



Background Note on the Special Address of Ambassador Majid Al-Suwaidi Director-General and Special Representative of the UAE COP28 Presidency

**Second regular session of the Executive Board
Monday, 13 November 2023, WFP headquarters Auditorium and on Zoom**

The world is battling rising hunger as the climate crisis tightens its grip. In recent years, there has been a staggering rise in the number and severity of extreme weather events. The first half of 2023 saw the longest-lived tropical cyclone on record in southern Africa, record-breaking heatwaves and wildfires across Europe, North America and Asia, and flash floods following an unprecedented three-year long drought in the Horn of Africa. In 2022, climate extremes pushed 56.8 million people in 12 countries into acute food insecurity and internally displaced more people than wars and conflicts.

The climate crisis, and its impact on food security, is unfolding against a backdrop of an overstretched humanitarian system and dwindling global resources. This is, in particular, the case for countries in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where extreme weather events affect three times as many people annually compared to other countries. Despite this, people living in extremely fragile states receive a fraction – up to 80 times less – of climate finance compared to those in non-fragile states.

In 2022, WFP has supported 15.2 million people in 42 countries with specific solutions and services to reduce and manage climate risks to food security. These solutions include climate forecasting and early warning, anticipatory action, climate risk insurance and community-based disaster risk reduction. While these investments are critical to reducing humanitarian needs, they are not financed at the scale and speed required to break the cycle of hunger in a changing climate.

The 28th Conferences of the Parties (COP28) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) marks the critical milestone of the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement. Presently, the world is not on track to meeting the Paris goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial times. A key objective of COP28 is therefore to ratchet up the national climate ambitions of governments and slow down the speed of global warming. Other critical tasks facing negotiators include the establishment of a fund and associated financing mechanism for loss and damage from climate change, and the ramping up of climate change adaptation finance for developing countries. The issues of energy transition and food systems transformation (including a thematic day dedicated to “[Food, Agriculture, Water](#)”) are likely to emerge strongly across several negotiating streams.

COP28 will have a first-ever thematic day dedicated to the focus of “[Health, Relief, Recovery and Peace](#)”, recognizing the need to accelerate climate action in fragile and conflict-affected contexts which face high levels of humanitarian needs. The development of a corresponding *COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace* is critical for all organizations trying to avoid escalating humanitarian needs in the wake of bigger and more frequent climate disasters. Governments, international financial institutions, multilateral climate funds, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations are working towards endorsing this Declaration and making commitments to operationalize it.

Ambassador Majid Al-Suwaidi is the Director-General of the UAE COP28 Presidency and oversees the UAE Presidency’s agenda on a variety of topics, including Relief, Recovery and Peace. He will discuss recent developments on the COP28 agenda, his expectations for COP28, and the relevance of COP28 to WFP. WFP has supported the COP28 UAE Presidency to identify policy, financing and programmatic solutions to ramp up climate protection for the most vulnerable and build resilient food systems in fragile contexts.