

## The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations

### Generic presentation

#### Why a Climate and Environment Charter?

- **Today's climate and environmental crises are existential threats to humanity.** They are affecting every aspect of our lives, from our physical and mental health to our food, water and economic security.
- **While everyone is affected, not everyone is affected equally.** Those who have contributed least to the crises are hit hardest and are often excluded from climate and environmental action and finance.
- **Local, national, and international humanitarian organizations are concerned about the scale of the crises and the rising needs they are generating.** The Charter stems from the recognition that we need to act, and have a responsibility to respond to the humanitarian consequences of these crises and to reduce the environmental footprint of humanitarian action.
- **The Charter is designed to galvanize and steer collective action.** It represents a high-level institutional commitment from the humanitarian sector to adapt our ways of working and work collectively to address these crises
- **It represents our sector's commitment to do our part, work together, ensure that our actions reduce the impacts of the crises, and convince others to do the same.** We want to send a clear signal that humanitarian organizations have a key role to play in addressing the climate and environmental crises.
- **The Charter is just the first step.** Its commitments must be translated into time-bound targets and policies that will lead to concrete change.
- **Yet, we cannot address these crises alone.** Protecting the lives and rights of present and future generations depends on political action to cut emissions, halt environmental degradation, and adapt to increasing risks. Without drastic and immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and significant investment in climate change adaptation and resilience, humanitarian organizations will not be able to respond adequately to the rising needs.

#### About the Charter

- **The Charter is for the whole humanitarian sector.** It is inspired by the 1994 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and is intended to guide humanitarian action into the future.
- **The Charter was designed by the humanitarian sector, for the humanitarian sector. It is the result of a collective effort across a wide range of humanitarian organizations.** This process was led by the ICRC and the IFRC with the support of an advisory committee of 19 climate and environment experts and humanitarian networks.

- **Over the course of a year, from mid-2020, hundreds of humanitarians have been consulted and over 150 humanitarian organizations shared their views and provided feedback.** We wanted to hear from a wide range of organizations, with different scales, reach and mandates, from local NGOs to international ones, from humanitarian networks to UN Agencies and Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies.
- **Feedback was extremely positive throughout the consultation process.** Humanitarians recognized the role we have to play in addressing these crises and saw the Charter as a tool to inspire action. 84 percent of consultation participants said that the Charter would be of use to their organization.
- **The Charter was opened for signature by all humanitarian organizations in May 2021.** Although there is no deadline to sign the Charter, the intention is to gather a large number of signatories by the time of COP26 in November 2021, to indicate the wide support for the Charter across the humanitarian community.

### **The Charter's Commitments**

- **Just seven commitments.** The Charter is short, aspirational, and accessible.
- **The first two commitments are the backbone of the text.**
- **Commitment One:** to step up our response to growing humanitarian needs and help people adapt to the impacts of climate and environmental crises.
  - It focuses on reducing risks and vulnerabilities through an increased focus on climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and anticipatory action.
  - It insists on the importance of sound risk analysis and on taking individual characteristics, think age or gender, and people's situation, think armed conflict or displacement, into consideration.
- **Commitment Two:** In line with the "do no harm" principle, to maximize the environmental sustainability of our work and rapidly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, while maintaining our ability to provide timely and principled humanitarian assistance.
  - In addition to emissions, it highlights a responsible use of natural resources and waste management.
- **The next five commitments** focus on how to achieve our ambitions, from embracing local leadership and leveraging our influence to building our knowledge and nurturing collective action.
- **The last commitment** is about the adoption of specific targets by signatories that spell out how commitments are being implemented. This means that each organization will develop its own targets and action plan, reflecting its capacities and mandate.

### **What comes next?**

- Signatories to the Charter are listed publicly on the [Charter website](#). The website also holds information about the Charter and guidance on how to implement its commitments.

- All humanitarian organizations are welcome to sign the Charter through the signature portal.
- Shifting our ways of working entails changes in our mindsets and approaches. It also entails investing the necessary resources to achieve our commitments. Donor support is critical for humanitarian organizations to meet transition costs as they adapt their programs and reduce their emissions. Donors wishing to publicly indicate their support for the Charter may do so through the Signature portal.