

# CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

## 2024 update

### I. Background

1. The 2022 evaluation of WFP's 2017 climate change policy and 2011 disaster risk reduction and management policy<sup>1</sup> recommended that the climate change policy be updated to reflect evolving international circumstances and the cross-cutting nature of climate change in WFP's operations and to incorporate lessons learned from the policy's implementation to date.

### II. Global context

#### The climate crisis is a humanitarian crisis

2. Since WFP's first climate change policy was endorsed in 2017, the accelerating frequency and intensity of climate extremes have surprised even the scientific community.<sup>2</sup> It is now clear that the impacts of climate change will continue to stretch a humanitarian system that is already struggling to keep pace with humanitarian needs, which are growing at the intersection between conflicts and climate and economic shocks.
3. Between 2010 and 2020, 83 percent of all disasters caused by natural hazards were linked to climate extremes – especially floods, storms, droughts and extreme heat. Together these disasters affected 1.7 billion people, killing 410,000.<sup>3</sup> In 2022, 70 percent of refugees and asylum seekers fled from highly climate-vulnerable countries.<sup>4</sup> In 2023 climate extremes drove 72 million people into crisis or emergency levels of hunger<sup>5</sup> and triggered over 20 million new internal displacements.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WFP. 2023. *Evaluation of WFP's Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Policies*.

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2023. *Climate Change 2023. Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers*.

<sup>3</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2020. *World Disasters Report 2020. Come heat or high water: Tackling the humanitarian impacts of the climate crisis together*.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 2024. *Focus Area Strategic Plan for Climate Action 2024-2030*.

<sup>5</sup> Food Security Information Network and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2024. *2024 Global Report on Food Crises: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions*.

<sup>6</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. 2024. *GRID 2024: Global Report on Internal Displacement*.

4. Climate change is shifting the patterns of humanitarian crises as some hazards, such as extreme heat, become more common<sup>7,8</sup> and others, such as tropical storms, behave less predictably.<sup>9</sup> These shocks deepen social and economic inequality and reinforce social norms and structural barriers that already limit the capacity of women and girls, children and young people, persons with disabilities and other disproportionately affected groups to manage risk and adapt to changing conditions. One example in this regard is the projection that climate change will trigger the abrupt end of schooling for 12.5 million girls.<sup>10</sup>
5. The interplay between climate impacts, humanitarian need and armed conflict is increasingly apparent yet difficult to analyse and predict. Conflict is rife in the countries that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; 13 of the 14 countries most at risk have humanitarian response plans, and all 14 are already coping with conflict or fragility.<sup>11</sup>
6. As food systems are particularly vulnerable to climate change, governments need to diversify, reduce and transfer climate risk across value chains. With the food, agriculture and land use sector contributing 24 percent of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions<sup>12</sup> there is also a need for coordinated international support and partnerships to de-carbonize and diversify food systems, increase the resource efficiency and resilience of agricultural value chains and ensure that the food security and nutrition needs of vulnerable communities can be met as the climate is changing.

#### **International climate action remains too small-scale and too slow**

7. The Paris Agreement on climate change aims to limit global temperature rise this century to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Based on current trends in greenhouse gas emissions, scientists predict that this target could be permanently breached as early as 2030, which would have wide-ranging consequences for economic development, ecosystems and food systems. To prepare for such a future, countries need to couple ambitious emissions targets with urgent investments in institutions, systems and processes that improve climate risk management and support climate change adaptation.
8. Meanwhile, the financing gap for climate change adaptation in developing countries keeps widening.<sup>13</sup> Efficient responses to climate disasters are further inhibited by a lack of pre-arranged financing, which accounts for less than 3 percent of all crisis financing flows.<sup>14</sup> In the absence of timely investments in adaptation and disaster risk reduction, fragile and food-insecure communities are now experiencing climate change impacts on a timescale of weeks and months, rather than years and decades. Many remain cut off from financing urgently required to strengthen local capacity in relation to climate resilience, disaster risk

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<sup>7</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2023. *Climate Change 2023. Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers*.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations. 2024. *Secretary-General's Call to Action on Extreme Heat*.

<sup>9</sup> World Meteorological Organization. 2023. *Tropical Cyclone Freddy may set new record*.

<sup>10</sup> Malala Fund. 2021. *A greener, fairer future: Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education*.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2023. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024: The spiralling climate crisis is intensifying needs and vulnerabilities*.

<sup>12</sup> Project Drawdown. 2024. *Food, Agriculture, and Land Use*.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2023. *Adaptation Gap Report 2023: Underfinanced. Underprepared. Inadequate investment and planning on climate adaptation leaves world exposed*.

<sup>14</sup> Centre for Disaster Protection. 2023. *The State of Pre-arranged Financing for Disasters 2023*.

reduction and emergency preparedness.<sup>15,16,17</sup> The absence of financing, coupled with a failure to harness the voices, knowledge and capacity of Indigenous and marginalized groups, continues to cause avoidable losses and damage to food systems and to deepen inequality for food-insecure populations.<sup>18</sup>

### **Alignment with international policy**

9. WFP's climate change policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is based on the scientific assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It supports countries in their efforts to advance the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the international policy regime established by the 2015 Paris Agreement. Specifically, WFP works towards the UNFCCC objective of preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system within a timeframe sufficient to "ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner".<sup>19</sup>
10. At the country level WFP recognizes the unique vulnerability and challenges facing developing countries, which lack the technical and financial capacity to manage climate risks to livelihoods and food systems. By integrating climate-specific activities into country strategies and programmes and supporting access to climate financing, WFP supports countries in realizing their national climate change policies and strategies and their national adaptation plans and nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement.
11. Recognizing the links between climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss, WFP affirms that these challenges must be tackled through coordinated and integrated action. In this regard, WFP supports the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, which provide complementary entry points and mechanisms to advance food and nutrition security in a changing climate.
12. WFP also subscribes to the UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities with regard to mitigating human-induced global warming and financing measures to address its impact. Food-insecure populations in developing countries, who contribute the least to global warming, suffer the consequences of the fossil fuel-based economies and consumption patterns in industrialized countries. To address this inequality, WFP supports a global climate finance goal for developing countries, in combination with new and additional financing to address loss and damage from climate change. WFP also aligns itself with the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and supports the participation of affected people and underrepresented groups in climate-related negotiations, planning and investment processes.

### **III. WFP's value proposition and comparative advantage**

13. **Leveraging partnerships to support the most vulnerable.** WFP maintains a consistent focus on the most vulnerable and food-insecure communities and on groups that are often left behind, such as Indigenous and displaced communities, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, children and young people and persons with disabilities. Building on an extensive network of local partners and institutions, WFP also advances community-based climate

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<sup>15</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2023. *Development finance for climate and environment-related fragility: Cooling the hotspots*.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2021. *Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace: Making climate finance work for conflict-affected and fragile contexts*.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030*.

