

Anticipatory Action in Latin America and the Caribbean

Bolstering nationally owned anticipatory systems to reduce climate impacts on food security



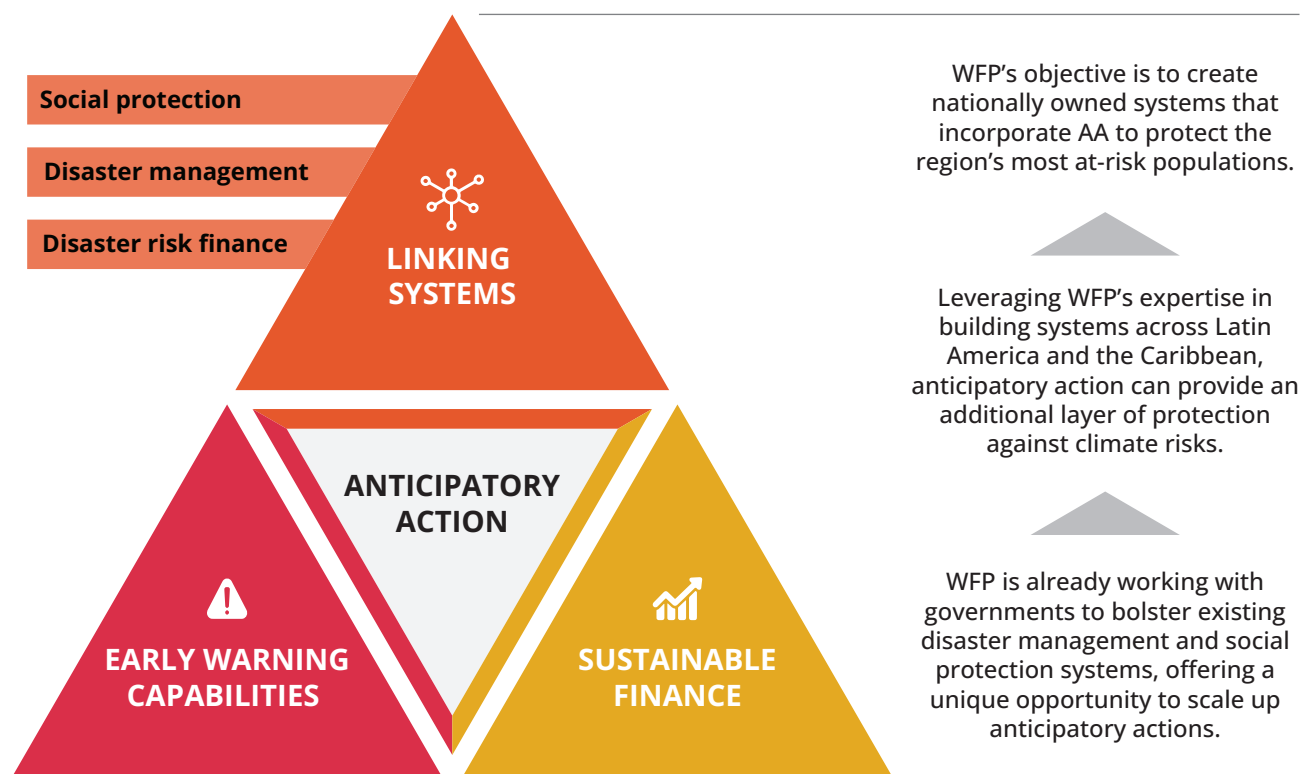
Climate extremes are a key driver of food insecurity.

At the same time, the climate crisis is intersecting and compounding other drivers of hunger, including conflict and economic downturns. To successfully manage these interlocking problems and avert cascading humanitarian disasters, traditional **humanitarian response systems need to evolve from crisis response to forward-looking risk management.** Recognizing the urgency of the problem, WFP works with governments around the world that are investing in early warning systems to better anticipate and respond to hazards. Leveraging these investments, **Anticipatory Action (AA) offers an innovative approach that enables the implementation and financing of actions triggered by weather forecasts,** and before an extreme weather event has occurred. These anticipatory actions aim to prevent and mitigate – to the extent possible – the effects of extreme weather on the food security and nutrition of highly vulnerable people.

Latin America and the Caribbean is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate.

Climate events are impacting food security and livelihoods, as dramatically demonstrated by the devastating impacts of Hurricanes Eta and Iota (2020), the droughts of 2015-2016 associated with an intense El Niño cycle, and record-breaking fires across South America triggered by unprecedented heat and dryness. The financial cost of these events can be catastrophic. For instance, Hurricanes Eta and Iota resulted in losses of more than \$7 billion dollars across Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (approximately 5% of the gross domestic product in the Central American countries) and where more than 8 million people required humanitarian assistance. The impact on food security and livelihoods is significant: rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns decimate agricultural production across the region.

WFP's approach to anticipatory action in Latin America and the Caribbean



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Strengthening national **early warning capabilities**

Building on already established and robust early warning systems, WFP is collaborating with climate service providers (principally national hydrological and meteorological agencies) to develop more skillful forecasts that can be used to inform decisions at all levels – including when to plant certain crops, when and where climate hazards are likely to hit, and where humanitarian and other food assistance is needed. Crucially, WFP is working with governments to develop early warning in order to mainstream anticipatory action into national systems for disaster management.



Linking **systems** to reach scale

In order to reach scale, WFP advocates for the incorporation of anticipatory action principles in social protection systems. Such systems already have key elements of anticipatory action: a vulnerability analysis that informs targeting and an operational protocol to disburse funds (or other assistance). A key missing piece is integration with early warning systems. Forecasts – whether they are seasonal or sub-seasonal – can offer an early indication of the types of events that may negatively affect a given population. If, for instance, a severe drought is forecasted in a region where people rely heavily on social assistance to meet their essential needs, anticipatory action can provide additional protection before an event. WFP is advocating for social protection structures that incorporate multiple benefits to anticipate and manage climate risk.



Sustainable **financing**

Anticipatory action is an innovative way of thinking. Even though, at the global level, there is substantial evidence to suggest that acting before an event is cost-effective, governments do not have sufficient budget to implement anticipatory action at scale. Until anticipatory action is implemented at scale, WFP is working closely with private actors – such as insurers and reinsurers – to complement the government financing for anticipatory action. WFP advocates for partnerships with these kinds of stakeholders to ensure financial sustainability as anticipatory action reaches scale. In addition, WFP is exploring other financial mechanisms, including contingent funding from national disaster management systems, funding for social protection, and sovereign/regional pools that governments can access to support at-risk populations.

