



**SNAPSHOT**

# Strengthening disaster and climate risk governance in the Americas

In the Americas, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, governments and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) are working together to strengthen disaster and climate risk governance at national and local levels.

We support states strengthening disaster risk governance through the development of legal frameworks to address disaster and climate risks in a comprehensive manner.

This includes integration between general disaster risk management laws and those related to climate change adaptation.

A coherent approach at the domestic level is needed to meet states' closely related commitments under the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## Our call to action

In the face of a global climate emergency - it is clear - we need to strengthen disaster and climate risk governance through greater coherence across climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development agendas.

We call on governments and stakeholders to:

- Prioritise and support the strengthening of disaster and climate risk governance. Strengthened disaster and climate risk governance at national, regional and local levels is critical to manage increased weather-related risks we are facing. This includes involving communities in the design and implementation of laws and solutions that enable urgent climate action and facilitating climate finance to enable them to do this critical work.
- Develop and implement effective climate-smart disaster-related laws. This includes aligning laws and systems across the humanitarian, development, environment and climate sectors to ensure coherence, definition of roles and responsibilities of all actors, stronger coordination, and concrete impacts on the ground.
- Address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised people and communities in legal frameworks, including people in crises and those displaced, so that they are reached, informed and included in global, national and local decisions and plans, and their needs are met.

## Strengthening disaster and climate risk governance in the Americas

The Americas is a diverse region, which is often hit by disasters such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and public health emergencies. It also experiences the effects of global economic crises, armed conflicts, increased violence, migration and the outbreak of socio-political crises.

IFRC Disaster Law has worked in the Americas since 2007, conducting more than 20 in-country projects, resulting in the development of approximately 15 laws, policies or strategies related to national disaster risk management.

In the Americas, IFRC Disaster Law assists National Red Cross Societies and governments to develop and strengthen climate-smart disaster risk management laws and policies. We advocate for domestic laws and policies that effectively facilitate international assistance for major disasters and create an enabling environment for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response. Disaster law projects carried out across the five sub-regions of the Americas have helped to drive legal and policy change in twenty countries.

We also work with regional and sub-regional organisations to harmonise legal and policy frameworks across the region and strengthen coordination for regional response. In particular, we work with the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Relief (CAPRADE) and the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC).

Our work also contributes to strengthening the capacity of National Red Cross Societies in humanitarian diplomacy, legislative advocacy, their auxiliary role and disaster law. We train staff and volunteers using the IFRC's Legislative Advocacy Toolkit, resulting in the design and implementation of successful policy advocacy strategies.





## Country profile: Honduras

In November 2020, Hurricane Eta and Hurricane Iota directly affected millions of people in Honduras, severely affecting the livelihoods, health, water, sanitation and hygiene systems of people already facing an economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the hurricanes tore through the country, the National Congress of Honduras passed a new law to ensure laws and regulations are in place for national and international agencies to better respond to disasters. The new law will facilitate international humanitarian aid to support the hurricane response and other disasters and crises in the future.

The adoption of the new law follows many years of research and advocacy by Honduran Red Cross. The Honduran Red Cross and community groups have long recognised the vulnerability of Honduras to disasters – in particular, many Hondurans are at risk of losing their livelihoods following a natural disaster such as Hurricanes Eta and Iota. To address this issue, the Honduran Red Cross prepared a legal study of disaster law in Honduras in 2016. The study was used to advocate for a new disaster law – the ‘rules of the road’ in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

A working group was established, comprising 16 government institutions, the United Nations and civil society organisations. The Honduran Red Cross and the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO), with the support of IFRC Disaster Law, began official talks with members of the Government of Honduras to highlight the need to work on a draft bill. At the meeting, a joint commitment was made to integrate a group of experts accompanied by an adviser to the National Congress, who would begin drafting a preliminary bill based on existing disaster law.



In 2017, with technical support from IFRC Disaster Law, the Honduran Red Cross started working closely with the Government of Honduras, drafting a bill to ensure that the necessary laws and regulations are in place for national and international agencies to better respond to disasters.

The new law incorporates key elements of international disaster response law (IDRL) and the IDRL Model Act, a tool developed by IFRC Disaster Law to address the common legal issues relating to international disaster response. It is the first law based on the IDRL Model Act to be adopted in the Americas. Between 2020 and 2022 the IDRL Law' Regulation has been developed by the IDRL Honduras working group and is expected to be validated before the end of 2022.

## 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.

