



NORTH AMERICAN
HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE SUMMIT



NORTH AMERICAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE SUMMIT (NAHRS) PROJECT

SUMMIT MEETING REPORT

March 14-15, 2018

PREPARED BY GLOBAL EMERGENCY GROUP

Langdon Greenhalgh, Engagement Manager
Aliisa Paivalainen, Project Manager
Lorraine Rapp, Subject Matter Expert
Drew Souders, Project Support

COMMISSIONED BY THE **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

1. Introduction

There exist many different efforts (laws, legal authorities, compacts, memoranda of understanding, projects) related to strengthening cross border support during crises in North America. However, there is limited comprehensive understanding of these various efforts beyond the entities directly involved. This silo approach across the three countries (Canada, Mexico and the United States), combined with significant bureaucratic barriers, will likely impede response efforts during a potential catastrophic disaster response when the rapid flow of humanitarian assistance (professional personnel, equipment and supplies) is required to save lives and reduce suffering.

The North American Humanitarian Response Summit (NAHRS) project represents a unique effort to improve the effectiveness of cross-border response to a potential catastrophic disaster in North America. NAHRS is implemented by the American Red Cross in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross and Mexican Red Cross, and with the participation of those countries' respective federal, state and provincial government entities involved in disaster response. NAHRS objectives include:

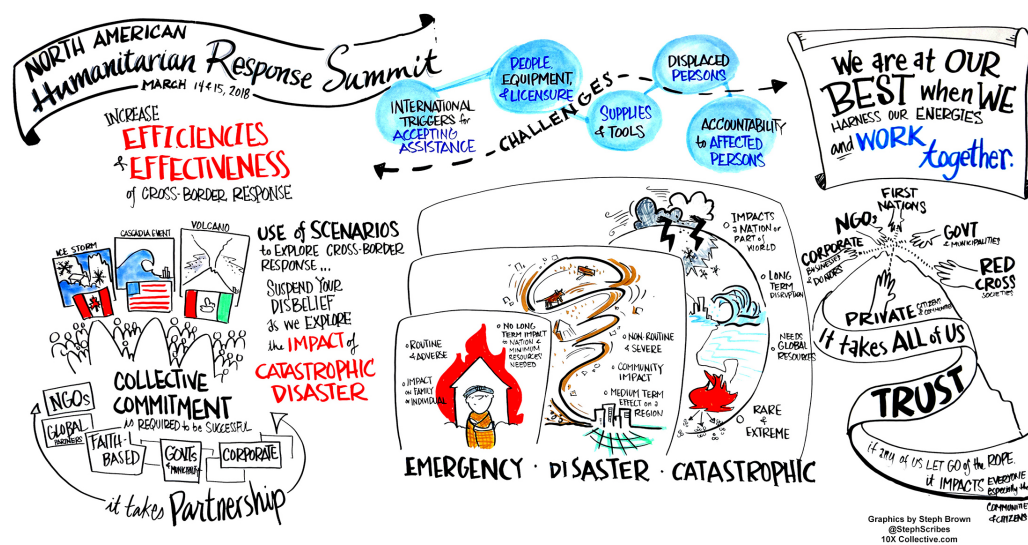
- Identifying barriers and relevant work completed to date;
- Working to improve communication, coordination, collaboration, diplomatic relations and the exchange of ideas amongst all major parties involved; and
- Identification of clear and quantifiable next steps to prepare for a major catastrophic response.

