

Anticipatory Action in Asia and the Pacific

Adopting a proactive risk-management approach to the climate crisis

Asia and the Pacific Region is the most disaster-prone region in the world, vulnerable to both weather-related hazards such as typhoons/cyclones, droughts, floods, and extreme temperatures, as well as geophysical hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tsunamis. Between 2010 and 2021, over 225 million people in the region have been internally displaced by weather-related hazards.¹ As the Earth gets warmer and the frequency of extreme weather events continues to rise, innovative and integrated risk management solutions that bridge humanitarian, disaster risk management, climate and other development sectors are needed.

Climate change is one of the major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition. It decreases the availability of food produced due to increasing temperatures and changes in rainfall and affecting households' access to and utilization of food. Asia and the Pacific accounts for 47.1 percent of the world's severely food insecure people in 2022,² driven by multiple, overlapping crises of political and economic instability, lingering impacts of COVID-19 and climate-related events.



However, it is possible to mitigate the impact of these drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition. As early warning information and forecasting skills become more advanced, accurate and available, governments and partners can use this data to move from a reactive approach – focused on responding after a disaster – to a proactive, risk-informed approach that anticipates, prepares for, and manages the impacts of hazards before they occur.



WFP has been developing Anticipatory Action (AA) since 2015,³ pioneering the approach with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the German Red Cross to identify data points, triggers, and mechanisms that would enable the release of humanitarian funds before an emergency occurs.

AA is based on credible weather forecast information linked with vulnerability and exposure data to determine trigger points. These triggers are then matched with pre-agreed anticipatory actions, funding, and plans which are implemented in the critical window of time between an activation trigger and the occurrence of an extreme weather event. This mechanism reshapes how governments and the humanitarian system respond to climate-related disasters.

AA complements the existing preparedness and contingency plans of government and humanitarian stakeholders by taking steps to reduce potential

¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC)

² FAO. 2023. *Asia and the Pacific - Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and trends*. Bangkok.

³ WFP, IFRC, German Red Cross. (2015). *Releasing disaster funds before crises would transform humanitarian response*.

⁴ WFP. (2022). *Integrating Anticipatory Action and Social Protection*.

impacts and scale of needs before they materialize. It also has the potential to inform longer-term programming to better manage the risks posed by large-scale, covariate shocks.

In Asia and the Pacific Region, WFP's overall objective is integrating and scaling up AA into national systems through four pillars:

1 INSTITUTIONALIZING AA

A coordinated, participatory, and inclusive approach lies at the heart of WFP's work for institutionalizing AA at all levels. WFP works alongside governments and stakeholders to integrate AA into national disaster risk management and social protection frameworks⁴, by supporting both strategic discussions and technical developments aligned with existing platforms and leveraging existing capacities. These efforts include policy analysis and advocacy to integrate AA into current frameworks, engagement with communities, local and national government structures as well as regional institutions.



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

2 STRENGTHENING EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS FOR AA

The ability to assess the likelihood and potential impact of hazards through accurate and up-to-date data is a prerequisite for AA. WFP works with national and regional hydrometeorological agencies to generate improved forecasts that can predict and communicate climate-related hazards with adequate lead time and acceptable accuracy. WFP supports government partners and stakeholders to define hazard-specific thresholds that will trigger readiness, early warning information and the timely implementation of AA. WFP is also working with regional technical agencies such as the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia in strengthening capacities of hydrometeorological agencies, as well as disaster management authorities, to increase access to Impact-based Forecasts which significantly support decision-making on AA.

