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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/136](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session. The period covered in the report is 1 January to 31 December 2018. The report provides an overview of progress made in this regard and outlines related trends, challenges and thematic issues. It concludes with recommendations for further improvements.

* [A/74/150](#).



I. Year in review

A. Disaster data for 2018

1. For 2018, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 315 disaster events, which caused an estimated 11,804 deaths, affected 68.5 million people and caused \$131.7 billion in damage.¹ Earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis were the deadliest type of disasters, responsible for 45 per cent of deaths. Floods had an impact on more people than any other type of disaster, accounting for 50 per cent of the total number of people affected. The number of deaths and affected people and the scale of economic damage for disasters in 2018 were lower than the annual average for the past 10 years, owing in part to fewer intensive large-scale disasters during the year. Over time, disaster mortality has decreased, owing in part to improved disaster risk management, in particular enhanced early warning systems and timely evacuations, as well as more effective and earlier response.

2. Since 2008, disasters have caused approximately 265 million new displacements, over three times more than conflict and violence, or an average of 24.1 million displacements annually.² The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates that, in 2018, disasters triggered more than 17.2 million displacements in 144 countries and territories. Most of the displacements were triggered by weather-related events, in particular tropical cyclones. Of that global total, 54 per cent of displacements happened in Asia and the Pacific. The global number of people displaced by slow-onset disasters remains unknown, given that only drought-related displacement is captured in some countries and only in part.³

3. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the past four years were the warmest on record. Features associated with global warming, such as the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters, the urban heat island effect, increasing sea-level rise, ocean heat content, glacier mass loss and shrinking sea ice extent, continue a portentous trajectory.⁴ Greater global ambition, commitments and action are urgently needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, curb the global temperature increase and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

4. In 2018, 113 million people in 53 countries experienced crisis-level acute food insecurity,⁵ driven primarily by conflict and insecurity, disasters and economic shocks, and required urgent food, nutrition, health and livelihood assistance. The decrease from 124 million people in 2017 was due in large part to vulnerable countries not experiencing the intensity of climate-related shocks and stressors that they had experienced in 2017 following the El Niño event of 2015–2016. Of those 113 million people, disasters and climate shocks pushed 29 million in 26 countries into acute food insecurity, of whom nearly 23 million live in 20 countries in Africa. A further 35 million people in climate-affected countries were living in stressed conditions⁶ on the verge of crisis-level food insecurity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*

¹ See Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, “Natural disasters 2018”. Available at www.cred.be/sites/default/files/CREDNaturalDisaster2018.pdf. The data used for the purposes of the present report exclude epidemics and insect infestations.

² See Sylvain Ponsérre and Justin Ginnetti, *Disaster Displacement: A Global Review, 2008–2018* (Geneva, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019).

³ See Vicente Anzellini and others, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019* (Geneva, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019).

⁴ See World Meteorological Organization, *WMO Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2018* (Geneva, 2019).

⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and Cadre Harmonisé (CH) Phase 3 or above.

⁶ IPC/CH Phase 2.

2019, warned that countries affected by the combination of drivers of conflict, climate change and economic slowdowns faced the greatest risk of hunger and malnutrition. The scale of crisis-level acute food insecurity may increase in the future owing to further shocks and stressors and to the less favourable weather conditions during the 2018–2019 cropping season, which have increased the probability of a drop in agricultural production in many vulnerable countries, with associated implications for food security, nutrition and public health.⁷

B. Overview of disasters associated with natural hazards in 2018

5. In Asia and the Pacific, a 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Central Sulawesi Province in Indonesia, triggering a tsunami, landslides and liquefaction affecting 1.5 million people. The event followed a series of earthquakes, which displaced more than 300,000 people. A tsunami also hit the Sunda Strait region of Indonesia, leaving more than 400 dead. Volcanic eruptions in Vanuatu led to repeated displacements. A 7.5 magnitude earthquake affected 544,000 people in Papua New Guinea. Two typhoons hit the Philippines, displacing some 2.1 million people. Tropical Cyclone Gita caused extensive flooding and damage in Fiji and Samoa, as well as Niue, and affected 80 per cent of the population in Tonga. Tropical Cyclones Keni and Josie affected more than 77,000 people in Fiji, causing significant flooding.

6. Severe drought affected more than 4 million people in Afghanistan and resulted in a 45–57 per cent reduction in annual wheat production. In Pakistan, drought affected more than 5 million people in Balochistan and Sind Provinces. Flooding in Kerala State, India, left 500 dead and displaced more than 1 million people, causing damages and losses of \$3.8 billion.

7. In Southern Africa, the 2018/2019 lean season began early in many areas owing to erratic and delayed rainfall, which led to poor harvests, leaving an estimated 10.8 million people severely food insecure. In the Sahel, some 5 million people throughout the region urgently required food, nutrition and livelihood assistance owing to a combination of drought, conflict and insecurity.

8. In Somalia, while the overall food security situation improved after four consecutive poor rainy seasons and associated drought, related needs persisted and the heaviest seasonal April–June rains in nearly two decades led to flooding in the southern and central regions, affecting 830,000 people and displacing 290,000 others.