The NAHRS project was initiated on September 26th-27th, 2017 with a convening meeting at the American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, DC for NAHRS stakeholders from Canada, Mexico and the United States (US). The meeting socialized the project's goals and laid the foundation for the remainder of the effort. After the convening meeting, three preparatory meetings were held. One preparatory meeting each in Canada, US and Mexico to focus on country-specific barriers, gaps and solutions to cross border coordination while also identifying opportunities for support during catastrophic disaster responses. The Mexico Preparatory Meeting was held December 7-8th, 2017 in Mexico City; the US Preparatory Meeting was held January 17th-18th, 2018 in Tucson, Arizona and the Canada Preparatory Meeting took place February 13th-14th, 2018 in Ottawa, Canada. The findings and recommendations collected from each Preparatory



Meeting were presented at the culminating event, the North American Humanitarian Response Summit (the Summit) convened in Washington, DC, on March 14-15th, 2018. More than 130 attendees from the three National Red Cross Societies; their respective federal, state, provincial, and local government entities; academic institutions and partner organizations assembled to assess findings of the NAHRS project and plot a course for the future. Strategic and tactical recommendations were discussed and next steps were outlined.

Figure 1 – Graphic Recording of an Overview of the NAHRS Process



2. Summit Methodology

The Preparatory Meetings centered on an interactive Table Top Exercises (TTX), in which facilitators presented a different catastrophic disaster scenario specific to each country so as to engage participants in considering the triggers, requirements and protocols related to international cross-border assistance from North American partners. The disaster scenario used for each country were as follows:

- Mexico: ‘Popocatépetl Eruption Scenario,’ in which the Popocatépetl volcano erupts at an unprecedented magnitude. In the simulation, the ‘super volcano,’ which lies 70km from Mexico City, kills 500,000 persons and affects another 10 million people, effectively overwhelming the Mexican national response systems¹.
- USA: ‘Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) Earthquake and Tsunami Scenario,’ in which a 9.6 magnitude earthquake along the CSZ, centered approximately 95 miles west of Eugene, Oregon severely impacts the west coast of the US².
- Canada: ‘Mega Ice Storm in Canada Scenario’ in which extreme meteorological conditions result in a massive winter storm impacting Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa. The scenario included unprecedented levels of snowfall and ice, debilitating the region and all three cities³.

The use of an extreme event helped participants imagine a situation in which national response capacities would be completely overwhelmed and have devastating economic and social impacts, presenting difficult moral dilemmas related to the prioritization of needs and requiring international assistance. The TTX provided a frame for ensuing plenary and group discussions that were divided

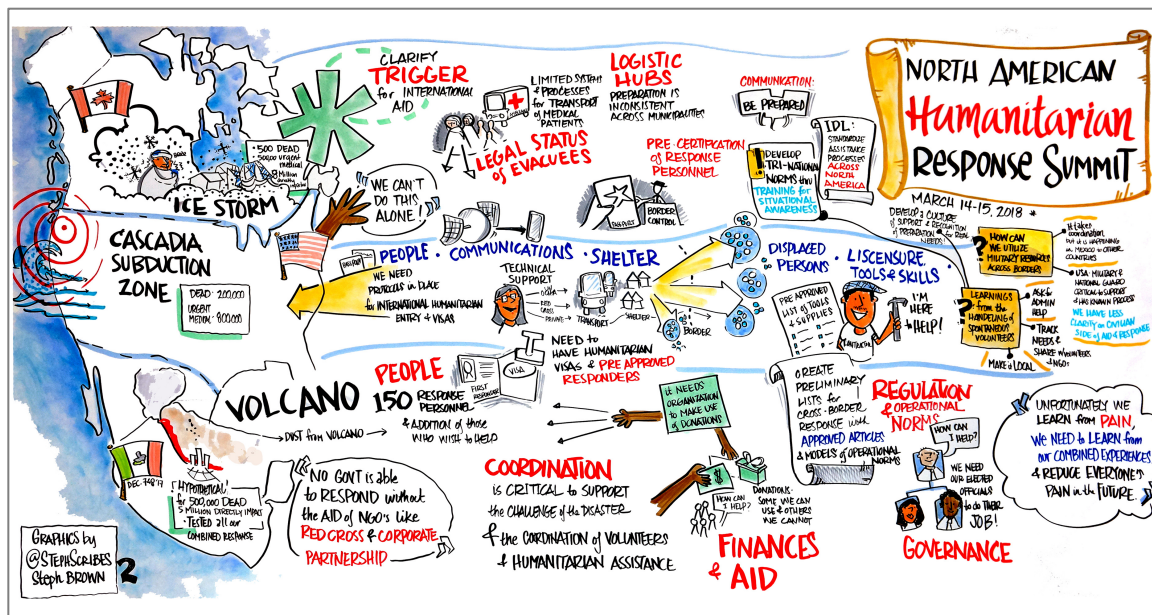
¹ Mexico Preparatory Meeting Report, December 7-8, 2017

