



ANTICIPATORY ACTION EVENT 2021

HIGH-LEVEL HUMANITARIAN EVENT ON ANTICIPATORY ACTION: A COMMITMENT TO ACT BEFORE CRISES



Co-chairs' statement

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Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations co-chaired a high-level event to advance anticipatory action on 9 September 2021, in New York. The event brought together Ministers and senior officials from 75 UN Member States and leaders from 60 international civil society organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN entities, International Financial Institutions and the private sector.

This event occurred at a key political moment - building on recent G7 commitments on anticipatory action and ahead of UNFCCC COP26. Global humanitarian needs are at an all-time high. Some 238 million people will require assistance in 2021, a 40 per cent increase on the preceding year – equivalent to 1 in 33 people worldwide. Crises are driven by conflict and fragility, amplified by COVID-19 and the growing impact of climate change, from floods, cyclones and droughts. These shocks strain an already over-stretched humanitarian system and jeopardize hard-won development gains.

Developments in science and technology mean we are better able than ever to identify the probability of a shock and its likely impact, and we must be smarter in how we prioritise and direct humanitarian resources accordingly. Rather than waiting for humanitarian needs to manifest and then responding, we must increasingly look to take action to prevent or mitigate potential disaster impacts before a shock occurs.

The humanitarian system must be as anticipatory as possible, and only as reactive as necessary. - Martin Griffiths, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

The event demonstrated – through testimony from beneficiaries and results from the numerous pilot projects – that for predictable humanitarian crises, anticipatory action is faster, less expensive, more effective, and provides a more dignified response. It saves lives, reduces needs and even protects development gains.



According to an analysis about financing for crises undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute and the START Network, at least half of all humanitarian crises are foreseeable and 20 per cent of humanitarian crises highly predictable. Yet only 1 per cent of crisis funding is pre-arranged. Participants at the event advocated overwhelmingly for a change, stressing the need to act ahead of predictable shocks.

The humanitarian system must shift away from a solely reactive response to crises towards an increasingly proactive, anticipatory approach – acting on risks instead of only reacting to needs. Participants aimed to mobilize stronger political commitment and raise financial resources to help catalyze this shift. Member States, UN agencies, the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement, NGOs and others submitted written financial, policy and best practice commitments, expressed a clear political will to act ahead of crises and an explicit recognition of the transformative potential of this approach. Commitments were made to scale up anticipatory action including design and mainstreaming of systems and frameworks, early warning and forecast systems, national and local capacity and mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation. Among the commitments:

- Several governments pledged to substantially increase their amount of pre-agreed funding, with Germany increasing its allocation to at least 5 percent of its overall humanitarian funding, aiming to double its contribution to anticipatory action in 2022 and to eventually contribute 100 million euro in 2023. Ireland provides approx. 25% of its humanitarian funding directly to mechanisms that support anticipatory action. Italy and Egypt announced new contributions to humanitarian funds;
- Save the Children will increase the amount of internal flexible funding spent on anticipatory action to 15% by 2024. FAO will dedicate at least 20% of its emergency financing to anticipatory action by 2025;
- This year, Start Network will launch the Start Financing Facility which will enable locally-led anticipatory action at scale;
- IFRC will seek to triple the size of its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to CHF 100 million by 2025, out of which 25% will be allocated to anticipatory action;
- The World Bank committed to making crisis preparedness a cross-cutting theme in IDA 20 and the IMF makes resilience and early action central to its Fragile and Conflict-affected States Strategy;
- Slovakia committed to improve the targeting and delivery of anticipatory actions at national level through further extension of general alerts network of permanently inhabited area from the current 58% to 85% by 2030;
- The Philippines and OCHA announced a new anticipatory action framework that will protect 250,000 vulnerable people against typhoons;
- The United Nations and Germany announced that on 8 October it will launch a Complex Risk Analytics Fund - a multilateral instrument to scale investments in a data ecosystem to help better anticipate, prevent, and respond to crises;
- Google and the African Risk Capacity announced partnerships with UNOCHA to advance innovative anticipatory approaches.

From the discussions and statements, the co-chairs noted the following clear themes:

- To reap the benefits of anticipatory action, we must significantly and systemically scale development, implementation, funding for and mainstreaming of a collective anticipatory approach.
- Anticipatory action should be integrated as a standard component of the humanitarian programme cycle, alongside concerted efforts to support uptake by national governments, with nationally owned approaches embedded in national and local adaptation and disaster risk management policies, laws and processes.
- Anticipatory action requires humanitarian financing to be more flexible, coordinated and predictable.
- Anticipatory action should be increasingly applied to a wider variety of hazards – including diseases, conflict, as well as multiple and compounding risks.
- Anticipatory action must be applied where it can have the most impact, including in protracted crises.

In order to do so, the co-chairs recommend the following steps in order to scale up and mainstream anticipatory action:

- Significantly increase and expand flexible, co-ordinated and predictable financing, including for anticipatory action through existing humanitarian pooled funds that apply the anticipatory approach, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and the Start Funds and Financing Facility, with the aim of more closely aligning the percentage of spend with the proportion of crises that can be accurately predicted;
- Invest in the forecasting, risk analysis and early warning systems that are needed to deliver anticipatory action and strengthen international collaboration to ensure sharing of critical data and enable regular assessments of crisis risks over medium to longer-term;
- Put in place monitoring & evaluation and impact assessments to further build the evidence base, make this available as a public good, for example through systematic reviews, to capture lessons learned from existing initiatives and inform scale up.
- Support International Financial Institutions and other actors to scale-up anticipatory action and crisis preparedness through financing instruments, such as IDA20, as well as for risk pools and insurance mechanisms;
- Develop a methodology to baseline current spending on pre-arranged funding for crises, with the support of the Centre for Disaster Protection;
- Work in partnership to drive forward a strategic approach that cuts across humanitarian, development, climate and data and research partners to ensure complementarity between government programmes, humanitarian action and development cooperation; for example by supporting global efforts such as the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), the InsuResilience Global Partnership and the Anticipation Hub;
- Adopt a “No Regrets” approach that recognises risks may not materialise in the way or with the impacts envisaged. Yet the anticipatory action approach is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to introduce positive changes to systems and processes and that builds resilience and benefits vulnerable groups;
- Invest in local capacity, ownership and sustainability, where possible, routinely supporting the capacities of those national and local actors working at the last delivery mile to strengthen their capacity to handle future shocks, safeguarding longer-term developmental gains and increasing communities’ resilience over time;
- Include beneficiaries at the center for framework design and work to continuously engage and empower communities at risk.

To maintain positive momentum, the co-chairs encourage stakeholders to work together, through global efforts, to develop a roadmap for scaling action and commit to meeting within a year to take stock of progress.

Interested parties can reach out to:

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