



## A humanitarian and environmental initiative: The Environmental Emergency Preparedness Programme

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### Programme Outline



*"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail"* Benjamin Franklin



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## Mission statement

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Green Cross International's Environmental Emergency Preparedness Programme is dedicated to saving lives as well as reducing environmental damage and economic losses caused by industrial accidents. It aims to empower local level actors and advocate for environmental emergency preparedness among all stakeholders at the global level.

## A humanitarian and environmental initiative

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The Environmental Emergency Preparedness Programme was launched at the "Rio + 20" United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in June 2012. It has both humanitarian and environmental dimensions. The programme focuses on building and reinforcing local capacities in developing countries, to prepare for industrial/technological accidents and other man-made disasters.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY ?

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A sudden disaster or accident resulting from technological, human-induced or natural factors, or a combination of these, that causes environmental damage as well as economic and human losses. Such an emergency may manifest itself as an industrial or a technological accident notably with the release of hazardous chemicals into the air, land or water.

### PREPAREDNESS ?

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The capacities and knowledge developed by governments, professional organizations, industrial companies, communities and individuals to anticipate and respond effectively to the impact of hazardous events. Preparedness activities may include contingency planning, communications, information management, coordination arrangements, personnel training, community drills and simulation exercises, evacuation plans, public education, awareness raising and strengthening of local skills.

### GREEN CROSS INTERNATIONAL

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Green Cross International (GCI) is an environmental organization founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993. GCI is a non-profit and non-governmental organization that works to address the interconnected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of advocacy, campaigns and local projects. GCI is present in about 30 countries and has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Green Cross International is well placed to engage in the area of disaster preparedness. While there are a number of non-governmental organizations active in the area of preparedness for natural disasters, there is hardly any international NGO assisting developing countries with building preparedness capacity at the local level with regard to such environmental emergencies as industrial and technological accidents.

Please find more details on GCI at the last page of this document.





## Why is this crucial to prepare for emergencies?

The world has seen a dramatic increase in the frequency and magnitude of natural and man-made disasters that have severe effects on lives, livelihoods and the environment. Environmental emergencies result in the death and displacement of many people, as well as substantial economic, social and ecological damage.

Costs of responding to disasters have risen almost ten-fold between 1992 and 2008, and are expected to rise even more. In 2012 alone, \$186 billion in economic losses were recorded and approximately 14,000 lives were lost as a result of emergencies. The same year, 318 catastrophic events occurred, of which 168 were natural catastrophes and 150 were man-made disasters such as industrial and technological accidents, according to the latest sigma study of Swiss Re (the Swiss Reinsurance Company). The impact of disasters, when all costs are calculated, can represent major losses for all countries.

As more and more people and assets are located in areas of high risk, there is increasing need for measures to be taken at the national and local levels to improve risk management and preparedness for environmental emergencies. As preparedness for effective response is identified as one of the specific gaps and challenges in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), new investments need to incorporate disaster risk reduction and mitigation measures, otherwise exposure to risk will continue to rise.

In order to meet sustainable development goals, risk management and preparedness measures have to address, in particular, the environmental aspects of disasters and accidents such as ecological degradation, pollution, disaster waste etc. Properly maintained industrial sites, together with well-prepared adjacent communities and protected ecosystems, contribute to cost-effective disaster risk reduction and local resilience.

Local communities are at the forefront of responding to various emergencies, including man-made disasters. Reducing risk at the local level therefore is fundamental. The importance of closely involving local governments and communities in the design and implementation of preparedness measures in the context of sustainable development is generally recognized. In particular, the Aarhus Convention declared "sustainable development can be achieved only through the involve-

ment of all stakeholders". It is universally recognized that effective preparedness can save lives and money, and the strengthening of disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels is one of the five priorities for action adopted by the HFA.

While preparedness is everybody's responsibility, civil society and non-governmental organizations have a prominent role in building capacities of local authorities and communities.

Taking into account a strong need to assist communities in developing countries with preparedness for environmental emergencies, Green Cross International is implementing a dedicated programme on preparedness, which addresses emergencies at the local level. It is believed that this programme would be attractive to donors, as it is supposed to deliver practical results on the ground by reducing the lives lost and human suffering from emergencies, as well as decreasing disaster-related environmental and economic losses. Such a programme is able to demonstrate to donors that an adequate preparedness can produce very good returns on investment.