² United States Preparatory Meeting Report, January 17-18, 2018

³ Canada Preparatory Meeting Report, February 13-14, 2018

into four different sessions. Participants were divided into groups, where they collaborated to work through TTX injects using an interactive online platform developed by Global Emergency Group (GEG) in partnership with the Urban Resilience Platform (URP). Facilitators supported each group as they worked through questions related to NAHRS key topic areas, making note of central challenges and themes presented across groups.

Figure 2 – Graphic Recording of Preparatory Meetings Findings



The result of each Preparatory Meeting was a series of country-specific defined challenges, solutions and next steps identified for improving the coordination of international response during catastrophic disasters in North America, as they relate to each country. The NAHRS topic areas covered during each Preparatory Meeting were:

1. Determination of national requirements and triggers for accepting and facilitating international support
2. Cross border movement of professional response personnel, their equipment & licensure issues
3. Cross border movement of humanitarian supplies and tools
4. Displaced persons issues related to the movement of people from one country to another due to a disaster (either due to the threat of a disaster or following the occurrence of a disaster)
5. Accountability to affected persons

Each of these topic areas was covered in-depth during the TTX. The conversations and insights from these sessions supported development of a series of challenges and solutions. From this preparatory process, five (5) strategic and five (5) tactical recommendations were developed to summarize and prioritize the solutions identified. The prioritized challenges and solutions from each Preparatory Meeting were triangulated for common themes and recommendations for the Summit. The strategic and tactical recommendations from the preparatory meetings were presented at the Summit for participant input, feedback, finalization and implementation planning. The summarized recommendations from the preparatory meetings presented at the Summit were as follows:

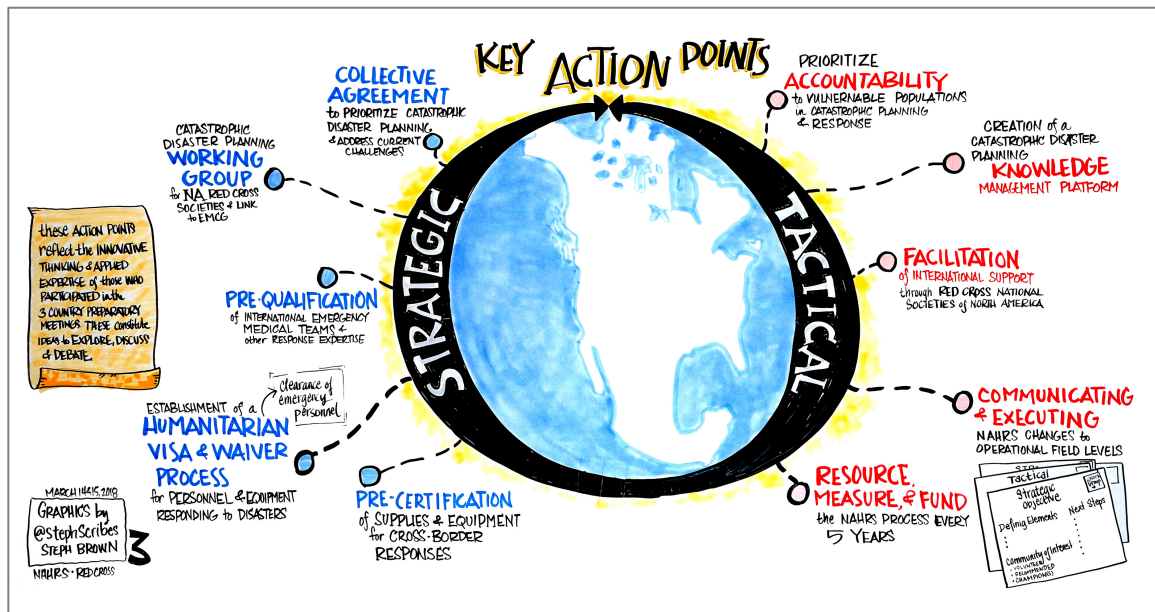
Strategic Recommendations⁴:

