

INCREASING THE URGENCY AND ACTION ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Conference of Parties for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28)
UAE, 30 November – 12 December 2023

Our asks

- 1 ACT URGENTLY:** to address the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent worsening humanitarian impacts, whilst vastly scaling up adaptation action at the local level reaching the most at risk and impacted people
- 2 PRIORITIZE LOCALLY LED ACTION:** support meaningful engagement and participation to co-implement solutions by and with communities which builds resilience to climate impacts. Adopt and implement principles for locally led adaptation.
- 3 INCREASE ADAPTATION FINANCE:** Quality, quantity and accessibility. Prioritize funding for the most impacted countries and communities, which reaches the local level.
- 4 SCALE UP ANTICIPATORY AND EARLY ACTION:** to prevent extreme weather events becoming disasters, to save lives and livelihoods. Invest in early warnings and other systems for early action at the local level, reaching last mile communities before disasters strike.
- 5 STRENGTHEN CLIMATE RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS:** investing in primary health care, WASH systems and community level preparedness to respond to evolving climate risks and achieve universal health coverage goals.
- 6 AVERT, MINIMIZE AND ADDRESS LOSS AND DAMAGE:** with new, additional, and predictable finance to support comprehensive action. Responses to loss and damage must reach the local level to people and communities most impacted.

Document purpose:

This document sets out key messages for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) network on climate change, as relates to the upcoming 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 28) which will take place in the United Arab Emirates in December 2023.

These messages are intended for use by National Societies at the national level in policy-related discussions with relevant ministries and government departments as well as other critical stakeholders to engage in the run up to COP28. National Societies are encouraged to adapt these to their national context and include national level examples as useful. You can also draw upon complementary resources such as thematic key messages which include further details, including those of our programmatic officer, as well bespoke briefings for technical audiences on the priority areas.

THE CONTEXT

1. The climate crisis is already a humanitarian crisis

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that climate change is already contributing to humanitarian crises.
- We are seeing dramatic and rising humanitarian impacts (e.g. lives, food, water, shelter), with the average global temperature at 1.15°C above 1850-1900 average. In the last five years (2018-2022):
 - 96 per cent of all disasters triggered by natural hazards were caused by extreme weather and climate-related events (this includes, floods, storms, cyclones, drought, landslides, wildfire, cold and heatwaves).¹
 - More than 120,000 people have died from climate - and weather-related disasters.
 - A staggering 1.59 billion people have been affected by climate - and weather-related disasters.
 - 130 million people are estimated to have been internally displaced by these events.
- The world's poorest and most exposed people suffer the most, including older people, women, girls and people living with disabilities, who are disproportionately affected.
- Now between 3.3-3.6 billion people live in contexts highly vulnerable to climate change. It is the world's poorest and most exposed people who suffer the most (IPCC 2023).
- Between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions, compared to regions with very low vulnerability (IPCC 2023).
- Around **four in ten people are affected globally by water scarcity** (WHO 2018) and water security for 80 percent of the world's population is under threat (Ebi et al. 2019)
- Humanitarian impacts will continue to escalate without steep and immediate cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, and investment in adaptation. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made it clear that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is critical to reduce the impacts on people and the planet. Yet, under current policies the world is on track for 2.8°C global warming (IPCC, 2023).
- As El Niño develops in the coming months and year, combined with human-induced climate change, global temperatures are expected to push into uncharted territory (WMO, 2023).
 - There is a **98% likelihood** that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the **warmest on record**.
 - There is a **66% likelihood** that the annual average near-surface global temperature between 2023 and 2027 will be **more than 1.5°C** above pre-industrial levels for at least one year.
- **Climate-driven impacts do not appear alone**; they are driven by compounding risks and issues such as poverty, inequality, degradation of natural resources, urbanization, and marginalization which make them worse. Currently, climate impacts are also compounding with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, protracted crises, conflict, as well as wider issues of debt.



