

# USAID'S BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE 2024 CLIMATE FACT SHEET



USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) has been investing in climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and early warning systems for decades as part of our mission to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the impact of disasters. Our programs help people in need become more resilient to humanitarian crises, including those caused or exacerbated by climate variability or change. We are striving to influence global standards by ensuring that our programs and operations are equitable, climate-positive, and environmentally sustainable; by deepening our own expertise on climate and environment; and by partnering with diverse actors to support innovative and effective climate solutions. We are also working to advance the international humanitarian system to be more fit for purpose in light of the climate crisis through our climate diplomacy policy work, advocacy for climate commitments, and support to partners to meet these commitments.

Our climate goals cannot be achieved without global partnerships. As we strive for innovation and increased climate expertise, we also acknowledge that we must more meaningfully engage with the private sector and international financial institutions to bring additional resources to development and humanitarian funding to advance our plan. BHA is working to increase access to international climate finance and funding through system-wide policy changes, particularly for areas facing a high level of humanitarian challenges compounded by fragility and conflict. Equitable and inclusive partnerships, especially with local actors, can provide unique opportunities for achieving our collective goals. BHA's overall climate approach is aligned with our [Early Recovery, Risk Reduction, and Resilience \(ER4\) Strategic Framework](#), [USAID's Climate Strategy 2022–2030](#), and the U.S. Government's [Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience \(PREPARE\)](#)<sup>1</sup>, focusing on four key areas for action.

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Global humanitarian needs continue to grow, and communities at the frontlines of climate change are facing unprecedented and increasing levels of vulnerability to disasters. Responding to these increased needs will require a whole-of-society approach. BHA is committed to working with a broad range of partners to leverage the wealth of knowledge and experience held by both public and private sector organizations, including those at the community level, to address increasingly complex situations. Together, we will invest resources and prioritize engagements with regional, country, and community actors to develop creative and innovative ways to reduce vulnerability to climate-related disasters. For example, BHA is collaborating with more than twenty organizations, including in the private sector, to improve humanitarian supply chains from procurement to delivery of lifesaving commodities.

<sup>1</sup> PREPARE is a whole-of-U.S. Government effort launched in 2021 to help more than 500 million people in developing countries adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change by 2030.



Mowlid, an agropastoralist, looks at a sorghum seed head on his farm in Gubata, Dolow, Somalia. BHA is working with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to improve food access for extremely food-insecure families and help them to transition from humanitarian dependence towards climate resilience. *Photo courtesy of Arete/FAO*

## 1 | ACCELERATING CLIMATE-RESILIENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As we deliver life saving humanitarian assistance, we are transforming our operations and programming to be equitable and environmentally sustainable. We actively work to reduce carbon emissions while supporting community-led projects to increase resilience for those feeling the effects of climate change most directly.

*Examples:*

- We are supporting and participating in green supply chain efforts across the international humanitarian community, collaborating with organizations such as the Global Logistics Cluster, Fleet Forum, and the QSE Procurement Group.
- In our own supply chains, we are introducing sustainable products and reducing packaging, working with local suppliers where possible, reducing waste, and pre-positioning items where possible to provide greener transportation options.
- BHA is funding a Joint Initiative for Greener Humanitarian Assistance, which supports donor alignment and coordination on climate and environment standards. With our international partners, we are working closely with humanitarian organizations to minimize the impact of packaging materials on people and the environment.
- We are supporting the broader integration of climate and environmental considerations through innovative digital tools, such as the Nexus Environmental Assessment Tool, which allows for rapid project-level environmental screening for humanitarian operations.

## 2 | STRENGTHENING COHERENCE ACROSS THE CLIMATE AND HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

Everyone working within the humanitarian, development, and peace communities has different roles to play to combat and reduce the impacts of climate change. BHA is actively increasing collaboration with our development counterparts, including colleagues within USAID, United Nations (UN) agencies, and multilateral development banks, to ensure coherence across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. Our goal is to ensure that our humanitarian programs seek to complement development and peacebuilding activities to address climate change and climate-related migration and displacement, and to actively promote and incorporate solutions designed by local leaders, organizations, and constituents.

