



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

Non-confidential / public feedback

THEMATIC CONCEPT PAPERS

Interactive Dialogue 1: Water for Health

I. Introduction

In situations of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV), the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) faces serious challenges. And the delivery of water and sanitation services, related directly to SDG 6 is particularly affected. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is intimately familiar with both situations of conflict, protracted crises and how they impact the delivery of essential services. It is essential that the Conference includes the people living in such contexts.

In 2022, the total population of countries listed as fragile and, or affected by violence and fragility is close to a billion¹. Meanwhile the number of people directly in need of humanitarian assistance rose above 270 million². The pressure on water supply, sanitation services and fresh-water resources in situations of conflict and armed violence comes on top of pre-existing pressures due for example, to demographic growth, increased consumption, climate change, pollution, or under-development. This combination of factors means that the issue is not only the slow implementation of SDGs, but also often their actual reversal, the loss of decades of development gains and the enormous challenges of recovery when faced by crises that are all too often protracted, prolonged and cyclical. Situations of fragility hamper the early stages of development, prevent relevant investments, and often forces services providers and governments into rapid growth without enough resilience. Crises and shocks at best stop development in its track, but more generally directly destroy previous gains, in particular in armed conflicts. Prolonged, protracted and cyclical crises initiate pernicious cycles of degradation that frequently lead to the further loss of decades of previous development efforts and successes. In turn, the lack of resilience pre-crisis and the

¹ World Bank data on FCVs: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/F1>

² Global Humanitarian Overview 2022: https://reliefweb.int/topics/global-humanitarian-overview-2022?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlg6r-vve--wIVyYXVChOfTwXWEAAAYASAAEgLyOPD_BwE



ICRC

limitations of crisis response can lead to enormous challenges for post-crisis recovery, at a moment when development programs and SDG implementation is most critical.

Access to water and sanitation was recently recognized as a human right but in addition to that, and in times of armed conflicts, access to essential services is first and foremost protected in the frame of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the laws of armed-conflicts.

Respect of IHL and the protection of essential services delivery by parties to conflicts are necessary conditions for the continuation of service delivery, the effective delivery of humanitarian water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs or effective post-crisis recovery. They are also therefore directly connected to a central goal and outcome of WASH program; better public health, reduction of the risk of epidemics and spread of water related diseases.

II. Overview of the challenge, current status and interlinkages

In contexts of FCV, the following challenges affect the adequate delivery of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services or even can lead to their degradation or collapse with severe consequences in terms of public health:

- Lack of respect for IHL; direct or indirect effects on service delivery.
- Exclusive or excessive attention to infrastructure (hardware) only (inadequate consideration of service delivery as a whole, inclusive of infrastructure but also people (capacity, access) and consumables).
- Persistence of multi-sectoral silos, e.g., between WASH and health professionals, clusters, ...
- Lack of reliable baseline data, in particular epidemiological, for assessments, program designs and monitoring and evaluation of impact.
- Focus of health professionals on curative healthcare, primary / secondary healthcare, communicable diseases, insufficient interest, and attention on public health.

III. Overview of opportunities for progress and transformative solutions

Addressing and incorporating root causes in programs: e.g., link WASH programs to protection agendas. Promote adherence to IHL, advocate for an essential service approach rather than an infrastructure centric approach. Include environmental damages in this approach.



ICRC

1. **Financing**

Equitable financing: i.e., a just balance between developed, developing, and fragile settings. Preventive investments: Make no-regret investments in preventive measures and resilience building. Consider an all-hazards approach. Make relevant and significant sanitation investments.

2. **Data and information**

In context of FCV, where the traditional generation of information and data can be challenged, in particular when it comes to public health or epidemiology, explore and support alternative approaches anchored in new technologies (e.g. tapping into big data to derive public health indicators). Explore options such as promoting the use of methodologies like Health Impact Assessment to ensure infrastructure is designed for health impact.

3. **Capacity development**

Promote the development of local capacities; protect and preserve the capacity of local service providers, support the development of their resilience to crises, their own capacity to respond to crises and put them at the centre of recovery and, or development efforts.

