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**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and
disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including
special economic assistance**

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**Special economic, humanitarian and
disaster relief assistance**

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [46/182](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly resolution [76/124](#) and Council resolution [2021/17](#). The period covered by the report is from 1 January to 31 December 2021.

The report contains an outline of measures taken to strengthen humanitarian coordination and response, information on humanitarian trends, challenges and recommendations, including in response to escalating humanitarian suffering due to conflict, the climate crisis and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

* [A/77/50](#).



I. Introduction

Overview of key trends

1. Driven by conflict, climate change and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance rose to unprecedented levels in 2021, straining the humanitarian system and highlighting the need for effective coordination. Rising geopolitical and regional tensions fuelled instability, resurgent armed conflicts, fragile and uneven economic recovery and escalating national debt in many parts for the world; drove more people into extreme poverty; and sharpened existing inequalities, thereby increasing vulnerability to further shocks. As ever, those left farthest behind – especially women and children, older persons, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and minorities – were disproportionately impacted.

2. Against the backdrop of the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, millions of people suffered profoundly as a result of human rights abuses and widespread violations of international humanitarian law, amid failures to protect or refrain from attacking civilians, civilian infrastructure and objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. Reports of methods of war in violation of international law increased, including the use of sieges, starvation and sexual violence. Humanitarian access to people in need was often delayed and/or denied. Hate speech, misinformation and disinformation adversely affected political dialogues and contributed to violence. In certain situations, humanitarian personnel were killed, injured, kidnapped, detained or harassed. Rhetoric against aid work and aid workers contributed to threats and attacks against humanitarian personnel. Most of those harmed were national staff.

3. The climate crisis had a growing number of severe impacts, exacerbating inequalities and vulnerabilities, fuelling tensions, compounding disease outbreaks, escalating environmental degradation, threatening livelihoods and ultimately driving up humanitarian needs. The number and intensity of extreme weather events continued to increase. Recorded disaster events increased from 368 in 2020 to 429 in 2021, affecting 101.8 million people and costing \$246.5 billion in economic losses.¹ Millions of people, from the Horn of Africa and southern Africa to Central America and the Caribbean, experienced acute food insecurity in the face of slow-onset and sudden climate-related events. Over 30 million were displaced owing to weather-related events.²

4. The COVID-19 pandemic claimed at least 1.8 million lives across the countries covered by a humanitarian response plan. The socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic have been profound, especially for women and girls. In countries with a humanitarian response plan, an additional 20 million people were pushed into extreme poverty.³ Vaccine inequity remains a great moral failure.

5. Hunger and food insecurity were at unprecedented levels. Some 190 million people across 53 countries and territories were acutely food-insecure and in need of urgent assistance in 2021, an increase of 37 million compared with 2020.⁴ The

¹ Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, International Disaster Database. Available at public.emdat.be (accessed 20 March 2022).

² Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021* (Geneva, 2021).

³ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022* (Geneva, 2021).

⁴ Food Security Information Network and Global Network Against Food Crises, *Global Report on Food Crises 2022* (forthcoming).

impacts were disproportionately felt by women and girls, who accounted for 60 per cent of those who are chronically food-insecure globally.⁵

6. Displacement continued to rise. The number of forcibly displaced persons had reached over 84 million by mid-2021, setting a record high.⁶ At the start of 2021, more than 48 million people had been internally displaced by conflict and violence and 7 million by disasters, including extreme weather and climate-related events.⁷ The number of refugees and asylum seekers surpassed 26.7 million and 4.4 million, respectively, by mid-2021.⁸

7. The COVID-19 pandemic severely undermined gender equality and women's empowerment. Women – especially local women leaders and women's organizations – were on the front lines of the response, yet women and girls were disproportionately affected, with a “shadow pandemic” of violence against women and girls, loss of jobs, limited access to services, inadequate inclusion in decision-making, and a stark decline in girls' access to education compared with that of boys.⁹

8. Taken together, the compounding effects of conflict, climate and the COVID-19 pandemic constitute the worst crisis for children in 75 years.¹⁰ Millions of children have lost access to education for prolonged periods. Protection concerns worsened, including increased displacement, attacks on schools and civilian infrastructure, trafficking, exploitation, increased risk of child labour and forced and early marriage.

9. The humanitarian system continued to adapt and innovate to respond to the massive challenges of 2021, showing what can be done through coordinated, collective action by the international community and partners. Ensuring humanitarian action in accordance with the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence remained as important as ever.

10. Thanks to the generosity of donors, who contributed \$18.7 billion to humanitarian appeals, the humanitarian system delivered food, shelter, health care and other essential assistance to 107 million people in 2021. According to the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022*, released in December 2021, \$41 billion in priority programming will be needed to assist 183 million people across 63 countries and territories in 2022.¹¹

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies in 2021

A. Complex emergencies

11. The United Nations and its partners responded to complex emergencies in 2021, including those in which violations of international humanitarian law continued, humanitarian access was impeded and the protection of civilians remained a serious concern.

⁵ World Food Programme, “Innovating for women: gender equality and food security”, 19 March 2021. Available at <https://innovation.wfp.org/blog/innovating-women-gender-equality-and-food-security>.

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Mid-year trends 2021”. Available at www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/618ae4694/mid-year-trends-2021.html.

⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021*.

⁸ UNHCR, “Mid-year trends 2021”.

⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Preventing a Lost Decade: Urgent Action to Reverse the Devastating Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Young People* (New York, 2021).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022*.

