

# CLIMATE ACTION UPDATE

Climate change increasingly impacts UNHCR operations and colleagues. In fact, it is featured in UNHCR's updated [strategic risk register 2021](#), with the critical risk of "failure to adequately recognize and adapt our strategic positioning, internal processes and operating posture in response to climate crisis". The climate crisis was also the topic of this year's [World Humanitarian Day](#) on 19 August. 'Climate action should be a major focus of emergency preparedness' calls UNHCR staff from the [environment unit in Cox's Bazar](#), Bangladesh.



*Flooding in Cox's Bazar severely damaged camps. Refugee volunteers worked non-stop to rescue those stranded.*

## Strengthening Operations:

- ➔ Environmental Survey Response Requested! The Environment and Energy unit would like to gauge country operations' level of interest and technical support needed for environmental mainstreaming. Please fill the [Environmental survey](#).
- ➔ In the first half of 2020, nearly 125.000 people were displaced due to droughts and floods in Somalia. In addition to emergency assistance, UNHCR relocates persons of concern to safe and secure sites, and enhances community resilience through livelihood & education programs.
- ➔ The Sahel Predictive Analytics Project research consortium keeps growing, now welcoming the Famine Early Warning System Network ([FEWS-NET](#)) and the [Walker Institute](#) at University of Reading. The consortium is preparing a report to compile the state of knowledge for predictive analytics and strategic foresight in the region.
- ➔ UNHCR's Refugee Environmental Protection (REP) fund has secured Oliver Wyman as its first Corporate Founding Partner. A comprehensive launch plan for the fund has been set up.
- ➔ Looking for support to convert fossil fuel powered generators into solar powered systems for water supply? Applications from Country Operations are invited under the Green Energy for Water: Project Flow. To start the informal application process, express your interest to Jill Lauren Hass ([hass@unhcr.org](mailto:hass@unhcr.org)) and Irene Sun ([sun@unhcr.org](mailto:sun@unhcr.org)) **by September 15<sup>th</sup>**.
- ➔ Initial Expressions of Interest (Eoi) from country operations are invited to design real-time monitoring packages using programmatic, environment-related indicators, such as groundwater levels or solar energy production. Please submit Eoi to Ben Harvey ([harveyb@unhcr.org](mailto:harveyb@unhcr.org)) and Anne Hyvaerinen ([hyvrinen@unhcr.org](mailto:hyvrinen@unhcr.org))
- ➔ At the World Water Week 2021 "[Climate migration: Water services and water security in displacement settings](#)" event, UNHCR DRS and field-based colleagues presented solutions implemented to alleviate water stress in the Teknaf sub-district in Cox's Bazar. At the session "[Refugee Communities | Water Inside and Outside the Camp](#)", UNHCR presented on solarization in camps and host communities in Tanzania, underlining the importance of partnerships and of longer-term monitoring to increase sustainability and the lifespan of interventions.

**Spotlight Good Practice:** In Cox's Bazar, water, soil and air testing is supporting a shift towards more proactive planning, monitoring and evaluation of activities for environmental restoration and climate resilience. Lessons highlight the value of Environmental Impact Assessments before any planned construction work to control soil erosion, and a multi-purpose design of buildings should be considered to optimize land usage. In addition, a continuous supply of clean fuel for cooking is key to prevent the loss of vegetation cover in the camps.

## Engaging on Law and Policy:

- UNHCR is preparing for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in collaboration with partners, including as a member of the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement, the Platform on Disaster Displacement, IOM, ICRC, NGOs & academia.
- Preparation of UNHCR's first Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement is underway, led by the GPC Task Team on Law and Policy, which will include displacement in the context of climate change and disasters.
- UNHCR contributed to the Report on the State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020 - "Working together for Weather, Climate and Water Resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean", [High-level launch](#) on 17 August 2021.

## Reducing UNHCR's Environmental Footprint:

- UNHCR DFAM has launched a tender for the Green Financing Facility, to establish a Power Purchasing Agreement in East Africa. The selected companies will support UNHCR in migrating three sites in Kenya and Uganda to renewable energy with an anticipated annual carbon reduction of 1.227 tons. This pilot will be replicated in other sites globally.
- The Supply Management Service (SMS) is implementing the Shipment Tracking System, which includes tracking of emissions from UNHCR's international shipment. This will improve our accountability in environmental impact measurement and associated reduction efforts.
- The "Strategy for Environmental Sustainability in UNHCR's Operational Responses 2021-2025", a joint effort between DRS and DESS, is under review, targeting both Supply and Response initiatives. SMS is conducting a comprehensive review of UNHCR's greenhouse gas emissions from selected items as a baseline to increase sustainability in supply.

**Green Box Update:** 81% of all UNHCR offices have enrolled in the initiative. 423 offices are participating and over 150 boxes (38%) have been installed. Read the latest [News Article on the Intranet](#) and find more information on the [Green Box Dashboard](#).

## Regional News:

**Africa:** The first "climate change famine" continues in Madagascar: an estimated 30.000 people experience catastrophic levels of food insecurity. The number of affected persons could further increase as the island enters lean season before harvest. UNHCR is closely coordinating its response with the United Nation Country Team, focusing on assistance to the persons of concern through its partner Conseil de Developpement D'Andhatapenaka (CDA). In Somalia, conflict, COVID-19 measures and a series of extreme weather events are pushing pastoralists to increasingly

abandon their lifestyle. The frequency of climate change related extreme weather events shows a threefold increase since 1970.