9. Notwithstanding generally favourable rains in Ethiopia in 2018, flooding affected 419,000 people and 190,000 others were forced to leave their homes in search of livelihoods, food, water and pasture. At year end, more than 500,000 people had been displaced by disasters.

10. In Nigeria, approximately 2.3 million people were affected by severe flooding. In Mali more than 70,000 people were affected by floods. In the Niger, 250,000 people were affected by flooding and 8,500 ha of agricultural lands were lost.

11. In 2018, significant food insecurity concerns emerged in parts of Central America. The loss of 282,000 ha of crops affected 2.2 million people in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In Guatemala, volcanic eruption resulted in 425 deaths.

⁷ See Food Security Information Network, *Global Report on Food Crises 2019: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions* (2019); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns* (Rome, 2019).

C. Funding related to disasters in 2018

12. A total of \$508.9 million was reported to the Financial Tracking Service of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in response to emergencies classified as disasters. Of that figure, \$381.4 million was reported in response to drought in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Somalia and Zimbabwe. A total of \$54 million was reported for response to earthquakes and tsunamis. A further \$53.2 million was reported to address the consequences of floods in various countries, while \$20.3 million was reported in response to cyclones and hurricanes in Madagascar, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

13. The Central Emergency Response Fund allocated \$500.5 million in 2018, of which \$125.3 million was for operations targeting the effects of disasters. This included \$59.3 million to address needs in drought-affected countries, \$30.8 million to address needs caused by floods, \$28.3 million for response to earthquakes and volcanoes and \$6.9 million to respond to cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons.

II. Progress in strengthening disaster preparedness, response and resilience

A. Opportunities to address disaster and climate risks and impacts

14. As evidenced by recent major disasters around the world, climate- and weather-related disasters already exert a heavy toll on communities, and this burden is only expected to grow. The 2018 special report, entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change brings a new sense of urgency to global efforts. If the 1.5°C and 2°C thresholds are breached, the possibilities to adapt will decline dramatically, and this is likely to unleash displacement, migration and humanitarian needs on an unprecedented scale.

15. Climate change and its impact have significant implications for humanitarian action. Increasingly frequent and intense disasters, their consequences aggravated by changes in their spatial extent, duration and timing, challenge the capacity of the humanitarian system to effectively prepare, respond to and reach those in need in a timely manner. Humanitarian actors need to continue to adapt analysis, planning and programming as a priority to address escalating disaster and climate risks across sectors and areas of work. Humanitarian, development, climate and human rights actors need to collaborate with a stronger focus on disaster risk reduction, prevention, anticipation and resilience. This requires greater investment in measures to reduce vulnerability, improve risk analysis and strengthen preparedness and early warning and early action mechanisms, especially through the increased use of climate science and longer-term projections, seasonal climate outlooks, weather forecasts and other hydro-meteorological services, as well as in appropriate financing mechanisms.

16. Escalating disaster and climate risk and impacts, exacerbated by risk drivers such as rapid population growth, unplanned urbanization and the concentration of people, assets and critical infrastructure in locations exposed to hazards, jeopardize the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Development processes and investment must be informed by these risks and ensure resilience to disaster and climate impacts. Disasters affect, displace and push millions of people into poverty annually, contribute to increased inequality and have serious human rights consequences. Disasters and the adverse impact of climate change disproportionately affect persons living in poverty, women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

17. A stronger focus is needed on empowering local actors to proactively address disaster and climate risks and on strengthening national and local capacities for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery within and across all sectors. The achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development depends on ensuring that vulnerable people affected by or at risk of disasters are not left behind. Humanitarian actors and partners need to identify and prioritize the people most in need, hardest to reach and those who may be excluded.⁸ Affected people must have a central role in contributing to the strengthening of resilience and the building of sustainable and inclusive societies, in line with the theme of the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Member States need to redouble their efforts to meet global target (e) of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020 in order to help to build resilience and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

18. Now is the decisive turning point to accelerate and scale up action to strengthen resilience and address the threat of climate change. Key opportunities such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Reconstruction Conference, the humanitarian affairs segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council,⁹ the Climate Action Summit 2019, the high-level political forum on sustainable development held under the auspices of the General Assembly, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, the high-level midterm review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provide critical momentum for a renewed commitment to a coherent and comprehensive global response to address disaster and climate risks, their drivers and impact, as well as the root causes of humanitarian crises.

B. Measures undertaken to strengthen preparedness and response in the Caribbean following the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season

19. The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season challenged the preparedness and response mechanisms of the Caribbean region. Building on lessons learned, including those discussed in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/73/343), United Nations organizations and partners have scaled up their presence in the region, strengthened response mechanisms, coordination and partnerships with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and supported offices of the resident coordinator and United Nations country teams to strengthen operational readiness and contingency planning at the national level.

20. The World Food Programme has strengthened the capacity, logistic protocols and supply chain management of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency and reinforced the pre-positioning of relief items in Agency subhubs, and is working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on shock analysis and integrating emergency cash transfer projects into government-led social safety nets. FAO, the Agency and partners are developing a regional emergency response strategy and action plan for the agriculture sector. UNICEF and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) signed memorandums of understanding with the Agency on child protection and on gender equality and the empowerment of women in disaster response, respectively, while the

⁸ See International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2018: Leaving No One Behind* (Geneva, 2018).