2. Our role as the IFRC network

- Around the world, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers, rooted within communities, are responding to growing impacts of the climate crisis.
- In 2022, the IFRC network's **191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and 16.5 million community-based volunteers reached 55 million people affected by climate and environmental crises.
- As **auxiliaries to the public authorities**, National Societies are uniquely mandated to support governments in reducing and managing disaster risks, including climate-related risks, and responding to disasters when they happen.
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has led in the development of the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#). We will carry out our commitments in the Charter to green our own activities. IFRC has made a concrete commitment that, by 2025, climate and environmental risks will be factored into all our programmes and humanitarian operations.
- IFRC's [Global Climate Resilience Platform](#), is a multi-year initiative to catalyse finance to scale up locally-led climate action and adaptation efforts. This targets increasing the resilience and adaptive capacity of 500 million people in 100 of the most climate vulnerable countries, reaching the least supported marginalized communities. This supports the delivery of a holistic, programmatic approach through the [Global Climate Resilience Programme](#).
- IFRC is playing a key leadership role in the [UN Secretary General's Early Warnings for All Initiative \(EW4ALL\)](#) as Pillar 4 Lead on Preparedness to Respond. EW4ALL aims to protect all people from disasters by 2027, starting by scaling up action this year in an initial 30 countries, including mainstreaming anticipatory action. EW4ALL was endorsed by all Parties at COP27.
- IFRC's [Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) is scaling up and close to reaching 100M CHF target. IFRC is committed to allocating 25% of its funds towards anticipatory action, we are currently implementing 34 anticipatory action plans in 21 countries. DREF capacity is being expanded through a ground-breaking indemnity-based insurance mechanism to support transform our disaster response. This risk transfer mechanism ensures that swift and agile support is available when a disaster occurs and provides a critical safety valve for DREF's life-saving work, ensuring the DREF can continue to meet the needs of today while standing ready for the crises of tomorrow.
- IFRC is preparing to launch a new climate initiative in partnership with OCHA to tackle the rising humanitarian impacts of climate change. This will focus on driving practical action; to enhance ways of working across climate-humanitarian-development, coherent financing and evidence to strengthen response to immediate shocks which maximizes adaptation action, driven by people and communities
- State parties of the Geneva Conventions at the 2019 [International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent](#), recognized the work of the IFRC and National Societies to support their States with disaster laws, disaster response, recovery and adaptation to climate change and affirmed that this mandate includes the responsibility to advise public officials in the development of climate-smart disaster laws and policies as well as inclusive climate change laws, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)¹
- As auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, National Societies are already **responding to aspects of loss and damage**.
 - **Before a crisis strikes, we minimize losses and damages** including the loss of life, loss of income, loss of livelihoods, loss of ecosystems and loss of health, through effective DRR and preparedness measures, pursuing anticipatory action, and scaling up early warning early action, underpinned by effective disaster law.
 - **After a disaster strikes**, National Societies respond to the impacts, to meet people's immediate needs into early recovery, including provision of emergency shelter, health care (including mental health support), income loss assistance, access to water/ sanitation, and support to people displaced, targeting support to those most affected and with the least resources to cope.



OUR MESSAGES

1. URGENT ACTION NOW

Background:

- We are already seeing devastating humanitarian impacts now with average global temperature at 1.15°C above the 1850-1900 average, driving disasters, **acute food insecurity and malnutrition, water shortages, increasing health impacts and displacement** in a number of countries around the world. It is the world's poorest and most exposed people who are suffering the most.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has made it clear that **reducing greenhouse gas emissions is critical** to reduce the impacts on people and the planet.
- Yet, under current policies the world is on track for 2.8°C global warming (UNEP, 2022).
- **Humanitarian impacts will continue to escalate** without steep and immediate cuts to greenhouse gas emissions, and investment in adaptation. Ambitious mitigation efforts are essential to limit the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis.
- If urgent action to tackle climate change is not taken, the number of people in need of international **humanitarian assistance could double by 2050** due to climate change and the financial costs could grow to 20 billion US dollars (USD) per year (IFRC, 2019).
- **At COP28**, the Global Stocktake process will complete, which reviews progress on all aspects of the Paris Agreement. We are off track and urgent action is needed now.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- **Acknowledge the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis** and increase immediate support for the most vulnerable people, countries and communities, including capacity strengthening, technical support and finance.
- **Drastic climate mitigation efforts are critical.** Pursue steep and **immediate emissions reductions to keep below 1.5°C limit.** This is the clearest way to **prevent** further rising **humanitarian impacts** and wider climate-related **losses and damages.**
- **Even with ambitious mitigation, adaptation remains critical. We must scale up adaptation action** including locally led approaches and strengthening local capacities and builds preparedness and resilience so that at-risk and affected communities are equal partners in the planning, design and implementation of adaptation actions and cross-sectoral strategies such as climate and health.
- More must be done to **avert, minimize and address loss and damage** – to reduce impacts where they can be avoided must be the priority and develop effective responses to impacts where the limits to adaptation have been reached.
- Put **people** at the centre of defining and measuring success; the number of lives saved, people protected, livelihoods and dignity restored from climate-related events.

