

CONTENT

WHY ANTICIPATORY ACTION?

Why anticipatory action?

Extreme weather and climate events are becoming more frequent, intense and complex – driven by climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, and compounded by armed conflict, food insecurity, displacement and epidemics. Yet a large share of these crises is foreseeable, and forecasts and early warning systems continue to improve, providing increasingly reliable information about where, when and with what magnitude a hazard will strike.

This combination of rising needs and growing predictability is the core rationale for anticipatory action. Anticipatory action links forecasts and early warning information to concrete actions and financing mechanisms, so that protective measures can be taken before a disaster fully unfolds. While anticipatory action originates from addressing extreme weather events, such as storms, floods or droughts, the approach is increasingly being extended to other contexts: non-weather hazards such as disease outbreaks or locust plagues, the humanitarian impacts of population movement, or wildfires.

A growing body of evidence shows that acting early in this way is more dignified and can be more cost-effective than tradition, reactive humanitarian response alone, and that it can reduce losses and suffering before they occur rather than only alleviating them afterwards. The value of an early warning system, moreover, often depends less on the accuracy of the forecast than on the capacity to act on it – and anticipatory action can help to close that gap.

Importantly, anticipatory action is not a substitute for longer-term investment in risk reduction. It strengthens the capacity to manage risks effectively and helps reduce the residual risk that is not addressed through broader disaster risk reduction and longer-term preparedness efforts.