

## Key Messages

# CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND COVID-19

IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy

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(OPAG)

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### Key Messages on Climate Change, Humanitarian Action and COVID-19

*These are intended to supplement a more detailed set of key messages which are being produced by the group and which are intended to cover the humanitarian impacts of climate change, including how these impact different groups in vulnerable situations, and different types of needs and sectors, as well as more detailed recommendations on reducing climate change driven humanitarian needs. These are deliberately intended to be short and to address issues specifically related to COVID-19 and climate change and not the broader spectrum of climate change related humanitarian concerns.*

<b>CHALLENGES</b>	
We cannot afford to divert attention from the growing climate crisis	<p>Climate change is a humanitarian problem.</p> <p>The world's attention is on the response to the global COVID-19 pandemic; but we cannot afford to take our eyes off the unfolding climate crisis.</p>
Climate change is already having massive impacts	<p>Climate change impacts all aspects of life and livelihoods, especially marginalized groups, and is increasingly a driver of displacement. Not only is it threatening food security and increasing the likelihood, recurrence and intensity of climate and weather-related disasters; it is already undermining humanitarian preparedness and response capacities, as well as the overall resilience of our life support systems, including agriculture, health, water, and infrastructure.</p> <p>Tens of millions of lives and livelihoods are already being rocked by climate-related disasters across the world. From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, climate change is affecting people already vulnerable due to existing and ongoing crises. Faced with multiple conflict and climate-related crises, the humanitarian system is already struggling to meet growing needs. At the same time, there has been inadequate investment in climate risk management and prevention to build climate resilience at scale and across sectors.</p> <p>Without drastic efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation), in particular if we pass the 1.5° threshold, the humanitarian impacts of climate change will be far worse.</p>
Compounded risks from the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis	<p>Countries across the globe are facing the compounded risks from both the ongoing climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Those most vulnerable to climate shocks, particularly poor and marginalized communities, women and girls, older people, persons with disabilities, and displaced persons, are also likely to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.</p> <p>For instance, thousands of women, men and children displaced by climate and weather-related extreme events (such as droughts, heatwaves, floods and storms) and longer term climate impacts (such as sea level rise, and desertification) are now living in settlement sites with little to no ability to practice physical distancing and inadequate access to clean water, soap and other hygiene materials.</p>

	<p>Moreover, government capacities to anticipate, prepare for and respond to climate disasters may be reduced, especially in public health and emergency services as evacuation and shelter systems may not be functioning, hospitals may be full, and international assistance highly constrained.</p>
<p>We are only as strong as our weakest links</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of how inter-connected we are – both in crises and in solutions. We are only as strong as our weakest links, and we will get nowhere without solidarity. Let’s apply these lessons to the climate crisis. Climate change and COVID-19 require global-to-local risk prevention, responses and solutions consistent with the rights of those affected, leaving no one behind.</p>
<p><b>HOW TO MOVE FORWARD</b></p>	
<p>Empower and invest in local action</p>	<p>International humanitarian support is stretched more thinly than ever before and leveraging funding for new crises will be a real challenge, while COVID-19 is constraining humanitarian access to vulnerable and affected people in need of assistance.</p> <p>We will only be able to meet the full extent of humanitarian need if the humanitarian community and international donors invest in supporting and empowering local and national disaster and climate risk management, as well as local humanitarian action to build resilience ahead of potential crises.</p> <p>This means finding new ways to ensure that adequate, timely, accessible, and flexible funding reach local actors, and effective means to ensure local community engagement in disaster and climate risk management, including on preparedness, early warning and early action on climate.</p>
<p>Invest in climate and disaster risk management</p>	<p>Many climate and weather-related crises are predictable, and experts anticipate they will increase and intensify over coming years. Getting ahead of crises by acting early saves lives, reduces suffering and cuts costs. We need to be prepared for the scale and scope of these future crises by investing in better early action, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, based on strong forecasting and early warning systems. Projects related to forecast-based financing and anticipatory action provide a safety net for governments which have established systems and can trigger pre-positioned financing ahead of an impending climate hazard.</p> <p>Investment in disaster risk reduction and management, including preparedness must consider investment in social welfare, and health care that is accessible to everyone. Well-resourced, equitable and risk-informed health systems that protect the most vulnerable are essential to protect us from health security threats, including those relating to climate change and its suite of extreme and slow-onset events.</p>
<p>Economic recovery from the pandemic must involve</p>	<p>Governments must not let crucial climate action become another victim of the pandemic. Instead, they should seize the opportunity of the COVID-19 crisis to transition and transform through building economic recovery on</p>

<p>building a greener, more resilient future.</p>	<p>green, resilient, and sustainable foundations that align with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>Investments in climate change adaptation (CCA), and disaster risk reduction and management (DRR/DRM) will help allay the impact of future disasters and pandemics – a clear win-win for the health of economies, women, men, children, and the planet.</p> <p>Supporting developing countries with climate finance will help them to adapt and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance.</p>
<p>Environmental protection, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation are critical for the prevention of infectious diseases</p>	<p>Animal-to-human disease transmission (zoonosis) is responsible for up to 75% of emerging infectious diseases. This is worsened by changed distribution of animal populations and increased human-wildlife interaction, both exacerbated by environmental degradation and the climate crisis.</p> <p>Environmental protection - addressing threats to ecosystems and wildlife, including deforestation, habitat loss, illegal trade, pollution, etc.— and climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as ensuring access to adequate water and sanitation and community-based health services, are critical to prevent and minimize the risk of infectious diseases, reduce the likelihood of zoonosis, and thereby ensure the full and effective implementation of basic human rights, such as those to health and a healthy environment.</p>