1. Collective Agreement to Prioritize Catastrophic Disaster Planning and Address Current Identified Challenges.
2. Creation of a Catastrophic Disaster Planning Working Group (CDPWG) for North American Red Cross Societies and Linking it to the Emergency Management Consultative Group (EMCG).
3. Pre-Qualification of International Emergency Medical Teams (and Other Response Expertise)
4. Establishment of a Humanitarian Visa and Waiver Process for Personnel & Equipment Responding to North American Catastrophic Disasters.
5. Pre-Certification of Supplies and Equipment for Cross-Border Responses.

Tactical Recommendations:

6. Prioritize Accountability to Vulnerable Populations in Catastrophic Planning & Response.
7. Creation of a Catastrophic Disaster Planning Knowledge Management Platform⁵.
8. Facilitation of International Support through Red Cross National Societies in North America.
9. Communicating and Executing NAHRS Changes to Operational Field Levels.
10. Resource, Measure and Fund the NAHRS Process Every Five Years.

Figure 3 – Graphic Recording of the Summarized Recommendations from the Preparatory Meetings



During the two days of the Summit, breakout groups engaged in spirited dialogue as they considered the recommendations (separated as strategic and tactical recommendations) from the preparatory meetings to address the identified challenges along with definitions, communities of interest and next steps related to the corresponding action points. Each breakout group during the

⁴ Key Action Points for the North American Humanitarian Response Summit, March 3, 2018

⁵ This tactical recommendation is complete. The knowledge management platform is accessed at <https://www.preparecenter.org/content/north-american-humanitarian-response-summit-nahrs>.

Summit focused on one (1) strategic recommendation and one (1) tactical recommendation from the above list. Participants were then asked to re-examine the solutions presented, to redefine them (if required) and to suggest concrete action steps and commitments for communities of interest for each solution topic with designated lead organizations. For notes captured from each strategic and tactical recommendation, see Section 3 below.

A graphic recorder provided live-scribing of the event to assist in documenting in an engaging manner the results of the Summit. For a list of all graphic recordings over the two days of the Summit, please see *Annex A*.

3. Refining Recommendations & Key Findings from the Summit

3.1 Strategic Recommendations

Original Strategic Recommendation #1: Collective Agreement to Prioritize Catastrophic Disaster Planning and Address Current Identified Challenges. The NAHRS process highlighted the current challenges related to catastrophic disaster response. The NAHRS process and its participants collectively should recognize the importance of catastrophic disaster planning and support actions to address as many of the identified challenges as possible, as rapidly as possible.

Consolidated NAHRS Working Group Feedback and Findings:

- Building a consortium should take place at two (2) stakeholder levels:
 - 1) Government/Authorities level (either federal, state/province, indigenous communities, local) and
 - 2) Other Entities: the Red Cross National Societies, civil society, NGOs private sector, donors, academia, military, INGOs (ex. IFRC, ICRC, UN).
- Related to the above strategic recommendation, there is a need to further define the term 'catastrophic.'
- There is the need to conduct an additional mapping exercise of existing policies, lessons learned and gaps that have already been identified and addressed.
- For this process to move forward, stakeholders should consider negotiating a formalized agreement that could be in the form of a Treaty, Memorandum of Understanding, operational document, trilateral agreement or charter.
- A five (5) year plan should be formulated for the future process.
- A continued knowledge management strategy is required with consistent monitoring and/or updating.
- Funding for this process should be linked to a mapping process/exercise.



