

## **Key Messages<sup>1</sup>**

# **ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS FOR COP28**

IASC Sub-Group on the Climate Crisis

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Endorsed by the IASC Deputies Group

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<sup>1</sup> These expanded key messages reflect the position of IASC member humanitarian organizations.

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## I. Common Narrative on the Climate Emergency and Humanitarian Action

### The climate crisis is also a humanitarian crisis

Climate change is having a profound impact on our planet. This includes increasing variability in seasonal temperatures and rainfall patterns, sea-level rise, desertification, soil erosion, and more frequent and extreme weather events, such as violent storms, floods, landslides, droughts, and heatwaves. Globally, acute food insecurity is at a record high, driven by a deadly mix of conflict, climate change-related weather extremes and economic shocks, including those caused by COVID-19. Since the 1990s, the average number of extreme weather events per decade has increased by nearly 35 per cent.

In 2022, climate change and weather-related hazards caused the deaths of over 74,000 people<sup>2</sup>, whilst the total number of those affected by these events since 2018 is a staggering 1.59 billion.<sup>3</sup> These shocks threaten the lives, health, livelihoods, and well-being of people around the world. They can also accentuate societal fragility and inequality, reduce food security, and undermine the enjoyment of human rights.

### Climate change compounds existing vulnerabilities

Climate-related disasters result in displacement and economic, social, and material loss and damage, undermining development gains that can threaten achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the enjoyment of human rights of those affected. The exposure and vulnerability of communities to climate risks is also compounded by armed conflict, unplanned urbanization, weak governance, poverty, a lack of infrastructure and services, social marginalization, discrimination, disability, age, and gender. People in the most vulnerable situations have limited capacity to anticipate, cope with, recover from and adapt to climate change. Climate change can also amplify existing tensions and grievances around access to agrifood systems, land and natural resources and may ultimately act as an accelerator of conflict.

Over 40 per cent of the global population lives in areas that are highly vulnerable to climate extremes. More than three billion people live in hotspots with high vulnerability to climate change.<sup>4</sup>

Humanitarians are working in some of the most impacted communities. Eleven of the sixteen most climate-vulnerable countries appealed for emergency humanitarian international assistance in 2022<sup>5</sup>.

## II. The role and relevance of the humanitarian sector

**There is no humanitarian solution to the climate crisis:** Mitigating climate change, accelerating adaptation, reducing disaster risk, and addressing loss and damage will require major new investments and commitments from a range of political, economic, scientific, development and peacebuilding actors. But working in closer partnership across this spectrum, humanitarians have a critical role to play in supporting communities to prepare for and respond to disasters, and to build their resilience to future shocks. Complementary efforts driving progress towards long-term solutions for sustainable resilience should be developed with state and non-state actors.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the maximum number of events, per country, per hazard across both EM-DAT and GIDD databases for 2022. See also [Ballester, J., Quijal-Zamorano, M. et al. Heat-related mortality in Europe during the summer of 2022. Nat Med 29, 1857–1866 \(2023\).](#)

<sup>3</sup> According to the Global Internal Displacement Database (GIDD) Data from 2018-2022.

<sup>4</sup> IPCC Working Group II Report- Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

<sup>5</sup> See OCHA's Global Humanitarian Overview and ND-GAIN's Country Index.

**The first responders in any crisis are local communities themselves:** Local organizations are working with governments and communities to avert, minimize and respond to the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis. In many contexts where local capacities are overwhelmed, international support is needed but must fully complement local efforts.

**Who we are:** The Inter-Agency Standing Committee supports a coordinated response to humanitarian crises. Its members include United Nations organizations, members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as well as major networks of international and national Non-Governmental Organizations.

**Our commitment to act:** More than 300 humanitarian organizations representing local, national and international NGOs, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies, IFRC and ICRC have adopted the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#). The Charter outlines our commitment to be part of the solution and help people adapt to a changing environment and climate, while also increasing our own environmental sustainability.