Promote development approaches that are anchored in science, technology but that remain inclusive of local knowledge and traditional know-how.

Work at bridging existing knowledge and practice gaps between various sectors, and actors; Health / WASH, Humanitarian / Development, ...

4. **Innovation**

-

5. **Governance**

-



IV. Recommendations

In all interactive dialogues, the ICRC calls for the reservation of a space, in discussions and proceedings, dedicated to the particular case of contexts of FCV.

The ICRC recommends that the outcomes of the World Water Forum 2022, in Dakar, “a blue deal” for water security and sanitation for peace and development³, be taken into consideration throughout the UN Water Conference 2023.

V. Guiding Questions

Do traditional approaches to SDG implementation have a sufficient level of granularity that allows for sufficient tailoring to different contexts and development stages?

Are those traditional approaches, and associated financing, adequate for contexts of fragility, conflict and violence? How could they be optimized and further developed to become more effective, sustainable and inclusive of local capacities?

³ World Water Forum 2022, Dakar: <https://mailchi.mp/worldwaterforum/dakar-declaration-declaration-de-dakar?e=3e7186d860>



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

Non-confidential / public feedback

THEMATIC CONCEPT PAPERS

Interactive Dialogue 2: Water for Development

I. Introduction

In situations of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV), the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) faces serious challenges. And the delivery of water and sanitation services, related directly to SDG 6 is particularly affected. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is intimately familiar with both situations of conflict, protracted crises and how they impact the delivery of essential services. It is essential that the Conference includes the people living in such contexts.

In 2022, the total population of countries listed as fragile and, or affected by violence and fragility is close to a billion¹. Meanwhile the number of people directly in need of humanitarian assistance rose above 270 million². The pressure on water supply, sanitation services and fresh-water resources in situations of conflict and armed violence comes on top of pre-existing pressures due for example, to demographic growth, increased consumption, climate change, pollution, or under-development. This combination of factors means that the issue is not only the slow implementation of SDGs, but also often their actual reversal, the loss of decades of development gains and the enormous challenges of recovery when faced by crises that are all too often protracted, prolonged and cyclical. Situations of fragility hamper the early stages of development, prevent relevant investments, and often forces services providers and governments into rapid growth without enough resilience. Crises and shocks at best stop development in its track, but more generally directly destroy previous gains, in particular in armed conflicts. Prolonged, protracted and cyclical crises initiate pernicious cycles of degradation that frequently lead to the further loss of decades of previous development efforts and successes. In turn, the lack of resilience pre-crisis and the

¹ World Bank data on FCVs: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/F1>

² Global Humanitarian Overview 2022: https://reliefweb.int/topics/global-humanitarian-overview-2022?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlg6r-vve--wIVyYXVChOfTwXWEAAAYASAAEgLyOPD_BwE



ICRC

limitations of crisis response can lead to enormous challenges for post-crisis recovery, at a moment when development programs and SDG implementation is most critical.

Access to water and sanitation was recently recognized as a human right but in addition to that, and in times of armed conflicts, access to essential services is first and foremost protected in the frame of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the laws of armed conflicts.

Respect of IHL and the protection of essential services delivery by parties to conflicts are necessary conditions for the continuation of service delivery, the effective delivery of humanitarian water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs or effective post-crisis recovery. They are also therefore directly connected to a central goal and outcome of WASH program; better public health, reduction of the risk of epidemics and spread of water related diseases.

II. Overview of the challenge, current status and interlinkages

In contexts of FCV, the following challenges affect the adequate long-term sustainable development of WASH services or can even lead to reversals of development gains:

- Lack of respect for IHL; direct or indirect effects on service delivery. Short term direct impact and long-term cumulative impact.
- Exclusive or excessive attention to infrastructure (hardware) only (inadequate consideration of service delivery as a whole, inclusive of infrastructure but also people (capacity, access) and consumables).
- Duration of states of FCV, typically prolonged, protracted and, or cyclical, making the necessary sustained long-terms actions difficult. Development actors may lose access and relationships, totally or partially, and may be unable to reconnect for long periods, therefore losing considerable knowledge and gains. Humanitarian actors may find themselves acting on the ground for years, or even decades, instead of the traditionally foreseen short response timeframes.
- Building resilient systems, infrastructures, or governance structures ahead of crisis is excessively difficult in FCV contexts. Recovering from shocks equally so.
- Despite much work on the topic, and clear needs, such gaps as the humanitarian / development divide are persistent and traditional models of aid still have to be adapted.