⁹ See Chair's statement on the 2019 humanitarian affairs segment. Available at <http://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/ECOSOC%20HAS%20-%20CHAIR%20STATEMENT.pdf>.

United Nations Development Programme and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies continue to strengthen community-based early warning systems. The Pan American Health Organization is providing technical assistance to Caribbean countries in managing health risks associated with disasters and making hospitals structurally safe and operational during disasters.

21. In 2018, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs implemented the first phase of a two-year strategy to support the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in strengthening operational readiness and response capacity. The Office conducted workshops on response preparedness, the humanitarian programme cycle, financing mechanisms, information management, needs assessments and interoperability between United Nations response mechanisms, such as the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, and the Agency's Regional Response Mechanism. Deployment modalities, needs assessments, civil-military coordination and reporting mechanisms were reviewed and recommendations identified for all partners. Simulation exercises were held in Jamaica for the western Caribbean and in Barbados for the Leeward Islands. The Office conducted a readiness mission to Dominica to support the development of a hurricane contingency plan and standard operating procedures. It has also extended support to contingency planning and putting in place minimum preparedness action plans in Belize, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. In Haiti, the Office and partners have been strengthening national response capacity with humanitarian civil-military coordination and United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team training and the pre-positioning of relief items. A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team hurricane preparedness mission was deployed to Sint Maarten to strengthen response coordination capacity and identify preparedness action plans to implement ahead of future hurricanes.

C. Food security and disasters

22. Disasters and climate variability are among the leading drivers behind the recent rise in global hunger and one of the leading causes of food crises and associated risks such as disease outbreaks. A warming climate has a negative effect on staple cereal production, with direct consequences for food security and the scale of vulnerable people in need of assistance. Countries with high exposure to climate extremes have more than double the number of undernourished people as those without high exposure. Hunger is more prevalent in countries with agricultural systems that are highly sensitive to rainfall and temperature variability and drought, and where the livelihoods of a high proportion of the vulnerable population, especially the rural poor and smallholder farmers, depend on agriculture.⁴

23. Data and technology help to identify changes in food security and inform policies, strategies and plans for prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response. Although the quality of data has improved, gaps remain in many countries. Collecting and analysing data on people vulnerable to food insecurity is essential to identify the key drivers of hunger and enable a targeted and integrated response by humanitarian and development actors to address emergency needs and the root causes of vulnerability.

24. Poor households are more susceptible to recurring shocks and may possess limited resilience owing to low income, a lack of savings, social exclusion, low asset bases and a heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and natural resources. National social protection programmes have been increasingly used to support the poorest and most vulnerable in reducing social and income-based vulnerability and the use of negative coping strategies. These programmes can provide incentives for climate-resilient agricultural livelihoods and support inclusive disaster preparedness and

response. Shock-responsive social protection systems allow humanitarian assistance to complement development programming that is aimed at enhancing the livelihoods and productive capacities of poor and vulnerable households.

25. Action at the global and regional levels has a central role in strengthening food security and reducing vulnerability. In 2018, the United Nations supported the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in developing a regional approach and country-specific strategies on risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection to strengthen national capacities to address food insecurity. Crucial steps were taken to operationalize the Global Network against Food Crises, a multi-partnership initiative to promote joined-up solutions to food crises.

D. Advancing humanitarian and development collaboration

26. In 2018, the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration agreed to focus its initial efforts on seven priority countries¹⁰ and carried out a review of progress and lessons learned in articulating and operationalizing collective outcomes¹¹ in those countries.¹² Good practices developed to date in humanitarian-development collaboration, especially with regard to joint analysis and joined-up planning, were noted in the review. The need for all relevant stakeholders to align programming and financing more systematically behind collective outcomes to effectively reduce need, risk and vulnerability, build resilience and make progress towards sustainable development was also stressed.

27. In some countries, collective outcomes have been identified to reduce disaster and climate risks and vulnerabilities, address food insecurity and malnutrition and strengthen basic service provision to mitigate the impact of recurrent disasters.

28. In Burkina Faso and Mauritania, collective outcomes were put to the test by the drought that had affected the Sahel and led to large-scale food insecurity and malnutrition in 2018. In Burkina Faso, the Government and donors, including the European Union and the World Bank, financed the nutrition response in line with collective outcomes. In Mauritania, a humanitarian response plan was launched to mobilize funding for the drought response and complement the multi-stakeholder partnership framework for sustainable development for the period 2018–2022.

29. In Somalia, collective outcomes were articulated in 2018 following the drought response, on the basis of the Somalia drought impact needs assessment and humanitarian needs overview. The development of such outcomes emphasized the importance of systematically reducing risk and vulnerability through aligned humanitarian and development programming and financing and of the urgent operationalization of the recovery and resilience framework and the Famine Action Mechanism of the World Bank to complement the humanitarian response plan.