12. Approximately 26 million people in Ethiopia needed humanitarian assistance and protection, including more than 9 million affected by armed conflict across northern Ethiopia. At least 5.2 million people in Tigray were in need owing to conflict and what amounted in effect to a blockade. Millions of others faced acute food insecurity. Conflict and insecurity continued to drive needs and undermine response capacities in several regions. Some 4.2 million people were displaced within the country.
13. In Yemen, approximately 20.7 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 12.1 million people in acute need and 4.3 million internally displaced, owing to armed conflict, economic collapse and deteriorating basic services.
14. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 27 million people were acutely food-insecure, and nearly 4.2 million people suffered from acute malnutrition, including 2.4 million children under 5 years of age. Some 5.6 million people were internally displaced.
15. In Afghanistan, some 18.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance, and 4.8 million people were internally displaced. Political upheaval, economic crisis and complex protection issues drove needs. Approximately 9 million people were at emergency levels of food insecurity – the highest number in any country.
16. In Burkina Faso, more than 3.5 million people, nearly one fifth of the population, needed humanitarian assistance. Insecurity affected over half of the country. Some 1.6 million people were internally displaced.
17. In Burundi, 2.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian context was driven largely by climate events. Improved harvests helped to reduce those in need of food assistance from 2 million to 1.4 million. More than 115,000 people were internally displaced.
18. In Cameroon, 4.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance, with more than 1 million people internally displaced.
19. In the Central African Republic, over half of the population, some 2.8 million people, needed humanitarian assistance. Protection risks increased, and 692,000 people were internally displaced.
20. Some 5.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance in Chad, which continued to be affected by insecurity and to face socioeconomic, health and climate-related challenges. Some 400,000 people were internally displaced.
21. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 10.6 million people needed assistance. Protracted needs aggravated by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to prevent any spread into the country impeded humanitarian assistance.
22. In Haiti, a deteriorating security situation due to gang violence hampered people's access to life-saving services. Approximately 4.4 million Haitians – over 40 per cent of the population – required assistance.
23. In Libya, 1.3 million people needed humanitarian and protection assistance. More than 670,000 internally displaced persons have returned to their areas of origin since the October 2020 ceasefire.
24. In Mali, 5.9 million people needed humanitarian assistance, the highest level in 10 years. Violence and climatic shocks were the main drivers of severe food insecurity. Some 350,000 people were internally displaced, an increase of 20 per cent compared with 2020.

25. In the overall Sahel region, the cross-border areas of the central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger) and the Lake Chad basin (Chad, Cameroon, the Niger and Nigeria) experienced unprecedented levels of insecurity. Humanitarian needs across the central Sahel rose to affect 10.8 million people, including 2.6 million internally displaced persons.
26. In Mozambique, 1.3 million people, including over 735,000 internally displaced persons, required assistance owing to the conflict in Cabo Delgado province.
27. In Myanmar, since the military takeover on 1 February 2021, the number of people in humanitarian need tripled to 3 million people. Over 670,000 people were internally displaced, including 320,000 owing to violence since 1 February. Some 20,000 people fled to neighbouring countries.
28. In the Niger, the number of people in need increased by 40 per cent, from 2.9 million in 2020 to 3.8 million in 2021, including some 264,000 internally displaced persons. The number of food-insecure people increased from 1.2 million to 2 million owing to insecurity, COVID-19, extreme weather and climate-related events, and socioeconomic challenges.
29. In Nigeria, over 5 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 3.2 million internally displaced persons.
30. In Pakistan, 10.5 million people needed assistance. Pakistan remained the third-largest host country for refugees, with over 1.4 million refugees registered.
31. In Somalia, 5.9 million people needed assistance, caused by drought, conflict, disease outbreaks and increasing poverty. Some 3 million people were internally displaced.
32. In South Sudan, a surge in violence, including violence directed at aid workers, caused further displacement and hindered humanitarian efforts to reach people in need. For three consecutive years, floods have affected the country, with 835,000 people affected in eight states during 2021. Overall, about 8.3 million people in South Sudan needed assistance, including 2 million internally displaced persons.
33. In the Sudan, 13.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 3 million internally displaced persons. The looting of United Nations warehouses in Darfur was a major concern, at a time of insecurity, increasing intercommunal violence and looming drought.
34. In the Syrian Arab Republic, 13.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance, including 6.6 million internally displaced persons. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with a severe economic crisis, intensified the level of people's needs, which was already high following a decade of hostilities.
35. In 2021, the humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine remained dire, with 3.4 million people in need of assistance. Older persons, persons with disabilities, female-headed households and children were among the most vulnerable. At the end of 2021, 850,000 persons were internally displaced.
36. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the cumulative impact of years of economic contraction, hyperinflation, political polarization and institutional challenges continued to drive needs, with 7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. With more than 5 million Venezuelans living abroad, this has become one of the largest refugee and migration crises in the world.
37. Across the occupied Palestinian territory, 2.1 million people remained vulnerable to humanitarian shocks. An outbreak of violence in May increased people's aid dependency and their reliance on negative coping strategies to address basic needs.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

38. In the Horn of Africa, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia were the hardest hit by drought and a desert locust upsurge. In Somalia, at least 3.2 million people were affected by drought, including 245,000 people who were displaced internally in search of water, food and pasture. Three consecutive poor rainy seasons in Kenya exhausted families' coping capacities and left more than 2.9 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Large-scale control measures and the advent of drought diminished the desert locust presence in the second half of the year.

39. The most acute drought in 40 years in the Grand Sud of Madagascar left over 1.6 million people – 37 per cent of the population of the region – facing severe food insecurity. Some 14,000 people experienced famine-like conditions.

