



SNAPSHOT

Supporting the Four Key Pan African
Initiatives through the Development of
Climate-Smart DRM Laws and Policies

What is Disaster Law?

Laws and policies underpin all aspects of disaster and climate risk management and legal gaps in these sectors can reduce the resilience of communities to disasters. Without strong legal frameworks, critical preparedness activities may be missed, and authorities can be overwhelmed during disaster response operations or be unable to meet targeted ambitions related to climate change adaptation. The result is more severe disaster impacts and delays to lifesaving assistance for the people who need it most.

In a nutshell, disaster law refers to the laws and policies which regulate disaster and climate risk management, outlining activities and assigning roles, responsibilities and resources to effectively:

- reduce disaster risks;
- prepare for disasters (including public health emergencies);
- manage and respond to disasters (including both locally led disaster response operations as well as those supported by international disaster assistance); and
- recover from disasters.

The importance of domestic disaster laws, policies and plans is supported by three key international instruments: the Sendai Framework; the Sustainable Development Goals; and the Paris Agreement. There are also several treaties which contain obligations relating to disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response, and international disaster assistance.

What does IFRC Disaster Law do?

IFRC Disaster Law supports Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies (National Societies) and states in the field of disaster law, through technical assistance, capacity building, the development of tools, models and guidelines, advocacy, research and promoting the sharing of experiences and best practices between countries.

Our mandate on disaster law is established by successive resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent adopted by the states parties to the Geneva Conventions and the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

How does the work of IFRC Disaster Law contribute to the Four Key Pan-African Initiatives?

National Society Development

While good governance, good management, and good leadership systems are key for National Societies to be stable and sustainable, laws and policies also have a vital role to play in strengthening National Society Development (NSD) in Africa. Foundational legal frameworks are essential to a National Society effectively fulfilling its auxiliary role.

A strong, up-to-date Red Cross law is important as it provides the basis for the recognition of the auxiliary role of the National Society and may provide the National Society with specific legal facilities and exemptions that enable National Societies to conduct their operations more efficiently and effectively. Sectoral laws and policies are equally important, as they can allocate National Societies roles and responsibilities, seats within relevant decision-making committees and legal facilities in specific sectors, such as disaster and climate risk management, health, migration and protection.

IFRC Disaster Law works with National Societies to advocate for the development of disaster and climate related laws and policies which recognise their auxiliary role, as well as expressly outline their roles and responsibilities in relation to the support of their governmental authorities.

IFRC Disaster Law's key activities in NSD include equipping National Societies with the legislative advocacy skills required to advocate for the review of Red Cross laws and the review or development of disaster and climate related laws and policies; and strengthening their auxiliary role through trainings, the development of guidance documents, and the provision of technical support with respect to how to strengthen the auxiliary role through law and policy.

Red Ready

National Societies provide services to people in hard-to-reach communities across the region. The Red Ready initiative focuses on strengthening disaster operations management, coordination and accountability through localization and practical implementation of the outcomes of existing IFRC NSD approaches and other capacity building programmes.

To enhance the preparedness of National Societies for disaster response, laws and policies should reflect an all-of-society approach to disaster and climate risk management, including public health, thereby facilitating the inclusion of all relevant actors, including National Societies. For example, the inclusion of National Societies in national and local disaster risk reduction committees can ensure that relevant community needs are addressed, including those who are most vulnerable. Inclusion in these committees support sustained contact between a National Society and relevant public authorities at all levels, therefore enhancing coordination and even access to resources to support implementation of relevant activities.

IFRC Disaster Law supports National Societies to advocate for the development of disaster risk, climate risk and public health management laws, as well as their inclusion in the development of these laws to ensure their roles are expressly provided.

Tree Planting and Care

The Tree Planting and Care initiative aims to inspire African National Societies to plant and take care of at least 5 billion trees across Africa by 2030 with an intention to support ongoing efforts to address acute hunger and environmental degradation in the region. IFRC Disaster Law advocates for the development of climate-smart, comprehensive and integrated disaster risk management laws and policies which promote resilience and address all phases of a disaster. Disaster and climate risk laws and policies can promote and incentivise disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities, such as tree planting and care; assign roles and responsibilities ensuring a whole of government and whole of society approach; and allocate resources for these activities. This will not only ensure their sustainability but also guarantee a coordinated approach with various sectors such as planning and land use management, ensure the availability of resources to support these activities as well as guarantee community engagement.

Zero Hunger

The increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods are having devastating effects on food security in Africa. The Zero Hunger Initiative builds upon the experience of National Societies in responding to food security issues and is aimed at saving lives, protecting livelihoods, reducing poverty, and ensuring that at least 60 million vulnerable people are out of hunger by 2030.

In line with the Zero Hunger initiative, IFRC Disaster Law supports the development of laws aimed at risk reduction and climate change adaptation which include measures aimed at enhancing food security. Given National Societies' extensive experience in this sector, their involvement in these law development processes will ensure that key activities are expressly mandated and resourced (such as contingency planning, regular hazard and vulnerability mapping and risk assessments), and the involvement of key stakeholders (such as communities, the private sector and most importantly, National Societies). Involvement in these processes will also guarantee that at-risk communities are well targeted in public awareness programmes and that innovative approaches such as anticipatory action and Forecast-based Financing (FbF) are included to promote sustainable livelihoods, thereby increasing food security.



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About IFRC Disaster Law

IFRC Disaster Law works with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments to strengthen disaster risk governance, through the development and implementation of climate, disaster and emergency related legislation, policies and procedures.

With 20 years of experience supporting the development and implementation of disaster law and policy around the world, we are the global leader in disaster law technical advice to governments.

Disaster Law activities in Africa are supported by:

