

Statement on Strengthening Anticipatory Action in Humanitarian Assistance – G7 Foreign Ministers, May 2022

BACKGROUND

Humanitarian needs are at a record high. Crises and conflicts, climate change impacts and disasters are increasingly threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions of people – trends exacerbated by the impacts of COVID19 and Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. For the humanitarian system to continue to be able to protect affected populations, to bridge the growing financing gap and protect hard-won development gains, a paradigm shift towards more efficient, effective and forward-looking humanitarian assistance is needed.

Building on the commitments made in the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crisis Compact adopted by the G7 in London and the High-Level Event on Anticipatory Action in New York in 2021 and based on our shared understanding of the critical importance of preventing and mitigating human suffering and reducing needs before they occur, we, the G7, commit to making the humanitarian system as anticipatory as possible.

We acknowledge the significant efforts underway to address the increasing impact of climate change and will strive for maximum coherence and synergies between humanitarian assistance and climate action as agreed in the Paris Agreement, including through the key contribution of anticipatory action to averting, minimizing and addressing the risk of loss and damage associated with climate change impacts. We seek to maximize synergies with the work on climate risk within the G7 development track. We furthermore welcome and support the UN Secretary-General's target to have within the next five years, everyone on Earth protected by early warning systems against increasingly extreme weather and climate change. We recognize the importance of the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative (CREWS) in achieving that goal. We look forward to seeing the action plan to be prepared by the World Meteorological Organization at the COP27 in Egypt.

We note with deep concern the growing problem of global food security and nutrition, further aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In a present where the risk of famine remains a real threat, it is imperative to lay the groundwork for the adoption and scaling-up of anticipatory mechanisms in order to facilitate early action and prevent the worst. We acknowledge the important complementary efforts of the G7 Food Security Working Group.

OUR COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE POTENTIAL OF ANTICIPATORY ACTION

Anticipatory action is defined as acting ahead of predicted hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. This requires pre-agreed plans that identify partners and activities, reliable early warning information, and pre-agreed financing, released predictably and rapidly when an agreed trigger-point is reached.

We commit to maximize the potential of anticipatory action to facilitate joint planning and more timely action, through improved collaboration also beyond the humanitarian system. This includes leveraging efforts on, inter alia, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, early warning, preparedness, social protection, and disaster risk and climate financing, and capacity strengthening and participation at all levels – local, national, regional, and international. To slow the growth in humanitarian need, important linkages need to be made to the progress on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, climate finance, and the ongoing G7 Workstream on Climate and Disaster Risk Finance, including in conflict and protracted crises, promoting the use of prearranged risk financing within anticipatory action. We therefore commit to strengthening the enabling environment for anticipatory action and improving collaboration and working across silos.

Countries experiencing conflict and protracted crises are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change with limited capacity to absorb shocks and to develop disaster risk management structures to enable anticipatory action. Our joint commitment to strengthen the approach of anticipatory action must entail efforts to increasingly apply it in situations of protracted crisis and conflict where natural and climate change-related shocks are exacerbating conflict-related needs. Although the current focus of our commitments is on natural and climate related shocks, we must continue to improve our understanding of the role anticipatory action can play in mitigating the humanitarian impact of other shocks, particularly given that the majority of humanitarian needs result from man-made hazards like conflicts and violence.

Well-established and functioning disaster and climate risk management structures and systems are important to deliver effective anticipatory action. In humanitarian settings in which these systems are not fully functional, international efforts will be required to both strengthen capacity and complement existing efforts in order for anticipatory action to evolve. We therefore stress the need for our continued support to build and strengthen national, regional and local disaster and climate risk management structures and systems where they are weak in order to support scaling up anticipatory action in these situations.