ICRC

III. Overview of opportunities for progress and transformative solutions

In recent years and in contexts of FCV many new approaches for the effective sustainable delivery of WASH programs have been tested and are proving effective and promising. This includes a wide range of coordination and cooperation mechanism, new forms of partnerships and new financing models.

1. Financing

Several New Financing Models are emerging that can support more effective delivery of sustainable development goals in the field of Water and Sanitation. Return or non-return seeking investments. New models of bonds, loans or grants. Multiyear flexible schemes. Blended or parallel financing.

Many of these new models are particularly promising in FCV contexts, where both the traditional long-term development and the short-term humanitarian models are showing limitations.

As existing funding mechanisms for both humanitarian and development sectors are not compatible, these new models allow to concretize the humanitarian-development nexus through innovative financing approaches

2. Data and information

-

3. Capacity development

Partnerships between Humanitarian and Development actors offer a major operational opportunity to strengthen responses and to better anticipate or recover from crises. The combination of the expertise of local actors and populations with that of humanitarian and development actors allows to consolidate but also strengthen a broader scope of response, from immediate urgent needs towards long-term sustainable solution. It also allows for constructive diversity in every aspect, from approaching water management system, to developing creatives solutions, multiyear planning, maintaining preparedness and contingency plans.

4. Innovation

-



5. Governance

-

IV. Recommendations

In all interactive dialogues, the ICRC calls for the reservation of a space, in discussions, proceedings and commitments, dedicated to the particular case of contexts of FCV. In this ID 2, we recommend that some space be allocated to exploring specific solutions for such contexts, including how to concretely and effectively bridge some of the existing gaps between humanitarian and development phases.

The ICRC recommends that the outcomes of the World Water Forum 2022, in Dakar, “a blue deal” for water security and sanitation for peace and development³, be taken into consideration throughout the UN Water Conference 2023.

V. Guiding Questions

Do traditional approaches to SDG implementation have a sufficient level of granularity that allows for sufficient tailoring to different contexts and development stages?

Are those traditional approaches, and associated financing, adequate for contexts of fragility, conflict and violence? How could they be optimized and further developed to become more effective, sustainable and inclusive of local capacities?

³ World Water Forum 2022, Dakar: <https://mailchi.mp/worldwaterforum/dakar-declaration-declaration-de-dakar?e=3e7186d860>



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

Non-confidential / public feedback

THEMATIC CONCEPT PAPERS

Interactive Dialogue 3: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment

I. Introduction

In situations of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV), the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) faces serious challenges. And the delivery of water and sanitation services, related directly to SDG 6 is particularly affected. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is intimately familiar with both situations of conflict, protracted crisis and how they impact the delivery of essential services. It is essential that the Conference includes the people living in such contexts.

In 2022, the total population of countries listed as fragile and, or affected by violence and fragility is close to a billion¹. Meanwhile the number of people directly in need of humanitarian assistance rose above 270 million². The pressure on water supply, sanitation services and fresh-water resources in situations of conflict and armed violence comes on top of pre-existing pressures due for example, to demographic growth, increased consumption, climate change, pollution, or under-development. This combination of factors means that the issue is not only the slow implementation of SDGs, but also often their actual reversal, the loss of decades of development gains and the enormous challenges of recovery when faced by crisis that are all too often protracted, prolonged and cyclical. Situations of fragility hamper the early stages of development, prevent relevant investments, and often forces services providers and governments into rapid growth without enough resilience. Crises and shocks at best stop development in its track, but more generally directly destroy previous gains, in particular in armed conflicts. Prolonged, protracted and cyclical crises initiate pernicious cycles of degradation that frequently lead to the further loss of decades of previous development efforts and successes. In turn, the lack of resilience pre-crisis and the

¹ World Bank data on FCVs: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/F1>

² Global Humanitarian Overview 2022: https://reliefweb.int/topics/global-humanitarian-overview-2022?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIg6r-vve--wIVyYXVChOfTwXWEAAAYASAAEgLyOPD_BwE



ICRC

limitations of crisis response can lead to enormous challenges for post-crisis recovery, at a moment when development programs and SDG implementation is most critical.

