

## **Low spending to prevent disasters exposes poor: Red Cross**

*Megan Rowling*

*Thomas Reuters Foundation*

*"Investing in resilience is the best method we have for protecting the lives, livelihoods and dignity of the world's most vulnerable people"*

BARCELONA/DAKAR, Oct 13 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Tens of millions of people around the world are exposed to predictable and preventable disaster risks because of a lack of investment to help them deal with threats, from earthquakes to storms and conflicts, the Red Cross said on Thursday.

The [World Disasters Report 2016](#), issued by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said only 40 cents in every \$100 of development aid is spent on preparing for disasters and making them less likely to happen.

At the same time, the world faces growing challenges - including a major migration crisis, disease outbreaks and climate change - that cannot be resolved by responding to humanitarian emergencies after they arise, it said.

"Business as usual is no longer acceptable. It will only lead to more silent suffering and deeper poverty," said IFRC Secretary General Elhadj As Sy. "Investing in resilience is the best method we have for protecting the lives, livelihoods and dignity of the world's most vulnerable people."

Report editor David Sanderson, who is a professor at the University of New South Wales in Australia, highlighted the need to ensure communities become stronger after a disaster, not just recover to the position they were in beforehand.

"Bouncing back is no good if the place was unprepared before. The point is about making things better," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation on the sidelines of the report's launch in Dakar.

The report cited Mozambique, which has drawn on its experiences of a flood disaster in 2000 that killed 800 people to put in place an effective disaster management system, including early warning, and to develop new legislation.

The southeast African nation is an example of "bouncing forward", where people use a disaster to find new opportunities to become more resilient, the report added.

"That's a shift in thinking," said Sanderson. "The aid community don't do this enough."

<http://news.trust.org/item/20161013090236-thh4l/>

Here are some facts and figures from the report, which includes data on disasters in 2015, collected by the Belgium-based Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters:

\* Between 1991 and 2010, disasters in poor countries resulted in \$846 billion of financial losses. Yet in the same period, only \$13.6 billion - 0.4 percent of the \$3.3 trillion spent on international development aid - was dedicated to disaster prevention or risk reduction.

\* In 2015, the number of disasters caused by natural hazards, including earthquakes and weather extremes, was 371, close to the annual average of 375 for the decade beginning in 2006.

\* Floods were the most frequent natural disaster cause in 2015, numbering 154, followed by storms at 114, which was the highest in the decade.

\* Droughts triggered 33 disasters in 2015, which was the warmest year on record and also affected by a strong El Nino climate pattern. The number of droughts was the highest for the decade and 38 percent above its annual average.

\* The number of deaths caused by natural disasters in 2015 was 22,724, the fifth highest of the decade. The deadliest disaster was the Nepal earthquake in April 2015, which killed more than 8,800 people. The numbers of people dying from floods and storms were the lowest in the decade.

\* Of the 108 million people affected by natural disasters in 2015, around half were hit by drought, a third by floods and 10 percent by storms.

\* The cost of natural disasters in 2015 was \$70.3 billion, which was the third lowest for the decade and 50 percent below the annual average.

Source: IFRC World Disasters Report 2016

(Reporting by Megan Rowling in Barcelona and Kieran Guilbert in Dakar; editing by Katie Nguyen and Laurie Goering. Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, women's rights, trafficking, property rights and climate change. Visit <http://news.trust.org>)