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR. 2024. *Global Focus: Climate Action*.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations. 1992. *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*.

resilience and disaster risk reduction in fragile and conflict-affected settings and where national climate change policies are not implemented at the local level. Its familiarity with the risks faced by underserved local populations in challenging circumstances puts WFP in a unique position to leverage partnerships and empower local groups and grassroots organizations in the areas of community-led adaptation, disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

14. **Knowledge-based services.** Building on its track record in disaster preparedness and prevention, WFP draws on its specialized services for managing climate risks to livelihoods and food systems. As further detailed in section VII of this policy, WFP uses its strong capacity and partnerships in integrated context analysis, impact-based forecasting and vulnerability-based targeting to prioritize disaster risk reduction activities in climate risk hot spots. Disaster preparedness and response planning, anticipatory action and climate risk insurance, which are deployed in close partnership with United Nations, non-governmental organization (NGO) and private sector partners, enable communities to better cope with loss and damage from climate change.
15. Harnessing its purchasing power and knowledge of local markets, WFP promotes the local sourcing of food for school-based programmes, which strengthens the diversification of food systems and smallholder farmers' risk reserves – that is, their resources for coping with shocks. As the largest cash provider in the humanitarian community, WFP can also stimulate demand for climate-smart technologies, including renewable energy, clean cooking and improved post-harvest processes.
16. In the aftermath of climate disasters, WFP supports communities and governments in “building back better” during disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Where the food security cluster is operational, WFP can leverage its cluster coordination capacity to ensure that the transition from humanitarian to development action is risk-informed and that climate risk analysis and adaptation options are factored into reconstruction planning and decision-making.
17. **Supporting innovative action at scale.** WFP has demonstrated that ambitious integrated programmes at the nexus between humanitarian and development action can support climate change adaptation beyond community-based initiatives. This is evident from programmes such as the Sahel Integrated Resilience programme, which has restored over 290,000 hectares of degraded land and improved the adaptive capacity of 4 million people;<sup>20</sup> benefitting from the integration of large-scale land restoration and school-based and nutrition programmes across five countries, households in the region are less dependent on food assistance during drought and in qualitative assessments report greater resilience to climate shocks.
18. Since adopting its first climate change policy, WFP has utilized and championed innovative climate risk financing solutions in international humanitarian action. WFP was the first United Nations entity to offer parametric climate risk insurance for food-insecure populations<sup>21</sup> and continues to advance the use of climate risk financing in integrated resilience programmes.<sup>22</sup> In parallel WFP continues to strengthen sovereign climate risk insurance and anticipatory action mechanisms as means of augmenting disaster relief by

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<sup>20</sup> WFP. 2024. *Resilience: Harvesting Hope in the Sahel*.

<sup>21</sup> WFP. 2024. *Climate Risk Insurance Annual Report 2023*.

<sup>22</sup> WFP. 2023. *The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative*.

governments and humanitarian organizations.<sup>23,24</sup> Through its Innovation Accelerator, WFP launches dedicated climate innovation challenges that make climate-specific technologies accessible to public and private sector partners and multilateral climate funds with an interest in technology.<sup>25</sup>

#### **IV. Scope of this policy**

19. Given the continued impact of climate change on hunger and humanitarian needs, WFP must focus on partnerships to advance climate action while addressing food insecurity and accelerate climate protection for communities in the most fragile and risk-prone settings. These priorities are embedded in an integrated approach to climate action that mirrors international policy and includes four entry points at which to avert, minimize and address loss and damage from climate change (see figure 1).

#### **Climate change mitigation**

20. The first line of defence to protect food security from the impacts of climate change is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: the greater the reduction, the lower the climate risk faced by food-insecure populations and the less loss and damage inflicted on food systems. WFP's climate change policy is therefore aligned with the climate change mitigation targets of the Paris Agreement and supports its call for ambitious emission reductions at the global level.
21. WFP is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint by implementing environmental management systems, standards and safeguards across its operations and programmes. These activities are governed by WFP's environmental policy and environmental and social sustainability framework.<sup>26</sup> In line with the United Nations "greening the blue" initiative<sup>27</sup> and the strategy for sustainable management in the United Nations system, WFP will intensify efforts to increase energy efficiency in its fleet and buildings, follow carbon-sensitive travel guidance and implement circular economy principles in its field operations. In its supply chain operations, WFP will apply innovative solutions that enhance environmental sustainability, from sourcing to transportation and warehousing.
22. While greenhouse gas emission reductions are not expected to be a principal objective of its country strategies and programmes, WFP will generate mitigation co-benefits through land restoration and livelihood support activities that promote regenerative practices, strengthen carbon sinks and sequester carbon in improved soils and vegetation.<sup>28</sup> Local procurement from short and resource-efficient value chains, the use of cash and vouchers to stimulate low-carbon technologies and the adoption of renewable energy and clean cooking solutions in school-based programmes are other ways in which WFP country programmes will generate co-benefits for climate change mitigation.

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<sup>23</sup> In partnership with the African Risk Capacity, Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company and the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility.

<sup>24</sup> WFP. 2024. *Scaling up anticipatory actions for food security: Anticipatory Action Year in Focus 2023*.