Out of the 25 countries deemed most vulnerable to climate change, 14 are mired in conflict. People in fragile and conflict-affected countries may be among those most requiring support for climate action but are often left out.

Governments in these countries often have only a limited capacity to comply with climate finance requirements. Governments often lack functioning structures to develop comprehensive responses and channel financial resources to the local level because of institutional weaknesses. In addition, accredited development actors and intermediaries may not be present. There is already a noticeable financing gap between stable countries and those that are affected by conflict or other violence, or in a state of fragility. Unless strong efforts are made to address this disparity, the gap will only continue to grow, exacerbating people's vulnerability and humanitarian needs.

The effects of climate change on rural areas can be severe and directly related to water resources, in turns affecting agriculture and livelihood, be it with too little (drought) or too much (flood) water: in Somalia (as of May 2022), 90% of the country faces drought, 1.4 million children are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition. Crops fail, water levels are depleted, and livestock is lost. Over 270,000 have left their homes in search of food and water. In Northern Mali, pastureland is shrinking at an alarming rate as a result of climbing temperatures and weaker rainfall. Herders travel longer distances with their animals to find grazing land and water. However, this becomes impossible when conflict prevents them from moving safely. Herders became trapped in place and might watch their most valuable asset die.

The effects of climate change on urban areas can be equally challenging, especially in contexts of FCVs where the level of basic services is already low and in particular when it comes to access to water, food, housing, sanitation and hygiene and health.

Fragility, conflict and violence often lead to direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on the water sector: Field experience suggests that the cumulative impact is the most destructive and the most difficult to recover from. This is typically due to the large scale of the infrastructural rehabilitation work needed to restore any service or combination of services in urban areas. In Syria, a country at high risk of climate change, more than ten years of conflict have seriously damaged the water-supply network, reducing supply by between 30 and 40 % and devastated the energy sector, reducing production by around 70%. These ten years of conflict a rich in illustration about resilience of essential services, but they have also brought entire systems much closer to their breaking points. In Ukraine, warfare is in large proportion urban. In Mariupol and other cities, people were or still are trapped by heavy combat and were or still are sheltering in unheated basements. With no running water, some have turned to melting snow or to using the water from radiators.



II. Overview of the challenge, current status and interlinkages

In contexts of FCV, climate change and environmental damages exacerbate almost every challenge:

- The weakening of institutions and their ability to respond to shocks and crises
- The redirection of attention to security at the detriment of securing and protecting essential services
- The restriction of mobility, including that of services providers, and of the population.
- The exposure of displaced persons' settlement to extreme weather events (droughts, temperature, storms, floods...).
- The access to natural resources and the perennity of these resources.
- Damages to the infrastructures/ environment/livelihood system
- The forced use of non-sustainable alternatives, such as groundwater.
- The shifting of pollution control to a second priority.

III. Overview of opportunities for progress and transformative solutions

Key entry points to address upcoming climate change and environmental degradation challenges in FCVs contexts include the acknowledgement of:

- The sheer scale, and duration of the challenge.
- The multifaceted interconnectivity of essential services, such as water, sanitation, power supply.
- The direct impacts of crises as well as the cumulative and indirect impacts.
- The challenges faced as a result of lack of respect for the rules of International Humanitarian Law.

1. Financing



ICRC

Accurately look at the significant shortcomings and financing gaps in FCV contexts, funding that do not match the duration or scale of the needs, that stand far behind that in other contexts and most often does allocate enough to adaptation measures.