30. The United Nations is strengthening the collaboration of its humanitarian and development entities by advancing the implementation of system-wide action to reduce disaster risk and build resilience. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development provides an important tool to maximize the impact of support for countries in strengthen risk-informed development planning and

¹⁰ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, the Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. See www.un.org/jsc/.

¹¹ Collective outcomes are concrete and measurable results that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of three to five years to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience. For more information, see www.un.org/jsc/.

¹² Beyond the scope of the review, several other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, South Sudan and the Sudan, have developed collective outcomes.

investment and to implement coherent action plans to reduce disaster risk, build resilience and achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement.

31. The United Nations common guidance on helping to build resilient societies informs the building of resilience for delivering the 2030 Agenda and is embedded in the reforms and prevention agenda of the Secretary-General and other key global frameworks. The guidance is aimed at achieving greater coherence of resilience efforts by incorporating a broad spectrum of resilience dimensions, hazards and risks into activities and investment across timescales to help countries with recurring disasters to strengthen institutions and the self-reliance of communities and break the cycle of disasters and recovery. The guidance is being field-tested in select countries and will be finalized in 2019.

E. Anticipating disasters by strengthening preparedness for response and recovery

32. There remains an urgent need to continue to strengthen preparedness, early warning, early action, rapid response and resilient recovery in countries and among people at risk of or affected by increasingly severe and frequent disasters. This has been a strong feature during recent humanitarian affairs segments and related special meetings at the sessions of the Economic and Social Council.

33. Escalating disaster and climate risks require scaled-up investment in disaster risk management and building resilience. Effective early warning systems and evacuations are essential for saving lives and should form an integral part of preparedness and response strategies and sustainable development and adaptation efforts. Science, information and communications technology and big data can help to ensure that early warning information reaches the last mile and triggers effective early action before disasters strike.

34. Humanitarian actors should enhance collaboration with hydro-meteorological and climate services to ensure the availability of actionable early warning information and hazard mapping. To this end, WMO is enhancing support for humanitarian organizations, including through the global multi-hazard alert system. In 2018, the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative launched two regional projects in West Africa and the Caribbean and supported 41 countries in improving weather forecasting and climate prediction capacities, strengthening collaboration among early warning agencies and engaging communities in risk mapping and early action.

35. The inter-agency standard operating procedures for early action to El Niño/La Niña episodes provide a framework for inter-agency early action by catalysing and guiding earlier humanitarian action and development efforts to mitigate and prevent the impact of extreme weather events relating to the El Niño Southern Oscillation. They outline what actions to take, by whom and by when once there are warning signs of a likely El Niño/La Niña episode. In September 2018, following a warning about a possible episode in late 2018/early in 2019, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee launched an “El Niño watch” and activated an analysis cell that identified 25 high-risk countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean where regional- and country-level preparedness and early action measures were undertaken. By late 2018, regional structures had convened and humanitarian and development organizations had developed or revised preparedness and response plans, secured pre-committed funding and implemented early action in at-risk countries.

36. In November 2018, Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals endorsed the Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation Protocol, which enables a rapid

system-wide mobilization to address urgent humanitarian needs in a sudden-onset or significantly deteriorating humanitarian crisis by ensuring additional capacity on the ground and that appropriate leadership and coordination mechanisms to deliver assistance and protection are established.

37. By the end of 2018, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Emergency Response Preparedness approach has been effectively implemented in 72 countries. In these countries, risk analysis is undertaken on a regular basis (at least once annually), a system to monitor those risks is in place and a gap analysis has been undertaken to identify required priority preparedness action for in-country actors, with support as necessary from the regional and global levels.

38. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2018. Since its inception, the Coordination Team has responded to more than 285 emergencies in more than 100 countries. In 2018, teams were mobilized to provide tailored support in different disaster contexts. In response to the earthquake in Papua New Guinea, the Coordination Team supported the Government and the humanitarian country team in information management, reporting, coordination and situational analysis, including environmental risks. In Nigeria, the Coordination Team supported government emergency operations centres in flood response. In Indonesia, it supported the Government-led response to the earthquake and tsunami. A Coordination Team response preparedness mission was deployed to Sint Maarten.

39. In 2018, the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group continued to strengthen the urban search and rescue capacities of Member States, including through region-wide earthquake response exercises in Armenia and the Philippines. The Advisory Group also provided technical advice to leverage technology in support of response, with more than 450 members from 38 urban search and rescue teams trained in data collection and information management by the end of 2018.

40. The World Health Organization (WHO) and partners supported national efforts in developing capacities to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats, including those associated with disasters, and implement the International Health Regulations. WHO supported 27 countries in conducting simulation exercises and 18 for after-action reviews, while 19 were supported with multi-hazard health emergency risk assessments.

41. As disasters inflict greater human and economic costs and are often recurring, the importance of resilient recovery has increased. The practice of recovery, which also includes the reconstruction of houses and infrastructure, restores people's assets and livelihoods, stops the descent of affected people into poverty and resumes their pathway to sustainable development. Recovery is an opportunity to learn from previous shortcomings and build back better through a resilient, inclusive and risk-informed approach. This entails policies and investment that are informed by disaster and climate risks and that integrate resilience within and across sectors, with a view to avoiding a return to pre-disaster vulnerabilities and extensive losses in future disaster events, including by building disaster-resilient infrastructure and livelihoods and improving land use and the enforcement of building codes.