**Types of climate action:** Humanitarian organizations are working to support protection and assistance to people in need due to disasters and other crises. We engage in disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, anticipatory action, response, and early recovery, aiming through our life-saving programmes to build resilience to future shocks. We support communities to take anticipatory action before and after shocks. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, humanitarian organizations, together with other partners, are working to address the compounding risks and impacts of climate shocks and stresses on people's lives and livelihoods.

**Understanding risks and vulnerabilities and supporting local capacities:** Because of our work and partnerships at the local level, humanitarian actors have a wealth of knowledge and data that can be critical to effective climate action. We undertake community-level assessments of vulnerabilities, capacities, and needs. Humanitarians aspire to work in a participatory manner, ensuring we are accountable to affected populations. We also support and seek to build capacities for local leadership of humanitarian action, as outlined in the Grand Bargain commitments.

**Faster finance and response:** Humanitarians have developed important tools and finance mechanisms to provide rapid support to the local level, including through pooled funding mechanisms such as the CERF, DREF, START and Country Based Pooled Funds. We are innovating in areas such as climate-risk informed humanitarian action, anticipatory action, and multi-hazard risk management. We are committed to building more effective partnerships with relevant authorities, development, and climate finance partners to ensure that international support is coherent, coordinated, respects human rights, and responds to the needs and priorities of affected people.

**Engaging in global decision-making on climate action:** We recognize that humanitarian actors have a critical role and responsibility to raise the alarm and amplify the voices of affected people about the impacts of the climate crisis. We are therefore seeking to engage more and in a coordinated way in the climate policy arena to explain what we do, convey the needs and priorities of affected people, learn from others, share lessons learned, and highlight critical gaps as well as the urgent need for action.

### **III. Critical Issues for COP28**

#### **a) Global Stocktake**

By evaluating where the world stands when it comes to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, [the Stocktake](#) is intended to help policymakers and stakeholders strengthen their climate policies and commitments in their next round of nationally determined contributions (NDC) in 2025, paving the way for accelerated action.

We welcome the technical dialogue of the first global stocktake synthesis Report and hope that the key findings related to adaptation, and loss and damage, as well as the need to invest in and scale up systems change, will be reflected in any outcome documents of the Global Stocktake. We also hope the Global Stocktake will encourage strengthened early warning and preparedness, anticipatory action, risk-informed and shock-response social protection, emergency response, recovery and other risk and impact management measures across the entire economies and more specific in those agricultural sectors, which are most vulnerable, and reflect States' human rights obligations. All efforts must now focus on ensuring people in fragile and crisis affected contexts are not left behind. The IASC is ready to support these efforts by providing necessary information and details.

## **b) Mitigation**

Without significantly increasing mitigation ambition and action, the humanitarian impacts of the climate emergency, already immense, will be catastrophic. Keeping the global temperature rise to below 1.5°C is a humanitarian priority. COP 28 must deliver bold action to reduce carbon emissions to mitigate climate change.

[Under the present approach to GHG emissions, global warming will exceed 1.5°C in the 2020s and 2°C before 2050.](#) Beyond these thresholds, adaptation and resilience options are increasingly limited, and losses and damages will rise. The burden will exacerbate growing inequalities between and within countries. [Recent research](#) suggests the world would need to reach net zero emissions by 2034 for a 50% chance of containing warming to 1.5C - far sooner than the global goal of 2050. Climate change mitigation, including through effective emissions reduction, is the best way to protect people.

We are committed to being part of the solution by reducing our carbon footprint and increasing our environmental sustainability.

## **c) Adaptation**

Climate adaptation is drastically underfunded and is not reaching the most vulnerable at remotely the speed or scale that is needed. From 2014–2021, finance from four climate funds amounted to US\$161 per capita to non-fragile States compared to just US\$2.1 per capita to extremely fragile States.<sup>6</sup>

Increased investment in resilience, disaster risk reduction and locally led adaptation is essential, especially for those most vulnerable and at risk, such as displaced persons, and others in need of protection. People with climate dependent livelihoods such as Indigenous Peoples, small-scale farmers, herders, fishers, and forest dwelling communities represent more than 70% of the population in many Least Developed Countries (LDC).

