

European Humanitarian Forum

Forum humanitaire européen



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European Humanitarian Forum (EHF) - Regional Consultation in MENA and European Neighborhood

“Climate Change and Humanitarian Needs” Final Report

I. Overview:

The regional consultation “Climate Change and Humanitarian Needs” was held on 22 November 2021. Co-hosted by the DG ECHO Regional Office, the French Embassy in Amman, and facilitated by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). The virtual event was attended by 65 persons from National non-governmental organizations (NGO), UN agencies, international NGO and the Red Cross/Red Crescent family.

The consultation kick started with a presentation of the results for the widely distributed survey on climate change and humanitarian needs (see attached in Annex) and was followed by a technical presentation by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The consultation then moved to breakout rooms where participants were encouraged to have open, transparent dialogue and share thoughts and recommendations about the topic. The discussions were presented in plenary with an opportunity for open discussion. The overall objective of this consultation was to illustrate a better understanding and analysis of the risks and impacts of climate change on humanitarian needs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and European Neighborhood regions, as well as to contribute to the reflection at the global level at the European Humanitarian Forum (EHF).

The overall objective of this report is to capture the dialogue and main themes on climate change and humanitarian needs as discussed throughout the event and in its sessions, identifying recommendations and advocacy points to be shared with all stakeholders and feed into the EHF.

Questions Discussed (These were suggested questions used for moderating the breakout groups)

1. What natural disasters have affected the populations in your respective countries in the last three years? How would you rate the scale and severity of these natural disasters?
2. Was there a need for humanitarian actors to respond to these disasters? Why?
3. Are national actors sufficiently equipped to deal with natural disasters in your country?
4. Are Early Warning Systems in place and functioning? For what type of disasters?

5. Do programming tools (HRP, contingency plans, etc.) include adequate provision for emergency preparedness to natural disasters?
6. Do you have good practices to share in this regards that would be relevant for other countries/regions?
7. What are the main constraints faced by humanitarian actors when responding to both sudden and slow onset natural disasters in existing operations targeting conflict affected population?
8. Have some of these natural disasters further displaced populations?
9. How can DG ECHO and the donor community support humanitarian actors to better prepare for and respond to natural disasters in the region?

II. Key Issues emerged

- Climate change-related crises compound existing emergencies (including armed conflict and poverty) in the MENA and European Neighbourhood regions.
- Across the regions, scale, duration and frequency of drought is increasing. Humanitarian actors are forced to launch emergency appeals due to drought severity, and as a result they cannot be anticipated or managed in a sustainable manner. Scarcity of water, including falling water levels, is the main challenge affecting livelihoods, agriculture, food, and health of the populations and leading to internal displacement or migration.
- Increased risk of forest fires as a result of dry weather and drought is becoming endemic to the already-dry region.
- Climate events and natural disasters are also driven by politics and very sensitive to non-natural impacts. For example, water access can be reliant upon geopolitics, particularly in areas with low supplies of potable water.
- In addition to the immediate impact on livelihoods and displacement, climate change-related crises are leading to increased social tensions in between communities (displaced and host) over scattered resources.
- Disaster preparedness and climate change are not prioritized by most governments of the region, despite that the consequences are already visible in many areas.
- There is a lack of integrated Emergency Warning Systems (EWS) at the regional level. National EWS are sometimes in place but disconnected from sub-national levels and local communities. Forecast and anticipatory models are not sufficiently functional to effectively prevent disasters.

III. Advocacy Messages

- Humanitarian organizations should internally prioritize climate change and demonstrate commitment by developing flexible and contextualized climate change programming, strengthening internal capacity/knowledge, and dedicating resources.
- Climate Change should be a cross-cutting theme across the coordination mechanisms and dedicated guests, and training opportunities should be provided on coordination mechanisms to both international and local NGOs
- Climate change response must be localized, and locally adapted solutions should be identified.
- Humanitarian actors should invest in new and diverse information and communication and recognize the need for more resilient and community-based programming, and ensure the inclusion of local, refugee and Internal Displaced (IDPs) community members.

- Increased quality, flexible, and long-term resources should be provided for climate change responses. Donors should specifically fund preparedness and risk management interventions.
- Standardization of Emergency Action and Response Plans should occur at the country and NGO level.
- Dialogue and coordination between the government, donor community, and civil society must be increased and organized.
- Humanitarian organizations should sign, commit, and adapt the Climate and Environment Charter.

IV. Identified Recommendations

- EU should continue supporting NGO coalitions in the region by providing the financial means and expanding the needed support for advocacy with key institutional donors and through diplomatic communication and advocacy efforts with members states.
- Humanitarian organizations should incorporate climate change-related risk analysis, adaptation measures, anticipatory action, do no harm and/or climate smart programming in all refugee response work and long-term sustainable work.
- Humanitarian organizations recommend to the EU and donor community to support their humanitarian climate work by addressing the lack of buy-in from senior governmental and institutional leadership. More capacity strengthening and awareness-raising are required to meaningfully integrate climate to programming.
- Donors should deploy multi-year flexible funding specifically addressing climate change and its effects. Moreover, donors should be very specific about their asks and recommendations addressing climate change, including mainstream vs targeted approaches. Especially for footprint and environment impacts. Adopt a holistic approach to addressing climate change over the long-term: preventive/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
- Mainstream and include climate change as part of the localisation agenda, with a strong component of capacity strengthening programmes for local actors, including establishing Early Warning Systems and adopting an integrated risk management approach.
- Multi-sectoral responses should be established to deliver climate-related programming in conflict areas.

V. Resources shared during the webinar:

- [EU Communication on humanitarian action: New actions, same challenges](#)
- [Climate and Environment Charter](#)
- [ICVA learning Stream on Climate Change](#)