

Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace

The Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace were developed in July and August 2024 by a global community of experts, practitioners, civil society and policy-makers, starting first in conversation with actors at the local level.

One year on, they represent a collective reaffirmation of the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace and emphasize the commitment to support finance and programming that is fit for purpose and tailored to local needs.

These common principles provide a practical vision for maximizing the effectiveness of climate action, ensuring that climate action and finance is peace-positive and conflict-sensitive and can offer avenues for resilient and sustainable development, conflict prevention and inclusive peacebuilding. While the principles are particularly useful to navigate the specific challenges of working in situations of fragility, conflict and severe humanitarian need, they can apply more broadly to other settings and their pursuit can enhance the efficacy of global climate action.

These principles build on best practices that have long been recognised by governments, international, regional and local organizations, international and regional financial institutions, philanthropic and private sector entities, as well as organizations from the climate, environment, development, humanitarian and peace sectors, including many of those that endorsed the Declaration.

The principles call us to:

1. Understand people and place for enduring, impactful outcomes.

Build an in depth understanding of the specific context through participatory and inclusive processes, and apply this engagement and understanding in the design, implementation and evaluation of climate actions.

Principles in practice:

- Prioritize gender-sensitive conflict analysis, including analysis on stakeholders, environment and economic context, and especially in consultation with local stakeholders, and, when possible, make this analysis available to the communities.
- Implement participatory engagement approaches throughout the programme cycle, update understanding on a regular basis, and project forward to understand the long-term consequences of interventions.
- Scale up risk-informed and conflict sensitive approaches to climate action and accessible climate finance that emphasize action in fragile settings, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, including granular and integrated gender-responsive risk and vulnerability mapping.

2. Be agile to maintain and boost resilience.

Strive to ensure flexibility and adaptability based on continuous learning and evidence, anticipating and responding to changes over time.

Principles in practice:

- Assess continuously to respond to changing dynamics, ensuring that allocation, co-financing, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain sufficiently flexible in order to adapt, and enable operational partnerships for concrete complementarities and synergies.
- Invest in learning based on reflection and evidence, using learning to inform changes to design and implementation.

3. Prioritise local ownership and leadership by affected groups.

Climate action and finance should be accessible, fit for purpose, and tailored to local needs. All stages of action should prioritise local and traditional knowledge and experience. Finance and programming should support local agency, resilience and capacities.

Principles in practice:

- Promote the leadership and empowerment of affected groups (including women and girls, children and young people, indigenous peoples and local communities, people with disabilities, older persons, and refugees, other displaced persons and their hosting communities, among other populations) to actively participate in policy making, programming design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation supported by education and training, in order to enhance ownership, impact, and sustainability of climate action.
- Strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of national and subnational governments and local actors, including civil society and the private sector, to absorb, allocate, deliver transformative and impactful results, account for, report on and leverage climate finance effectively.
- Embed community engagement and accountability measures, especially in the design phase, including regular communication with local groups in relevant languages and channels to ensure that there is clear understanding of climate actions and how accountability mechanisms function, promoting learning and accountability for all.

4. Support collaboration and synergies.

Promote complementarity across governments, international and regional organizations, financial institutions and mechanisms, civil society, local communities, the private sector and other actors to tailor climate action to context and needs.

Principles in practice:

- Enhance the exchange of information between countries and regions, institutions, and sectors, and sharing of data and evidence, including early warning and analysis of climate related risks, strengthening accuracy, accountability, reliability, and open accessibility of data for public, private and community actors.
- Leverage the unique value of different actors across the system to access hard-to-reach populations, particularly among civil society, the private sector, international financial institutions and other climate funders in order to optimize complementarity of mandates and expertise.
- Engage in outreach, consultation and regular communication with other relevant stakeholders to shore up shared understanding, channels for sharing information, as well as to provide the needed skills and investments to implement peace-positive projects and programs sustainably.

Why a set of common principles for effective climate finance and action for relief, recovery, and peace?

On 3 December 2023, a first-of-its-kind day for peace, the COP28 presidency launched the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace. The Declaration calls for bolder collective action to build climate resilience at the scale and speed required for people, communities and countries in situations of fragility, conflict and/or severe humanitarian needs.

A set of common principles offer a concrete next step for people and places affected by fragility, conflict, and humanitarian needs by building coherence across a diverse landscape.

