Thursday, 9 September 2021

Concept note
Last updated: 19 August

The United Nations and the Governments of Germany and the United Kingdom are convening a High-Level Event to advance anticipatory action and galvanise a collective push to act ahead of crises. This event comes at a key moment, building on recent G7 commitments on anticipatory action and ahead of COP26, recognising the growing impact of climate change on the severity and frequency of crises.

Global humanitarian needs are at an all-time high and continue to grow. Crises are driven by fragility and conflict, amplified by COVID-19 and the growing impact of climate change. Some 237 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2021, a 40 per cent increase on last year, while extreme poverty has risen for the first time in 22 years.

Rather than waiting for a shock to occur and humanitarian needs to manifest, we can predict both the shock (for example a drought or flood) and the impact (for example food insecurity) with increasing precision. This enables us to take anticipatory action before the worst impacts of the shock to save lives, stop needs growing, reduce suffering and maximize the impact of limited funding.

This High-Level Event - to be opened by the United Nations Secretary-General - will showcase compelling examples of this anticipatory approach and generate signals of support to scale action. Leaders from governments, international financial institutions, the United Nations and civil society will come together to demonstrate that the world is committed to act ahead of predictable crises.

Why anticipatory action?

Date and venue
Thursday, 9 September 2021
Virtual event

Contacts
For more information please visit: www.unocha.org/aa

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Registration
Kindly limit the response to one registration per delegation. The information requested includes the focal point for the virtual meeting. To register, please go to: www.unocha.org/aa
Anticipatory action is a set of actions taken to prevent or mitigate potential disaster impacts before a shock or before acute impacts are felt. Anticipatory action is not a substitute for longer-term investment in risk reduction. The actions are carried out in anticipation of a shock, based on a prediction of how the event will unfold. For example, if a flood is forecast, there is no need to wait for flood waters to rise and then rescue people by boat, when people can be given the means to get themselves to safety and secure their livelihood assets. If a drought is predicted, there is no need to wait for families to go hungry, when farmers can switch to drought resistant seeds.

Over the past few years, a growing number of organizations, including the FAO, IFRC, OCHA, WFP, and START Network, have taken proactive steps towards using this approach for a range of shocks, while partnerships such as the Anticipation Hub and the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) have been formed to further collective progress on this agenda. Anticipatory action pilots have generated a wealth of knowledge and compelling evidence that shows that for predictable humanitarian crises, anticipatory action is faster, cheaper, more impactful, and provides a more dignified response that protects development gains.

Event overview and objectives

The objective of the event is to catalyse a shift in the way we approach crises to ensure anticipatory action is mainstreamed, delivered at scale, and focused on where it can have most impact. The event will be a key milestone in advancing this agenda and aims to:

- Provide a platform to showcase compelling examples and the evidence of impact;
- Solidify and widen the base of supporters for the anticipatory approach;
- Secure signals of support and investment for a scale-up; and
- Identify next steps.

The event will explore key structural and financial barriers to operationalising anticipatory action and advocate for sustained financial and non-financial support. Participants will be encouraged to directly address or help remove these barriers, for example by increasing the level of pre-agreed finance; strengthening forecasting and early warning systems; collectively expanding the evidence base and sharing information; improving coordination and collaboration on triggers and actions; and scaling-up an anticipatory approach, particularly in conflict-affected states and protracted crises.

Logistics

- This high-level event will take place on Thursday, 9 September.
- The opening session will feature a welcoming address by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, as well as a high-level panel discussion and a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Martin Griffiths.
- Following the opening session Member States and partners will be invited to make statements of support (financial and non-financial announcements). Throughout the event, practitioners will showcase success stories from anticipatory action pilots, share lessons learned and highlight the voices and views of those people most affected by recurring shocks.
- The event will be managed using a virtual platform. Interpretation will be available in English and French. More information regarding the format and technical requirements of the meeting will be shared in due course with registered participants.
- Participation is by invitation only. Invitations will be sent out to all UN Member States and Observers; Inter-Agency Standing Committee members; IFRC and ICRC; international financial institutions; NGOs and other interested organizations. Member States are invited to participate at the Ministerial Level or above. Other partners are expected to participate at principal level. The event will be live streamed to a global audience.