40. Southern Africa was again impacted by multiple tropical weather systems, with Tropical Storm Chalane – which made landfall in late December 2020 but continued its passage across land in early January 2021 – affecting at least 96,000 people across the region and hitting Mozambique and Zimbabwe the hardest, while Tropical Cyclone Eloise made landfall in January 2021 in Mozambique and affected more than 467,000 people in Madagascar, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Eswatini and South Africa.

41. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano left at least 31 people dead and approximately 360,000 people temporarily displaced. Some 10,000 people remained homeless as at December.

42. In Central America, extreme weather and climate-related events, Hurricanes Eta and Iota, landslides, rising food insecurity, a challenging socioeconomic situation, including as a result of COVID-19, and growing migration and displacement affected the region. The number of people in need of assistance rose to 1.7 million in El Salvador, 3.6 million in Guatemala and 2.8 million in Honduras.

43. In Colombia, humanitarian needs increased owing to extreme weather and climate-related events, civil unrest and the integration of transcontinental migrants and refugees, particularly from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with approximately 6.7 million people requiring assistance.

44. On 14 August 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, followed by Tropical Cyclone Grace, leaving 800,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance.

45. Tropical Cyclone Ana affected 480,000 people in Fiji and caused widespread flooding and damage to infrastructure. Typhoon Surigae affected 7,300 people in Palau and flooded agricultural areas and homes.

III. Key themes in humanitarian response

A. Climate crisis

46. The climate crisis is a risk multiplier. Humanitarian actors are struggling to keep pace with the increasing number and impact of extreme weather and climate-related events, and the consequent rise in humanitarian needs, such as escalating food insecurity and displacement. Extreme weather and climate-related events interact with other drivers of humanitarian need to exacerbate vulnerabilities, especially in countries with existing humanitarian crises. Recurring disasters make it extremely difficult for communities to recover between shocks.

47. Globally, approximately 1 billion people are projected to be at risk from coastal-specific climate hazards by 2050.¹² Ninety per cent of refugees come from the countries that are the most vulnerable and the least ready to adapt to the climate crisis.¹³

48. Most emerging infectious diseases are zoonoses, driven by environmental degradation, the thinning of the barriers between species in different habitats and the introduction of diseases into new regions. Climate change impacts health, including mental health, through increasing heatwaves, the disruption of food systems, increases in zoonoses and food-, water- and vector-borne diseases and by eroding livelihoods.

49. Humanitarian actors continued to adapt programming and responses to the climate crisis. Many humanitarian organizations joined the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations, in which actions to guide humanitarians in the face of climate and environmental crises are outlined.¹⁴ Needed actions include: stepping up response, mitigation and adaptation efforts; reducing emissions; increasing research and analysis; collaborating beyond the humanitarian sector; reinforcing and supporting local leadership, preparedness, responses and resilience; and advocating for ambitious climate action, including for more and better climate financing accessible to vulnerable countries.

B. Coronavirus disease pandemic

50. In 2021, the United Nations issued a comprehensive response to COVID-19, bringing together a strengthened health response, a humanitarian response and a transformative and sustainable recovery framework for the socioeconomic response. The comprehensive response built on what was learned over the course of 2020. The World Health Organization issued the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan 2021, which was focused on: actions at the national, regional and global levels to overcome the ongoing challenges, including how to ensure the safe, equitable and effective delivery of diagnostics and vaccines as part of the overall strategy to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic; and mitigating new challenges, such as risks related to new variants.

51. COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX), the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is the largest source of vaccines in countries with humanitarian response plans. In 2021, COVAX delivered 40 per cent (261 million) of all doses delivered to 28 countries and territories with humanitarian response plans. Administering doses proved challenging in some locations owing to difficulty in accessing populations, insufficient financing, instability and armed conflict.

52. Achieving the goal of the World Health Organization of vaccinating 70 per cent of the world's people by mid-2022 is essential to prevent future COVID-19 surges and will require getting vaccines to the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.

¹² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability – of Working Group II Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Switzerland, 2021).

¹³ United Nations, "Climate change link to displacement of most vulnerable is clear: UNHCR", 22 April 2021. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090432>.

¹⁴ Available at www.climate-charter.org.

C. Armed conflict: protecting civilians and upholding norms

Respect for international humanitarian and human rights law

53. In 2021, lack of respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law by parties to armed conflicts remained a major concern. Throughout 2021, civilian populations – particularly women and children – continued to be hit hard by armed conflicts, suffering death, injury and forced displacement. By mid-2021, displacement had reached the highest levels ever recorded, as civilians fled armed conflicts, deprivation, violence and starvation. Civilian objects, such as schools, hospitals and water, sanitation and electrical infrastructure, continued to be attacked and damaged by fighting, disrupting access to essential services and fuelling displacement.

54. Promoting understanding of and respect for international humanitarian law by all parties to conflict is now more critical than ever to protect civilians. This can be supported by States incorporating international humanitarian law into domestic legislation, military manuals and the training of forces; and adopting policies and practices to mitigate civilian harm at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. States should use their influence to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians with all parties to conflict, including partner forces and allies, by making respect for international humanitarian law a condition for trading in arms, the training of forces and influencing partners' choice of tactics and weapons. Such efforts must also include promoting an understanding of and compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law among non-State armed groups. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be investigated and prosecuted.

