If we do not limit global heating and support people in adapting to climate change, we will see destabilization, migration and starvation. Current humanitarian needs will seem small compared to the potential rise if the world fails to tackle this global emergency.

WFP
World Food Programme

CHANGING LIVES

INSIGHT SERIES

The Climate Crisis and Hunger

THE CHALLENGE

2021 was the third-costliest year on record for climate-related disasters, totalling US$329 billion in economic losses and accounting for four mega-disasters with response costs of over US$20 billion.[1] More frequent and intense droughts, floods and storms were reported across the globe. These caused widespread food insecurity, crippled agricultural production and devastated livelihoods, with people forced from their homes.

These patterns are in line with findings from one of the latest assessment reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

(IPCC), which issued grave warnings that climate change is already causing dangerous and widespread disruption. If emissions are not reduced, the risk of food-supply shocks will greatly increase, with harvests failing simultaneously in multiple major food-producing countries. This will lead to shortages and price spikes. Food productivity growth is already down 21 percent because of global heating.
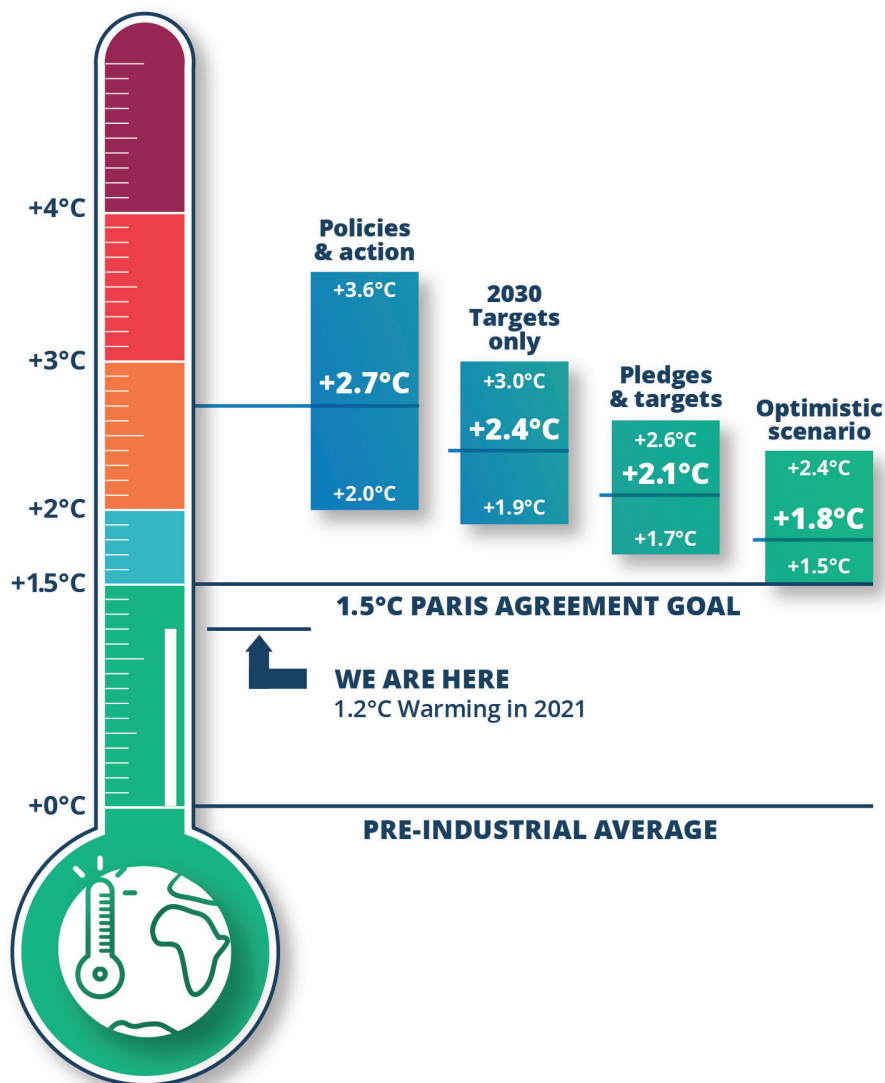
Climate change does not act in isolation, but compounds existing vulnerabilities and makes risks increasingly complex and difficult to manage.

1 Aon, 2021 Weather, Climate and Catastrophe Insight, 2022

The IPCC report highlighted that the world risks surpassing 1.5°C degrees of warming in the next two decades which, even if temporarily exceeded, would result in irreversible impacts. Every inhabited region of the world experiences the effects of climate change, but not all in the same way. Over 40 percent of the global population already lives in places that are highly vulnerable to climate impacts. These communities contribute least to the problem, but are faced with the worst impacts and have limited means to cushion the blows.

Figure 1: Global mean temperature increase by 2100

The world is underinvesting in climate action. Climate finance is risk averse and fails to reach areas where losses and damages outpace the capabilities of governments and the international aid system to respond. According to [the UNDP Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace Report](#), over the past seven years, extremely fragile states averaged US$2.1 per person per year in climate finance, compared to US$161.7 in non-fragile states.

Climate action failure was ranked as the most severe risk in the [World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2022](#). This failure is considered the most severe threat in both the medium term (2-5 years) and long term (5-10 years), further highlighting that this is not a problem of future generations but a current global issue. Environmental risks made up half of the top ten identified risks for the next decade, with extreme weather and biodiversity loss ranked second and third respectively.