The majority of climate finance is going to mitigation rather than adaptation but, with a high vulnerability to the compounding impacts of climate change and conflict, the need for adaptation – and adaptation finance – in FCV countries is much higher than the need to reduce their very limited contributions to global climate change.

Crucially, the current institutional design of most multilateral climate funds is not compatible with conflict-affected countries, as they are setting high requirements on due diligence, monitoring and compliance by national governments and are not equipped to manage the risks related to projects in conflict-affected settings. Specific mechanisms should be explored.

Opportunities for addressing the challenges presented in FCV contexts are summarized in the report by the ICRC and others on climate financing “Embracing discomfort”³, and grouped in four macro areas:

- Approach risk differently to enable climate change adaptation in places affected by conflict.
- Enable climate adaptation writ large and small: deliver at multiple scales and with diverse actors.
- Work better together: optimize complementary mandates and expertise across different sectors of the international aid architecture.
- Address structural divisions and silos that hinder informed action.

2. Data and information

Generate quality data and information, specific to FCV contexts, and inclusive of financing, to allow accurate identification of gaps, generate evidence and quality analysis.

3. Capacity development

Partnerships between Humanitarian and Development actors offer a major operational opportunity to strengthen responses and to better anticipate or recover from crises. The combination of the expertise of local actors and populations with that of humanitarian and development actors allows to consolidate but also strengthen a broader scope of response, from immediate urgent needs towards long-term sustainable solution. It also allows for

³ [“Embracing discomfort. A Call to Enable Finance for Climate-Change “](#)



ICRC

constructive diversity in every aspect, from approaching water management system, to developing creative solutions, multiyear planning, maintaining preparedness and contingency plans...

4. Innovation

Innovation does not always need to be creating new complex or sophisticated solutions. It can be the creation of very simple technology, or simply allowing sufficient flexibility in action, or in funding for local actors to tailor response to the problems and challenges they actually face. Or just find a new or better adapted way of doing the same thing.

Humanitarian and development actor's expertise, combined with local knowledge can contribute to adaptation, mitigation and resilience building and to innovative new ways to approach old but increasing issues:

- Use of Solar systems (solar pumping, solar fridges, solar lighting ...etc.)
- Improved water resource management; groundwater use, rainwater harvesting, storage, aquifer recharge, leakages detection and repair, networks optimization, wastewater re-use, ...
- Use of local materials and incorporation of traditional construction techniques
- Integrated agriculture, improved irrigation methods

5. Governance

-

IV. Recommendations

Acknowledgement: Acknowledge the high vulnerability to climate risks of countries enduring conflict due to their limited adaptive capacity.

Preparation: We need prepare for the impacts of climate change. The ICRC calls for full support for programs aimed at increasing the resilience of essential services, including water, to climate shocks.

Partnership: The ICRC believes that a strong partnership needs to be forged between humanitarian, development actors, peace building communities, financing stakeholders together with local service providers and local communities, to strengthen the resilience of essential services before and during protracted crises.



ICRC

Climate Action: Live up to international commitments to bolster climate action in countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which entails strengthening climate action in countries

Climate Finance: Enduring conflict and violence, ensure that this action is adequately supported by fit-for-purpose and accessible climate finance.

V. Guiding Questions

Do traditional approaches to SDG implementation have a sufficient level of granularity that allows for sufficient tailoring to different contexts and development stages?

Are those traditional approaches, and associated financing, adequate for contexts of fragility, conflict and violence? How could they be optimized and further developed to become more effective, sustainable and inclusive of local capacities?



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

Non-confidential / public feedback

THEMATIC CONCEPT PAPERS

Interactive Dialogue 4: Water for Cooperation

I. Introduction

In situations of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV), the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) faces serious challenges. And the delivery of water and sanitation services, related directly to SDG 6 is particularly affected. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is intimately familiar with both situations of conflict, protracted crisis and how they impact the delivery of essential services. It is essential that the Conference includes the people living in such contexts.