Humanitarian access

55. Access constraints continued to impede humanitarian response. Restriction of movement, interference in humanitarian operations, active hostilities, insecurity, attacks and threats of attacks against humanitarian workers, and damaged or poor infrastructure were daily obstacles to the delivery of aid. In many contexts, bureaucratic and administrative impediments hampered humanitarian operations (for example, visa denials and protracted delays, custom clearance delays and denials or delays in official registration), especially for humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

56. Operating in insecure and access-constrained environments impacted the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver in a safe and timely manner and increased costs. Increased humanitarian needs were observed in areas in which access was severely constrained. The proliferation and fragmentation of non-State armed groups, and the prevalence of armed gangs in urban settings, presented additional obstacles to humanitarian access.

57. Disinformation and misinformation can have a negative impact on the perception of humanitarian actors. Social media have been used to spread rumours about humanitarian assistance, with a direct impact on the acceptance by communities of humanitarian workers and the assistance that they provide and the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

Protecting humanitarian personnel and assets

58. In 2021, at least 143 security incidents involving humanitarian personnel were recorded in 14 countries and territories experiencing armed conflict, resulting in 93 fatalities. Such incidents included shootings, aerial bombardments, kidnappings,

sexual assaults, landmine and improvised explosive device explosions, principally during ambushes, combat and crossfire, raids and individual attacks.¹⁵ National staff continued to bear the brunt of the violence and represented 98 per cent of the fatalities recorded in 2021. Actual figures are likely to be higher as security incidents are difficult to track.

59. The rise of gangs and criminal actors involved in trafficking and other illegal activities in some humanitarian contexts posed additional security risks for humanitarian actors and securing access and delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection of those in need.

Protecting medical care in conflict

60. Violence, attacks and threats against medical care persisted. In 2021, the World Health Organization Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care documented attacks on health care in 15 countries and territories experiencing armed conflict.¹⁶ Providing impartial medical care to populations living in areas affected by conflict led in some instances to the detention, prosecution and imprisonment of medical personnel because of their perceived affiliation with or support to parties to the conflict. Adherence to Security Council resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#) is critical.

Protecting civilian infrastructure and objects indispensable to survival

61. Damage to and destruction of civilian infrastructure were major concerns, including damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, health-care facilities and food production infrastructure. Farms, crops, grazing pastures, fisheries, irrigation systems, mills and food processing and storage sites were targeted with alarming regularity. In its resolution [2573 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council underlined the urgency of adhering to international humanitarian law, fighting against impunity and ensuring accountability for serious violations of international law in this connection.

Impact of urban warfare

62. Conflicts in urban areas affected more than 50 million people. The use of explosive weapons in urban areas, particularly those with wide-area effects, carried a high risk of indiscriminate harm. Civilians, including children, were far more at risk when explosive weapons were used in populated areas and suffered devastating harm, both in the immediate aftermath and over the long term. Many victims endure long-term or permanent injuries, resulting in disability and grave psychological distress.

63. The destruction of essential infrastructure, including homes, hospitals and health care, roads, basic services and schools, has had serious impacts on civilian populations, increasing displacement and protection risks. Civilians accounted for 88 per cent of people harmed by explosive weapons globally, a trend observed for the tenth consecutive year. In 2020, civilians accounted for 11,056 recorded deaths and injuries caused by explosive weapons, or 59 per cent.¹⁷

Adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures

64. Counter-terrorism measures have sometimes limited the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach people in need. Humanitarian staff have been arrested, detained and threatened following accusations of support to individuals or groups that a

¹⁵ Aid Worker Security Database. Available at <https://aidworkersecurity.org>.

¹⁶ World Health Organization Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care. Available at <https://extranet.who.int/ssa/Index.aspx>.

¹⁷ Action on Armed Violence, "Explosive violence monitor 2020". Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Explosive-Violence-Monitor-2020-V3-single-pages.pdf>.

Member State may label or consider as terrorist, on the sole basis of their involvement in humanitarian activities. In some situations, NGO operations were suspended on such grounds; donors have discouraged engagement with some groups or suspended programmes because of legal uncertainties; or programmes were disrupted owing to bank de-risking. Ill-defined or overly broad legislative and administrative acts related to countering the financing of terrorism and limited guidance for humanitarian operational actors, particularly national and local NGOs, can have a chilling effect as uncertainty and/or exposure to legal liability influenced decision-making, rather than humanitarian needs. As a result, humanitarian access and the efficiency of humanitarian action in some instances have been undermined, and people who should have received assistance have not.

65. Good practices exist in providing safeguards in counter-terrorism and sanctions measures for humanitarian activities. In resolution [2462 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council demanded that all Member States criminalize the wilful provision or collection of financial and material support for the benefit of terrorist organizations and individuals; and urged Member States, when designing and applying measures to counter the financing of terrorism, to take into account the potential effect of those measures on exclusively humanitarian activities, including medical activities, that are carried out by impartial humanitarian actors in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law. In 2021, the Global Counterterrorism Forum published the “Good practices memorandum for the implementation of countering the financing of terrorism measures while safeguarding civic space”. In resolution [2615 \(2021\)](#), the Security Council decided that humanitarian assistance and other activities that support basic human needs in Afghanistan were not a violation of the prohibition on making resources available to individuals and entities listed by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1988 \(2011\)](#). This explicit humanitarian exemption has been an essential step for humanitarian activities in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power.

D. Rising food insecurity and averting famine

66. A further dramatic deterioration in food security and the threat of famine were seen in 2021. Rising food costs threatened still more households. Climate change worsened food insecurity and affected every region of the world. For example, the Horn of Africa entered 2022 on the verge of catastrophe, following three failed rainy seasons in lowland areas.