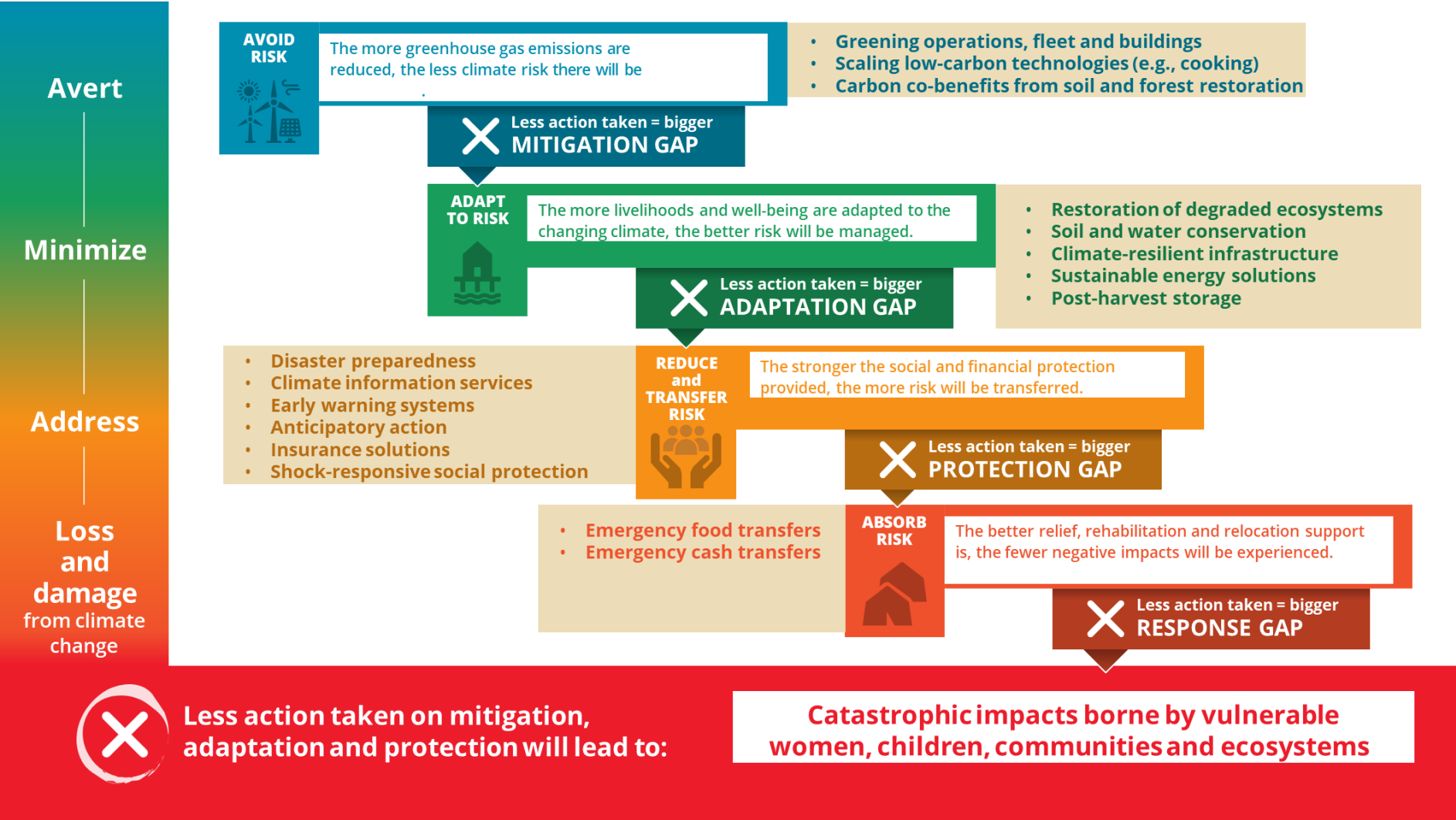
<sup>25</sup> WFP. 2023. *WFP Innovation Accelerator at COP 28. Innovation 4 Adaptation: Tackling the Climate and Hunger Emergencies*.

<sup>26</sup> WFP. 2021. Executive Director's circular OED2021/018: *Establishment of the WFP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework*.

<sup>27</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. 2023. *Greening the Blue Report 2023: The UN System's Environmental Footprint and Efforts to Reduce it*.

<sup>28</sup> WFP. 2021. *Food Assistance for Assets (FFA)*.

Figure 1: WFP's integrated approach to climate change action



## Climate change adaptation

23. Adaptation to the impacts of climate change is the second line of defence in minimizing loss and damage to livelihoods and food systems. WFP's climate change policy reflects the priorities of the Paris Agreement global goal on adaptation,<sup>29</sup> namely, to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.<sup>30</sup> WFP applies a context-specific and community-based approach to adaptation that involves structural measures such as physical infrastructure, engineering and ecosystem-based approaches; social measures in the areas of education, information and behaviour change; and institutional adaptation focusing on government policies and programmes, laws and regulation and economic planning and investment.
24. In alignment with its resilience policy, WFP's climate change adaptation programming prioritizes chronically food-insecure contexts<sup>31</sup> where a climate-induced disruption in food availability or access can result in a humanitarian food crisis or emergency. This situation can be mitigated by ensuring that country strategies and programmes incorporate activities that address climate-specific vulnerability and increase the adaptive capacity of livelihoods and food systems.
25. Such activities include targeted support for ecosystem-based adaptation and collaboration with a wide range of national and local partners – including community-based organizations, farmer groups, women's groups and schools – to restore degraded landscapes, promote diversified and regenerative farming practices and strengthen the uptake of sustainable energy, post-harvest processing and storage solutions in food value chains. To de-risk local food systems with regard to climate impacts, WFP connects smallholder farmers with climate risk reserves, increases the robustness of communal infrastructure and improves access to climate information for more risk-informed decision-making.

## Disaster preparedness

26. Alongside climate change mitigation and adaptation, the short-range protection of livelihoods from unavoidable climate hazards forms an essential third line of defence in WFP's integrated approach to climate action. In the absence of critical progress on greenhouse gas emission reductions and timely adaptation investments, WFP must also support preparedness for inevitable disasters and advance protection against the negative consequences of climate change that can no longer be mitigated or adapted to. Such protection requires a sharp focus on disaster preparedness and risk reduction, with activities implemented over weeks or even months in order to strengthen community preparedness for, and protection from, the next unavoidable climate shock.
27. To deliver short-range disaster preparedness, WFP is committed to strengthening local, national and regional protocols for climate early warning and emergency preparedness<sup>32</sup> and the expansion of shock-responsive social and financial protection in hazard-prone locations.<sup>33</sup> A critical priority is to expand the number of countries in which anticipatory action protocols can be activated based on climate forecasts and connected with pre-positioned financing before climate shocks materialize.

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<sup>29</sup> UNFCCC. 2015. [Paris Agreement, Article 7, Global Goal on Adaptation](#).

<sup>30</sup> UNFCCC. 2021. [Approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation](#).

<sup>31</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others. 2024. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World: Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms](#).

<sup>32</sup> WFP. 2023. [Anticipating Weather and Climate Risk – Weather Information for the Global Public Good](#).

<sup>33</sup> WFP. 2024. [Climate Risk Insurance Annual Report 2023](#).