Next Steps for this process should include:

- Creation of a Senior Leadership Group (ex. executive steering committee).
- Creation of a working group (this would include legal experts).
- Creation of a Terms of Reference at three levels: 1) NAHRS 2.0 2) Senior Leadership Group and lastly 3) the Working Group or sub working groups.

Original Strategic Recommendation #2: Creation of Catastrophic Disaster Planning Working Group (CDPWG) for North American Red Cross Societies and Linking it to the Emergency Management Consultative Group (EMCG). Seizing upon the opportunity presented in the tripartite MOU between the North American Red Cross Societies, the American, Canadian and Mexican Red Cross Societies should stand-up a new working group, the Catastrophic Disaster Planning Working Group (CDPWG) with equal participation and leadership. This CDPWG should prioritize and resource catastrophic disaster planning in North America. Recognizing the important role that the government led Emergency Management Consultative Group plays in North America and relative to the topic of catastrophic disaster policy, the newly constituted CDPWG should seek to interface directly with the EMCG at the policy and operational levels (as applicable). A representative of the CDPWG should be included in the new Health & Working Group within the EMCG.

Consolidated NAHRS Working Group Feedback and Findings:

- A common definition of 'catastrophic' as it applies to the NAHRS definition needs to be more fully realized.
- The committee or working group should incorporate national and policy levels.
- This initiative overall should stress a 'tripartite' agreement between the three National Societies.

Next Steps for this process should be to:

- Decide on a name for the Working Group.
- Get buy-in from the three (3) Red Cross National Societies.
- Create a linkage and meeting interface with the Emergency Management Consultative Group.

Original Strategic Recommendation #3: Pre-Qualification of International Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) and Other Response Expertise. The tripartite entities involved should explore how best to ensure that Emergency Medical Teams, as pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO), can deploy and support without any legal encumbrances (including licensure requirements). Other response expertise required for catastrophic disaster response, should be explored further and advanced based upon lessons learned from the EMT pre-qualification process.

Consolidated NAHRS Working Group Feedback and Findings:

- The above statement is too narrow in identifying EMTs and WHO for this strategic recommendation. Moreover, stakeholders felt a WHO initiative was not the best fit within the North American context.
- Medical teams also need to be inclusive of other 'health' professionals not operating in the medical field (for example those medical professionals that are degreed but not licensed).

- There is a need to define licensure and licensors within all three (3) countries and to analyse and triangulate existing typing systems, including Evidence-Based Design Accreditation and Certification (EDAC).
- A table of qualifications and Scopes of Work for professionals to be deployed within a catastrophic response should be developed.
- There was unanimous commitment from the group that this is a key focus area moving forward.
- It was highlighted that the reciprocity component between the three (3) countries is going to be a challenge.

Next Steps for this process should be to:

- Pre-plan the waiving of licensure for medical professionals.
- Look at current teams that exist and examine common definitions that can be agreed upon across countries. Thus, there would be no need to form new North American specific medical teams for this initiative.
- Evaluate and adjust policy and legal frameworks related to emergency public health teams.
- Ensure working group members from all nations are represented; this could be done as an academic exercise.

Original Strategic Recommendation #4: Establishment of a Humanitarian Visa and Waiver Process for Personnel & Equipment Responding to North American Catastrophic Disasters.

In order to facilitate the movement of humanitarian personnel and supplies required during a cross-border response, the tripartite Red Cross National Societies and governments should support the creation of unique humanitarian visas (for personnel) and a waiver process (for pre-approved equipment and personnel) required during a catastrophic response. These visas and waivers are to be granted based on subsequent agreement between all six parties involved.