42. In 2018, the United Nations, together with the World Bank and the European Union, conducted seven¹³ post-disaster needs assessments, which provide a comprehensive picture of the damage and losses and a foundation for recovery and reconstruction programmes. While the growing impact of disasters has increased demand for these assessments and underscores the importance of addressing recovery

¹³ In Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, India (Kerala), Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Rwanda and Somalia.

needs, the lack of predictable and adequate funding remains a key challenge for planning and implementing recovery and reconstruction programmes. A review of post-disaster needs assessments conducted between 2014 and 2016 revealed that, on average, only 24 per cent of recovery needs were funded.¹⁴

F. Enhancing the use of data

43. The collection, reporting, analysis and use of disaggregated data on disaster risk, loss and damage are essential for understanding the specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of vulnerable and affected people and for ensuring the effectiveness and inclusiveness of disaster risk reduction strategies and response and recovery activities. More efforts are required to build the capacity of national disaster management agencies and statistical offices and other official data contributors to inform and strengthen evidence-based approaches to address disaster risks and impacts.

44. The Sendai Framework monitor provides a tool to track progress in the achievement of the targets of the Sendai Framework and related Sustainable Development Goals (1, 11 and 13), while the retrofitted DesInventar Sendai disaster loss database system allows Member States to better record and analyse disaster impacts and trends in alignment with the monitor.

45. The INFORM initiative continues to publish its Global Risk Index biannually. In 2018, it supported new subnational risk analysis in Burundi, Chad, Myanmar, Nepal and the Niger. It also published detailed guidance and training material for countries and organizations wishing to conduct risk analysis using the INFORM methodology.

46. Data protection and privacy are of paramount importance for humanitarian action. The risk of data misuse may erode the trust of affected people and negatively affect humanitarian operations. Operational guidance on responsible data use within the humanitarian sector has been developed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and partners to support the safe, ethical and effective management of data in humanitarian response.

47. The Centre for Humanitarian Data oversaw record growth in the Humanitarian Data Exchange platform of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which, as at 16 July 2019, hosted more than 9,800 data sets shared by 243 organizations. The significant growth in 2018 of the number of users and the amount of data being downloaded from the Exchange indicates that more data are being used to build awareness and inform decisions in the humanitarian system than ever before.

G. Financing for anticipatory action

48. To keep up with growing needs and disaster risks, humanitarian organizations are moving from reactive action towards more anticipatory approaches. This shift is aimed at more effective prevention, mitigation, preparedness, early warning, early action, rapid response, recovery and resilience-building in high-risk contexts with recurring disasters, with the goals of saving lives and livelihoods and of reducing lead times to action, humanitarian needs and the cost of response. To enable this and improve outcomes for at-risk and affected people, financing needs to be predictable,

¹⁴ See United Nations Development Programme, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, World Bank and European Union, *Post-Disaster Needs Assessments: Lessons from a Decade of Experience* (2018).

timely, flexible, adequate and multi-year, as well as accept a degree of uncertainty in terms of forecasts and whether hazards materialize as full-blown disasters.

49. A more anticipatory system that does not wait until the full impact of disasters are felt requires greater levels of forecasting, predictive analytics and early warning systems that reach people at risk, coupled with the optimal design and use of all available financial instruments and interventions. There is increasingly compelling evidence of the benefits of anticipatory approaches in which financing is prearranged and disbursed to enable early action when an imminent hazard is forecasted.

50. Forecast-based action by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund is a funding mechanism specifically designed to provide predictable and timely funding for activities included in the early action protocols of national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with automatic disbursements according to pre-agreed forecast triggers that indicate that a hazard is imminent. By end of 2018, 20 such Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were developing these protocols. Since its launch in May 2018, the mechanism has approved allocations for early action in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Mozambique and Peru.

51. An evaluation of the pilot project of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on forecast-based financing in Bangladesh demonstrated that the households supported by unconditional cash grants three to seven days before flooding experienced clear benefits in reducing the impact of flooding. They lost fewer livestock, had improved food security during and after the disaster, accrued less debt and experienced less psychological distress, compared with households that were not supported by early action. The project helped to connect disaster preparedness and response with longer-term resilience and development activities and showed that forecast-based approaches saved lives, livelihoods and money.

52. In 2018, FAO undertook targeted early action activities with international and national partners to prevent and mitigate the impact of forecasted hazards in seven countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in addition to three ongoing interventions that had begun in 2017. The risk analysis and early warning information that triggered early action proved accurate and timely, given that all forecasted hazards eventually materialized. Early action helped to safeguard agricultural livelihoods, improve food security and nutrition and strengthen the resilience of households. Studies demonstrate that early action in agriculture is cost-effective and helps to reduce the cost of humanitarian assistance: for every \$1 invested in early livelihood support ahead of forecasted hazards, households obtained returns of between \$2.50 and \$7.10 in terms of increased agricultural output and avoided production losses and damage to assets.¹⁵

53. The African Risk Capacity insurance mechanism has been augmented through the roll-out of Replica, which is designed to enable humanitarian organizations to obtain complementary climate risk insurance policies, with payouts triggered when some indices such as low rainfall or reduced vegetation are confirmed through satellite data. This mechanism was launched to complement African Risk Capacity in offering reliable and predictable funding for early humanitarian response and to help to protect vulnerable households and break the cycle of poverty in the face of extreme weather shocks.

