

# Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance commitments and recommendations

## Summary

- **Climate change is increasing the severity and unpredictability of flooding, destroying lives and livelihoods.**
- **The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA) commits to actions to build flood resilience and urges governments at the UN Climate Action Summit to commit to greater investment in flood resilience, including through climate-smart, risk-informed development. This must include ambitious adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) funding pledges and policy reforms.**

## Key facts and figures

**734** million people flooded

Floods affect more people globally than any other type of natural hazard, with over 734 million people affected by floods in the last 10 years alone (IFRC, 2018). With climate change, flood impacts on countries and communities are projected to increase.

**\$3 bn** only of DRM investment

Investments in resilience to flooding and other disasters are urgently needed to support vulnerable communities. Yet current funding levels are well below needs: Only about US\$15 bn has been made available to developing countries for adaptation, of which only about \$3 bn was for disaster risk management (DRM) (CPI, 2018). This is out of an estimated annual need for developing countries of \$140 bn to \$300 bn per year by 2030 (UNEP, 2018).

**Locally** led investment is needed

Climate finance investments should be locally led and must strengthen local institutions and governance, where people have the best knowledge of the risks they face and the solutions to them. At present, the climate finance system lacks the transparency, finance delivery systems, and incentives to enable this.



*Raising the ground level with sand to protect homes from coastal El Niño flood – Piura, northern Peru. Rodrigo Rodrich for Practical Action*

## ZFRA commitments

1. The ZFRA commits to scaling up our work in climate action, including advocating for **the generation of an additional \$1 billion from public and private sources** in climate-smart, risk-informed development, which builds resilience.
2. With our programming and advocacy efforts we commit to **helping make 2 million people more resilient to flooding**. We will elevate community voices and research findings with international donors and all levels of government to show why increased investment in flood resilience is urgently needed.
3. We also commit to engaging with other initiatives, including **the Early Action Partnership of the Resilience Adaptation workstream**.

## Recommendations for government action

The UN Climate Action Summit is an important opportunity for governments to demonstrate their commitment to meet the challenge of the climate emergency. We applaud the UN Secretary General's call for ambitious commitments to confront the growing crisis; urgent action is desperately needed.

**Increase funding.** At the Summit, developed countries must provide a **clear blueprint towards achieving the \$100 billion in climate finance they committed for developing countries** and that at least 50% of these funds go to adaptation, a critical issue for the most vulnerable. This will be a clear benchmark of the Summit's success.

**Funding where it matters.** The commitments by bilateral and multilateral donors, including the Green Climate Fund, and by national governments should **include detailed plans for increasing funding for local levels and how funds will reach the most vulnerable populations**.

**Implement risk reduction policies.** Governments should commit to **aligning existing laws and policies and institutional structures across sectors, systems, and geographic levels and integrate new risk reduction measures into their development plans.** Integrating flood risk reduction policies with development practices provides multiple dividends and can also advance community development goals. Likewise, integrating DRM and climate change adaptation policies and institutional structures can reduce duplication of efforts. By aligning laws and policies, countries and communities can build flood resilience in a more integrated way.

**Partner with communities to understand and build resilience.** Through our Alliance's efforts in building flood resilience around the world, we have gathered empirical evidence on the drivers of resilience in 118 flood-prone communities in nine countries using the innovative Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities tool. In partnership with communities, we have built an unprecedented database of community-level information and experience with flooding. The evidence shows that communities can build their resilience by strengthening different types of capital: human, social, physical, financial, and natural capital. Working together to better understand the determinants of resilience can empower vulnerable communities, governments, and donors to take action towards building their resilience to flood and other hazards.

As part of their commitments to the Summit, we therefore **urge national governments to focus on *ex ante* responses work with local communities to better understand their barriers to building flood resilience,** looking beyond physical and financial capital. A focus on natural capital and the preventive part of the integrated DRM cycle, which are often overlooked, can ensure communities and societies become more resilient to flooding and other climate-related hazards.

### **Build in accountability mechanisms to commitments.**

The UN, multilaterals, and governments must agree to accountability mechanisms for previous and new commitments made in New York. For example, linking commitments to National Assessed Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, and other relevant government strategies is a critical step to ensure commitments are honoured.

### **To create tangible results for vulnerable people, the Summit must include:**

- A recognition that investments in climate change adaptation and risk reduction need to provide tangible results for the most vulnerable at local levels.
- Hard financial commitments of at least \$50 bn per year for climate change adaptation and additional funds for DRR. Funding must also be directed to local levels, where needs are greatest.
- Clear timelines and accountability mechanisms for previous and new commitments, including routes for translating commitments to policy reforms into changes in laws and implementation of policy.
- Commitments by governments and donors to work with communities to look at gaps in community resilience, including natural capital and DRM cycles, and to plan in partnership with communities to address these gaps.
- The generation of innovative solutions that move beyond grey infrastructure investments to green infrastructure.

### **References**

Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) (2018) *Global Climate Finance: An Updated View 2018*, [pdf] <https://climatepolicyinitiative.org/publication/global-climate-finance-an-updated-view-2018/> [accessed 20 July 2019].

IFRC (2018) *World Disasters Report, 2018* [pdf], <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/10/B-WDR-2018-EN-LR.pdf> [accessed 20 July 2019]

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (2018) *The Adaptation Gap Report 2018*, Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP

**The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance** is a multi-sectoral partnership which brings together community programmes, new research, shared knowledge, and evidence-based influencing to build community flood resilience in developed and developing countries.

We help people measure their resilience to floods and identify appropriate solutions before disaster strikes.

Our vision is that floods should have no negative impact on people's ability to thrive. To achieve this we are working to increase funding for flood resilience; strengthen global, national and subnational policies; and improve flood resilience practice.

**Find out more: [www.floodresilience.net](http://www.floodresilience.net)**

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance is made up of the following organisations:

