

**Submission by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
on operationalising the Santiago Network**

**15 March 2022**

The recent IPCC WGII report is very clear: losses and damages are happening today, and will continue even with limited warming and best efforts to adapt. The Summary for Policy makers states that *human-induced climate change, including more frequent and intense extreme events, has already caused widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people. With increasing global warming, losses and damages will increase and additional human and natural systems will reach adaptation limits (high confidence). Near-term actions that limit global warming to close to 1.5°C would substantially reduce projected losses and damages (...) compared to higher warming levels, but cannot eliminate them all (very high confidence).* In addition, *effective adaptation does not prevent all losses and damages. The IPCC also notes that losses and damages are unequally distributed across systems, regions and sectors and are not comprehensively addressed by current financial, governance and institutional arrangements, particularly in vulnerable developing countries. With increasing global warming, losses and damages increase and become increasingly difficult to avoid, while strongly concentrated among the poorest vulnerable populations (high confidence).*

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) comprises 192-member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, a secretariat in Geneva and more than 60 delegations strategically located to support activities around the world. We reach over 67 million people through long-term services and development programmes, and over 32 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes.<sup>1</sup> Our volunteers and staff confront the realities of loss and damage every single day, and are deeply concerned about future humanitarian needs arising from the climate crisis.

As a participant in the UNFCCC process as an intergovernmental organisation, we welcome the opportunity to submit views on the development of the institutional arrangements of the Santiago Network in accordance with relevant COP and CMA decisions. IFRC input is organized around the recommendations outlined below. IFRC views are further reinforced through separate submissions by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, the Adaptation Research Alliance, the Risk Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) and Climate Risk Early Warning System (CREWS) initiative.

**i. Operational modalities**

***Recommendation: the operational modalities must be coordinated with adaptation efforts, build on prior experience in addressing losses and damages, and have flexibility to evolve based on learning***

The technical assistance to be catalyzed by the Santiago Network must be well coordinated with adaptation efforts that also seek to reduce and avoid climate-related impacts. Where unavoidable impacts

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<sup>1</sup> See Everyone Counts report (2019), IFRC

and residual losses and damages occur (both extreme and slow onset, economic and non-economic losses), despite best efforts to adapt, reduce disaster risk, and build resilience, the Santiago Network must be able to deliver timely technical assistance to frontline communities addressing these losses and damages.

The humanitarian community has a long experience in addressing losses and damages (or more specifically, the impact of disasters) which can be leveraged through the Santiago Network to support countries in averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage. However, in addition to drawing on existing knowledge and expertise, it will be important for the Santiago Network to maintain a flexible, adaptable, evidence-based approach that allows for adjustment of functions based on learning over time of what has worked well and not so well.

***Recommendation: Ensure that support reaches the most vulnerable people, and ensure meaningful engagement with and support for local actors***

The success of the Santiago Network will ultimately be determined by the extent to which meaningful support and action is provided to those most in need and at risk. The Network must ensure support reaches the most vulnerable people, especially including those living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (for an analysis of climate vulnerability and countries not receiving the support they need see IFRC, [World Disasters Report 2020](#), Chapter 6). Its work must be guided by *principle of leaving no one behind*, taking into account local and indigenous communities' perspectives.

Technical assistance must support locally-led, demand-driven, sustainable and long-term solutions that are not contingent on the availability of financial resources. Empowerment of local communities to address losses and damages directly through the provision of skills, knowledge and resources to address losses and damages they experience will help to ensure actions are tailored to and respectful of lived experience and local realities.

To ensure this happens, the Santiago Network must make concerted efforts to draw in and engage with local organizations that are working directly with people at risk. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the IFRC stand ready to facilitate such engagement if and when necessary.

## **ii. Structure**

***Recommendation: Establish a light coordinating entity with adequate resourcing***

The Santiago Network should comprise three components: An advisory board, a light coordinating entity, and the network itself made up of organisations, bodies, networks and entities (OBNEs). The Advisory Board, representative of the broader network, would help to guide the direction of the SNLD and set the direction of the Network's activities. A small coordinating body can support implementation of SNLD activities. This body should be guided by the need to ensure activities are coordinated, coherent - and critically - meet local needs and engage local actors to the extent possible. In order to help ensure country-driven processes that are aligned with local context and needs, in-country focal points should serve as a link between developing countries and the Santiago Network, coordinating the implementation of

countries' requests for support, similar to the role played by the CTCN's National Designated Entities (NDEs) and NAP focal points. Focal points can also serve as a link between developing countries and local stakeholders, including government institutions, humanitarian partners such as National RCRC Societies, and the private sector. The OBNEs would then provide the requested technical assistance.