67. Conflict remained the chief driver of acute food insecurity, forcing people from their homes and lands, damaging critical infrastructure and straining access to such basic services as health care, education and markets. Almost 70 per cent of people facing acute food insecurity lived in areas affected by conflict and insecurity. Humanitarian access remained one of the most critical issues, as reflected in Security Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#), in which the Council called for respect for international humanitarian law and strongly condemned the use of the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare and the unlawful denial of humanitarian access to civilian populations in need.

68. Humanitarian efforts to address the threat of famine and acute food insecurity intensified across several regions. The high-level task force on preventing famine was created by the Secretary-General in March 2021 to strengthen a whole-of-system approach and advocate for famine prevention resources and improved access. Over 500,000 people facing catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 5) in north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen received humanitarian assistance, with 100,000 families receiving livelihood assistance. In South Sudan, humanitarian action brought six counties back from the

brink of famine through a targeted, multisectoral scale-up in the most food-insecure areas. Despite the mobilization of collective efforts, the situation continued to deteriorate owing primarily to access impediments by parties to the conflict and inadequate levels of funding.

E. Centrality of protection

Protection in humanitarian response

69. Humanitarian organizations took innovative approaches, drawing lessons learned from the pandemic, which heightened people's exposure to violence, abuse and exploitation. These lessons included leveraging digital technologies, remote delivery and monitoring solutions, strengthening and building community-based networks and remote case management with adaptable referral pathways to providers of care and support.

Child protection

70. Armed conflict and extreme weather and climate-related events continued to profoundly affect children, including children with disabilities, while the continuing impact of the pandemic heightened children's vulnerabilities. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners registered more than 170,000 unaccompanied and separated children to receive support in 2021. Moreover, the United Nations verified more than 23,000 grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict.¹⁸ These violations included recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access. Thousands of children continue to be deprived of liberty in detention centres and camps for long periods without charge, often based on the acts, beliefs or affiliations of their family members.

71. Coordination continued to play an essential role in bringing child protection responses to those most in need, while also mitigating risks. Operationalization of norms, strengthening global child protection standards and driving innovations that place children's rights at the centre of humanitarian action remain critical.

F. Gender equality and rights of women and girls

72. Humanitarian crises disproportionately affected women and girls and exacerbated existing gender inequalities. Rising food insecurity had a negative impact on girls' access to education and increased their exposure to gender-based violence, negative coping strategies and early marriage. Displaced women and girls faced increased risk of gender-based violence and were often left out of the processes to develop policies designed to protect them. During the pandemic, women were overwhelmingly the first responders and were central to the resilience of families and communities, yet they were not sufficiently represented in leadership and decision-making positions. As ever, the role and contribution of women across humanitarian responses and contexts is critical to addressing the needs of affected communities.

73. In 2021, in response to an inter-agency humanitarian evaluation on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, a plan was developed to monitor

¹⁸ Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Progress and challenges for children since the 1996 publication of Graça Machel's report on the impact of armed conflict on children", fact sheet, August 2021. Available at https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Graca-Machel-at-25_FactSheet_August-2021.pdf.

progress and track accountability for implementing the evaluation team's recommendations. The Afghanistan humanitarian country team established an Afghan women's advisory group to provide guidance and advice to the humanitarian country team in facilitating more context-specific and locally anchored engagement with the Taliban on ensuring that the rights of women and girls remain comprehensively integrated in humanitarian assistance. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender Standby Capacity Project provided senior expertise on gender equality in humanitarian action in support of humanitarian country teams across 20 contexts. The gender in humanitarian action working groups also contributed to the work of 13 humanitarian country teams.

74. The shortfall in funding for gender and gender-based violence programming remained a serious challenge. To help address this, the Central Emergency Response Fund approved \$373.5 million for projects marked by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's gender with age marker, indicating that gender was a consideration in the design of humanitarian programming. Across 20 country operations, country-based pooled funds provided \$830 million for projects with strong gender mainstreaming components, as scored by the gender with age marker.

Gender-based violence

75. Gender-based violence increased during the pandemic and addressing violence against women and girls in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts is urgent. Women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence.

76. The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies underscores the importance of fully funding gender-based violence prevention and response in emergencies. The Central Emergency Response Fund established a gender contact group of experts to help guide humanitarian pooled funding to strengthen support for women and girls and address gender-based violence. In 2021, the Emergency Relief Coordinator convened a high-level round table to address gender-based violence funding gaps, and strengthened certain features of the Financial Tracking Service to track such funding and increase accountability regarding funding gaps. According to the Financial Tracking Service, although \$207 million of gender-based violence funding was received in 2021, there remained a 72 per cent shortfall.

G. Addressing and reducing displacement

77. By mid-2021, almost 83 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced because of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and abuses, or events seriously disturbing public order. Millions of people remained trapped in situations of protracted displacement without durable solutions. Protracted conflicts and the increase in the intensity and frequency of sudden- and slow-onset disasters due to climate change were increasingly driving displacement. Conflict and natural hazards often intersect. Ninety-five per cent of the new conflict-related displacements recorded worldwide occurred in countries that are vulnerable or highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.¹⁹ Some 80 per cent of displaced persons lived in countries affected by acute hunger and malnutrition. The impact of the pandemic continued to be more severe for displaced populations. A total of 160 countries are including displaced persons in national COVID-19 vaccination plans.²⁰

¹⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021*.

²⁰ UNHCR, "2021 midyear results: COVID-19 multisectoral monitoring". Available at <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Multisectoral%20Monitoring%20midyear%20results%202021.pdf>.

