

# Disaster resilience and climate change: 4 ways forward

The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) has decided to speak out in the face of increasing disasters linked to climate change. Around the world, disasters are increasing in frequency and impact<sup>1</sup> and as organisations operating in these environments, we are concerned by the threat posed by climate change and its effects.

## Why all this talk about disasters?

In 2014, 87%<sup>2</sup> of recorded disasters were related to climate. Climate change is set to further increase the likelihood of climate related hazards such as storms, floods, and forest fires in the future. Climate change will also continue to aggravate chronic crises such as food and water insecurity, and will place up to 600 million<sup>3</sup> more people at risk of hunger by 2080; expose 40%<sup>4</sup> of the world's population to water shortages by 2050; and increase climate-induced displacement and conflicts over diminishing resources.

In addition, climate change also exacerbates poor health and destroys livelihoods, increasing people's vulnerability to disasters. For example, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress, and affect many thousands more<sup>5</sup>. Changes in rainfall will significantly alter crop yields in certain areas, and without stable incomes, farmers will have little to support themselves when disasters strike.

A new climate change agreement could pave the way for a truly global collaboration towards sustainable development and a reduction in poverty. But, this will only be possible if states agree to ambitious commitments to prevent hazards, reduce vulnerability and build resilience, and if these commitments are supported by adequate means of implementation.

## What are GNDR members doing

GNDR is composed of more than 850 organisations from 137 countries and is the largest international network of organisations committed to working together to improve the lives of people affected by disasters world-wide. GNDR members are already working with governments and other actors to ensure commitments are turned into action. Civil society organisations can be:



### Implementers

Delivering local action in partnership with the state and other actors



### Capacity Builders

Strengthening capabilities at the local level



### Knowledge Brokers

Identifying, developing and sharing knowledge, expertise and innovative practice



### Connectors

Building bridges across different groups and scales to strengthen local level engagement



### Monitors

Ensuring greater accountability through monitoring and reporting local level progress



### Advocates

Mobilising and standing up for the needs and priorities of marginalised people

<sup>1</sup> IPCC SREX Report "Managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation". 2011 UNEP/WMO. <http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/>

<sup>2</sup> UNISDR, 'The Economic and Human Impact of Disasters in the last 10 years', EM-DAT database 2014, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Munich Re. This percentage represents a sharp increase from two decades ago when climate-related catastrophes accounted for 75% of disasters. [http://www.unisdr.org/files/42862\\_economichumanimpact20052014unisdr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/files/42862_economichumanimpact20052014unisdr.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> UNDP, 'Fighting climate change: human solidarity in a divided world', Human Development Report 2007/2008. [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/268/hdr\\_20072008\\_en\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/268/hdr_20072008_en_complete.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> OECD, 'The Consequences of Inaction', Environmental Outlook to 2050, OECD Publishing, 2012. <http://www.oecd.org/fr/env/indicateurs-modelisation-perspectives/49848948.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> WHO, 'Climate change and health, Fact sheet N°266', Media Center, Reviewed August 2014. Accessed August 3rd, 2015 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en/>

<sup>6</sup> Examples include: Charter for Change campaign (<http://charter4change.org/>); Joint statement from DRR networks on Finance for Development Agreement ([https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Joint\\_CS\\_statement\\_on\\_DRR\\_in\\_FFD\\_FINAL\\_120615.pdf](https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Joint_CS_statement_on_DRR_in_FFD_FINAL_120615.pdf))

# Our recommendations

**1 States must cut greenhouse gas emissions towards the 2050 zero-emission target to keep global warming below 1.5°C.** Governments, informed by science, have agreed that 2°C is the threshold beyond which the risks become unmanageable. Stopping warming before it reaches the internationally agreed extreme upper limit of 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C, is not just a political goal, it is an economic and humanitarian necessity. Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), in particular of developed countries, must be more ambitious and states must also honour previously made commitments. States must be held accountable for these commitments, with the publication of national reports every 2 years, and eradication of fossil fuel subsidies. Further, global mitigation activities must be supported by scaling up technology transfer, which should be mandated in the INDCs of developed countries.

**2 States must agree on a global goal on adaptation and provide a long term framework for action.** At the national implementation level this means the integration of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) into all national and local level development planning. It also means the allocation of resources to strengthening national capacities for adaptation and DRR at all levels, particularly targeting those groups most at-risk to disasters. At the international level, this requires the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund to respond to the reality of financial requirements and increase ease of access to southern actors, and for donor countries to ensure that 5% of Overseas Development Aid is spent on DRR activities. At all levels, coherence between sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction policies, structures and institutions is essential.

**3 Loss and damage must be recognised as a separate pillar of the climate change agreement.** Embedded within this recognition must be support for the Warsaw International Mechanism. This mechanism fulfils the role under the Convention of promoting implementation of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. It must include commitments to: enhance understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches; strengthen dialogue, coordination, and coherence across policy sectors and among relevant stakeholders; and enhance action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building to address loss and damage.

**4 States must work with civil society in local implementation of commitments.** In order to address the significant actions needed to respond to climate change, a whole of society approach is needed. Multi-stakeholder systems must be put in place to plan, implement and measure national and local activities. Local communities and NGOs possess critical knowledge about climate-related hazards and capacities to deal with them. Without systematic engagement with these groups, climate adaptation risks being inappropriate and ineffective. Therefore, international and national policies must outline partnerships with civil society in planning processes. All actors should look at ways to strengthen the capacity of local people, so they can run their own activities and access the resources they need. This requires a change in how the system operates. In line with similar asks of humanitarian, DRR and development systems<sup>6</sup>, we recommend 20% of climate change adaptation funds go to local level actors to implement activities.

*The messages within this paper have been drawn from position papers developed by GNDR members regionally and do not necessarily represent the views of all individual organisations.*