GLOBAL PRIORITIES FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION ACTION

1 Scale up climate adaptation and solutions to avert, minimize and address loss and damage

Urgent global action is needed to scale up climate adaptation and protect the most vulnerable. Funding must be more sustained and predictable, allowing humanitarian and development organizations to change lives over the long term and plan for scale as needs increase. It must be additional to life-saving humanitarian assistance, to ensure governments are not forced to choose between saving lives and changing lives.

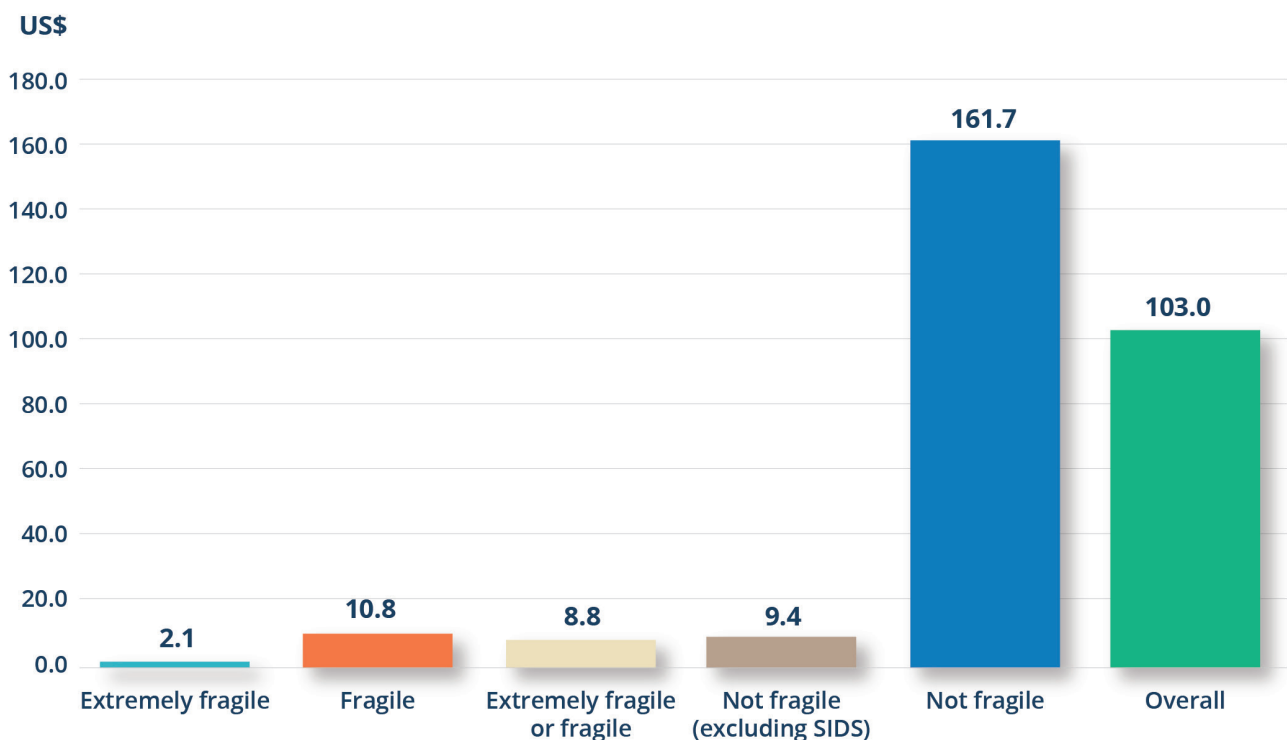## 2 Invest in climate action in communities in fragile contexts

More climate finance must be directed to fragile states, as highlighted in the UNDP report, to limit the climate-related risks in areas where they often hit the hardest and are felt most profoundly. The international aid system should stop limiting adaptation investments to development contexts and ensure vulnerable areas receive more than essential humanitarian funding.

3 Transform food systems

The range of activities that produce, process and transport food to our tables are neither equitable or sustainable. The lack of diversity in our food systems, reliance on polluting practices and exposure to disruptions such as conflict, are threatening global food security. We must urgently reverse the negative relationship between food systems and climate change.

Figure 2: Average overall funding per capita by country fragility classification 2014-May 2021 (not including co-financing)

US$

Category	Value
Extremely fragile	2.1
Fragile	10.8
Extremely fragile or fragile	8.8
Not fragile (excluding SIDS)	9.4
Not fragile	161.7
Overall	103.0

WFP'S CLIMATE ACTION

WFP has effective and scalable solutions to help food insecure people prepare for, respond to and recover from climate shocks and stresses. WFP saves lives following climate-related disasters, assisting people in the most remote and challenging locations to cope with climate shocks. At the same time, WFP supports communities to:

- **ANTICIPATE** climate hazards before they turn into disasters, by using early-warning systems to trigger pre-positioned financing for preventative action

- **RESTORE** degraded ecosystems that serve as natural shields against climate impacts

- **PROTECT** the most vulnerable with safety nets and insurance against climate extremes

- **ENERGIZE** schools and communities through access to sustainable energy.

These solutions prioritize climate action in the most vulnerable and fragile contexts, accelerate adaptation solutions at scale and drive innovation at the nexus between humanitarian and development action. They also promote integration, recognizing that protection from climate impacts is most effective when multiple adaptation initiatives are combined.

In 2022, WFP implemented climate risk management solutions in 42 countries, benefiting more than 15 million people. As an experienced risk-manager with extensive programmatic reach, WFP has the field presence and operational readiness to scale up protection against climate impacts for millions of people.

Submerged houses in Char Bara Dhul, Bangladesh. *WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud*

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