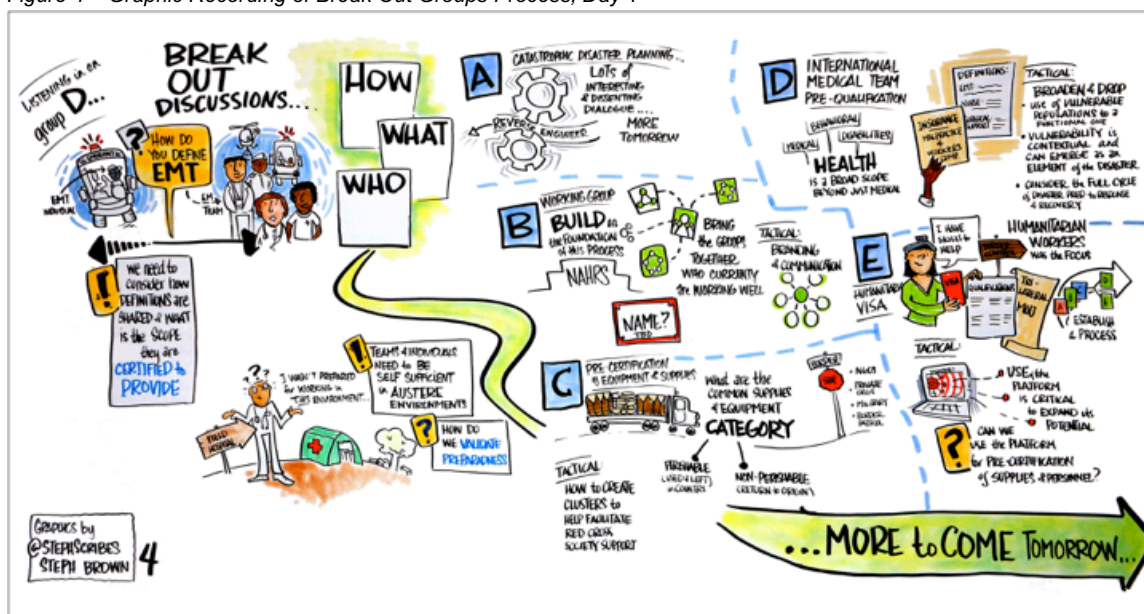
Consolidated Feedback and Findings:

- That the above statement is too prescriptive, would require legislative approval (which may not be possible at this time and does not exhaust existing options that already exist in the current system. Instead stakeholders involved should utilize the existing parole track available with established processes and avoid the legislative track at this time.
- This track would include clarifying the process for requesting personnel and equipment between three (3) countries.
- Establish consistent Points of Contact related to the movement of personnel and equipment within each government so that it is clear where the request should come from and whom it should go to.
- Define and establish the required operational information needed (including paperwork) needed for the cross-border movement of people and their equipment (e.g. flight manifest list with name, date of birth, passport #, required equipment to be taken) and be sure to protect data privacy.
- Standardize humanitarian identification.

Next Steps for this process should include:

- Sub-working group meeting for deep dive.
- Define standard operating procedures (including required paperwork).
- Draft and approve a Memorandum of Agreement for input from respective legal counsels.

Figure 4 – Graphic Recording of Break Out Groups Process, Day 1



Original Strategic Recommendation #5: Pre-Certification of Supplies and Equipment for Cross-Border Responses. Identification of a pre-certified and mutually agreed upon list of emergency response supplies and equipment that can then be fast-tracked through any North American border's customs and border control in the event of a disaster. Ensure supply chain continuity for these supplies and equipment with private sector engagement.

Consolidated Feedback and Findings:

- There were conversations but no consensus on changing 'response' to 'humanitarian aid'. The group determined that clarifying wording would be required in the future.
- There was a suggestion to use the ICRC emergency supplies catalogue as a starting point for categorization of material and equipment, but it was recognized that a process and methodology to support categorization needs to be developed.

