

POSITION PAPER

The humanitarian NGOs' perspective on climate resilience

This position paper sets out views expressed by members of the VOICE Resilience-Nexus Working Group whose goal is to provide the humanitarian NGOs' perspective for the European approach to resilience, climate change and the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Climate change and environmental degradation have become **primary root causes** of humanitarian crises around the world, generating food insecurity, water shortages, displacement and threatening livelihoods. Human influence is warming the climate at a rate that is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years¹. In 2020, weather-related events were responsible for 98% of all disaster displacement recorded,² and despite additional difficulties resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, weather extremes remained the primary driver of acute food insecurity in 15 countries, putting **16 million people in a situation of crisis requiring urgent actions**³. Affected communities see the access to their basic needs strongly impacted and experience multiple and intersecting violations of their rights, leading to further marginalisation.

NGOs have long-standing experience working with local partners to support people in the most vulnerable situations and to enhance climate resilience, especially in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. While working hard to reduce their environmental footprint, they support the setting up of **climate adaptation** programmes aimed at (i) reducing the magnitude of disaster-induced **loss and damage** through prevention measures; (ii) enhancing communities' resilience through anticipatory actions, disaster risk reduction (DRR), early response mechanisms and flexibility; as well as (iii) facilitating first responders and communities' leadership to recover as fast as possible after a disaster hits.

NGOs need to be supported in the delivery of these adaptation measures. The European Union (EU) and its Member States (MS) play a key role in providing such support. The [Sendai Framework for DRR](#), the creation of a dedicated disaster preparedness budget line, and the [EC's Communication on the EU's Humanitarian Action](#) underlined the need to **increase the range of disaster preparedness and anticipatory actions in humanitarian funding**. Despite these initial commitments, more needs to be done. The most vulnerable and marginalised communities, who have historically contributed the least to climate change, are the hardest hit. Humanitarian needs are steadily growing, and humanitarian NGOs **urge the EU and MS to take responsibility and to make tangible progress towards climate resilience to curb this dangerous trend.**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EU AND AND ITS MEMBER STATES:

1. Step up efforts to scale up climate finance aimed at building climate resilience
2. Ensure climate measures include locally led adaptation actions and prioritise vulnerable and marginalised people, especially women and girls
3. Enhance strong collaboration with other actors to promote climate resilience

1. Step up efforts to scale up climate finance aimed at building climate resilience

Ensure climate finance is new and additional to the existing financing lines. Additional money for climate finance should not be taken from existing resources such as Official Development Assistance. This is key to support vulnerable communities in coping with the effects of the climate crisis and build resilience.

Dedicate at least 50% of climate finance to adaptation and allocate more funding for DRR and emergency preparedness, especially in fragile contexts. In addition, there is a need to foster investments in anticipatory actions to humanitarian assistance, to reduce risks and build resilience. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, a stronger focus on disaster risk financing for forecast-based action (FbA) should be envisaged. Humanitarian NGOs' experiences provide solid evidence on the value of anticipatory actions, risk analysis, and forecasting in preparing humanitarian response ahead of climate disasters.

Mobilise funds to address economic and non-economic Loss and Damage. Anticipatory actions play a role of utmost importance to reduce Loss and Damage for both sudden and slow onset events. Fostering investments in anticipatory actions on national and communities' adaptation and relocation plans are concrete ways to address it.

Ensure quality funding and flexibility between humanitarian and development budgets. Both humanitarian and development donors should allow for flexible funding including crisis modifier budget lines, that can flexibly be used for intensified humanitarian support or for developmental objectives, depending on the needs on the ground and on conflicts that could be aggravated by climate change and environmental degradation. Predictable, timely, flexible and long-term funding is essential for humanitarian NGOs, implementing most humanitarian projects worldwide. This is equally important before or after a crisis hits and is also key to respond to the needs of the most marginalised. Displaced people, among others, are particularly vulnerable to all forms of shocks and stresses, and see conflicts and environmental degradation deepen existing inequalities, particularly in relation to gender.

Recognise the investments humanitarian NGOs are already making to reduce their environmental footprint and provide additional support to further enhance these efforts. While welcoming the European Commission's ambition to establish minimum requirements for "greening" EU humanitarian action, humanitarian NGOs call for additional support to ensure this "greening" approach will not be translated in an additional administrative and financial burden that could undermine the efficiency of their life-saving action.

2. Ensure climate measures include locally led adaptation actions and prioritise vulnerable and marginalised people, especially women and girls

Ensure locally led adaptation actions through a bottom-up approach. Local and national actors, including humanitarian NGOs, women-led organisations, grassroots and faith-based organisations, are key frontline responders during and after emergencies. Donors should support local communities to take a leading role in building resilience to climate change and prepare, mitigate, cope with, and recover from the impacts of climate-related disasters. This is even more important in fragile and conflict settings, where humanitarian NGOs have been successfully promoting a community managed DRR approach to reduce the impact of disasters. Further collaboration between humanitarian and development donor services should be explored to ensure equal partnership, mutual accountability, strengthen, map, build on existing local expertise, and support local and national actors' preparedness and response capacity in a flexible and adaptable manner.

Guarantee that efforts to increase resilience are inclusive and empowering. Climate disasters do not affect everyone in the same way. Climate actions should foster greater participation of those most affected by climate change: children, persons with disabilities, displaced people, migrants, mainly women and girls. Joint tailored programmes need to be developed to address people's different needs, enhance their resilience, capacities, and assets to let them participate meaningfully.

3. Enhance strong collaboration with other actors to promote climate resilience

Enhance collaboration among different actors to scale up anticipatory actions and DRR. The EU and MS should ensure more structural exchanges between humanitarian and development services to ensure anticipatory actions and DRR interventions are kept high on the political agenda and are systematically integrated or 'mainstreamed' into their development policies and programming. Moreover, when implementing a nexus approach in climate-related actions, all relevant actors, including local governments and affected communities, humanitarian NGOs and development actors should be included from the beginning. A closer cooperation with academia can be very useful as they provide research, forecast-based tools, which are key on anticipatory actions, and foster innovation.

Ensure conflict, displacement and gender considerations are incorporated in local, national and global climate adaptation policy and planning. In disaster management laws, policies and plans, specific attention should be given to gender-based violence risks and prevention. Women's organisations and female community leaders must be included meaningfully in planning, decision-making and implementation of climate adaptation strategies.

Ensure a nexus approach in line with humanitarian principles. The Lisbon Treaty, guided by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and humanitarian principles, should be kept at the heart of each EU and MS humanitarian aid policy. All humanitarian interventions should be grounded into the local context, adopt a conflict-sensitive approach and more broadly a "risk-informed" approach/programming.

1. UN News, IPCC report: 'Code red' for human driven global heating, warns UN chief, 9 August 2021

2. iDMC, Global report on internal displacement 2021 - Internal displacement in a changing climate, 2021

3. Global Network against Food Crises and Food Security Information Network, 2021 Global Report on Food Crises, 2021

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