



STATEMENT BY Ms KATHRYN CLARKSON

Head of IFRC Country Cluster Delegation for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam

And Permanent Observer of IFRC to UNESCAP

ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND

RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and our 52 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia Pacific, we welcome the opportunity to strengthen efforts in the region to leverage digital innovation for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Asia Pacific region is continuing to face an increase in disasters and protracted crises exacerbated by climate change, resulting in far-reaching impacts, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized; and inhibiting progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The most vulnerable people, including women, children, people with disabilities and elderly, are also the same ones that are being excluded by the digital divide, their lack of access to technology significantly limiting their ability to receive early warning information about imminent disasters and adequately prepare themselves, directly increasing the risk of loss of life and livelihoods. Technology and digital innovation is also essential for people to access humanitarian assistance, wherever they are. Ensuring digital connectivity for communities or people on the move, will bolster the speed and dignity of humanitarian assistance, ultimately saving more lives.

The IFRC is focused on digitally transforming to enhance the relevance, speed, quality and accessibility of humanitarian services for those in need, using the unique position of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to connect directly with communities.



We urge governments and partners to increase focus on bridging the digital divide to more effectively reach communities at higher risk of disasters. Our collective investment in improved digital capabilities will assist people to receive and respond to early warning information more effectively, which is necessary if we are to ensure all people can access early warning information by 2027 as part of the Early Warnings for All initiative.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to invite you all to discuss this further during our side event on Thursday organized in collaboration with the Thai Red Cross Society, Thai Ministry of Health and ITU to promote the utilization of digital technologies for humanitarian assistance.

Thank you very much.