*Examples:*

- We have initiated and supported country-level and regional-level workshops across the humanitarian, development, peace, and climate communities to discuss approaches, enhance learning, and align programmatic priorities and funding approaches to collectively address climate adaptation and risk reduction.

- We support our implementing partners to strengthen evidence, research, and analysis of climate-related programming and foster programmatic capacity strengthening, knowledge sharing, and learning across partners.
- We encourage and support the design and implementation of our multi-year programs to utilize sequencing, layering, and integration, both across BHA programs and other USAID activities as well as with programs funded by governments and donors across the HDP nexus to maximize the impact and sustainability of climate adaptation and risk reduction interventions and create potential for longer-term resilience.

### 3 | SUPPORTING LOCAL PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES AT THE FRONTLINES OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We know that communities facing the most severe climate risks are mobilizing and adapting to climate change. Their needs and voices, as well as those of local organizations, must be at the forefront of design and implementation. As we seek to expand partnership approaches with diverse actors, including local organizations and members of affected communities, we are increasingly integrating climate adaptation into community-based disaster risk reduction and resilience programs through investments in nature-based solutions, climate-smart agriculture, and livelihoods. We support inclusion and local leadership while working to ensure that all people have equitable access to the benefits of climate programs and financing.

*Examples:*

- We are supporting local disaster risk reduction efforts to map and reduce community disaster risk and to integrate climate adaptation into strategies and preparedness plans. We are strengthening the capacity of first responders and training youth and communities in disaster management in the face of climate-related crises.
- BHA maintains a Climate Smart and Disaster Ready funding mechanism to invest in locally led, innovative adaptation solutions in communities at greatest risk of climate-related disasters.
- [USAID's Policy on Locally Led Humanitarian Assistance](#) provides a shared vision for expanding local humanitarian partnerships, including in those geographic areas most at risk of climate variability and change.



As climate change increases the risk of fire in many areas around the world, community members in Vietnam's Son La province practice fire prevention by employing water bucket brigade tactics, facilitated by the Vietnam Red Cross Society. *Photo courtesy of Vietnam Red Cross Society*

### EQUIPPING YOUTH LEADERS

More than half the world's population is under the age of 30, and stands to benefit the most from disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation activities that can reduce the risk and impact of disasters. Through BHA's Office of Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, we are working with our partners to equip youth leaders in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction knowledge to bolster communities' climate resilience and adaptive capacity. Supporting young leaders with skills-strengthening and critical resources will support locally led disaster risk reduction and resilience.



BHA partner GOAL Honduras has helped the community of Villanueva develop new early warning systems, including sirens and rainfall monitors. These systems help make communities more resilient to climate-related disasters such as flooding and landslides — saving lives before disaster strikes. *Photo Dakota Gardner/USAID.*

## 4 | EXPANDING AND IMPROVING CLIMATE EARLY WARNING AND EARLY ACTION

Building on decades of support for early warning systems, BHA remains committed to reducing natural disaster and climate risks, particularly for the most at-risk populations in the hardest-to-reach areas. Our funding supports impact-based early warning systems and anticipatory action, encouraging the use of authorized weather forecasts/warnings, supporting proactive and coordinated disaster risk management, and exploring new disaster risk financing mechanisms.

*Examples:*

- In support of the UN Secretary-General’s Early Warning for All initiative, BHA invests in a [flash flood guidance system](#) that enables national authorities to monitor and provide climate-related flash flood early warning to more than 3 billion people in 74 countries. With our support, the UN program is working to expand the system to cover an additional 20 countries in Africa and Small Island Developing States.
- We partner with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and other organizations to establish and advance early warning systems for floods, droughts, cyclones, and heatwaves. Our partnerships also aim to increase disaster risk knowledge; to empower decision-makers and communities to respond to climate-related risks; and to detect, observe, monitor, analyze, and forecast hazards in select countries.

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Across all of these action areas, BHA takes a broad, cross-cutting approach to ensure that inclusion, equity, and justice are at the forefront of our actions and that we continue to promote the Do No Harm principles that are core to our mandate. Our priority is to promote and support more locally led, equitable climate actions for communities at risk to climate-related disasters in humanitarian contexts.



Scan the QR code to learn more about our climate commitments



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Cover photo courtesy of Action Against Hunger