54. In 2018, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs received support from the Central Emergency Response Fund Advisory Group to explore a more anticipatory use of the Fund and subsequently undertook technical consultations

¹⁵ See FAO, *Madagascar: Impact of Early Warning Early Action* (Rome, 2019); FAO, *Mongolia: Impact of Early Warning Early Action* (Rome, 2018); FAO, *The Sudan: Impact of Early Warning Early Action* (Rome, 2019).

and commissioned independent reviews. A recent study set out the added value of the Fund as a financing tool for anticipatory action and highlighted its specific niche in this field, including appropriate activities in line with its life-saving criteria. To better understand the suitability of the Fund in this regard, the Office will design and conduct pilots with Fund allocations in carefully selected contexts. The pilots will help to generate evidence and lessons learned about the technical, institutional and policy questions of how to fund anticipatory action in a coordinated manner.

55. The shift from reaction towards anticipation in financing is a system-level change. Currently, with few exceptions, anticipatory action is often undertaken as single-agency projects at relatively modest scales. The evidence collected to date on the effectiveness and advantages of anticipatory action provides impetus for further efforts aimed at taking financing models and funding volumes for early action to scale and ensuring greater coordination, coherence, impact and scope of such initiatives. In this regard, the further testing of approaches, gathering of evidence on their impact and outcomes for affected people and learning from the integration of early warning information, predictive analytics and risk monitoring and analysis into decision-making are critical.

H. Localizing disaster preparedness and response

56. The World Humanitarian Summit, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain have harnessed momentum for localization in line with the call to reinforce and not replace local and national systems and actors. International actors have invested in strengthening local capacities through training and technical assistance. Some donors and international organizations have adopted legal and policy changes that are enabling new approaches, including direct funding for local actors, and resulting in new partnerships. Localization, however, still faces significant challenges. More can be done to reinforce efforts to include national and local actors in international field coordination structures and in global decision-making processes. Structural barriers that impede local actors from gaining access to international funding remain. Continued efforts are required to expand the dialogue and improve the implementation of commitments on the ground.

57. Evaluations of humanitarian action suggest that national and local actors enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response. Local actors are on the ground before, during and after disasters and are key to strengthening prevention, resilience and preparedness. They are nearest to affected people and have local knowledge and experience that international actors may not possess. National and local actors are particularly critical to extend the reach of international responders because they operate in difficult-to-access areas. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have unique capacities and functions in terms of mobilizing volunteers, connecting different actors to one another and providing specialized services to communities.

58. The locally led response to the series of earthquakes that struck Indonesia in 2018 demonstrated the benefits of localization and investment in the capacity and leadership of local responders and response mechanisms. With international support, the Government of Indonesia and local civil society actors have made successful investments since the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 for a stronger disaster risk management structure and capacity at the national, provincial and district levels, including the national disaster response framework approved in 2018. Such investment enabled the Government to assume strong leadership and for local responders to deploy their volunteer networks and mobilize local funding and take ownership of the response, while international actors provided tailored complementary support to the national and local actors. There was a notable increase

in the presence and voice of national and local actors in coordination forums, with clusters led by national or local government representatives.

59. Local and national actors are increasingly gaining access to international funding. Country-based pooled funds allocated 25 per cent (\$208 million) of their funding directly to national and local NGOs in 2018. In contexts in which the capacity of these organizations is strong, country-based pooled funds have allocated significantly more, between 40 and 80 per cent of their funding, to them. Factors such as proactive outreach and training support to these organizations, coupled with their participation in the prioritization and decision-making processes of these funds, have contributed to the growth in direct allocations to these actors, an increase from the 16 per cent (\$74.3 million) in 2015. In addition, a large portion of funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund reaches national and local responders as the implementing partners of United Nations organizations. To complement these efforts, other sources of humanitarian funding should increase the proportion of their funding allocated to local actors.

I. Disaster displacement

60. Disaster displacement has devastating effects on people and their livelihoods. Between 2008 and 2018, disasters triggered more than three times the internal displacement than conflict and violence. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects human mobility patterns will change in response to climate variability, extreme weather events and slow-onset disasters and processes such as sea level rise. Weather-related hazards account for more than 87 per cent of all disaster displacement, and their risk and impact are expected to be aggravated by climate change.² A global average of more than 17 million people is at risk of being displaced annually by floods alone, with more than 80 per cent of them living in urban and peri-urban areas.³ Given the rapid rate of urbanization and increasing concentration of people in exposed locations, their exposure and vulnerability to disasters and associated displacement is likely to rise. Without concrete climate and development action, slow-onset impacts of climate change such as water scarcity and declining crop yields could compel more than 143 million people in Latin America, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa alone to move within their own countries by 2050.¹⁶

61. Disaster risk reduction plays a key role in preventing disaster displacement and reducing its risk, strengthening the resilience of people at risk of displacement, addressing the needs of displaced persons and finding durable solutions to their displacement. The inclusion and meaningful participation of displaced persons in these efforts is essential. The Sendai Framework is intended to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020. This provides an opportunity to include disaster displacement and other forms of human mobility in these strategies as a step towards reducing the number of people affected by disasters.