2. IMPLEMENT LOCALLY LED ACTION



Background

- Despite communities being at the frontlines of the climate crisis, **local communities are rarely leading the design and implementation** of urgent climate action needed to increase climate resilience and adaptive capacity.
- **Locally-led climate action** is broader than adaptation – it recognises the need to put local actors and communities at the heart of decision making, including across the **full disaster continuum** from preparedness, response, resilience, recovery, rehabilitation, as well as for longer-term locally led adaptation.
- Locally-led climate action, includes **locally led adaptation (LLA)**, where local actors and communities lead on decisions and implementation of climate adaptation programmes, funding and practices, has been limited, despite commitments such as the [principles for locally led adaptation](#).
- **Locally led adaptation can be extremely effective.** Communities and local actors know the vulnerabilities, needs and capacities at the local.
- **At COP28**, the process to agree a “**Global Goal on Adaptation**” will conclude at COP 28. The Global Goal on Adaptation seeks to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change through a globally agreed structured framework.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- Governments and institutions should adopt and **implement the Principles for Locally-led Adaptation**
- **Recognize the role of local communities and local actors in climate policies, plans and programmes (including in NDCs and NAPs).** Local communities and actors should be involved in design of plans and should co-lead climate action. Efforts are needed to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity recognizing the lived experience of diverse communities, including Indigenous communities, women, youth, people with disabilities and older people.
- **Strengthen community engagement in local climate risk information systems** and ensure scientific information is accessible to communities and local actors, combining it with local knowledge and risk perceptions. Provide hazard and risk education, identify capacity needs and inform local decision-making to build resilience.
- **Support strengthening coherence across resilience and adaptation which puts local action at the centre.** Strengthen partnerships, coordination, coherence and technical assistance to enable more joint-up action between climate, development and humanitarian across short to longer timescales to build resilience to climate related risks and disasters.
- Include locally led adaptation as a core element for inclusion in the **Global Goal on Adaptation**, starting by including this in national negotiating positions.



3. INCREASE CLIMATE FINANCE FOR ADAPTATION

Background

- The **most climate vulnerable countries and communities**, with the least capacity to manage rising risks, are not receiving the support they need ([IFRC, 2022](#)).
- International **climate adaptation finance flows to developing countries are 5-10 times below estimated needs** and the gap is widening. Estimated annual adaptation needs are expected to grow to USD 160-340 billion by 2030 and USD 315-565 billion by 2050 (UNEP, 2022).
- **Less than 10% of climate adaptation finance reaches the local level** – or just 2% of the global total of climate finance flows from developed to developing countries (IIED).
- Whilst world leaders have committed to double adaptation, most climate finance from multilateral climate funds is still spent on mitigation, with **only 28%** (US\$2.9 billion) of the US\$10.7 billion dispersed funding **spent on adaptation**. (DI GHA Report 2022).
- In 2021, **none of the 10 most climate vulnerable countries** (as defined by ND-GAIN) **were among the top 10 recipients of climate-related development finance** (OECD). For example, Somalia, the most vulnerable country according to ND GAIN, ranks only 59th for per person in climate adaptation funding disbursements, whilst Afghanistan comes in 99th (IFRC, updated stats from [Where it Matters Most](#) report)
- **At COP28**, a “Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace Declaration” is due to be launched. The COP Presidency is seeking endorsement by governments and organizations. This aims to accelerate efforts to unlock access to finance, address access barriers and scale up climate adaptation efforts to ensure populations most at risk are not left further behind, particularly countries and communities affected by conflict, crises and fragility.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- Deliver on the commitment to **double climate adaptation finance** as a minimum.
- **Improve the quantity, quality and accessibility of adaptation finance** (as committed to in the Paris Agreement, this should be equally balanced 50:50 with mitigation finance).
- **Ensure funds reach the local level**. Invest in locally led adaptation and enable local actors to access funding harnessing the expertise of affected people, invest in local capabilities, scaling up decentralized and devolved financing. Enhance action to streamline reporting and flexible and unearmarked financing that suits the local context.
- **Ensure that adaptation finance reaches the most vulnerable**, including in hard-to-reach places, as well as fragile and conflict-affected countries and communities. We encourage stakeholders to identify concrete commitments and actions to contribute to the **COP28 “Declaration”** to accelerate climate action, and we are keen to do our part.
- **Build coherence between climate, development and humanitarian finance** streams for a joined-up approach across short to longer timescales to build resilience to climate related risks and disasters. This should include donors actively working across Ministries and departments to build coherent approaches and scale action and which works. This should seek to strengthen layered financing approaches with the private sector and from innovative sources to leverage support to scale adaptation action.