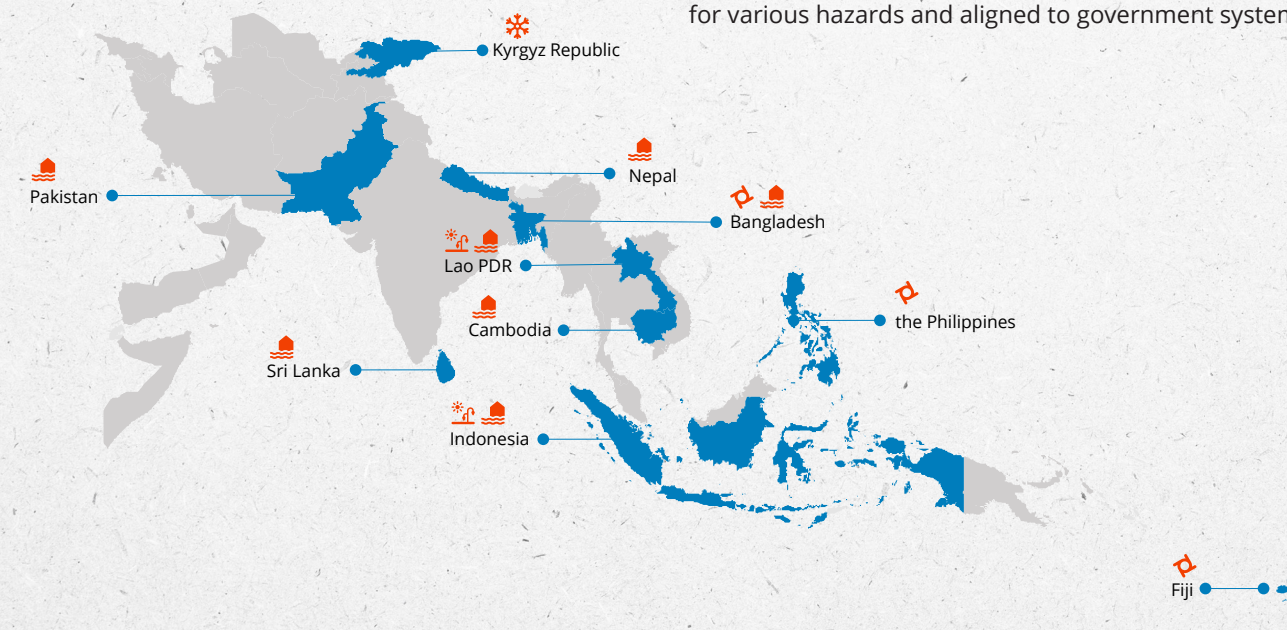
3 IDENTIFYING AND IMPLEMENTING APPROPRIATE FINANCING TOOLS FOR AA

Once triggers⁵ are met, government agencies and partners disburse funds quickly – typically within a few days for fast-onset hazards and several weeks for slow-onset hazards. WFP supports governments in assessing the Climate and Disaster Risk Financing and Insurance instruments available at the national level as well as identifying potential complementary risk financing mechanisms, such as national and subnational contingency funds, funding from international financial institutions, UN humanitarian funding, and private parametric insurance schemes. Once funds are identified, WFP supports government and humanitarian partners in developing financial frameworks to enable rapid disbursement of AA funding.

AA PROGRAMMES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

As one of the first regions to implement AA, Asia and the Pacific is currently implementing AA programmes in 10 countries with varying approaches adapted to the different contexts. Each country is developing its specific integration within the government and humanitarian systems and its links with disaster risk management and social protection.

Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines have implemented AA for longer with WFP directly protecting people ahead of shocks, while other countries such as Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Pakistan are designing the delivery of AA through national systems testing different models. New emerging countries such as Lao PDR and Sri Lanka are conducting feasibility assessments and consultations to develop AA approaches for various hazards and aligned to government systems.



4 EVIDENCE BASED ADVOCACY ON AA

Available evidence indicates that the AA approach can limit potential damages caused by a natural hazard. Findings from the impact evaluation of AA in the Nepal 2022 floods indicate an overall net gain in food security, coping strategies and psychological well-being for people who received AA compared to post-shock transfers. While the positive impacts of AA on people is increasingly gaining recognition, more evidence is being generated to support advocacy with governments for increased

investments and the sustainability of AA. WFP is committed to a strong AA evidence and knowledge management agenda in Asia and the Pacific to generate and share valuable lessons learned that inform the evolution of AA to make it more effective, efficient, impactful and sustainable.

5 Triggers are a critical component of AA which once reached, activates disbursement of funds and implementation of anticipatory actions. Triggers and thresholds are defined based on an analysis of hazards and impacts, early warning information and through a consultative process with decision-makers, implementing agencies and communities.