In 2022, the total population of countries listed as fragile and, or affected by violence and fragility is close to a billion¹. Meanwhile the number of people directly in need of humanitarian assistance rose above 270 million². The pressure on water supply, sanitation services and fresh-water resources in situations of conflict and armed violence comes on top of pre-existing pressures due for example, to demographic growth, increased consumption, climate change, pollution, or under-development. This combination of factors means that the issue is not only the slow implementation of SDGs, but also often their actual reversal, the loss of decades of development gains and the enormous challenges of recovery when faced by crisis that are all too often protracted, prolonged and cyclical. Situations of fragility hamper the early stages of development, prevent relevant investments, and often forces services providers and governments into rapid growth without enough resilience. Crises and shocks at best stop development in its track, but more generally directly destroy previous gains, in particular in armed conflicts. Prolonged, protracted and cyclical crises initiate pernicious cycles of degradation that frequently lead to the further loss of decades of previous development efforts and successes. In turn, the lack of resilience pre-crisis and the

¹ World Bank data on FCVs: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/F1>

² Global Humanitarian Overview 2022: https://reliefweb.int/topics/global-humanitarian-overview-2022?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlg6r-vve--wIVyYXVChOfTwXWEAAAYASAAEgLyOPD_BwE



ICRC

limitations of crisis response can lead to enormous challenges for post-crisis recovery, at a moment when development programs and SDG implementation is most critical.

In that context, the respect of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), of the Laws of Armed Conflicts (LOAC) and the protection of essential services delivery by parties to conflicts are paramount, and necessary conditions for the continuation of service delivery, the effective delivery of humanitarian water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs or effective post-crisis recovery.

II. Overview of the challenge, current status and interlinkages

Despite broad endorsement of IHL and LOACs principles, by states and non-state actors, water and sanitation services, water resources and infrastructure are almost inevitably affected by conflicts. Directly or indirectly, unintentionally or as tactics of warfare. The most vulnerable, such as women, children, minorities, people with disabilities, are usually the most affected.

A non-exhaustive list of the challenges to the delivery of essential services to populations in FCVs includes:

- Direct attacks on infrastructure or deprivations of access.
- Indirect and reverberating effects of hostilities.
- Impact on service providers, loss of personnel, rain drain, inability to continue capacity building, loss of revenue and funds.
- Impact on material assets; import and transport of spare parts, specialized material, consumables.
- Negative impact on the civilian population of international sanctions and restrictive measures.
- Inability of countries in FCVs situation to further negotiate or monitor transboundary water agreements and treaties.

III. Overview of opportunities for progress and transformative solutions

Re-affirm commitment to respect international laws: There is an existing strong body of laws applying to the protection of essential services and of the environment with IHL as a central and comprehensive piece in situations of conflict.

Recent commitments, such as expressed for example in UNSC Resolution 2573, provide both reminders of existing frameworks and propositions for broader and more protective interpretations (for example such as the consideration of long-term, indirect and reverberating effects or the expansion of the focus from infrastructure to “people and consumables”).



ICRC

1. **Financing**

-

2. **Data and information**

-

3. **Capacity development**

-

4. **Innovation**

-

5. **Governance**

There is a growing consensus that the ongoing conflicts are having an immense impact on essential services. It is essential to change the way hostilities are conducted if we want to safeguard public health and avoid generating unbearable costs for the reconstruction or repair of these systems.

IV. Recommendations

In all interactive dialogues, the ICRC calls for the reservation of a space, in discussions and proceedings, dedicated to the particular case of contexts of FCV. Discussion on cooperation around water, sanitation and other essential services must reserve a central place to the IHL framework.

The ICRC recommends that the outcomes of the World Water Forum 2022, in Dakar, “a blue deal” for water security and sanitation for peace and development³, be taken into consideration throughout the UN Water Conference 2023.

Recent resolutions, such as UNSC Resolution 2573 (2021) could provide an excellent backbone, or at least a set of key considerations, to an interactive dialogue on cooperation.

³ World Water Forum 2022, Dakar: <https://mailchi.mp/worldwaterforum/dakar-declaration-declaration-de-dakar?e=3e7186d860>