## **Disaster response**

28. Humanitarian relief after climate disasters is the final option for addressing loss and damage from climate change, after all other lines of defence have failed. With climate extremes a key driver of hunger, WFP is frequently called on to provide humanitarian response in the same places that sustain loss and damage from climate change, delivering assistance in line with humanitarian principles and in accordance with its mandate to save lives.
29. Recognizing that funding for humanitarian aid is insufficient and precarious and that humanitarian principles trump climate justice considerations during emergency responses, this policy establishes that governments and donors should not consider humanitarian action to be the first option for addressing loss and damage from climate change. This reflects the priorities of “prevention always, development wherever possible and humanitarian action when necessary” recommended by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) and endorsed by WFP in its strategic plan.<sup>34</sup>
30. At the same time, WFP recognizes the relevance of its disaster relief experience in enabling more efficient government responses to loss and damage, particularly with regard to emergency preparedness planning, early humanitarian action, cash-based transfers for affected populations and the integration of principles of resilience in disaster rehabilitation and recovery work.

## **V. Principles of this policy**

31. Drawing on lessons learned during its implementation to date, and in alignment with the principles underpinning WFP’s resilience, emergency preparedness and gender policies, this climate change policy will apply a number of people-centred principles.

### **Anticipate and protect**

32. Most climate extremes are predictable. Their probability can be modelled, and the scientific methods used to forecast and assess their impacts are increasingly reliable. Pre-emptive action saves lives, time and humanitarian response costs – as has been demonstrated by the growing scale of WFP early warning, anticipatory action and climate risk insurance programmes and the evidence underpinning them. Establishing clear thresholds for action and working in collaboration with governments, private sector partners, other United Nations entities and NGOs, WFP will continue to focus on practical applications for multi-hazard early warning systems, forecast-based financing and parametric insurance to address different layers of risk<sup>35</sup> and protect lives.

### **Localize and integrate**

33. Evidence from WFP’s climate and resilience programmes<sup>36, 37</sup> shows that the resilience of local communities to climate shocks is determined by the degree to which people in different locations have access to resources and are capable of organizing themselves prior to and during times of need. For WFP, this means adopting a context-specific, integrated and conflict-sensitive approach to programming that aims at a balanced strengthening of human, social, natural, productive, financial and political capital relevant to climate risk

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<sup>34</sup> WFP. 2022. *WFP Strategic Plan 2022–2025*.

<sup>35</sup> WFP. 2022. *Climate Risk Financing: Anticipatory and Early Actions for Climate Hazards*.

<sup>36</sup> WFP. 2024. *Resilience Learning in Niger: Impact evaluation endline report*.

<sup>37</sup> WFP. 2021. *Acting Before a Flood to Protect the Most Vulnerable: An Independent Review of WFP’s Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Bangladesh*.



management. In many situations of food insecurity and conflict this balance is structurally deficient and affected by a chronic triple threat of social vulnerability, economic inequality and environmental fragility. In such settings WFP will shift from a distribution- and execution-centred role and instead focus on social cohesion and the empowerment, capacity, leadership and governance of local actors.

### **Mobilize and partner**

34. Strengthening the resilience of livelihoods and food systems to the impacts of climate change cannot be achieved by any single project or organization. It requires sustained partnerships and collaboration to address the complex and multidimensional factors that underpin the vulnerability of livelihoods and food systems, which often include income poverty, economic and social inequality and a lack of human security. Solutions to such multidimensional vulnerability require strong institutional and financing partnerships at the nexus between humanitarian, development, peace and climate action. Lessons from the implementation of WFP's climate and resilience policies to date have shown that effective approaches to climate change adaptation – such as WFP's integrated resilience programme in the Sahel region or its global anticipatory action and disaster risk financing programmes – are institutionally and financially integrated. They sequence and combine various sources of financing and establish sustainable partnerships between public and private sector entities, United Nations entities, NGOs, research institutions and local actors. Aside from a more sustainable financing base, these partnerships also raise awareness of climate change adaptation and catalyse evidence generation and knowledge sharing.

## **VI. Theory of change**

35. WFP subscribes to a vision of the future in which people who are exposed to climate shocks and stressors have food security and can continue to meet their food and nutrition needs as the climate is changing. To achieve this vision WFP pursues two complementary and interrelated goals:
  - a) strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of food-insecure populations with regard to climate change; and
  - b) strengthen government capacity to manage climate risks to food systems and prepare for, respond to and recover from climate disasters.
36. **Outcomes.** Both goals are mediated by measurable outcomes at the local and national levels that relate to the empowerment of local communities to manage climate hazards and adapt to the impacts of climate change and the ability of government institutions and systems to realize climate change adaptation plans and address associated loss and damage. A complementary third outcome relates to WFP's contributions to regional and global policy processes, which anchor food security and nutrition objectives in international climate policies, funds and programmes. These outcomes intersect in contexts where community-based adaptation objectives connect with, or complement, efforts to strengthen government systems, services and processes.
37. **Change pathways.** The achievement of these outcomes is linked with complementary pathways for change that facilitate the integration of climate-focused activities in country strategic plans (CSPs). Through context-specific analysis of climate and disaster risk, WFP can design tailored climate-related interventions under CSP outcomes and focus areas and incorporate climate financing, thereby mainstreaming climate in its country programming. The implementation of these activities is facilitated by efforts to empower women and girls, young people and marginalized groups and strengthen institutional capacity and partnerships at all levels of climate action. To integrate food and nutrition security in