78. In follow-up to the report of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement issued in September 2021, the Secretary-General developed a draft action agenda on internal displacement laying out his vision for stepped-up action in response to this challenge. The draft action agenda reflects concrete commitments by the United Nations system and calls on other key stakeholders to enhance their efforts to advance solutions to internal displacement, to prevent new displacement crises from emerging and to ensure that those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance. Such efforts include working to ensure respect for relevant international legal frameworks, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and their implementation at the national level.

Refugees

79. The number of refugees reached 26.6 million by mid-2021. Some 85 per cent of all refugees were hosted in lower income countries. Life became more precarious for forcibly displaced people, placing vulnerable people and communities under unprecedented pressure. As outlined in the global compact on refugees, protecting, assisting and upholding the rights and dignity of refugees is a collective endeavour and a mutual responsibility.

Migrants in vulnerable situations

80. The impacts of the climate crisis, environmental degradation, the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic, rising food insecurity and growing security concerns combined to increase pressures for the mass movement of people, who are often among the most vulnerable in the world. Humanitarian assistance and protection are essential for migrants travelling along perilous routes, where their lives and safety are in danger. Urgent action must be taken to include migrants in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and to provide humanitarian assistance and protection.

H. Data protection and cybersecurity

81. The vulnerability of data held by humanitarian organizations is a growing concern, given the risks to the safety and dignity of people. Operational information and data collected from affected people for humanitarian purposes must never be the target of attack, yet in 2021 there were breaches and thefts of such data. Financial, legal and political measures and good standards and rules to bridge the gap between theory and practice must be in put in place, operating on the principle of “do no harm”. While humanitarian organizations are working to better protect data, States should also take steps to ensure that attacks on humanitarian data are prevented and appropriate measures taken.

IV. Developments in coordination and response in 2021

A. Improving humanitarian preparedness, coordination and response

82. In 2021, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee continued its role as the chief global humanitarian coordination platform, bringing together operational organizations providing humanitarian assistance (across the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent family and NGOs), under the Emergency Relief Coordinator as chair. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee focused on strengthening the impact of coordinated humanitarian response and support to field operations, including through system-wide emergency activation procedures (scale-up programmes) in Ethiopia and Afghanistan; operational action and advocacy around key crises and

thematic issues; and support through coordinated guidance and initiatives, some of which are referenced in the present report.

83. Since 2020, the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework has been used to inform humanitarian needs overviews in 26 countries. The methodology provides cross-sectoral, rigorous, transparent and people-centred analysis of humanitarian needs and their severity. It helps to improve the way humanitarian actors jointly assess, analyse, plan and respond to crises, and provides strengthened evidence to support the prioritization of resources to populations and localities in greatest need.

84. Global and regional humanitarian partners continued to support countries and regional organizations in preparedness and response. Across all regions, they supported local and national authorities, deployed staff to provide specialized expertise in support of disaster-affected communities and Governments, and prepositioned supplies to increase preparedness to respond to disasters or escalating insecurity.

85. In 2021, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team deployed for four missions, together with operational partners. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group developed strategic objectives, which aim to enhance support for local capacities and flexible response efforts.

B. Multipurpose cash programming

86. Multipurpose cash transfers cover the multiple basic needs of people in a flexible and cross-sectoral manner. Such transfers can be delivered in tandem or linked with other complementary humanitarian assistance and social services. Cash transfers, market situation permitting, support the dignity and decision-making of affected people and can also be supportive of local responses and reinforce local markets and service providers.

87. The expansion of social protection responses during the pandemic provided examples of country experiences in delivering emergency responses through national social protection systems or mixed approaches of national systems and aligned multipurpose cash transfers. Nonetheless, multipurpose cash transfers are not yet being used to their full potential. To enable effective and efficient use of multipurpose cash transfers, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee have agreed to work together to support an increase in the use of multipurpose cash transfers and to strengthen predictable cash coordination, including through cash working groups.

C. Humanitarian and development collaboration and linkages to peace

88. Partners continued to support the implementation of strengthened humanitarian, development and peace collaboration to reduce peoples' needs, risks and vulnerability at the country level.

89. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee review of 16 countries showed close collaboration between Governments, the United Nations, international and local NGOs, donors and international financial institutions focused on reducing food insecurity, forced displacement and gender-based violence, and increasing access to basic social services. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia were some of the countries where closer collaboration across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts is being operationalized around

collective outcomes.²¹ Advances were made in sharing analysis and in joined-up planning through the complementarity of humanitarian response plans and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Ten countries have developed collective outcomes or are in the process of doing so.

90. The Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration focused on support for Chad, the Niger and the Sudan in 2021. In the Sudan, for example, the Joint Steering Committee helped to bring together humanitarian and development actors to support the transition from the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). In Chad, the Joint Steering Committee engaged with the Resident Coordinator to support the finalization of the Government's national development plan, with a view to enhancing the coherence of humanitarian and development priorities.

D. Early action and anticipatory approaches

91. In 2021, the humanitarian community developed and implemented anticipatory approaches and projects in over 60 countries. In addition to pilots already in place for Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Somalia, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and humanitarian partners worked together to facilitate anticipatory action frameworks for Malawi for drought and dry spells, Nepal for floods, and the Philippines for storms. Together, these pilots are projected to provide over four million people with anticipatory humanitarian assistance in case of imminent severe disasters. Flexible, coordinated and predictable financing is key to scaling up collective anticipatory action. The Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated some \$60 million to support collective anticipatory action since July 2020, including for Somalia for drought and food insecurity, Bangladesh for floods and Ethiopia for drought.