At COP28, Parties must outline how they will implement the commitment made in Glasgow to double adaptation finance to at least \$40 billion in 2025, with clear prioritization of the most climate-vulnerable countries and communities. Parties and climate finance providers should commit to achieving parity between climate mitigation and adaptation financing. They should also develop new mechanisms to ensure that fragile and conflict-affected communities can benefit from climate finance at a scale that is commensurate with their immense needs. As humanitarian actors, we recognize the critical role that we must play in achieving this, including through building stronger partnerships across relevant sectors.

Humanitarians support the adoption of a [robust framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation at COP28](#). It is critical to ensure the framework supports adaptation that is locally led and informed by the views of communities, but also by age, ability, and gender-disaggregated data on climate impacts and adaptation benefits. Inclusive mechanisms to engage women, youth, children, displaced people,

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP, Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace: Making Climate Finance Work for Conflict-Affected and Fragile Contexts, 2021. Available at: [www.undp.org/publications/climate-finance-sustaining-peace-making-climate-finance-work-conflict-affected-and-fragile-contexts](http://www.undp.org/publications/climate-finance-sustaining-peace-making-climate-finance-work-conflict-affected-and-fragile-contexts)

Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups in adaptation and risk-informed decision-making, implementation and monitoring should be incorporated in the GGA framework.

#### **d) Loss and Damage (L&D)<sup>7</sup>**

Communities in vulnerable situations need urgent action now to avert, minimize and address climate-related loss and damage. This must be a comprehensive, global, and multi-sectoral effort and must prioritize protecting the rights of all and especially those in vulnerable situations. Building on the outcome of the Transitional Committee, COP28 should result in the operationalization of a new adequate, effective, and prompt fund and funding arrangements aimed at supporting particularly vulnerable developing countries to avert, minimize and address loss and damage. The fund and funding arrangements should channel new and additional resources, and should incorporate measures, including for recovery, to specifically target the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. The new fund should ensure the meaningful inclusion of children, displaced people, and other groups in vulnerable situations in decision making. Solutions and funding to address loss and damage must put people's human rights, dignity, and agency at the centre of the approach. It will be critical that the new Fund operate in coherence with new and existing arrangements, including those in the humanitarian sector and funding should support actions complementary to life saving humanitarian actions.

Recognizing that governments are central in responding to loss and damage, a comprehensive approach must be integrated across local, regional, and national levels. This will require arrangements to mobilize financial, technical, and capacity support for climate-vulnerable and at-risk countries and communities and people in vulnerable and fragile situations.

As humanitarians, we can act to:

- Minimize losses and damages by strengthening and investing in disaster risk reduction, early warning, preparedness, anticipatory action, shock-responsive social protection systems and resilient health and education systems.
- Address key aspects of losses and damages through humanitarian response, and recovery in ways that effectively manage climate risks and help to build resilience.
- Support those countries most vulnerable to climate change with technical expertise and resources to assess losses and damages due to impacts of climate change, as well as investment in capacities that will enable action in response.

We recognize that humanitarian action does not, should not, and cannot, deal with a significant portion of losses and damages (such as threats to entire ecosystems, the devastation of livelihoods and economies, and the need for reconstruction of homes and infrastructure). Therefore, loss and damage funding arrangements have a much broader scope than humanitarian funding.

We call for the strengthening of multilateral mechanisms to address the impacts of loss and damage for fragile settings, including through the Warsaw International Mechanism and the Santiago Network.