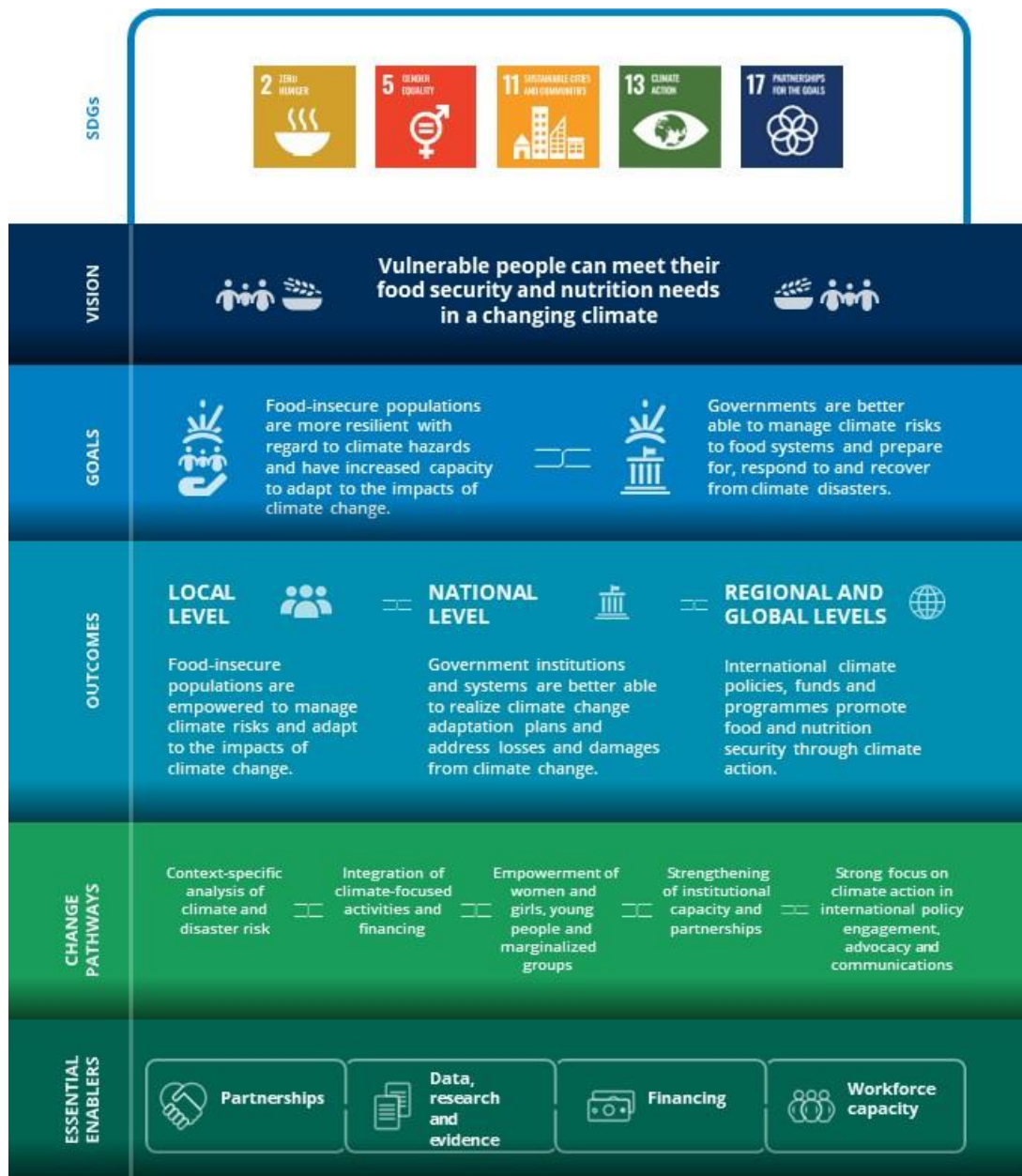
international climate policies, funds and programmes, WFP needs to maintain consistent technical engagement in international policy processes and a strong focus on climate action in corporate advocacy, communication and executive messaging.

38. **Enablers.** This policy is underpinned by four enabling factors that describe the inputs required at various functional levels of WFP to activate the pathways of change towards the achievement of the policy outcomes:
- a) *Partnerships.* Collaboration and coordination with government partners, local institutions and other humanitarian and development actors is necessary to address multi-layered vulnerability through integrated and context-specific programming.
  - b) *Data, research and evidence.* To ensure that climate-specific actions are well integrated in CSPs, WFP country offices and their partners must be equipped to analyse climate-specific problems and appraise effective adaptation options for various livelihood groups and target locations. The choice and technical design of such activities needs to be informed by technical knowledge and guidance that is often consolidated at WFP headquarters or regional bureaux.
  - c) *Workforce capacity.* Business mechanisms such as contracting modalities, rotational staffing plans, expert rosters and training protocols need to be adjusted and improved to help build and retain climate-specific expertise in WFP. This will enable the organization to engage effectively on issues related to climate action and climate finance.
  - d) *Financing.* WFP needs to improve its strategies, capacity and partnerships for accessing, sequencing and combining various sources of financing for climate action.
39. Climate change is a risk multiplier for many WFP programme and operational functions. This policy is therefore closely aligned with WFP's updated resilience policy (2024), environmental policy (2017), emergency preparedness policy (2017), policy on WFP's role in peacebuilding in transition settings (2013), local and regional food procurement policy (2019), country capacity strengthening policy (2022), gender policy (2022), protection and accountability policy (2020) and forthcoming school meals (2024) and localization (2025) policies.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> "Compendium of policies relating to the strategic plan" (WFP/EB.2/2023/4-C).

Figure 2: Theory of change of WFP's updated climate change policy



## VII. Policy outcomes

### Outcome 1: Food-insecure populations are empowered to manage climate risks and adapt to the impacts of climate change

40. The climate change adaptation needs of food-insecure communities are locally specific and determined by risk exposure, vulnerability and adaptive capacity. They require a community-focused, inclusive and participative approach to the analysis and tackling of climate-related problems. WFP applies the principle of community-based adaptation to all programming that seeks to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of local communities with regard to climate change. This approach applies equally to rural, peri-urban and urban populations.

41. In this context, WFP is harnessing its experience with asset creation and livelihood support programmes to restore and rehabilitate degraded assets for physical and ecosystem-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Collaborating with partners and local institutions, WFP supports the restoration of degraded soil, water and forest resources; the rehabilitation and reinforcement of community infrastructure such as water reservoirs, irrigation and drainage canals, flood protection dykes and post-harvest storage systems; training on diversified and regenerative farming practices; and the adoption of clean energy and resource-efficient technologies in local food systems.
42. In the spirit of integrated adaptation programming, agroecological approaches offer a particular opportunity to meet the food and nutrition needs of future generations while mitigating the impacts of climate change by creating a diversified and regenerative natural resource base. Building on traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local smallholder farmers, WFP is promoting agroecological approaches that combine local and traditional knowledge and scientific analysis. Sustainable energy solutions, post-harvest processing and storage technology also play a critical role in “climate-proofing” productive assets and allow local communities to build risk reserves.
43. Many climate change adaptation strategies require considerable energy use, yet the role of modern renewable energy services in climate adaptation is not widely acknowledged in policy making or practice. By increasing the use of sustainable and diversified energy technology and services, such as solar-powered pumps, mills and refrigeration, renewable energy opens adaptation pathways that promote emissions reductions and independence from fossil fuel markets. With regard to the daily energy needs of local institutions, WFP can leverage its role as a food systems actor to facilitate access by schools and households to clean and modern cooking solutions that prevent deforestation, increase economic opportunities for local businesses and mitigate the negative health impacts of traditional cooking methods.
44. Reducing humanitarian needs in an era of increasingly frequent climate disasters requires a combination of community-based investments in adaptation and interventions to protect them from possible near-term loss and damage. WFP is committed to strengthening local capacity for disaster preparedness and response and enhancing the resilience of local food systems actors with regard to near-term climate shocks. Building on its experience of supporting smallholder farmers with access to disaster risk financing and insurance coverage, WFP is increasing access to financial protection<sup>39</sup> before, during and immediately after climate shocks. The early availability of risk financing can help prevent the use of negative coping mechanisms.
45. Critical to empowering food-insecure communities to manage climate risks is their capacity to connect with early warning systems and take anticipatory action when imminent climate shocks are forecast. Such anticipatory action requires the pre-positioning of financing and plans that are pre-agreed between WFP and local partners. When a climate shock is forecast to hit a local community, WFP works with government authorities, other United Nations entities and local NGOs to release early warning communications, cash transfers and other protective services before households are affected. Early support allows people to prepare for shocks and reduce their impact rather than depend on humanitarian aid, which in turn reduces the cost of humanitarian relief operations.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> WFP. 2023. *Payouts from WFP-supported Climate Risk Insurance Programmes: Safeguarding food security through financial protection for the most vulnerable*.