4. SCALE UP ANTICIPATORY AND EARLY ACTION



Background

- The UN Secretary General's **Early Warnings for All initiative** (EW4All) aims to ensure everyone on earth is protected by early warning systems by 2027. The fourth pillar of EW4All Initiative ‘Preparedness to Respond’ is led by IFRC, engaging countries and communities to ensure the initiative reaches last mile communities.
- Early warning and early action to save lives and livelihoods, **investment across the full value chain**, with particular focus on local community capacity and preparedness, to ensure early warnings translate into early action at community level to reduce losses and damages
- Despite some progress, funding for early action is limited, insufficient and hard to access, especially for local actors. **Pre-arranged finance for early action remains below 3% of committed humanitarian appeal funds** (REAP, 2023). Whilst anticipatory Action has demonstrated effectiveness over the past decade, but is not yet a mainstream approach, attracting only 0.2% of total humanitarian aid, and rarely being used in the development and climate sectors (CDP, 2023).
- The five largest humanitarian funds have been **increasing the amounts of disbursed for anticipatory action**. Spending has increased from a total of USD 41.5 million in 2020 to USD 45.8 million in 2021, and USD 63.8 million so far disbursed in 2023. This is still a very small amount of the total funds directed towards disasters. (REAP 2023).
- **At COP28** a “Charter” will be launched on the disaster financing, and the COP28 Presidency is seeking endorsement by governments and organizations. The Charter aims to “get ahead” of disasters by encouraging pre-arranging finance, investing in systems that enable earlier and anticipatory action, and fosters nexus collaboration.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- Ensure that investments in early warning systems are matched by **adequate investments in the capacity to act** at the local and community level, investing across the whole value chain including through EW4ALL.
- **Invest in systems and delivery mechanisms that ensure actors on the ground can turn early warnings into early action**, with a focus on shock responsive social protection where possible and humanitarian delivery channels where necessary.
- **Integrate and strengthen anticipatory action in national climate frameworks** (e.g. NDCs, NAPs), disaster risk management, development strategies, policies and plans.
- **Increase finance for earlier action and alignment across climate, humanitarian and development investments**, including anticipatory action, which enables funds to be rapidly used ahead of disasters, and can be integrated into wider systems and partnerships to strengthen adaptive capacity and resilience of communities, such as [IFRC Water at Heart](#), as a programmatic example of how to scale action.
- **Strengthen disaster risk financing and support innovative financing tools**, to unlock the potential of private sector partnerships, such as [DREF insurance](#)
- In accordance with **the COP28 Charter**, commit to efforts to enable faster, more predictable, equitable, and better targeted finance for disasters.