#### **e) Early Warning and Anticipatory Action**

One third of people, mainly in least developed and small island developing states, are not covered by effective early warning systems. There is a need to dramatically scale-up the coverage of early warning systems and make actionable early warning information available at the local level to the most at-risk people and communities, in line with the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative. As

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<sup>7</sup> IPCC Glossary, Loss and Damage entry clarifies the usage of terminology on climate and this document follows the IPCC practice. Research has taken Loss and Damage (capitalized letters) to refer to political debate under the UNFCCC following the establishment of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage in 2013, which is to 'address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.' Lowercase letters (losses and damages) have been taken to refer broadly to harm from (observed) impacts and (projected) risks. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/>

humanitarians, we urge Parties to commit to ensuring that actionable early warning information reaches communities in time for them to act on it. This means not only investing in forecasting, but also in necessary structures to ensure action in 'last mile' communities.

Advances in science and technology and stronger coordination mean that when early warning is available, we have time to act before disaster strikes. Over half of all humanitarian crises are at least somewhat predictable and 20 per cent are very predictable, yet less than 1 per cent of humanitarian appeals funding is channeled to anticipatory action.<sup>8</sup> Anticipatory action – acting ahead of predicted crises to prevent or reduce impacts - saves lives and livelihoods, prevents suffering, protects development gains, and cuts costs. It can also lead to a more dignified, faster response. Research by FAO demonstrates that in some situations, for every USD 1 invested in anticipatory action, rural families can gain up to USD 7 in benefits and avoided agricultural losses<sup>9</sup>. Scaling up anticipatory approaches requires that humanitarians, local government, and other partners work together to establish pre-agreed action plans that can be activated rapidly when an early warning trigger-point is reached, supported by predictable, pre-arranged financing. Adaptive social protection is also an effective approach for building resilience for children and their families, by addressing child poverty in the context of climate shocks. Around the world, only one in four children aged 0-14 years receives a child or family benefit.

It is critical for early warnings to be linked to shock-responsive social protection and other emergency preparedness and response measures. These can help save lives and livelihoods, particularly when they empower people through participatory and inclusive decision-making.

At COP28, national and local governments can commit to developing forecast-based action, financing mechanisms and multi-year operational plans for emergency preparedness and response. Investments in Early Warning Systems must be accompanied by complementary finance enabling anticipatory action. Donors can commit to scaling up their contributions to anticipatory action and to provide sufficient, predictable, and flexible financing, particularly through unearmarked funding and contributions to existing humanitarian pooled funds that can most effectively take swift action.

### **Practical steps that can be taken at CoP 28 in relation to early warning and anticipatory action**

- National and local governments can commit to ensuring that actionable early warning information reaches communities in time for them to act on it. This means not only investing in forecasting, but also investments to ensure action in 'last mile' communities, including through the inclusion of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people in their Early Warning Systems.
- National and local governments can commit to developing policy frameworks that include anticipatory action as part of national disaster management systems.
- National and local governments can commit to developing forecast-based action and financing mechanisms and multi-year operational plans for emergency preparedness and response.
- Humanitarian actors, donors and other partners can commit to scaling-up collective anticipatory action to reach more people ahead of predictable shocks and stresses.
- Humanitarian actors can commit to integrating data-driven decision-making into all humanitarian action. This can include, for instance, integrating data on risk in humanitarian planning, coordination, and financing decisions.
- Investments in Early Warning Systems must be accompanied by complementary finance enabling anticipatory action. Donors can commit to scaling up their contributions to anticipatory action and to provide sufficient, predictable, and flexible financing, e.g., through unearmarked funding to agencies or existing humanitarian pooled funds that can most effectively take swift action.

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<sup>8</sup> High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General, *Too important to fail – addressing the humanitarian financing gap*, January 2016, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/%5BHLP%20Report%5D%20Too%20important%20to%20fail%E2%80%94addressing%20the%20humanitarian%20financing%20gap.pdf>. [accessed 11 December 2020]

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc7900en>

- Humanitarian organizations can commit to working more closely together with development and climate institutions to analyze long-term risk informed by climate science, seasonal climate outlooks, weather forecasts and other hydrometeorological services.