Common principles affirm a joint commitment to provide financing and programming that is fit for purpose and tailored to local needs. They support coordination and shared priorities, providing common understanding as they move from policy to action. They recognize that climate finance, policies or approaches that are not conflict sensitive and that do not engage or understand local community needs or conditions are less likely to be successful and more likely to be challenged.

Moreover, endorsement of common principles can stimulate and encourage internal change. Endorsement can create conditions within institutions that lead to action, discussion and progress for more coherent and convergent climate and conflict sensitive action. These principles can start conversations between unlikely actors. They also foster greater accountability from those who have committed to the people and places that need climate finance the most.

Finally, these principles intentionally lay the groundwork for future policy change. By sparking discussion on non-binding agreements, actors can better understand the needs and experiences of their peers, setting the stage for action.

People in the world's most vulnerable places cannot wait for the 'right' conditions to adapt to climate change. There is an urgent need to adapt and build resilience now. Climate action in these settings is possible and can offer avenues for conflict prevention, inclusive peacebuilding and sustainable, resilient development.

Background:

Those most affected by fragility, conflict and humanitarian needs are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and are among the least resourced to cope.

Almost half the world's population (3.3-3.6 billion people) live in 'hotspots' of high vulnerability to climate change.¹ Many of these areas are also impacted by protracted conflict and fragility. Three out of four people living in the world's most climate vulnerable countries experience some other form of vulnerability or crisis, including food insecurity, and low levels of international funding to adapt to climate change.²

Fragility and conflict increase people's exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards. At the same time, climate change adversely exacerbates humanitarian needs and constitutes a significant and growing challenge to peace and stability. Climate change, conflict, fragility and/or humanitarian crisis disproportionately affect the most marginalized groups in society.

Existing inequalities worsen the impact of climate change and disasters on women, girls, and people with disabilities, limiting their access to resources and increasing their vulnerability. Despite being critical to finding local solutions, they are often excluded from formal systems. Addressing gender and disability is essential for effective, sustainable climate action and conflict prevention.

Over the last 20 years, people in the most climate-vulnerable countries experiencing protracted crises received about \$1 per person in multilateral climate funds, while those not in crisis received nearly five times more (\$4.88 per person).³ Even within states, climate finance does not reach the most vulnerable populations. Less than 10% of climate finance in fragile settings leaves capital cities and rarely reaches the local level.⁴

The Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace Declaration

To date, the COP28 Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace Declaration has been endorsed by 93 countries and 10 financial institutions. The Declaration recognised that the people, communities and countries who are on the frontlines of the climate crisis and are among the least well resourced to cope with the associated shocks and stressors. Among the things it called for were to:

- Substantially scale up and improve access to financial resources, including strengthening technical capacities for tailored financial instruments;
- Integrate conflict sensitivity in all responses;
- Prioritise local ownership and leadership of affected groups;
- Enable greater adaptability of finance, and;
- Support greater synergy across the sectors and mandates.

Other Resources

- Principles for Locally-led Action (IIED and WRI)
<https://www.iied.org/10211iied>
- Peace Finance Principles (Finance for Peace)
<https://www.financeforpeace.org/impact-framework/peace-finance-principles/>
- Development Effectiveness Principles (European Commission)
https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/european-development-policy/development-effectiveness_en
- The Istanbul Principles on Development Effectiveness (Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation)
<https://www.effectivecooperation.org/content/istanbul-principles-development-effectiveness>
- Principles for Peace (Principles for Peace)
<https://principlesforpeace.org/the-principles/>

¹ UNFCCC. July 2022. Conflict and Climate Change.
<https://unfccc.int/news/conflict-and-climate#:~:text=There%20are%203.3%2D3.6%20billion.and%20Small%20Island%20Developing%20States>

² Uppsala Universitet. June 2024 [UCDP: record number of armed conflicts in the world - Uppsala University \(uu.se\)](https://www.uu.se/en/press/press-releases/2024/2024-06-03-ucdp-record-number-of-armed-conflicts-in-the-world)
<https://www.uu.se/en/press/press-releases/2024/2024-06-03-ucdp-record-number-of-armed-conflicts-in-the-world>

³ Development Initiatives. 2023. Beyond Humanitarian Funding: Addressing Cycles of Crisis. The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report.
<https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2023/beyond-humanitarian-funding-addressing-cycles-of-crisis/>

⁴ *Unlocking Climate Finance for Fragile States*, (MercyCorps), 2023