



In collaboration with



ESCAP 80th session of the Commission

22 - 26 April 2024, United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok

Side Event on Digitalizing humanitarian assistance

Time:	12:45 – 13:45 Bangkok time
Date:	Thursday 25 April 2024
Mode of meeting:	Hybrid
Venue:	Conference room 4, Level 1, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok and online connection via Microsoft Teams
Online:	Join online
In person registration ¹ :	https://indico.un.org/event/1007591/

Background

The eightieth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be held from 22 to 26 April 2024 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. Guided by the theme “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”, the eightieth session will be an opportunity to strengthen region-wide cooperative action on leveraging digital innovation for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Over the last years we have experienced an escalating number of protracted crises in Asia Pacific, exacerbated by a changing climate, which have far-reaching impacts across various aspects of society, including environmental degradation, human health, economic losses, displacement, migration, and loss of livelihoods.

Against this background of increasing humanitarian needs, particularly in a context of inequality and exclusion, we recognize how technology and digital innovations could help reduce gaps in accessing

¹ All participants attending side events in person are required to register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/1007591/>. Please select “side event participants” under Representation Type when you register. Kindly note that side event organizers and participants will obtain the badges which can access only meeting rooms designated for the side events.



humanitarian aid, prevent and respond to disasters and contribute to accelerate the progress towards sustainable development.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in partnership with the Thai Red Cross Society, the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Center (APDRC) will host a side event to highlight the importance of digitalization in humanitarian assistance, particularly in disaster management and at the community level. While advocating for inclusive, accessible early warning systems and access to humanitarian aid, we recognize how improved digital capabilities will contribute to reach this goal. The event aims to raise awareness and promote the use of digital technologies and leverage technological opportunities, across the humanitarian assistance, with the aim of being more efficient in disaster preparedness (early warning systems, forecasting, anticipatory action) and disaster response (access, community reach).

Objectives

- Raise awareness about the digital divide in community-level humanitarian action.
- Highlight the impact of inadequate technology and digital tools, focusing on how early warning systems' shortcomings can negatively affect vulnerable groups' ability to prevent, prepare for, survive, and recover from disasters, leading to increased inequalities and the perpetuation of existing social norms.
- Elevate the digital data skills of humanitarian actors to enhance their impact within communities across the network and beyond.
- Strengthen the digital capabilities and resources at community-level, especially those with the lowest levels of data and digital capacity, to improve their foundation for humanitarian action.

Expected outcome

Increase awareness on how new technologies and digital innovations can contribute to improve humanitarian assistance, through more efficient disaster preparedness and disaster response.

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Co-organizers/partners

- **Ms. Kathryn Clarkson**, IFRC Head of Delegation, Country Cluster Delegation for Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and Permanent Observer of IFRC to UNESCAP
- **Mr. Bunrak Saraggananda**, Director of Information Technology and Digital Bureau, Thai Red Cross Society
- **Mr. Supharek Thawillarp (Pai), MD, DrPH**, Deputy Director, Information and Communications, Technology, Ministry of Public Health
- **Ms. Atsuko Okuda**, Regional Director International Telecommunication Union, ROAP
- **Ms. Okhee Kim**, Director, Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Centre.

Audience

All participants of the Committee session, members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies movement, UN Agencies, governments, and Ministries.

Format of the side event

25 April 2024, 12:45 – 13:45 (Bangkok Time) in Conference Room 4, Level 1, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok and virtually via [Microsoft Teams](#).

In-person Registration: <https://indico.un.org/event/1007591/>

Virtual link: [Meeting](#)

Contact information

For more information, please contact Cindy Le Ky Huong, Corporate Services and Partnerships Coordinator, IFRC (cindy.lekyhuong@ifrc.org) or Alexandra Magaloff, Humanitarian Diplomacy Senior Assistant, IFRC (alexandra.magaloff@ifrc.org).



Agenda Items

12:45 – 12:50

Welcome remarks by Kathryn Clarkson, Head of Delegation, IFRC Bangkok

12:50 – 13:30

Panel Discussion with statements from :

- **Mr. Bunrak Saraggananda**, Director of Information Technology and Digital Bureau, Thai Red Cross Society
- **Dr. Supharek Thawillarp (Pai), MD, DrPH**, Deputy Director, Information and Communications, Technology, Ministry of Public Health
- **Ms. Atsuko Okuda**, Regional Director International Telecommunication Union, ROAP
- **Ms. Okhee Kim**, Director, Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Centre.

13:30 – 13:40

Open discussion moderated by Alexandra Magaloff, Humanitarian Diplomacy, IFRC

13:40 – 13:45

Closing of side-event by Kathryn Clarkson, Head of Delegation, IFRC Bangkok