



**START
NETWORK**

REGIONAL BRIEF

ASIA-PACIFIC CLIMATE WEEK



BACKGROUND

Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW) will take place from 13-17 November 2023 in Johor, hosted by the Government of Malaysia. The APCW 2023 is a platform for policymakers, practitioners, businesses, and civil society to exchange climate solutions, barriers to overcome, and opportunities realised in different regions. It is the fourth of the Regional Climate Weeks for 2023.

The Regional Climate Weeks consider four major systems-based tracks with an aim to provide region-focused contributions to inform the global stock take. The themes are:

- 1 ENERGY SYSTEMS AND INDUSTRY;**
- 2 CITIES, URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENTS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT;**
- 3 LAND, OCEAN, FOOD, AND WATER;**
- 4 SOCIETIES, HEALTH, LIVELIHOODS, AND ECONOMIES.**

Due to the nature of Start Network’s work and expertise, the focus of our contributions is on the fourth topic.

Distributing NFIWASH Dignity Kit & Dry Rations Kit in India
© NEADS



KEY FACTS & FIGURES ON THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

The Asia-Pacific region is the most disaster-prone region in the world with over 2 million people having lost their lives to disaster since 1970. The region represents almost 60 percent of the global disaster death toll, and it remains that 85 percent of the region's population are exposed to multi-hazard risks. The principal causes of fatalities from natural hazards in the region are storms and earthquakes, with the impacts of disasters being greatest in the least developed countries (ESCAP, 2023).



CLIMATE CHANGE IS EXACERBATING THE FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF NATURAL HAZARDS INCLUDING FLOODS, TROPICAL CYCLONES, HEATWAVES, AND EARTHQUAKES. THIS HAS RESULTED IN TRAGIC LOSSES OF LIFE, DISPLACED COMMUNITIES, DAMAGE TO HEALTH, AND HAS PUSHED MILLIONS ACROSS THE REGION INTO POVERTY (ESCAP, 2023). IN ADDITION, THE REGION IS ALSO IMPACTED BY THE SLOW-ONSET EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE INCLUDING DROUGHT, SEA LEVEL RISE, AND SALINIZATION (UNESCO, 2023).

CLIMATE FINANCE AND ADAPTATION COSTS

An estimated investment of approximately \$144.74 billion is required for effective transformative climate adaptation in the region. This equates to 0.49 percent of regional gross domestic product (ESCAP, 2023). Key areas identified as being in need of investment include (but are not limited) to water supply, sanitation, irrigation, flood control, transport, and energy infrastructure (ADB, 2023a).

However, such investments are difficult when countries most at risk of climate change in the region also suffer from the highest burden of debt. As a result of this debt, a significant portion of countries' earnings go into external debt repayments leaving limited room for investment into resilient and adaptive futures (ESCAP, 2023).



DISPLACEMENT

Climate change is driving human displacement throughout the region. Between 2008 and 2020 the Asia-Pacific region represented **80 percent of the total global new displacements related to disasters**. Displacement can be categorised in two ways: directly through the destruction of human settlements; and, indirectly by climate-driven loss of livelihoods which leads to forced migration (UNESCO, 2023).

Low-and middle-income countries and small island states face specific challenges of disaster displacement with impacts of displacement being further compounded by poverty, inequality, land degradation and erosion (IDMC, 2022).

Displacement is further contributing to unprecedented growth in urbanisation. **The Asia-Pacific region is home to 70 percent of the world's most populous cities (UNEP, n.d.)** with cities in Asia reported to be experiencing an **increase in urban populations by 44 million people every year (ADB, 2023a)**.

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS



The Asia-Pacific region is the fastest-growing economic powerhouse in the world, but much of the region's employment and production rely heavily on carbon-intensive activities (ADB, 2023b). Consequently, the region is responsible for more than half of global carbon emissions and several countries are heavily reliant on imported fossil fuels (ADB, 2023a). At the same time, heatwaves and droughts are placing greater stress on existing energy generation. Transitioning to clean energy across the region is essential in order to tackle climate change (ADB, 2023a).

IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURE

Ecosystems across the region are highly diverse, and so community vulnerabilities vary from one place to another. Yet, one cross-cutting trend is the increased intensity of droughts, floods, rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and sea level rise which are leading to a reduction in agricultural production. These impacts are detrimental to those with livelihoods dependent on agriculture and is resulting in surges in food prices (ESCAP, 2023), and heightening food insecurity (IFAD, 2022).

FLOODING, HEATWAVES & EARTHQUAKES



Climate risks and impacts on the region are extremely diverse. However, some of the greatest climate impacts have been from flooding and heatwaves. Over the last year, these hazards have been unprecedented, particularly in India and Pakistan, where both countries have experienced prolonged and dry heatwaves and heavy rainfall and flooding which has triggered landslides and river overflows. Overall, in 2022, flooding led to the greatest loss of life, causing over 4,800 fatalities largely across India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh (ESCAP, 2023). Earthquakes have also caused significant damage primarily in Japan, China, the Philippines, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The losses from these disasters are estimated to cost \$34 billion and \$12.1 billion, respectively (ESCAP, 2023).

START NETWORK'S FINANCING MECHANISM, **START FUND**, PROVIDES RAPID RESPONSE FUNDING TO UNDER-THE-RADAR, SMALL TO MEDIUM-SCALE CRISES, FILLING A CRITICAL GAP IN THE HUMANITARIAN AID SYSTEM.

