

World Food Programme

Climate Change: A humanitarian challenge for the 21st century

The global climate is changing. Humanitarian organisations must now meet new and increasing challenges to continue their life-saving work. The number of climate-related natural disasters has doubled over the last ten years—and scientists predict in the coming decades that there will be more frequent and more severe disasters due to changes in world weather patterns.

Climate change also threatens to significantly increase hunger and malnutrition worldwide. Many of the communities that will bear the most serious consequences are already vulnerable and suffering from hunger, undernutrition and food insecurity. The scientific community reports that many effects of climate change are irreversible, but there are many actions that can be taken now to help affected communities adapt to increased flooding, frequent droughts, intense tropical storms and desertification.

WFP has a track record and established pool of knowledge from which to draw

For more than 40 years, WFP has been addressing weather-related hunger by helping communities prepare for and recover from major weather-related disasters. Decades of experience implementing successful food for work projects can provide governments and organisations with a pool of information from which to draw. This wealth of programming and operational experience allows WFP to make a unique contribution as governments and communities plan for future weather-related challenges.

Fighting weather-related hunger

- *Unmatched deep field presence*
WFP already operates in many of the areas where vulnerability to climate risks and natural disasters

are most severe. WFP has 76 country offices, 270 sub-offices and more than 10,000 staff in the field – many of them in countries that will be hardest hit by climate change.

- This gives WFP and its partners an advantage in addressing a range of climate-related food and nutrition issues.
- *WFP's enhanced capacity*
WFP was chosen to lead the global UN response to natural disasters, part of which is managing five UN global Humanitarian Response Depots which serve 31 humanitarian organisations and allow relief supplies to be shipped within the critical first 24 to 48 hours after a disaster.



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Ethiopia

WFP's MERET* project in Ethiopia demonstrates how conservation and better land management practices can promote more sustainable livelihoods among the rural poor, while helping to protect them from extreme weather events. Supported jointly by WFP and the Ethiopian government, MERET operates in over 600 communities and has benefited more than one million people. It has contributed to the rehabilitation of over 300,000 hectares of degraded land since its launch in 2000.

*Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions to More Sustainable Livelihoods

El Salvador

Promoted by WFP in collaboration with national, regional and international partners, SATCA's* aim is to strengthen early warning capacities and systems across disaster-prone areas of Central America to enhance local and regional disaster preparedness and risk reduction. SATCA improves the ability of WFP and its partners to anticipate and minimize the impact of natural hazards across Central America.

*Sistema de Alerta Temprana para Centroamérica

Bangladesh

WFP has a leading role in strengthening the National Early Warning Systems, enhancing disaster preparedness and response capacities. Since 2000, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies and activities have resulted in 30,000 homesteads being raised above flood levels, and 1.6 million women trained in effective disaster preparedness and adaptation.

WFP has sophisticated tools and services

- WFP uses satellite imagery, geographic information systems, mapping of the vulnerability of specific populations, early warning and emergency preparedness to help governments and partners anticipate and prepare for the onset of natural hazards. WFP has helped local communities, governments and the international community get ahead of the hunger curve by supporting preparedness and disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts.
- Expanding the sharing of these WFP capabilities while upgrading them with climate-related information, will help governments and humanitarian organisations find and take the most appropriate measures to not only to predict when and where disasters will hit, but also to allow for evacuations and other measures to be put in place to cushion the impact.

WFP and Its Partners

- *Working with governments*
WFP implements many resilience-building, climate-related activities in partnership with host governments – both at the local and national level. National Adaptation Programmes of Action – part of the Kyoto agreement – as well as other national and regional planning frameworks, offer several opportunities for WFP to support national adaptation, food security, livelihood protection and disaster risk reduction plans and programmes.
- *Working with agencies and organisations*
A core strength of WFP is its unique network of non-governmental and intergovernmental partners with whom it works to address challenges too large for any one organisation to tackle alone. WFP will further expand its collaboration with partner institutions in order to enhance its collective ability to combat the effects of climate change on hunger and undernutrition.
- *Working with communities*
WFP activities have been built around the needs of the local community to increase their resilience to weather-related crises and disasters and the longer term impacts of climate change.



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For more information go to:
www.wfp.org/climate-change