ambitions for the Movement as a whole, in particular in improving the way the Movement works together in large-scale emergencies.

The agreement is designed for large scale emergencies, in events when 'One International Appeal' is launched. The particular situation that necessitates 'One International Appeal' and its unique treatment would be mutually agreed by the Director of Operations or the Regional Directors of ICRC and the Under Secretary General of Programmes and Operations or the Regional Directors of the IFRC, duly informed by the content of this funding modality agreement and prior decisions on the subject.

Once it has been decided whether the situation necessitates 'One International Appeal', the following process will start. The decision process shall be initiated during a Mini-summit that should occur within the first 24-48 hours of a large-scale emergency. Through this process, the National Society of the affected country, the ICRC and IFRC have to come to agreement on the identity and the main parameters of the Movement's coordinated response.



Red Cross Red and Crescent Movement engaging with children – Picture by Palestinian Red Crescent Society

The Funding Modality Agreement is a first step in the right direction and we are looking forward to use it in the future.

Only by having a shared vision on how to mobilize resources we will be able to respond more and better to increasing humanitarian needs.