The programme will generate a broader involvement of civil society, concerned industries, private sector, corporate associations and non-governmental organizations in international efforts to address risk management and preparedness for environmental emergencies. It is expected that as a result of the implementation of this programme, local capacities would be significantly reinforced to enable them to adequately respond to emergencies without the need for international assistance.

The programme's geographical coverage is global, targeting developing countries and countries in transition in all regions. The programme is based on three main pillars:

# Pillar 1. Capacity Building For Environmental Emergency Preparedness At Local Level



Green Cross International is initially designing projects in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America, which aim at building preparedness capacity of local authorities, communities and relevant organizations for environmental emergencies, including industrial/technological accidents. Programme activities include the development of community emergency plans for specific sites, the organization of seminars to exchange experience in industrial accident prevention, preparedness and response, as well as the development of materials to support training and capacity building activities.

The main target beneficiaries are communities living near the selected sites, as they will greatly benefit from improved safety and preparedness. This process will make local authorities aware of various risks and hazards and enable them to act in a swift and focused way. Local authorities will also benefit from acquiring first-hand experience in emergency preparedness and contingency planning. Industrial and private business partners will benefit from knowledge and capacity building on chemical safety and local emergency preparedness - particularly companies located within and nearby the selected sites.

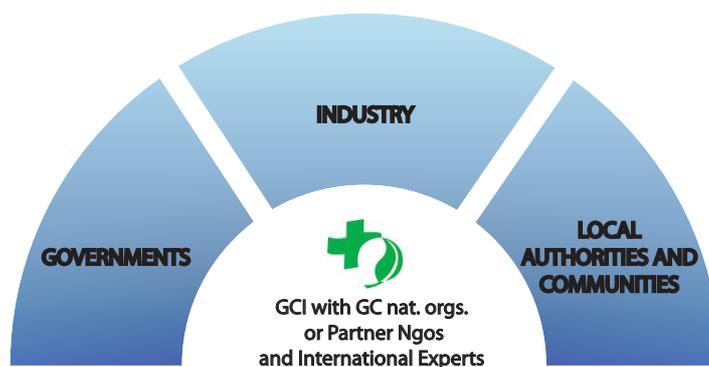


Fig.1: Stakeholders involved in Green Cross preparedness projects

It is expected to attain the following results:

- Enhanced capacity of local authorities, communities and relevant organizations for environmental emergency preparedness;
- Increased awareness of hazards and risks at a local level;
- Improved understanding and experience of local authorities in creating and implementing community emergency plans;
- Lessons learned on bridging gaps between local populations and industrial companies;
- Basis for replicating experience in other locations and countries;
- Decreased reliance on international emergency assistance.

Whenever possible, projects will be implemented in partnership with UNEP's Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL) programme using its methodology. In countries where Green Cross National Organizations exist, activities will be carried out jointly with these organizations. A typical duration of a project is two-three years and all projects involve high-caliber international experts in the field of environmental emergencies and capacity building.

## Pillar 2. Partnership On Integrated Approach To Prevention, Preparedness For And Response To Environmental Emergencies



### A global partnership

The issue of emergency preparedness is too large to be addressed by any single entity, and it requires the concerted efforts of all sectors of an increasingly interconnected globalized world. Therefore, it is planned to implement the programme in close cooperation with relevant partners in the NGO community, Governments, the UN system, the private sector (industrial companies, insurance or reinsurance companies) with a view to create a synergy and set up a comprehensive system for the preparedness of environmental emergencies.

This partnership aims to strengthen international co-operation for better management of environmental emergencies and to promote the integration of relevant activities into international strategies and assistance programs related to sustainable development. Green Cross International is a key stakeholder in this partnership. As such, it is developing links and interactions with and between local actors involved in environmental emergencies preparedness. Activities under the partnership are aimed at improving the dialogue among various stakeholders and actors involved in environmental emergency preparedness at local level, as well as enabling cooperation and reinforcing synergies among local entities in different countries.