SCALE-UP AND EMBED ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

While traditional humanitarian assistance remains essential in conflict and disasters, anticipatory approaches allow us to act before disaster strikes and crises fully unfold, before lives and livelihoods are lost. We, the G7, therefore reaffirm our commitment to advocate for, scale up and systematically mainstream anticipatory action into the humanitarian system,

particularly for countries with well-established disaster risk reduction infrastructure in place.

We commit to support the integration of anticipatory action into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle as well as development planning and national adaptation plans, in order to develop and strengthen structures, systems and capacities that enable early action and building in areas of high disaster risks. In this regard we also commend UNDRR's important recommendations and checklist on Scaling up Disaster Risk Reduction in Humanitarian Action 2.0.

We commit to support, strengthen and increase the availability of quality forecasting data on risks, including both hazards and projected needs to improve early warning systems and risk analysis. This includes jointly designing and developing innovative risk analytics, thresholds, triggers, and modelling for anticipation as well as investment in coordination and infrastructure to allow for data and model sharing to multiply knowledge, evidence and experiences of anticipatory action. We commit to support this, inter alia, through the UN's Complex Risk Analytics Fund (CRAF'd) and the Index for Risk Management (INFORM).

Evidence shows the crucial role of local actors for successful implementation of anticipatory action. They best understand local vulnerabilities, needs, capabilities and barriers to participation, allowing for an inclusive response. Acting ahead of crises provides stronger opportunities for more locally-led action. We commit to support local communities, civil society and authorities in the relevant countries to play a leading role in climate and disaster risk analysis and management, data-collection, preparedness and programming.

We commit to the inclusion and participation in anticipatory action and the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable communities, groups, and individuals in anticipatory action. We recognise that gender, age, ability, ethnic and religious identity, displacement status and sexual identity overlap with social, cultural, and economic barriers to inclusion in anticipatory action. We believe that strong anticipatory action is action that recognizes all people as agents of change, and mitigates the risks of gender-based violence, discrimination and inequalities.

Collective learning, coordination, and partnerships are the basis for driving the anticipation agenda including further building and disseminating a strong evidence base at all levels. We commit to support this, inter alia, through initiatives like the Anticipation Hub, the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership and the Global Network Against Food Crises.

INCREASE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR ANTICIPATORY ACTION

Funding must be made available on a larger scale and in a flexible and predictable manner to build and fuel anticipatory action where appropriate, ensuring actors and protocols are in place to allow for anticipatory measures to be implemented when triggered.

We, the leading donors of the humanitarian system, strive to significantly

increase our financial support in anticipatory action programming. This includes pre-positioning funding, inter alia, within humanitarian organisations, in pooled funds and pertinent financing instruments. Mindful of their particular vulnerabilities and challenges, we will focus our efforts on protracted crises and conflict-affected situations.

We will utilize existing financing instruments and seek new financing solutions to deliver on our commitments, expanding anticipatory action in the framework of existing funds, particularly for countries with established disaster risk reduction infrastructure in place, but also through new financing solutions. In support of the diversity of humanitarian funding instruments, we seek to increase support to existing instruments, such as pooled funds like the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) as well as to the Start Network's Start Funds and Start Ready. We further call for the expansion of this approach to the Country-Based Pooled Funds where appropriate. We will further explore how disaster risk finance can be made more anticipatory, using forecasts to trigger payouts rather than releasing funds from risk pools based on modelled impacts.

We will put a specific focus on financial instruments that address local leadership, communities, and systems in anticipatory action, so that anticipatory action programs are informed by local context, knowledge, and risk assessments, are embedded in local structures, and continue to strengthen the capacities of local communities and national systems.

In the spirit of accountability and transparency, we strive to develop ways to better track and report on our humanitarian funding of anticipatory action. To this end we commit to develop a methodology that improves our understanding of how much funding is going to anticipatory action and opportunities to increase it. This commitment builds on efforts begun by the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Panel and can be informed by the work of the Centre for Disaster Protection. Using a shared methodology, we seek to establish a baseline of our individual funding and subsequently report on our financial support to anticipatory action in the future.