<sup>40</sup> WFP. 2024. *Scaling up anticipatory actions for food security: Anticipatory Action Year in Focus 2023*.

46. The impacts of climate change affect everyone, but not equally. For all context-specific activities under this outcome WFP will follow a people-centred approach and apply principles of inclusion and participatory engagement, which include the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.<sup>41</sup> Social groups that are disproportionately affected such as displaced people, persons with disabilities, women and young people will be involved in decisions related to efforts to reduce the vulnerability of their livelihoods. With regard to the disproportionate impact of climate disasters on small children and breastfeeding mothers,<sup>42</sup> WFP will work with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others to champion nutrition interventions as part of integrated resilience and emergency response programmes.
47. Unequal social roles and responsibilities also make it challenging for women and girls to exercise control over climate-sensitive natural resources; access financial services and risk information; and participate in decision-making about climate change adaptation. This results in disparities between their exposure to climate shocks and stressors and their adaptive capacity, disaster response preferences and choices, and participation in climate-responsive policies. For example, water resources are under increasing pressure from climate change and women and girls often shoulder the burden of fetching water. During heatwaves and dry spells, they are forced to spend even more time in search of water resources, which increases their exposure to gender-based violence and limits their time to engage in other risk management opportunities.<sup>43</sup> To understand the differential impacts of climate change on various social groups and identify effective adaptation options, it is necessary to equitably and intentionally include the voices and needs of women and girls in adaptation planning and to empower women-led institutions as agents of change for climate action. With regard to increasing financial inclusion and enabling more equitable access by women to risk reserves and financial protection, it is essential for WFP to continue to strengthen women's access to climate risk insurance mechanisms.<sup>44</sup>

## **Outcome 2: Government institutions and systems are better able to realize climate change adaptation plans and address losses and damages from climate change**

48. Building on its first phase of climate change policy implementation, WFP will intensify its support for national and local governments seeking to strengthen institutional capacity and systems for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. While government demand for such services has been growing, it is highly context-specific and often includes a wide range of policy design, programme and investment planning tasks. WFP recognizes that in some conflict-affected contexts, partnering with host governments can pose challenges with regard to WFP's adherence to humanitarian principles and conflict sensitivity. In such cases WFP will ensure that climate-focused programmes do not run counter to the central principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.
49. To improve the evidence base for adaptation planning, WFP works with government institutions to strengthen the analysis of climate risks to food security,<sup>45</sup> which is essential for the risk-informed development of national adaptation plans, food security policies, disaster management plans and nationally determined contributions under the

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<sup>41</sup> "WFP protection and accountability policy" (WFP/EB.2/2020/4-A/1/Rev.2).

<sup>42</sup> UNICEF. 2023. *From the first 1000 days to a resilient future: Environmental and Climate Education for Early Childhood in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

<sup>43</sup> UN Water and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). 2023. *From Commodity to Common Good: A Feminist Agenda to Tackle the World's Water Crisis*.

<sup>44</sup> WFP. 2022. *Gender & Risk Finance: How climate risk insurance can turn four women's lives around*.

<sup>45</sup> WFP. 2019. *WFP Guide to Climate & Food Security Analyses*.

Paris Agreement. This technical assistance leverages WFP's expertise in integrated context analysis<sup>46</sup> and climate risk profiling,<sup>47</sup> as well as its operational partnerships in climate modelling and forecasting.

50. In close alignment with its other thematic policies, notably the policy on local and regional food procurement, WFP will leverage the transformation of food systems as a key pathway for climate action and support the development of low carbon and climate-resilient food value chains. Strengthening adaptive capacity and climate resilience at the local level, WFP will support the capacity of smallholder farmers and other value chain actors to employ resource-efficient technologies for post-harvest processing and storage as well as renewable energy solutions for food production, processing and storage. This approach will put special emphasis on the inclusion of people who are often excluded from access to markets and technologies, including women and young people. Through the innovative concept of planet-friendly school meals, WFP will facilitate a targeted push to reduce unsustainable agricultural practices,<sup>48</sup> scale up solutions for clean cooking and promote education about climate action.
51. In countries that lack climate financing investment, WFP is committed to increasing the ability of governments to mobilize climate-specific funding for strategic projects aimed at achieving food security objectives under national climate change adaptation policies, plans and strategies. This includes improving government access to multilateral climate financing instruments such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund and the integration of climate risk management activities into government-led investments supported by international financial institutions.
52. Faced with stronger and more frequent climate shocks and stresses, governments require greater fiscal space to enable them to respond to climate disasters and address the impacts of loss and damage on national economies. They also need to prepare for future climate impacts of a magnitude beyond anything yet experienced, which will require upgrading emergency preparedness and response systems.<sup>49</sup> Relevant contributions by WFP include support for national disaster preparedness and response plans, national disaster risk reduction strategies, sovereign climate risk insurance mechanisms, shock-responsive social protection systems and anticipatory action systems that trigger pre-arranged financing when critical warning thresholds are crossed. During and after climate disasters, WFP will support the provision of cash-based transfers to accelerate local recovery from loss and damage.

### **Outcome 3: International climate policies, funds and programmes promote food and nutrition security through climate action**

53. At the global level WFP's impact on the promotion of food and nutrition security through climate action is closely linked with its strategic positioning and engagement with the UNFCCC, the 2015 Paris Agreement and several associated processes and funding instruments.<sup>50</sup> WFP is an active observer of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and member of the technical expert group on comprehensive risk management established

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<sup>46</sup> WFP. 2014. *Integrated context analysis and the three-pronged approach*.

<sup>47</sup> WFP. 2022. *Climate Response Analysis – Country Profiles*.

<sup>48</sup> WFP. 2023. *WFP's approach to Planet-Friendly School Meals*.

<sup>49</sup> Inter-agency Standing Committee. 2023. *Key Messages on Averting, Minimizing and Addressing Loss and Damage from a Humanitarian Perspective*.