***Recommendation: the coordinating entity should be a small team hosted within an existing institution inside or outside the UNFCCC***

As outlined in the submission by the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, of which IFRC is a member, the Santiago network should be hosted within an existing institution inside or outside the UNFCCC, that can objectively and impartially support affected countries, and engage with Santiago Network members at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. The IFRC offers its support to whichever entity is established in achieving its objectives.

***Recommendation: Funds to the Santiago Network to deliver requested technical assistance should be dedicated to the national and local level, through a simplified access funding window***

For this proposed structure, adequate financial resources will be required. Clearly, additional financial resources will also be required for implementation of technical assistance. Any initiative to establish a fund to finance day-to-day operations of Santiago Network should dedicate adequate resources to deliver requested technical assistance from national and local stakeholders. National and local stakeholders seeking technical assistance would greatly benefit from a simplified access funding window that avoids the business-as-usual accreditation standards of UNFCCC climate funds, which can create barriers for national stakeholder access and ownership. Furthermore, funding allocation should be driven by stated needs for technical support rather than donor priorities. At this time, IFRC does not take a position on the structure of the fund nor any appropriate Fund Manager relationship.

iii. **Possible elements for the terms of reference of a potential convening or coordinating body that may provide secretarial services to facilitate work under the Santiago network**

***Recommendation: ensure the TOR has clear objectives around supporting the most vulnerable countries and communities***

Currently the poorest people are paying the greatest cost when it comes to dealing with losses and damages. It is important that the TOR has clear objectives around supporting those most in need, the most vulnerable countries and communities and the poorest people and communities. Explicit reference to the importance of reaching the most vulnerable communities that are particularly likely to experience losses and damages, both economic and non-economic, should be made in the context of the Network's operational modalities, even if people live in places that are unstable and affected by armed conflict and violence. We refer to the ICRC's submission on the Santiago Network for more details on the latter point.

***Recommendation: Ensure that the ToR promotes coherence, including with the disaster risk reduction and humanitarian communities, and at the national level, and explicitly connects with other relevant networks and partnerships***

Not only does action to tackle losses and damages require locally-led solutions, it must also be connected, coordinated, and coherent across existing processes as well as OBNEs. This includes the disaster risk reduction and humanitarian communities. It will be important to bring together communities working in these areas, and draw on long-standing expertise and experience on disaster risk management practitioners, rather than create parallel process and networks. In that respect, we propose that the Santiago Network modalities include close engagement with the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), the Anticipation Hub, the Centre of Excellence for Climate and Disaster Resilience, and others, including pooled financing mechanisms like CREWS. The objectives of REAP are similar to the proposed objectives of the Santiago Network, and we refer to REAP's submission on the Santiago Network and their lessons learned for consideration, especially with regard to the Marketplace function.

At the national level, a lack of coherence between various ministerial department planning process is a serious obstacle to taking action to avert, minimize and address losses and damages. Strong linkages between NAPs, NDCs, national disaster planning, and other ongoing development planning processes are essential for providing support and taking action. National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, with their global presence and strong connection to local communities' needs, as well as their auxiliary role to governments are well placed to offer practical support to the Network to enhance synergies between various actors.

***Recommendation: Ensure the ToR focuses on responding quickly and at-scale to requests for technical support***

Too often, national systems working to support those most in need and at greatest risk are already overstretched. For this reason, the SNLD must be simple and accessible while remaining sufficiently agile to respond quickly and at scale based on developing country requests.

**IFRC support to the Santiago Network**

The IFRC will seek to engage and support the Santiago Network in achieving its objectives, drawing on years of practical experience of our National Societies working on disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response in communities all over the world as well as on the technical expertise of our Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. We are concerned that insufficient support and action to minimize, avert and particularly to address losses and damages already occurring and set to occur in the future will stretch the humanitarian system beyond a breaking point, and further erode the capacity of the poorest and most vulnerable to respond to losses and damages with dignity and agency. Losses and damages are already being incurred today, and the price is already being paid in terms of loss of lives, livelihoods, assets and infrastructure; degraded ecosystems; displacement and forced migration, as well as challenges to adapt. We look forward to the immediate operationalisation of the Santiago Network so that the needed technical assistance can begin to reach the poorest and most vulnerable people at the frontlines of this climate and humanitarian crisis.