Next Steps for this process should include:

- Each country and/or National Society defines and prioritizes equipment and material needs.
- Develop a combined list of pre-identified, approved equipment and material using common baselines, harmonized language, and criteria across the three countries or National Societies.
- The countries need to define when international support would be necessary and what would trigger the request and acceptance of international equipment and materials. An 'If, then' definition may be required to determine triggers and what waivers can be put in place based on those triggers.
- Review similar work that has been completed in the past (i.e. How did wild land firefighters work through cross border equipment and material issues to support each other?).
- Review ways to build on existing systems and determine equivalent regulations in Canada and US (International Assistance System - IAS) to Mexico's regulation 422 (customs regulations for emergencies) and how the regulations support the efforts to move equipment and material across borders quickly and efficiently.

- Review equipment licensure issues, especially communications equipment.
- Include the management of private sector relations.
- Review realities of transportation and warehousing requirements based on limited resources and competing priorities and identify companies and/or carriers to support shipping concerns.
- Create a directory of personnel with the authorities and/or processes to support cross border movement.

3.2 Tactical Recommendations

Original Tactical Recommendation #6: Prioritize Accountability to Vulnerable Populations in Catastrophic Planning & Response. Development of guidance, messages, tools and practices that will ensure that the voice of vulnerable populations are heard, prioritized and guide future catastrophic disaster responses.

Consolidated Feedback and Findings:

- Change the definition above to: Prioritize accountability to 'individuals with access or functional needs, including those with disabilities' or 'People in vulnerable situations'.
- The engagement process needs to be accessible. This would require including groups that deal with disability issues and groups that are governed by and for the disabilities community.
- Guiding agencies in emergency management to engage in the discussion and related planning. Integration is the priority in all phases for a disaster.

Next Steps for this process should include:

- Collective agreement to focus on prioritizing this topic and ensuring that there is engagement on this topic throughout the process of catastrophic planning and preparation.
- Ensuring this is a common theme amongst all working and sub-working groups. This theme needs to be inherent and embedded across all working groups for the NAHRS process moving forward.

Original Tactical Recommendation #7: Creation of a Catastrophic Disaster Planning Knowledge Management Platform. Hosted by the American Red Cross and the Global Disaster Preparedness Center (GDPC) website, this platform will serve as the knowledge management repository for all catastrophic disaster planning resources relevant to the North American context.

Consolidated Feedback and Findings:

- Explore a secure web portal for sharing of NAHRS operational info and data with NAHRS partners.
- Avoid duplication and ensure linkages with other platforms (e.g. OSOCC).

Next Steps for this process should include:

- Sharing of NAHRS materials on the GDPC website (see Page 5, Footnote #5)
- Exploration of a secured web portal for both internal information sharing amongst the NAHRS stakeholders as well as external information sharing
 - Determine if there is a need and the priority of that need
 - Determine system and user requirements
 - Address Personally Identifiable Information (PII) issues

Original Tactical Recommendation #8: Facilitation of International Support through Red Cross National Societies in North America. The Red Cross national societies should explore the feasibility and requirements associated with facilitating global humanitarian support (personnel, equipment and supplies) in the event of a catastrophic disaster that requires support for North American partners and beyond.

Consolidated Feedback and Findings:

- This tactical solution was determined by participants and stakeholders as being too difficult for National Red Cross Societies to facilitate. Thus, it was deleted as a proposed solution.
- It was recommended that this topic be dropped from the NAHRS initiative at this point.

Original Tactical Recommendation #9: Communicating and Executing NAHRS Changes to Operational Field Levels. As changes are eventually made at the policy level, it will be essential that such changes are disseminated, communicated and executed at the field operational level where any changes need to be applied to be useful in this a catastrophic response context.⁶

Consolidated Group Feedback and Findings:

- Participants and stakeholders are satisfied with the outputs of the NAHRS initiative, however, these outputs now need to be communicated clearly and efficiently.
- This should include promoting trilateral messaging throughout the process but does not need to be a separate tactical action step and instead should be rolled into future proceedings as an activity.