<sup>50</sup> WFP. 2023. *Anticipating Weather and Climate Risk: Weather Information for the Global Public Good*.

under the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage.<sup>51</sup> As an accredited entity with the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, WFP interacts with boards and fund secretariats to review and improve funding policies and practices with a view to better serving the needs of food-insecure communities. WFP is a member of the Santiago Network under the UNFCCC, which catalyses technical assistance to support developing countries in addressing loss and damage, and it also serves as a leading voice in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the prioritization of climate action in situations of food insecurity.

54. To advance climate resilience and adaptive capacity in drylands, WFP engages with the Desertification Convention, which aims to address land degradation and build resilience to drought as the basic conditions for food and water security and for achieving global objectives on climate change and biodiversity. Other international policy platforms to advance food and nutrition security through climate action include working groups of the Group of Seven and the Group of Twenty that engage on priorities and instruments related to food security and climate risk management.
55. WFP puts particular emphasis on international policy processes and advocacy efforts that advance climate action in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Through strategic engagement with international partners,<sup>52</sup> WFP is building advocacy coalitions to better serve the needs of people who face compound crises stemming from climate vulnerability, fragility and conflict and food insecurity.<sup>53</sup> Following through on its pledge to support the declaration on climate, relief, recovery and peace adopted at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC,<sup>54</sup> WFP has formulated quantifiable global targets and developed a pipeline of projects for scaling up climate action in fragile settings.<sup>55</sup>
56. As a signatory of the Agenda for Humanity's "Peace Promise" and in line with the OECD-DAC 2020 recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, WFP is committed to ensuring conflict sensitivity in its programmes and addressing climate impacts as one of the drivers of conflict. In this way, WFP advances the integration of climate-specific action into international policy discussions about humanitarian action, conflict and fragility, with a particular focus on the empowerment of women and girls.<sup>56</sup>
57. In addition to its engagement in intergovernmental policy processes and platform, WFP contributes to technical platforms such as the Early Warnings for All initiative,<sup>57</sup> the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership,<sup>58</sup> the Systematic Observations Financing Facility,<sup>59</sup> the Global Shield against Climate Risks, the Insurance Development Forum and the Climate

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<sup>51</sup> UNFCCC. 2022. [Technical Expert Group on Comprehensive Risk Management](#).

<sup>52</sup> Such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

<sup>53</sup> WFP participates in the Coalition for Climate Action in Fragile and Conflict Settings led by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Bank.

<sup>54</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. 2023. [Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace](#).

<sup>55</sup> WFP. 2024. [WFP's Climate Resilience Investment Pipeline. Partnering for Actions to Reduce Humanitarian Needs and Boost Food Security](#).

<sup>56</sup> UN-Women. 2023. [Feminist Climate Justice: A Framework for Action](#).

<sup>57</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and World Meteorological Organization. 2023. [Global Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems 2023](#).

<sup>58</sup> Global Public Policy Institute. 2023. [2023 Stocktake for the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership \(REAP\): Final report](#).

<sup>59</sup> WFP. 2023. [Anticipating Weather and Climate Risk: Weather Information for the Global Public Good](#).

Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative.<sup>60</sup> In collaboration with FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, WFP supports the transformation of food systems as a pathway for climate action and provides analytical and technical input to a number of initiatives that support the implementation of the declaration on sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems and climate action adopted at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC.<sup>61</sup> Complementing these efforts, WFP provides case studies, good practices and lessons learned about context-specific climate change adaptation and resilience programming for the United Nations food systems summit process and United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub.

## VIII. Essential enablers

### Partnerships

58. WFP will rely on strong partnerships to implement this climate change policy. Since its first climate change policy was approved there has been a proliferation of partnership and cooperation opportunities in the international, regional and national governance of climate action, partly spurred by the urgent need to move from ambition to action, but also stemming from new developments in international climate dialogue – notably the concept of loss and damage and the recognition of food system transformation as a pathway for climate action.
59. The implementation of this climate change policy is rooted in sustained collaboration with government institutions and local and non-state actors to realize climate change adaptation priorities and minimize loss and damage. To realize these objectives WFP is harnessing a range of partnership opportunities that can be broadly characterized as follows:
  - **Technical partnerships** with government bodies and NGOs, other United Nations entities and other public and private sector partners to enable and coordinate high-quality design and implementation of climate-focused projects.
  - **Implementation partnerships** with local service providers, NGOs and community groups, including women-led organizations, to implement and sustain climate-focused activities in specific locations.
  - **Knowledge partnerships** with universities and academic and research institutions to analyse climate-related risks and vulnerability, appraise adaptation and risk management options, monitor the long-term results of projects and codify “what works” in different settings.
  - **Financing partnerships** with bilateral donors, multilateral climate funds, international financial institutions, philanthropic and private sector partners to enable sustained long-term investments in climate change adaptation and climate risk management.
  - **Advocacy partnerships** with other United Nations entities and programmes, intergovernmental institutions and platforms, civil society and advocacy groups and NGOs to highlight priorities for climate action and communicate climate-related problems and context-specific solutions to internal and external audiences.

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<sup>60</sup> Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems. 2021. [Delivering at Scale 2021–2025](#).

<sup>61</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. 2023. [Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action](#).



60. As part of its plan for implementing the climate change policy, WFP will map and categorize its global and regional partnerships that can be harnessed to strengthen climate action at the national, regional and global levels. This mapping will highlight joint initiatives with key partners, including work with FAO on implementing a joint strategy for anticipatory action<sup>62</sup> and improving the geographic coverage and degree of hazard forecasting for food security. Joint and complementary programming and advocacy efforts between WFP and FAO will promote the coordinated design and implementation of multilateral climate finance projects; strengthen implementation partnerships in fragile and conflict-affected settings; and reinforce support for food security and regenerative agriculture in international climate policies, funds and programmes.<sup>63, 64</sup>
61. Under this policy, WFP's partnership with IFAD will focus on the resilience and adaptive capacity of smallholder farmers and agricultural value chains, including through the scale-up of climate risk insurance solutions and the targeted integration of adaptation practices and technologies in agricultural investment programmes. Collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization will focus on hazard early warning systems and the connection of hydro-meteorological observational networks with last-mile climate information services. WFP's partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction will enable coordinated support for the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction<sup>65</sup> as well as aligned advocacy for disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction.
62. With regard to partnerships at the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, WFP will continue to partner with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration, UNICEF and OCHA to address climate and conflict drivers of food crises in an integrated manner and advance climate protection for marginalized and particularly vulnerable groups such as refugees, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities and children.
63. Collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the World Bank Group and regional development banks will focus on de-risking food systems with regard to climate impacts and the integration of food and nutrition security in government-led climate change adaptation and agricultural development projects.