92. In Ethiopia, an anticipatory approach enabled schools to remain open, thanks to the timely provision of cash and water. Without such support, many households would have migrated because of drought, and children would not have been able to access education. Anticipatory action also secured fodder production for livestock. In Somalia, the United Nations and its partners provided cash assistance and dignity kits and strengthened their efforts to prevent gender-based violence ahead of the main impact of the drought. Anticipatory livestock treatment in Somalia secured an estimated 5.45 million litres of milk, or one glass a day for 200,000 children for six months. Rehabilitation and upgrading of boreholes improved household finances, kept livestock healthier, reduced disputes related to water sources and mitigated migration due to drought.

93. More than 80 organizations are part of the Anticipation Hub, a platform hosted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the German Red Cross to facilitate knowledge exchange, learning and guidance around anticipatory action.

²¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Mapping good practices in the implementation of humanitarian-development-peace nexus approaches". Available at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/mapping-good-practices-implementation-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-approaches>.

E. Humanitarian financing

94. In 2021, donors contributed some \$1.77 billion to the pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, representing a record level of income. Of this, the Central Emergency Response Fund received \$638.5 million and the country-based pooled funds \$1.13 billion, the highest contribution level on record for the latter. Together, the pooled funds allocated \$1.52 billion to humanitarian partners, \$548 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund and \$970 million from 23 country-based and regionally based pooled funds. The pooled funds enabled responses to a wide range of humanitarian needs, including tackling food insecurity, responding to disease outbreaks, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and addressing the consequences of violent conflict and displacement. Afghanistan was the largest recipient of resources from the pooled funds in 2021, with \$245.3 million.

F. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

95. As reports of misconduct continued, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee increased its efforts in 2021 to bolster protection from sexual exploitation and abuse capacity, ensure access to quality information and assistance for victims and survivors, and strengthen coordination and coherence. Under the leadership of the Champion on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment – the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund – the Inter-Agency Standing Committee provided more predictable expertise to field operations, with a roster of experienced and trained protection from sexual exploitation and abuse coordinators to be deployed in support of Humanitarian Coordinators in high-risk contexts. Community outreach and advocacy campaigns in 35 countries focused on victims' rights, reporting channels and assistance.

96. An external review commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Champion on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment found that there had been improvements over the past 10 years to help clarify leadership accountability and coordination at the country level. However, the review also identified the need for further improvements, such as more predictable resourcing for inter-agency activities to prevent, respond to and investigate sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The authors of the review recommended that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee adopt a shared definition and application of a victim-centred approach, invest more consistently in community engagement, and clarify responsibilities regarding sexual harassment. The authors concluded that lack of capacity remains a major constraint; that capacity for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse should be part of immediate humanitarian response, responsibilities and activities integrated in operational support; and that more investigation capacity in high-risk contexts should be available.²²

G. Accountability and inclusion

97. In 2021, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Operational Policy and Advocacy Group developed a proposal to strengthen system-wide accountability to affected people and outlined areas for consideration to advance collective accountability to affected people and strengthen the participation of affected

²² Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "External review" (Geneva, 2021). Available at <https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/resources/2021-iasc-external-review-pseash>.

populations and the organizations that support them in humanitarian forums through accountable leadership, an inclusive system and architecture, and quality funding.

98. The focus among Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners is to develop and strengthen mechanisms for the participation of affected people in humanitarian coordination and for their priorities and views to inform and shape humanitarian preparedness and response. This includes enabling affected people to participate on the advisory boards of funding mechanisms such as humanitarian pooled funds. As a priority under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinators are being encouraged to lead the way on systematic accountability to affected people and to support humanitarian country teams in transforming global commitments on accountability to affected people into country-level action.

H. Persons with disabilities

99. The Reference Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action brings together the United Nations, NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities to support the operationalization of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. COVID-19 exacerbated the risks for persons with disabilities.

100. During 2021, guidance and training sessions contributed to increasing disability inclusion in the humanitarian programme cycle. Since early 2021, a disability contact group has served in an advisory role to improve disability mainstreaming in pooled funds. The Central Emergency Response Fund allocated \$10 million specifically to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises.

I. Mental health and psychosocial support

101. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings – a collaboration of 60 humanitarian organizations – developed a wide range of resources, available in more than 100 languages and disseminated widely in humanitarian emergencies, to scale up mental health and psychosocial support activities. Country-level mental health and psychosocial support coordination groups increased globally from groups in 23 countries in March 2020 to groups in 44 countries by December 2021. Joint development and field testing of the minimum services package for mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings continued in 2021 in five humanitarian emergencies.

J. Localization

102. In 2021, local actors were at the forefront of the response to COVID-19, particularly in sustaining humanitarian operations and in last mile delivery. In July 2021, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee released guidance on strengthening participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in the Committee's humanitarian coordination mechanisms and agreed to start measuring global progress against indicators set out in the guidance. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee also continued its work on localization with humanitarian country teams and clusters. Organizations worked on empowering women's grass-roots organizations and women's collectives, including organizations led by women refugees.

103. In 2021, the country-based pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs allocated \$315 million to national and local partner organizations, corresponding to 39 per cent of total allocations, exceeding the target of 25 per cent. United Nations agencies funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund subgranted some \$73 million, or 14 per cent of the Fund's annual funding, to national and local partners. Almost all country-based pooled funds had at least one local or national NGO on their advisory board. Despite these efforts, local and national humanitarian actors need further opportunities to access funding.

