

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

IASC DEPUTIES GROUP AD HOC MEETING

Background Note: IASC Reflections on UNFCCC COP27 & Plans for COP28

Prepared by IASC Climate Sub-Group

Virtual, 26 January 2023

Purpose

This note provides an overview of the engagement of IASC members at UNFCCC COP27, including outcomes and lessons learned, and shares suggestions for effective collective participation in and advocacy on climate action leading up to COP28 in December 2023.

Key Outcomes of UNFCCC COP27

COP27 resulted in significant strides in areas such as Loss and Damage but fell short of expectations in other critical areas including mitigation, adaptation, and targets for climate financing.

A number of decisions/results, which are part of the COP27 [Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), are of particular significance to IASC members, including:

1. Creation of an agenda item on loss and damage finance, the decision to create a Loss and Damage Fund to address the adverse effects of climate change, and establish a Transitional Committee which will advise on the modalities of the new fund.
2. Finalized institutional arrangements of the Santiago Network, which will provide technical support for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage, and the call for proposals to host the secretariat for the network.
3. The decision to develop a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation, which could include themes relevant to humanitarian action, including peace and human mobility, as well as an explicit reference to community-based adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
4. The emphasis on the need for improved actionable early warning systems and climate information services linked to the World Leaders Summit at COP27 on the Early Warning for All Initiative, led by the UN Secretary-General.
5. A clear call to multilateral financial institutions, including development banks, to become fit for purpose and take on more risk in addressing the climate crisis
6. The recognition of the role of Nature-Based Solutions or ecosystem-based approaches for their mitigation and adaptation/resilience action while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards.

Reflections on IASC Engagement in COP27

1. IASC member participation at COP27 increased both in number and in seniority as compared to previous COP events, as demonstrated by the participation of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and several IASC Principals.¹ IASC Principals and members participated in a significant number of high-level events and [official side events](#) giving visibility to humanitarian needs and the role of humanitarian actors in climate change.
2. Using WhatsApp and other platforms, IASC members coordinated engagement during negotiations around key topics, including prioritization of the most vulnerable, the need to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, locally-led action and disaster displacement. The [IASC key messages](#) helped to inform engagement with Parties and other stakeholders and were reinforced in different [statements](#) and [media materials](#) by IASC members.
3. IASC members also publicly shared information about the status of negotiations, key events, and responded to challenging areas in the negotiations by issuing [press releases](#) and [social media postings](#) during the second week when it looked like there could be backsliding on mitigation commitments, which would have disastrous humanitarian implications.

Several lessons can be learned from this experience:

1. Feedback from interlocutors at COP27 indicated that humanitarian organizations focused on raising the profile of their humanitarian work, and prioritized organization-specific initiatives and fundraising. Whilst these are legitimate goals, the critique was that the humanitarian community failed to offer a strong message with a clear and united voice.
2. At the same time, it became apparent during the development of the IASC key messages on climate that there are limits to achieving a collective humanitarian voice. Not all organizations are aligned on issues, such as whether humanitarians should advocate for access to climate financing or seek to influence negotiations.
3. The humanitarian community can offer significant insight and lessons for climate action on programming with cash or rapid and anticipatory finance, for example. However, this requires concerted action from the IASC to inform the climate community as there is a lack of awareness of humanitarian funds and actions in the climate community.
4. The humanitarian community must bring the voices of affected people and local organizations to COP discussions, as IASC members have a level of access to these processes that affected communities and local actors do not have.
5. In order to have impact, there is a need to engage in the climate agenda and COP processes from the very start of each year. Joint propositions or key messages need to be identified early. IASC members are then in a strong position to engage with parties, make submissions to UNFCCC or other fora, and develop relationships with key actors necessary to ensure desired outcomes.
6. IASC members should seek to expand partnerships and targets for advocacy, strengthening relationships with the Presidency of COP, the High-Level Climate Champions, the UNFCCC, Core Climate Group members, Climate Advisers Group, RC/HCs and other relevant CSO alliances. This will enable the IASC to influence the agenda and substance of discussions and outcomes through increased humanitarian

¹ The Emergency Relief Coordinator, Secretary General of IFRC, Executive Director of WFP, Director-General of FAO, Director-General of IOM, Director-General of ICRC, representatives of IASC NGO consortia and several other senior representatives from IASC members attended for key sessions. In addition, 12 Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators attended COP27.

presence, sustained relationship building, provision of data and analysis, and experience and knowledge at negotiations and UNFCCC processes.

7. In order to maximize collective activities and impact, it is important for IASC members to resource their climate-related activities. Agency focal points often are asked to multi-task in preparing UNFCCC statements, advocacy plans and events for their own organizations and resources are not provided for collective statements.

Proposals for Effective IASC Engagement in COP28

COP28 (30 November - 12 December 2023) presents significant opportunities for the IASC. The COP28 Presidency, the United Arab Emirates, have indicated a desire to focus on communities in fragile areas and humanitarian relief, climate and security, ensuring climate financing reaches fragile contexts and enhancing Early Warning and Early Action. These are clear areas of interest and opportunities for the IASC to engage. Against this backdrop, the below activities are proposed:

1. Develop an Action Plan with clear objectives and timeline to engage in and feed into the broader climate agenda and relevant UNFCCC workstreams leading to COP28. Planning should include engagement not only at COP but also with UNFCCC constituent bodies, such as the Warsaw International Mechanism Executive Committee meetings, and with ongoing consultative processes such as the Global Stocktake, the Global Goal on Adaptation and other relevant processes outside the UNFCCC. Complementing the Action Plan, map who is doing what in the IASC to orchestrate effective coordinated advocacy, information gathering and joint messaging, along a shared narrative of climate actions across and within key sectors or systems.
2. Gather data on humanitarian response and spending to climate hazards to help build the case that humanitarian agencies are playing a role in climate action and identify and share success stories.
3. Leverage individual IASC members' expertise, mandate and recognized voice in the climate change negotiations to ensure humanitarian messages agreed in the IASC feed into and impact COP processes. Individual members should be encouraged to prepare submissions to UNFCCC incorporating key messages agreed by the IASC. Joint submission could also be explored.
4. Explore the possibility of creating a common humanitarian event agenda or meeting space at COP 28, and seek to secure high-level events relevant to humanitarian action. This can help foster collaboration, and reduce fragmentation of messages.

Framing Questions

1. What could we do differently or better to influence the climate agenda and negotiations?
2. How can we better showcase our collective relevance, added value and impact making the case for climate action in humanitarian contexts?
3. What is our common analysis of the problem when it comes to climate finance? Will we engage collectively on climate finance issues and if so, how?
4. Which of these proposed activities should we prioritize? Which activities would have the greatest impact in terms of responding to the humanitarian crises?
5. Are IASC members willing to dedicate additional resources to undertake the proposed activities effectively?