High-Level Humanitarian Event on Anticipatory Action: A Commitment to Act Ahead of Crises

Segment Three: Statements and Pledge Announcements by Participating Delegates

Introduction

Let me start by thanking The United Nations and the Governments of Germany and the United Kingdom for convening this important moment for anticipatory action.

Section 1: Introduction of Start Network and our anticipation work

I am speaking on behalf of Start Network, a membership of more than 55 civil society organisations, local and international, large and small, set up to bring change to our slow and reactive humanitarian system. In this sense, anticipatory action has always been part of our DNA, we have been pioneering proactive approaches since 2016.

The Start Funds have reached more than 22 million people to date, and have released funds in anticipation of crises on 46 occasions. We have also set-up Start Funds in Nepal and in Bangladesh.

Its sister Start Ready approach uses risk modelling, collective planning and pre-positioned financing, to predictably fund foreseeable crises at scale. We currently have Start Ready systems active or in development in 6 countries.

Section 2: The benefits of anticipation and early action.

Based on our experience and evidence, the arguments for anticipatory action are clear:

Anticipating predictable disasters can protect the most vulnerable. For example, working with the Africa Risk Capacity and the Government of Senegal, we insured communities against potential drought, which meant 98% of children and mothers were able to maintain 2 meals a day once the drought hit, proving more cost-effective and ethical than allowing people to become malnourished and require emergency assistance.
Anticipatory action promotes new forms of community accountability. Community members, who have the greatest vested interest in acting early, can be involved in deciding crisis triggers, determining needs, and how and when to provide assistance if a trigger is met.

Indeed, over time, we have seen a shift in approaches and attitudes - the majority of our members have used Start Funds to act ahead of a crisis.

Yet our analysis still shows that although 55% of crises are predictable, less than 1% of the funding is organised in advance.

Meanwhile, global humanitarian needs, compounded by the climate crisis, are at an all-time high and continue to grow. Humanitarian funding isn’t keeping pace.

We must go further. We must act sooner – and at scale.

A commitment to launch the SFF

This is why, this year, Start Network is launching the Start Financing Facility, a new financial infrastructure that offers a range of mechanisms and tools to get ahead of disasters, and at scale.

Through the SFF, Start Network commits to:

1. **A locally-led approach**: equipping frontline civil society responders to be collectively prepared for crises.
2. **Scalability**: by growing a mix of funding and financing tools that can be used for both predictable and unpredictable crises.
3. **Efficiency**: Achieving more than 4 times the impact of response funds by layering and leveraging these different finance instruments across geographies and risks.

But we can’t do this alone.

We are working with a wonderful set of partners including our member NGOs, donors, national meteorological offices, national disaster management agencies, universities, the World Bank and many others.
We would particularly like to thank the UK and Germany for driving this agenda forward, and to our fellow members of the Anticipatory Action Task Force; FAO, WFP, OCHA and IFRC for the work done to implement and test these approaches.

Going forward, we need new partnerships to scale-up anticipatory action work. I would like to invite the donors to consider funding the Start Financing Facility. New funding is essential to make the scale-up of locally-led anticipatory action a reality.

We have the technology to anticipate crises, we have the systems ready to go, what we need is the funds to scale this up and the political championship and momentum to see this through. Let’s support at-risk communities to get ahead of predictable crises.