Original Tactical Recommendation #10: Resource and Fund the NAHRS Process Every Five Years. Apply learning from all catastrophic disaster globally to inform and guide catastrophic disaster planning in North America. Measure progress against agreed upon next steps and establish a consistent platform for the evolution of this critical area of work.

Consolidated Group Feedback and Findings:

- Stakeholders and Summit participants agreed that NAHRS should be funded every five (5) years.
- Suggested possible future funding for NAHRS should include: FEMA grants and other government agency counterparts, the Rockefeller Foundation, Resilient Cities Initiative, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Gates Foundation and New York Life.

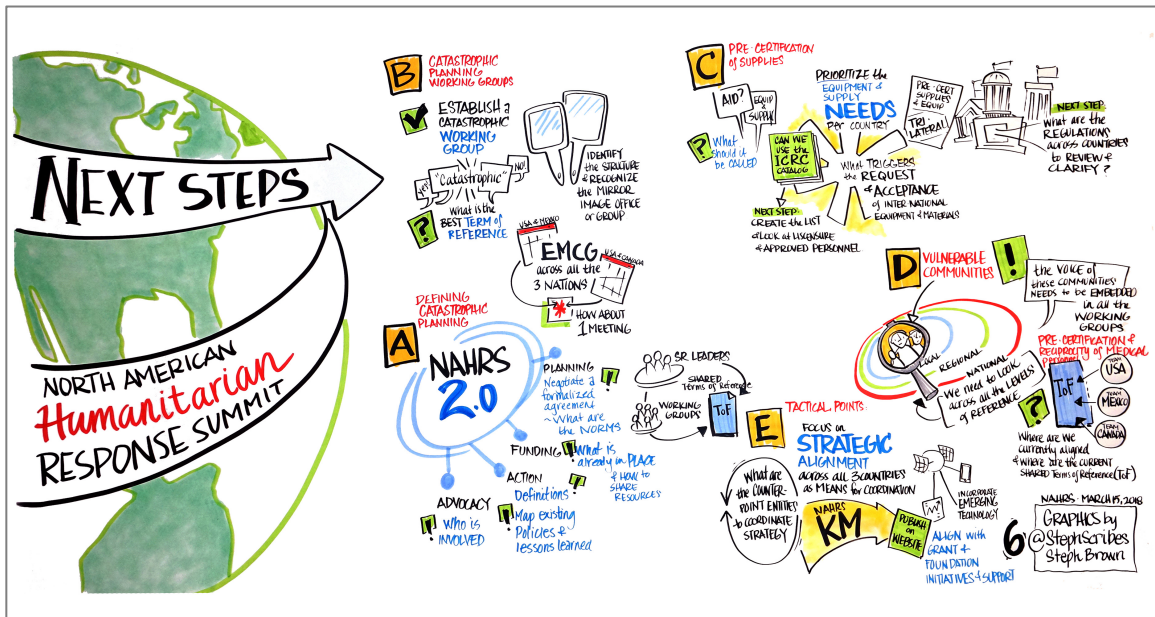
⁶ See Footnote 5.

4. Next Steps

NAHRS stakeholders broadly agreed that the project had fostered a unity of mission and shared commitment while demonstrating the power of humanitarian diplomacy and that joint, multinational planning for a catastrophic event in North America is imperative. One major outcome of the NAHRS project was that these planning activities have already become an important part of assisting National Societies and governments in preparing for and responding to disasters, and that the project would transition to a continuing initiative, underscoring the criticality of meeting humanitarian needs during extreme events. The North American Humanitarian Response Initiative (NAHRI) will build on the outcomes of the project to-date and continue engaging decision makers, disaster responders, policy professionals and academic experts in the exchange of ideas to optimize cross-border collaboration during a catastrophic disaster response in North America.

The American Red Cross will keep stakeholders and participants informed about the NAHRI process through the GDPC website and other communications.

Figure 6 – Graphic Recording of Next Steps



-- END--

Annex A:

 All Graphic Recordings from the Summit, Washington DC, March 2018