5. STRENGTHEN CLIMATE RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

Background

- The climate crisis is one of the greatest threats to public health. Climate change is impacting **people's physical, and mental health, and access to water** across the world. Climate change multiplies existing health vulnerabilities, including limited access to safe water, sanitation, food security, and education (IPCC 2023)
- The number of **people lacking sufficient water** at least one month per year is projected to increase from 3.6 billion today to more than 5 billion by 2050 (GCA, 2019). Yet WASH programs receive **less than 1% of global climate finance**.
- More **severe heatwaves and wildfires** have increased deaths and health impacts. People working outdoors are at high risk. Excess deaths during extreme heat events affect older people and groups with underlying health conditions. (IPCC, 2023)
- **Health and water services are disrupted by extreme events**, leaving chronically ill and vulnerable and disadvantaged people at risk. This includes, women, children, ethnic minorities, lower-income communities, migrants or displaced persons, older populations, and those with underlying health conditions (IPCC, 2023).
- **Vector and water borne diseases are changing** exposing new populations and increasing existing vulnerabilities for people to infectious diseases. Immunization is essential to reduce global morbidity and mortality from preventable diseases, as well as reducing and mitigating the risk of outbreaks and pandemics.
- **COP28** will host a Climate Health Ministerial, convening Heads of States, Health, Climate and Environment Ministries to build a shared vision and action.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- **Strengthen climate resilient health systems** investing in primary health care, WASH systems and community level preparedness to respond to evolving climate risks, from and achieve universal health coverage goals.
- **Support interventions and direct climate finance** to enhance protection against specific climate-sensitive health and water risks and save lives. This includes; climate-informed health surveillance linked to early warning, early action systems at community level, access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and heat action plans.
- **Strengthen national planning on health, water and climate change** including through NDCs/ NAPs, enhance coordination, cooperation and action across government and with local authorities and districts. With proactive, timely and effective adaptation, many risks for human health and well-being could be reduced and some potentially avoided.
- **Invest in climate-proofed immunization approaches and strategies** including public health approaches and new vaccines developments to prevent and respond to changing risks and preventing disease outbreaks fuelled by climate change and strain on systems
- **Focus on the most vulnerable people and settings**. The most effective measures to reduce vulnerability in the near term are programmes that improve basic public health.
- **Ensure locally led action**. Strengthen the role of community health workers and volunteers to reach the most vulnerable eg climate health risk information

6. AVERT, MINIMIZE, AND ADDRESS LOSS AND DAMAGE



Background

- Countries and communities **are already experiencing loss and damage** from climate change, which will increase with every increment of global warming. Loss and damage is caused by rapid-onset events, such as floods, storms, as well as slow-onset events such as desertification and sea-level rise. (IPCC 2023)
- Loss and Damage refers to **climate change impacts that go beyond people and communities' capacities to adapt to and recover from** – in particular, impacts which cannot be avoided by mitigation, adaptation or disaster risk management ([UNFCCC](#))
- Loss and damage can be measured in **economic** terms, such as damages to homes, infrastructure, food systems and livelihoods, and others that are **non-economic**, including loss of life, biodiversity, ecosystems, cultural heritage, territory, and Indigenous knowledge, as well as displacement and adverse effects on health. ([UNFCCC](#))
- Failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in adequate preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures at the pace and scale required has led to climate-related **loss and damage which could have been avoided** (ZFRA, 2022)
- Estimates of future costs associated with loss and damage range from **US \$290 billion to US \$580 billion**. (Oxfam, 2022) Even current levels of losses and damages go beyond many national capacities to absorb, triggering higher levels of debt, and beyond international humanitarian to local communities' and households' capacity to withstand.
- **At COP28** an agreement is to be reached to establish a new Loss and Damage fund and funding arrangements for Countries particularly vulnerable to climate change.

Messages

We call on governments/ parties as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- **New, additional and predictable finance** to reduce and respond to the scale of climate-induced losses and damage, now and flexible to escalating risks and needs.
- **Comprehensive efforts are needed to avert, minimize, and address losses and damages.** Scaling up investments across the full disaster continuum from preparedness to recovery, including action across the climate, humanitarian and development nexus. This is necessary for delivering support in the short, medium and long term as part of a wide package of support which also strengthens resilience. This includes; disaster risk reduction, early warning early action anticipatory action, social protection, disaster risk financing, insurance pools, solidarity funds, etc.
- **Strengthen coordination and frameworks at the national level.** Support countries to capture and communicate their loss and damage needs. This could include leveraging their NDC/NAP processes for planning to address loss and damage and strengthened recovery frameworks and assessments and approaches at local level.
- **Implement locally led solutions.** Ensure the new fund and funding arrangements support locally led solutions as central to respond to losses and damages. This is key to ensure measures are tailored to local needs and reach the most vulnerable.
- **Scale up anticipatory and early action** to minimize loss and damage. New funding arrangements should be designed with flexibility to support and enhance pre-arranged funds in anticipation of disasters and support anticipatory action where appropriate.