62. The risk of disaster displacement will be influenced by how policies and processes at all levels influence the exposure and vulnerability of people, infrastructure and assets to natural hazards. In this regard, existing global policy agendas and frameworks recognize the challenge of displacement and provide guidance for policy responses. Nationally appropriate targets and indicators for reducing disaster displacement should be developed and used for reporting progress against the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda.

¹⁶ See Kumari Rigaud and others, *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2018).

63. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at its twenty-fourth session, welcomed the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement on integrated approaches to averting, minimizing and addressing displacement relating to the adverse impact of climate change, contained in the annual report of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts. The Conference of the Parties, in its decision 10/CP.24, also invited parties, bodies under the Convention and the Paris Agreement, United Nations agencies and relevant stakeholders to consider the recommendations when undertaking relevant work. The recommendations reference actions and instruments that are intended to strengthen policies, institutional frameworks, tools and guidelines on climate change, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian action. Their implementation will help to better understand and address the risks and impact of displacement relating to disasters and climate change.

64. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration recognizes the nexus among disasters, the adverse impact of climate change, environmental degradation and migration. It provides a range of action, policy instruments and best practices for States to consider using in order to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin and to develop approaches and solutions to support these people, including by taking into consideration the recommendations from processes such as the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda and the Platform on Disaster Displacement. The need to strengthen data collection and analysis for coherent policy approaches and regional cooperation is also emphasized in the Compact.

65. The increasing interaction of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation with the drivers of refugee movements is recognized in the global compact on refugees. In the compact, the international community is called upon to support efforts to reduce disaster risks, in line with the 2030 Agenda and other relevant frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework.

66. The implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is key to reducing and resolving disaster displacement within countries. A three-year multi-stakeholder Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons 2018–2020 was launched in 2018 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles to refocus international attention on internal displacement and mobilize more collaborative and multidisciplinary action and showcase best practices. As part of the regional exchanges, technical experts in the Pacific and the Caribbean will address planned relocations in the context of disasters and climate change.

67. The Platform on Disaster Displacement continued the implementation of the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, which offers a consolidated set of practices and policy options on ways to prevent, reduce, prepare for and address internal and cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. In 2018, the member countries of the South American Conference on Migration adopted regional guidelines on the protection of people displaced across borders and on migrants in countries affected by disasters linked to natural hazards, a process supported by the Platform since 2016. The Platform supported policy development, training and the exchange of effective practices in the Americas, the Horn of Africa, South-East Asia and the Pacific. The Platform informed the sixth Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction by mapping progress on the implementation of disaster displacement provisions in the Sendai Framework and by launching the “Words into Action” guidelines on disaster displacement for piloting in select regions.

68. Notwithstanding the scale of disaster displacement, there are data gaps that limit the understanding of its full impact and dynamics and of required effective responses and strategies to address needs, provide solutions and reduce the risk of future displacement. Monitoring the end of displacement remains elusive, and little information exists on return flows or the successful achievement of local integration or settlement elsewhere. To tailor responses to needs and track progress in addressing disaster displacement, a better understanding is required of the causes, duration and severity of displacement and the differing coping capacities of displaced persons. This also requires a more systematic approach involving common standards and improved data collection, disaggregation and interoperability to enable effective data access, analysis, management and utilization.¹⁷ Existing tools supported with new technologies and approaches can help to obtain comprehensive, timely and accurate disaggregated data. At the same time, the capacity of national actors, including statistical offices for data collection and analysis, should be strengthened, including by considering guidance provided by the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics.

J. Protection in disasters

69. People affected and displaced by disasters are exposed to protection risks that threaten their safety, dignity and enjoyment of rights. During disasters, pre-existing vulnerabilities are exacerbated and protection risks and violations of rights increase. These include unequal access to aid, abuse and exploitation, family separation, the loss of personal documentation, physical and other forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking, and issues relating to land, housing and property rights.

70. The inclusion of a protection perspective in all disaster risk management efforts is essential. Humanitarian actors responding to disasters should uphold the duty to do no harm, analyse and address protection needs, engage collectively to achieve protection outcomes that reduce risks, and monitor and evaluate these outcomes and their impact. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee policy on protection in humanitarian action provides a framework for putting protection at the core of responses, while other tools such as the Committee's Operational Guidelines on the Protection of Persons in Situations of Natural Disasters and *The Sphere Handbook* offer additional guidance on protection in disaster preparedness and response. To help to address protection concerns, the Inter-Agency Protection Standby Capacity initiative deploys senior advisers to assist in strengthening humanitarian response. Humanitarian country teams in disaster-prone contexts should consider developing strategies to adopt a centrality of protection approach in response activities and mitigate the exposure to protection risks.