START FUND ACTIVATION: FLOODING IN PAKISTAN

In early January 2022, heavy rains and snow started to fall in Balochistan, Pakistan. The heavy rains cut off regions from each other and disrupted essential services - highways were blocked due to flooding, power supplies were interrupted, the airport grounded, and schools and health facilities were heavily damaged. The crisis affected several villages and damaged approximately 5,000 homes, forcing families to leave their communities. The crisis resulted in more than 38,000 people in need of immediate shelter and emergency WASH, food, and livelihood support.

HANDS, Bright Star Development Society Balochistan; Care International; Islamic Relief; Mercy Corps; Muslim Aid; Qatar Charity, and local communities came together to assess needs in the affected communities and raise an alert to the Start Fund for emergency support.

BY DOING SO, THE CONSORTIUM WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE:

- 500 TENTS
- 1,500 EMERGENCY PACKS AND HYGIENE KITS
- 1,500 KITCHEN SETS

In total, 9,844 people were reached with life-saving support. Of these individuals, 52 per cent were children, 47 percent were female and 2 percent had a disability.

By working together, the humanitarian community in Balochistan was able to provide rapid emergency support to families left with nothing after the flooding. Equal and fair collaboration between INGOs and local



Alert N-06 Nepal Beneficiary carrying relief materials at Darchuala © Qatar Charity, Nepal

organisations allowed for impactful support for communities. By working in partnership, sharing resources, and collective decision-making, Start Fund has ensured appropriate and better humanitarian action for those who need it, when they need it, across the globe.



India flood response © NEADS



IN EARLY JANUARY 2022, HEAVY RAINS AND SNOW STARTED TO FALL IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN.



THE HEAVY RAINS CUT OFF REGIONS FROM EACH OTHER AND DISRUPTED ESSENTIAL SERVICES

APPROXIMATELY **5,000** HOMES WERE DAMAGED

38,000 PEOPLE WERE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE SHELTER AND EMERGENCY WASH, FOOD, AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT



KEY MESSAGES

BEYOND THE HEADLINES OF EXTREME WEATHER AND SEVERE DISASTERS, START NETWORK HAS BEEN ADDRESSING THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN A NUMBER OF WAYS.

01 Performing a lifesaving and gap-filling role by responding to under-the-radar, small to medium sized crises through the Start Fund.



02 Protecting people at risk of climatic crises through innovative financing with Start Ready, which prepositions funding for predictable climate hazards. Start Ready pools risks across countries to stretch funding further and respond quickly to locally identified climate risks.



03 Driving systemic change that prioritises locally led action, and co-creating shifts in the way humanitarian action is approached, resourced, and delivered. By shifting power and decision-making through the work of the locally led humanitarian hubs working in partnership with us we advocate for a humanitarian system that is more locally led and anticipatory.



POLICY ASKS



TOGETHER WITH OUR NETWORK OF MORE THAN 80 LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING ACROSS FIVE CONTINENTS, WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR:

01 INCREASED FINANCING TO ADDRESS THE LOSSES AND DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

Loss and damage is typically understood as the adverse impacts of climate change which have occurred and will occur despite mitigation and adaptation efforts. It is key that continued progress is made towards the targets on mitigation and adaptation, but it is also necessary to take steps to avert, minimise, and address current and future loss and damage. **Previous analysis** has estimated that the Global North is responsible for 92% of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Loss and Damage Financing Mechanism must be aligned with the calls from countries experiencing the biggest effects of climate change and cover both economic and non-economic loss and damage, including the impact on lives, societies, and environments. This should not be duplicative financing but rather in addition to existing financing from other sectors (e.g., humanitarian, development, and climate). Furthermore, the Loss and Damage Financing Mechanism should ensure that funding reaches people and communities affected and at risk of climate impacts.

02 A MORE LOCALLY LED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE RISKS.

The Grand Bargain is an agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian aid organisations, and calls for 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders.

Through our financing mechanisms, we are able to shift resources to national and local organisations to anticipate and respond to crises. Local communities and people who are disproportionately affected by climate change must have access to risk information, early warning systems, and pre-arranged financing to respond to crises in a timely and efficient way to protect themselves.

Local knowledge, expertise, and leadership must be recognised to strengthen responses to climate risks. More locally informed and inclusive approaches to humanitarian response involves supporting community-based innovation, recognising local and Indigenous knowledge, and including the needs of all people in their diversity (e.g., traditionally marginalised populations like women, youth, elderly, and persons with disabilities).

03 A SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN THE HUMANITARIAN FINANCING SYSTEM, BASED ON INNOVATIVE, FLEXIBLE, AND PROACTIVE WAYS TO RESPOND TO CLIMATE NEEDS AND REDUCE RISK.

For some hazards it is possible to use science and risk modelling to determine the predictability and patterns of occurrence which can be utilised to act in anticipation or earlier in the evolution of the crisis.

The current humanitarian financing system is slow, reactive, and fragmented.

By shifting mindsets, resources, and financing to a proactive approach supported by financing that is released rapidly (and where possible in advance of crises) and responses that are led by actors within the crisis-context, it is possible to protect more people and reduce humanitarian impacts.

Anticipatory and early action must be complemented and connected to wider disaster risk management efforts to further reduce risks and continue to build resilience.