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<sup>62</sup> FAO and WFP. 2023. *FAO-WFP Anticipatory Action Strategy: Scaling up anticipatory actions to prevent food crises*.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Group. 2020. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*.

<sup>64</sup> FAO. 2022. *The future of food and agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation*.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*.

## Data, research and evidence

64. A key outcome of this climate change policy is the enhancement of the resilience and adaptive capacity of livelihoods and food systems with regard to climate change. As described in WFP's 2024 resilience policy, the availability of high-quality data, research and evidence enables context-specific and risk-informed policymaking, programme planning and funding decisions. This requires combining evidence derived from climate models, extreme weather attribution studies, impact-based forecasts, satellite monitoring and value chain analysis with data from household surveys, vulnerability assessments, focus group interviews and participatory appraisals. Seasonal food security monitoring, analysis and forecasting will support analysis of the complex impacts of climate, economic and conflict-related shocks on food security.
65. To ensure that country strategies and programmes are informed by risk, WFP will systematically integrate climate risk and vulnerability information into the early stages of CSP design and combine the results of climate-specific assessments with other socioeconomic data related to food security, poverty, gender and nutrition. Emphasis will be given to a joined-up analysis of climate risk and gender inequality data with a view to increasing participation of women and girls in climate change adaptation initiatives. Analysis of local food systems and value chains will include analysis of climate risks across the stages of food production, processing, storage, transport and consumption.
66. For results monitoring and impact analysis, WFP will seek to balance quantitative and qualitative evidence. For the former, WFP will measure the impact of climate resilience programmes on humanitarian needs as well as the cost-benefit ratio and impact of various approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Geospatial tracking tools<sup>66</sup> will provide a unique perspective on the effectiveness of ecosystem-based adaptation and its long-term impact on natural resources. With regard to qualitative evidence, WFP will continue to track and interpret climate-induced variations in food security recorded through people's own perceptions of climate resilience, building on evolving indicators in its corporate results framework such as the shock exposure index and the resilience capacity score.<sup>67</sup>
67. As part of the climate change policy implementation plan, WFP will update its multi-year research strategy on climate action, prioritize countries and themes for impact evaluations, synthesize evaluations and decentralized evaluations, and develop a practical and low-cost methodology for tracking the implementation of the policy.

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<sup>66</sup> Such as WFP's Asset Impact Monitoring System – AIMS; see WFP. 2020. [Asset Impact Monitoring System \(AIMS\)](#).

<sup>67</sup> WFP. 2023. [Shock Exposure Index \(SEI\)](#); WFP. 2022. [Resilience Capacity Score \(RCS\)](#).

## Financing

68. Since 2018 WFP has mobilized close to USD 1 billion for strategic projects with a significant climate objective. These investments are essential to strengthening the climate resilience of food-insecure populations and building the systems and capacity necessary to protect them from new disasters. The increasing impact of climate extremes, which aggravate other drivers of risk such as conflict and economic inequality, require WFP to redouble its fundraising efforts to ensure that its programmes and operations are climate-compatible and risk-informed. To this end WFP will improve its ability to access, sequence and combine various sources of financing – including humanitarian, development, climate and peacebuilding funds – to enable integrated programming and ensure more flexible and predictable multi-year funding for climate and resilience outcomes.
69. The implementation plan for this policy also involves the development of a climate resource mobilization strategy that encompasses a thematic fundraising outlook for the following types of resources.
- **Multilateral climate funds.** WFP has accredited entity status with the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund and is an executing partner in collaboration with other accredited entities for projects funded through the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund administered by the Global Environment Facility.
  - **Bilateral climate and development funds.** WFP is an implementing and executing partner for climate-specific and climate-relevant projects that are supported by bilateral donors and reported to the OECD, in line with the OECD-DAC Rio markers for climate<sup>68</sup>.
  - **International financial institutions and national (programme country) governments.** Ongoing global efforts to reform the international financial architecture for climate action recognize international financial institutions as central players in the effort to increase climate financing for developing countries. Among these institutions, multilateral development banks are important partners for WFP in its engagement with governments because they facilitate the strategic allocation of funding for the design and implementation of initiatives that de-risk development investments and strengthen food system resilience.
  - **Private sector.** WFP supports market-based mechanisms for climate-specific products and services such as parametric climate risk insurance, digital access to climate information, renewable energy and improved post-harvest processes. WFP is also an implementing partner in public-private partnerships and for special projects financed by philanthropies, foundations and individual donors.<sup>69</sup>
  - **Innovative finance.** WFP is a technical and implementing partner for blended finance, catastrophe bonds, carbon credits, green bonds and debt swaps.

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<sup>68</sup> OECD. 2011. *Handbook on the OECD-DAC Climate Markers*.

<sup>69</sup> "Private-sector partnerships and fundraising strategy (2020–2025) Cooperation with the private sector, foundations and individuals for the achievement of zero hunger" (WFP/EB.2/2019/4-A/Rev.1).

## Workforce capacity

70. As part of the climate change policy implementation plan WFP will suggest targeted investments in its workforce to enable it to meet the objectives of the policy. These investments will focus on the following priorities:
- **Strengthening staff capacity** on climate science, climate change policy, climate financing and climate-focused programming.
  - **Developing and disseminating knowledge and guidance materials** to inform the design and implementation of high-quality climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and integrated resilience projects.
  - **Enabling the recruitment and retention of personnel with specialized skills** to strengthen climate-related capacity in relevant functions across WFP.
  - **Developing service centre and deployment models** to make specialized technical expertise available to WFP country offices and regional bureaux with shorter lead times.
71. To strengthen the capacity of WFP employees as enablers of climate action, WFP will review climate-relevant staffing and skills profiles at the country office, regional bureau and headquarters levels and assess rotational cycles and contracting modalities. This includes producing recommendations for the recruitment, retention, training and re-training of the best available human capital for climate action and integrated resilience programming at all levels of the organization. A three-pronged “buy, build or borrow” strategy<sup>70</sup> will be considered to combine the strengthening of internal capacity with the sourcing of external expertise and the use of secondments, junior professional officers and standby partnership agreements.
72. Lastly, WFP’s effectiveness in enabling critical workforce capacity for climate action and promoting and advocating climate solutions in national country strategies and programmes, and CSPs relies on effective executive messaging and the consistent integration of climate considerations into WFP’s internal and external communications.

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<sup>70</sup> WFP’s [Climate Learning Certification Programme](#) aims to equip WFP staff with the knowledge and skills to interact with donors and national governments on climate programmes.