K. Strengthening human resources capacity

104. In line with the Secretary-General's human resources strategy, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to make progress on gender parity and improve geographical representation through its four-year People Strategy 2018–2021, supplemented by a gender parity action plan. Gender and diversity statistics are regularly monitored to facilitate the tracking of progress and identify areas for improvement. The Office has been able to achieve near gender parity at all professional levels.

105. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs initiated racism-awareness webinars and established a network of diversity and inclusion focal points to support staff engagement and dialogue on anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion. It also established a web page entitled "United Against Racism", accessible to all staff of the Office, with information and materials on anti-racism. Dedicated resources have been allocated to support these efforts, including the establishment of a dedicated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer position.

106. United Nations agencies are also taking measures to improve gender balance and geographical diversity. At UNICEF, the proportion of women participating in the humanitarian front-line deployment sourcing platform stands at 47 per cent and is increasing. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has reached gender parity at the P-1–4 and Assistant Secretary-General levels and near parity at the P-5–D-2 levels, and has developed a targeted leadership development programme for female P-5 and D-1 leaders. Dedicated resources were allocated to support the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts of UNICEF, with the establishment of a culture and diversity team in the Office of the Executive Director and funding for four diversity, equity and inclusion-related positions for the next four years. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees adopted a multi-year strategy following a review of workplace race equality and equity, partnering with the McKinsey Black Leadership Academy, providing inclusive leadership training and launching an allyship movement.

V. Recommendations

107. **Based on the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends the following:**

(a) **Member States, parties to conflict and humanitarian organizations should promote and ensure full respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence;**

(b) **Member States and parties to conflict should allow and facilitate the rapid, unimpeded and sustained access of impartial humanitarian relief, simplify and expedite procedures for the entry and deployment of medical and humanitarian personnel, goods and services, and remove barriers, constraints or levies that impede such access;**

(c) Parties to conflict should urgently take all measures necessary to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, in particular by ensuring respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects; and should cease grave violations of children's rights. They must refrain from attacking, destroying, removing or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population and must protect and take constant care to spare civilian infrastructure that is critical to the delivery of essential services to the civilian population, and must stress the need to fight impunity and the importance of ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law;

(d) Parties to conflict should respect and protect all medical and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, and their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities. They should take all practical measures necessary to that end, including those defined in the recommendations made pursuant to Security Council resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#), and should prohibit the criminalization of medical care and strengthen accountability for serious violations;

(e) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should increase capacity and programming to minimize protection risks faced by affected populations, strengthen the protective environment, promote the safety and dignity of affected persons and systematically scale up victim-centred approaches and measures to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse;

(f) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should scale up efforts and funding to respond to gender-based violence, ensuring that survivors have access to critical services at the onset of an emergency;

(g) Parties to conflict should avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. Member States are encouraged to advance a political declaration to address the humanitarian impact resulting from such use, including commitments to avoid such use;

(h) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian and development organizations should scale up efforts to help internally displaced persons to find durable solutions, prevent new displacement from emerging and ensure those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance, in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and other international obligations and standards;

(i) Member States should ensure that their counter-terrorism measures comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law and do not impede principled humanitarian activities, including medical activities. Member States and regional organizations should include specific exemptions for exclusively humanitarian activities, including medical activities, that are carried out by impartial humanitarian actors in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law and should raise awareness of and ensure the effectiveness of these exemptions, notably through regular engagement with humanitarian organizations and the private sector, including the banking sector;

(j) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should increase efforts to provide and fund cross-sectoral mental health and psychosocial support services that are integrated into humanitarian programmes, including for children, in all emergencies;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making, supported by robust gender analysis;

(l) The United Nations and humanitarian organizations should strengthen their capacities to protect the data of affected people and humanitarian organizations, while Member States should take measures to prevent cyberattacks on humanitarian data from occurring and hold those who commit such attacks to account;

(m) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should mainstream the inclusion of persons with disabilities into programmes, policies and strategic frameworks, improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by disability and ensure the participation of persons with disabilities throughout the humanitarian programme cycle;

(n) Member States are called upon to fully resource humanitarian response plans and encouraged to continue their strong support for country-based pooled funds and to fund the Secretary-General's Central Emergency Response Fund to the level of \$1 billion;

(o) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to promote partnerships among international, regional, national and local actors and organizations to reinforce capacities and promote community engagement;

(p) Member States, parties to conflict, the United Nations, humanitarian, development and peace organizations and other relevant actors should scale up actions and flexible funding that meet immediate needs while addressing the root causes of food crises and preventing their deterioration into famine. This requires a commitment to ending conflicts and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, including the prohibition on the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, and the duty to allow and facilitate humanitarian access in line with Security Council resolution [2417 \(2018\)](#). It also requires the transformation of agrifood systems to be more inclusive, resilient and sustainable, including through early action, prevention and shock-responsive social protection systems, especially in fragile contexts, and to ease the burden of climate change on the most vulnerable;

(q) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should accelerate efforts to understand and address the humanitarian and human rights impacts of climate change, including by increasing the capacity to understand climate and environmental risks, using climate risk analysis in planning and programming, strengthening early warning systems, preparedness and disaster risk reduction, expanding flexible, coordinated and predictable financing for early action and anticipatory approaches and increasing finance for adaptation and resilience. Member States should also accelerate actions to reduce emissions in line with the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees and scale up adaptation and related financing;

(r) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should continue to learn lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and scale up prevention, preparedness, early warning and early action efforts ahead of disease outbreaks and epidemics.