### The key-role of the private sector

Green Cross International attaches a great significance to the role of the private sector in the realization of the objectives of its programme. A constructive dialogue and partnerships between GCI, industries and insurance or reinsurance companies can be a powerful lever for achieving their respective missions.

Green Cross International does not see the private sector as simply a source of funding. Helping local populations to improve their own abilities in disaster management by establishing local mechanisms and processes for identifying, assessing, preventing, preparing and responding to various potential industrial accidents, cannot be done without the private sector's active involvement.

Insurance and reinsurance companies should find a strong interest in this programme, as preparedness initiatives significantly reduce the economic costs of accidents, in addition to saving lives and alleviating the environmental impact of accidents. In addition, insurance and reinsurance companies could act through GCI as instigators to plead for the importance of preparedness when dialoguing with industrial companies and to incite business partners to democratize such processes.



Industrial and private business partners will benefit from knowledge and capacity building on local emergency preparedness with a better communication with the local authorities, which could reinforce corporate social responsibility actions and create an improved image, as a result of their transparency and actions taken to protect populations from accidents.

In this connection, GCI is enhancing dialogues and willing to establish partnerships with the industrial sector and the insurance sector so as to promote the integration of preparedness for environmental emergencies at the local level in corporate policies and practices. GCI can by example help businesses adopt practices that avoid and minimize impacts of accidents and generate benefits for people living in proximity to industrial sites. One of GCI roles would be advising the private sector, particularly in support of small and medium enterprises in developing countries. In particular, GCI can facilitate access to expertise and its network of experts. Thus, a pragmatic dialogue and partnership with the private sector is one of the cornerstones of GCI Programme of Environmental Emergency Preparedness.



## Pillar 3. Advocacy And Policy Development

The increasing incidence and severity of environmental emergencies continue to seriously affect populations and slow down the attainment of sustainable development goals. Much more should be done in raising awareness of environmental disasters and their impacts, as well as the importance of preparedness.

For this reason, the third pillar covers a broad area of "Advocacy and Policy Development". Its purposes are to ensure the necessary high-level political engagement in the important area of environmental emergencies, generate ideas and support the development of concrete initiatives on key issues of environmental emergencies, and facilitate the creation of multi-stakeholder coalitions to launch such initiatives.



Fig.2: GCI's Founding President Mikhail Gorbachev with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon

In this connection, GCI intends to enhance dialogues with governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector, so as to mainstream the issue of environmental emergencies into the overall process of sustainable development. GCI will also make efforts to garner the necessary political and financial support to facilitate a coherent approach to preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies. In particular, GCI will encourage and facilitate the highest level of engagement of many actors and stakeholders in the area of environmental emergencies. It is expected that a set of ideas and strategies would emerge on how the international community could work collectively to address fundamental issues and emerging challenges of environmental emergencies.

### Green Cross events

Another important mean of advocacy and awareness building on environmental emergencies is a tripartite partnership of GCI, OCHA and UNEP "The Green Star Awards". The Green Star Awards recognize those who have made remarkable efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to environmental disasters around the world. Notably those who worked tirelessly to prevent such crises, and established measures to brace for their impact. The information on these Awards can be found on the GCI website.



In May 2013, Green Cross is organizing a side event at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva, together with UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), UNEP (UN Environment Programme) and UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe). The event, sponsored by the SDC (Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation), aims to highlight environmental emergencies as one of priorities in disaster risk reduction, and to encourage more effort to address the environmental aspects of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and its success. The event will also demonstrate how adequate national and local preparedness mechanisms can contribute to a continuous sustainable development process, particularly in least developed countries. In addition, Green Cross will promote its Environmental Emergency Programme on an "Ignite" stage during the Platform in order to raise awareness on preparedness at local level for emergencies, in particular industrial accidents.



## Green Cross is present in:

Argentina	Denmark	Poland
Australia	Estonia	Russia
Austria	France	Spain
Belarus	Ghana	Sri Lanka
Bolivia	Hungary	Swaziland
Brazil	Italy	Sweden
Burkina Faso	Japan	Switzerland
Canada	Republic of Korea	Taiwan
Côte d'Ivoire	Netherlands	Ukraine
Czech Republic	Pakistan	USA

Note: We are able to work globally thanks to several partnerships with other NGOs and organizations

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