K. Gender, age and disasters

71. Women are often first responders to disasters and play a central role in the survival and resilience of communities and families. Principled humanitarian response cannot be achieved without understanding how women and men are situated differentially in socioeconomic and political spheres and how this enables or prevents their contribution and access to aid. Strengthened guidance and approaches launched in 2018, such as the updated Inter-Agency Standing Committee *Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action*, represent a major step forward in the ability to incorporate this analysis into the design and implementation of humanitarian policy and

¹⁷ Vicente Anzellini and others (2019), chapter 2; Sylvain Ponserre and Justin Ginnetti (2019).

programmes. The updated *Handbook* was issued in 2018 and an accountability framework is being used to monitor the collective performance of the Committee.

72. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender with age marker was launched in June 2018. The marker is a planning and monitoring tool that gives the office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs the ability to report on the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit and in the Grand Bargain to leave no one behind. The marker strengthens the original one by including age, adding a monitoring component and enabling the analysis of programme quality measures such as accountability, protection, feedback and complaints mechanisms. With support provided by Gender Standby Capacity project advisers, the marker was applied to more than 2,700 humanitarian projects, including 44 per cent of those accepted for the 2019 humanitarian programme cycle, with country completion rates ranging from 4 to 80 per cent.

L. Persons with disabilities and disasters

73. Persons with disabilities are among the most marginalized in disaster-affected communities. Limited data, poor identification and registration and a lack of reasonable accommodation of their needs and rights in humanitarian action, especially during response and recovery, compound their exclusion. Their full, effective and meaningful participation, inclusion and empowerment as active stakeholders in all aspects of humanitarian, disaster risk reduction, development and recovery policies and programming is essential, including for strengthening their disaster resilience and for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the central commitments of the Agenda for Humanity and the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and ensure dignity and human rights for all.

74. To foster the effectiveness and efficiency of inclusive humanitarian action and assist humanitarian actors, Governments and affected communities in undertaking related actions, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee is developing system-wide guidelines on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, which will be finalized by end of 2019. The new United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy provides a framework to strengthen system-wide accessibility and the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities, including in humanitarian contexts. The Global Disability Summit, held in London in July 2018, mobilized new commitments and deliverables to address the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and development assistance.

III. Recommendations

75. **On the basis of the present report, the Secretary-General recommends that Member States, the United Nations, humanitarian and development organizations and other relevant stakeholders:**

(a) **Increase ambition and scale up efforts with respect to address and manage the risks and impact of climate change and, in this regard, provide full support to the Climate Action Summit 2019 of the Secretary-General and the implementation of its relevant outcomes, initiatives and transformative action;**

(b) **Scale up and accelerate efforts to address the humanitarian impact of climate change and adapt analysis, planning and programming to address escalating disaster and climate risks in humanitarian action across sectors and areas of work;**

(c) **Strengthen collaboration and partnerships among humanitarian, development, climate change and disaster risk reduction actors at all levels to**

better understand, anticipate, prevent, reduce and respond to need, risk and vulnerability relating to disasters and climate change;

(d) Identify and support people and communities most at risk and affected by disasters and the adverse impact of climate change by strengthening their resilience and response capacities and ensuring that their needs are met effectively and that no one is left behind;

(e) Continue to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems and the timely communication of actionable early warning information at the global, regional, national and local levels;

(f) Leverage opportunities provided by science, technology and data to enhance risk projections, forecasting, mapping and analysis, climate services and early warning to better anticipate and manage disaster risk;

(g) Continue to pilot and scale up anticipatory and forecast-based financing approaches and initiatives;

(h) Increase predictable funding for post-disaster recovery, and in this regard examine the options for effective approaches and instruments;

(i) Develop and strengthen climate-resilient food systems and shock-responsive social protection systems that anticipate, prevent and reduce the risk and impact of disasters and climate change, facilitate responses and strengthen livelihoods, food production, resilience and recovery, as well as link effectively with humanitarian assistance, including cash-based transfers and complementary livelihood support, with risk transfer mechanisms, including climate risk insurance, and with efforts to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in the context of disasters and climate change;

(j) Improve the understanding of existing national and local actors, systems and capacity prior to disasters, promote equal partnerships with local organizations and strengthen their capacity to manage disaster risks and engage in a principled manner in humanitarian response;

(k) Support the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including by minimizing the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin in the context of natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, taking into consideration available policy tools and guidance and building on existing partnerships;

(l) Strengthen the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in the context of disasters;

(m) Strengthen the collection, sharing, disaggregation and interoperability of data on internal and cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and climate change at all levels;

(n) Include in national strategies, policies and plans targets and indicators for reducing disaster displacement and reporting progress against the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda;

(o) Advance the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making and the planning and implementation of humanitarian action to effectively address their needs and gender inequality, including by increasing funding to women's organizations;

(p) Incorporate a protection perspective in disaster risk management and strengthen efforts to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence in the context of disasters.