

Mr. Peter Felten
Launching Event IFRC Forecast-based Action by the DREF
07. Mai 2018, 10.30h-13.15h
CICG, Geneva

Keynote Speech

Dear Secretary General As Sy,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to be part of this important launching event of Forecast-based Action by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund of IFRC.

Since the very beginning the German humanitarian assistance has been – not only following but actively supporting – the development of this Forecast-based Action by the DREF and the Forecast-based Financing mechanism in general.

Forecast-based Financing, or in short FbF, is the main tool for us at the German Federal Foreign Office to operationalize anticipatory humanitarian action.

Such an anticipatory humanitarian assistance is urgently needed as only reacting to disaster cannot be the answer anymore, if we consider the rising risks of climate change.

We do see climate change and the related rising extreme weather risks undoubtedly among the biggest humanitarian challenges of our century.

The annual number of natural disasters is continuously growing. The biggest part of this rise in disaster numbers is related to extreme weather events, mainly flooding and storm events.

Millions of people are already suffering from the consequences of climate change such as food insecurity, water shortage and the destruction of livelihood.

Considering the current climate change predictions, we have to expect that the frequency and magnitude of such weather related disasters will further increase in the future.

Therefore we also must change the way how we are planning and delivering humanitarian assistance. Waiting for the disasters to happen should not be an option anymore.

Increasing climate risks call for innovative solutions in order to use scarce humanitarian resources more efficiently and more effectively.

Germany has acted early in that respect. Climate change and disasters related to extreme weather events are already a very important topic for our humanitarian assistance – especially in the context of our risk reduction and preparedness engagement.

Already in 2014, GER has launched a special Climate Action Plan within its humanitarian assistance, which is coordinated by the German Red Cross.

Our main aim in the past years has been to implement a paradigm shift towards a forward-looking, anticipatory humanitarian assistance and to operationalize the so called early warning early action approach.

Based on this early warning early action approach, we want to enable our humanitarian partners and vulnerable communities to make preparations before disasters strike.

Together with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement we have taken major steps in the past years to develop and integrate innovative risk financing approaches.

Forecast-based Financing is at the center of these innovative risk financing approaches and can have a significant impact on the lives of vulnerable populations.

It will be presented to you in more detail shortly during this event, also highlighting specific case studies and success stories.

In close cooperation with our partners and other donors, we have supported the development of the FbF mechanism to enable the release of funding to humanitarian actors for risk reduction and preparedness actions well before disaster happen.

We are very satisfied to see that such anticipatory approaches are now becoming increasingly and rapidly introduced into existing financing instruments of the humanitarian system, such as the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund within IFRC.

We are proud to support the establishment and implementation of Forecast-based Action by the DREF.

There is a confirmed need for such a dedicated Forecast-based funding mechanism to finance targeted preparedness measures based on risk thresholds and available extreme weather forecasts.

Forecast-based Action by the DREF is a logical next step to ensure predictable, reliable and sustainable supply of funding within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for early preparedness actions, before disaster strikes.

The integration of Forecast-based Action within the DREF will operationalize the important window of opportunity between a

forecast trigger and a potential disaster. It will widen the focus from response to anticipatory humanitarian action.

The development of the Forecast-based Action is also in line with the discussions of the Grand Bargain, which highlights the need for new and innovative ways to address the humanitarian financing gap.

A financial mechanism resting on science-based forecasts and early warnings supports the shift to forward-looking innovation for preparedness and early warning.

Forecast-based Action by the DREF will allow National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to anticipate the potential humanitarian impacts of disasters and to respond faster and more targeted to extreme weather forecasts in the future.

Addressing disaster risks and the adverse effects of climate change is a huge challenge in front of us all.

At the same time we note that the international community and the international humanitarian system are increasingly becoming aware of the urgency of this matter.

And we note that initiatives such as Forecast-based Financing are bearing fruit and can make a difference. FbF can improve financial planning in the humanitarian sector and clarify responsibilities for early action.

We believe that FbF has the potential to revolutionize international disaster risk reduction in a way that previous efforts to improve the links between early warning and early action have not.

To have a significant impact, however, forecasts need to be integrated in an even more systematic way into humanitarian and risk reduction work.

And FbF will need to be adopted at large scale, building on existing humanitarian delivery channels and strengthening these, and draw on a range of financing mechanisms.

Therefore we are also looking forward to advancing corresponding FbF instruments within the NGO context in cooperation with the START Network and in the UN context in cooperation with OCHA, for example looking specifically at early action within the CERF.

Germany is convinced that we need such comprehensive approaches to reduce humanitarian needs in relation to climate and disaster risk.

I invite you all to join our activities in the context of Forecast-based Financing and anticipatory humanitarian action and to support these initiatives also in your working environment. I hope very much that today's launching event will support anticipatory approaches that can complement each other and trigger a change within the humanitarian system.

There is no good humanitarian assistance without anticipatory action and there is no good humanitarian donorship without an anticipatory component.

Thank you very much for your interest in this topic.

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