

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE**

**PRINCIPALS BI-ANNUAL MEETING**

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT: “CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS”**

Prepared by IFRC

Geneva, 20 October 2021

**I. The Charter**

**The humanitarian community has an important role to play in addressing the impacts of the climate crisis.** As a sector, we must be a part of the solution: supporting vulnerable communities to prepare for, adapt and respond to the growing impacts of extreme weather events. We also need to walk our own talk, ensuring that we are taking all necessary steps to minimize our own negative impacts on the climate and environment, through our operations.

While many of our agencies (and some network initiatives) have developed useful approaches, both to climate-smart programming and to greening operations, none of us is yet doing everything we could, and we have lacked a fully joint commitment across our whole sector. Responding to this gap, **the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations was launched for signature at the end of May 2021.** IFRC and the ICRC led the development of the Charter with advice from an expert panel and through extensive consultations with over 150 humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies, local and international NGOs, and National Societies. We would like to express particular appreciation to ICVA for its support in helping us to reach and hear from many of its members.

The Charter is aimed at all humanitarian organisations, big and small. **It is a statement of moral commitment but is not legally binding.** While it is phrased in general terms, signatory organizations are also encouraged to develop their own specific targets (if they do not already have them) within one year of signature. Since its launch in May, over 80 organisations have signed. We hope that all IASC organisations will consider doing the same so that our collective approach can also be a strong part of our joint message of commitment in the run-up to the UNFCCC COP 26.

- **Recommended action:** All IASC members are encouraged to endorse the Charter and (where they don't yet have them) develop their own specific targets.

**II. A coordinated joined humanitarian voice in the race against climate change**

In addition to galvanizing our own efforts, the commitment we show through the Charter can be one tool for our joint advocacy on climate change. As humanitarians, we have several particular areas of unique value in the dialogue and decision-making. We can share our **front-row view of the current human impacts** of climate-driven extreme events around the world, the populations who are most at risk, and the already over-extended state of humanitarian finance. We can be also a **persuasive voice for the necessary investments in adaptation and in local capacity and action**, as well the steps that can be taken to reduce human suffering from extreme events, including through resilience building, early warning and action, and effective response.

The recent IPCC report shows that human actions still have the potential to determine the future course of climate. This window of opportunity is still open, but barely. We must have our voices joined in a coherent and convincing way to effectively influence climate policy-making. The climate advocacy sub-group of Results Group 3 has already developed some common messaging on climate change and

plans to continue to refine this and support coordination and information sharing. Both at the leadership and the technical level, our agencies can increase our impact through consistent and clear messages and good coordination of our various advocacy efforts.

- **Recommended action:** With support from Results Group 3, IASC members are encouraged to contribute to, and use joint messaging and coordinate advocacy efforts in the run-up to COP 26 and beyond in a consistent way.