#### Spotlight: Floods have nearly doubled in West and Central Africa between 2015 and 2020

Similar to last year, heavy rains and flooding has affected [Douala](#), the economic capital of Cameroon. Floods in [Niger](#) have affected over 150.000 people and killed 66 persons. More than 88.000 people have been affected by [flooding in Sudan](#) since the onset of the rainy season in July.

In [South Sudan](#), an estimated 380.000 people were impacted by flooding. Paired with violence, food insecurity and COVID-19 this continues to increase people's humanitarian needs. Heavy rains and strong winds have damaged refugee camps in east Sudan. Watch this [video](#) of Assistant High Commissioner for Operations visiting the camps.

**Americas:** The combined impacts of a 7.2-magnitude earthquake, and tropical depression Grace, have affected [850.000 Haitians](#), 650.000 of whom are in need of humanitarian assistance. Distribution of assistance to the hardest-to-reach rural areas remains a critical concern. Southern USA was hit by deadly [Hurricane Ida](#), causing power outages and severe flash floods.

**Europe:** The Mediterranean faced protracted heatwaves and an unprecedented outbreak of wildfires in August. Thousands were forced to flee fires in [Greece and Turkey](#), 20.000 hectares of forests burned down in [Sardinia](#). Temperatures in Greece exceeded 40°C for 11 days straight, and the situation was described as "apocalyptic". Average [annual temperatures](#) are predicted to rise by up to 2°C over the next 30 years across the Mediterranean.

**Middle East:** Next to the critical political situation, Afghanistan experiences an ongoing drought affecting a third of the country. This greatly worsens the situation for more than 12 million people facing acute food insecurity and 9 million people in need of water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance. The 2021 harvest is predicted to be below average, while the next lean season is expected to be earlier and more intense than usual.

More than 53.000 Yemeni households are predicted to be affected by disasters in a most likely scenario and 93.100 families in the worst-case scenario. The Protection Cluster is prepared to provide protection services such as cash assistance, psychosocial and legal support.

**Asia and the Pacific:** During the [Regional Dialogue](#) of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) on 1-3 September, eight Pacific Islands Nations adopted 16 recommendations to address the regions' most urgent climate change policy priorities. Among them is the support of establishing a dedicated Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change.

The [Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021](#) highlights that Asia and the Pacific has accounted for 57% of global fatalities from disasters and 87% of the global population affected by natural hazards since 1970. Most countries are still ill-prepared for multiple overlapping crises as the average annual damage across the region is significantly higher than the global average.

#### FACTS & FIGURES

Around 25% of the global population lives in countries with extremely high [water stress](#). 10% of the increase in global internal migration is related to water deficits, according to the World Bank's report "[Water, Migration, and Development](#)".

Around [1 billion children](#) live at extremely high risk of the impacts of the climate crisis, states UNICEF's "[The climate crisis is a child rights crisis](#)" report.

#### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

➔ On the 60-year anniversary of the 1961 Statelessness Convention, the High Commissioner underlined that stateless people are at risk of being excluded from evacuation plans and governmental efforts to reduce the risks posed by extreme weather events.

- ➔ The report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to development on [Climate action at the national level](#) highlights the need for enhanced participation of marginalized populations, including displaced people, in decision making for climate action.
- ➔ This Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) [report](#) outlines an analytical framework with drivers, triggers and effects of internal displacement in the context of climate change.
- ➔ The new weekly UN Climate Action Podcast [No Denying It](#) focusses on young climate change makers. It airs every Thursday from 26 August to 28 October 2021.
- ➔ This report on the [UN Security Council and Climate Change](#) shows how climate change and its link to security issues have gained traction in Security Council discussions and in the wider UN architecture since the mid-2000s.
- ➔ This [UNDP film](#) illustrates the impacts of climate change on displaced communities in Papua New Guinea.
- ➔ UNHCR's Special Advisor on Climate Action underlined the need for enhanced coordination around data at his statement for the [UN High-Level Event on Anticipatory Action](#).

### Upcoming Climate events

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|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>3-11 September</b>           | <a href="#">IUCN World Conservation Congress</a> with sessions on environment, climate, conflict, peace and migration.   |
| <b>13 September</b>             | A joint UNHCR, African Union (AU) and UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) <a href="#">pre-event on Climate Change and Development</a> at the 9th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa hosted by the Government of Cabo Verde (13 – 17 September 2021). The event will feature Cosmas Chanda, UNHCR's Representative to AU & ECA Madeline Garlick, UNHCR Head of the Protection Policy and Legal Advice (PPLA) section in DIP and Grainne O'Hara, UNHCR Director of the Division of International Protection. Registration <a href="#">here</a> . |
| <b>14 September</b>             | Africa Confidential, the International Crisis Group and the Royal African Society jointly host a conference on <a href="#">Climate, Conflict &amp; Demography in Africa</a> . Registration <a href="#">here</a> .  |
| <b>15 September</b>             | HRC48 Side Event on "Addressing the Adverse Impact of Climate Change on the Full and Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights". Registration <a href="#">here</a> .   |
| <b>20-26 September</b>          | <a href="#">Climate Week in New York</a> . Registration <a href="#">here</a> .   |
| <b>27 September</b>             | <a href="#">Berlin Climate Security Conference 2021</a> featuring an event on " <a href="#">Human Mobility, Climate Change and Conflict</a> " with UNHCR's Special Advisor on Climate Action.  |
| <b>27-29 September</b>          | <a href="#">Africa Climate Week 2021</a> .   |
| <b>30 September – 2 October</b> | <a href="#">Pre-Cop</a> in Milan.  |

### CONTACT US

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