BANGLADESH

 **260,000 people**
covered in 2023

The AA portfolio in Bangladesh is the largest in the region, and continues to grow from covering 260,000 people in 2023 to covering over 1 million in 2024 in flood and cyclone-prone locations. In 2024, Bangladesh has reached new heights with its AA work with the fastest ever implementation of anticipatory cash reaching 150,000 people in less than 12 hours ahead of Cyclone Remal in May 2024. Just a month later in July 2024, WFP Bangladesh reached 447,800 people three days ahead of floods in the Jamuna Basin, the biggest coverage ever achieved. This also included recipients of social protection programmes to start testing the links with AA and SP in the context of Bangladesh. An impact evaluation is currently being implemented to capture the results of this and inform future implementation and advocacy for institutionalization. WFP continues to partner with the Government, civil society, and wider UN to scale up to other locations and hazards and to institutionalize it to ensure sustainability.

NEPAL

 **145,665 people**
covered in 2023

WFP has been implementing AA in Nepal since 2015, in close collaboration with the Government, UN agencies and civil society, Nepal activated its AA framework in October 2022 reaching 100,231 people with anticipatory cash and early warning messages in the Karnali Basin and the West Rapti Basin. The impact evaluation conducted showed the value add

of anticipatory cash and early warning messages in food security gains, mental health, and agricultural investments.

WFP continues to institutionalize AA at all levels of the government in Nepal, strengthening coordination structures, developing, and implementing AA SOPs, guidelines, and regulations for municipal, ward and community level DRR structures, and strengthening the capacity at the national level with the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, the Ministry of Home Affairs and AA practitioners.



PHILIPPINES

 **225,000 people**
covered in 2023

WFP has been developing AA systems for typhoons in the Philippines since 2015, in close collaboration with key government stakeholders, UN, and the civil society. Since the approval of the inter-agency AA framework in 2020, there has not been any activation, but they have been testing their operational capacity and adjusting programme features through annual simulation exercises. These simulations create a space for collaboration and learning among all involved stakeholders from central government to communities increasing everyone's awareness and preparedness ahead

of a typhoon. Parallely, WFP in the Philippines has been working strongly on integrating AA within the policy frameworks and it is among the first countries in the world to advance the [Declaration of Imminent Disaster Bill](#) – allowing the Government to act based on forecasts and not only upon the declaration of an after-impact emergency. This Bill is currently in its final stage of Government approval and will mark a historical shift from a reactive policy framework for disaster risk management to a proactive one.

FUJI

 **75,000 people**
covered in 2023

Under the first inter-agency Anticipatory Action Framework in the Pacific, WFP will support the Department of Social Welfare in providing anticipatory cash and early warning messages to beneficiaries of four social protection programmes in high-risk locations.⁶ This is an innovative design whereby humanitarian funds will be fully channelled through WFP to the Government's social protection system to implement the anticipatory actions. Additionally, WFP is providing technical support to Fiji's Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection to develop its capacities for AA. WFP will continue to work with the Government in testing and improving the systems.



6 2024 - Supercharging social protection systems with anticipatory cash: Case study on Fiji's Anticipatory Action Framework | World Food Programme (wfp.org)





WFP has been working jointly with the Government to assess the feasibility of AA and define the entry points to protect people ahead of climate shocks. Only a year after the initiation of the work, the Government of Indonesia took the lead on AA and declared El Niño drought in 2023 based on the forecasts. This triggered governments funds and actions to protect livelihoods and avoid losses ahead of the upcoming drought. WFP continues to develop the capacity of local governments in three high-risk provinces to define the triggers, actions, and protocols for AA connected to the wider disaster risk management and contingency plans.



MOVING FORWARD

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

WFP will continue to work alongside governments and partners to institutionalize AA within existing policy and regulation frameworks. Lessons learned and best practices will continue to be shared for AA to adjust and be institutionalized as a sustainable forward-looking approach to address the climate crisis in Asia and the Pacific. Moreover, WFP is facilitating South-South Triangular Cooperation initiatives, allowing governments to learn from each other's experience on institutionalizing AA.

INCLUSIVE SCALABILITY

Asia and the Pacific being the region with the largest population exposed to the impacts of climate change, WFP will continue to increase the amount of people it can collectively protect ahead of a wider range of forecastable shocks, in coordination with governments and other key UN and civil society partners, bringing efficiency and effectiveness in its operations. Putting people at the centre, WFP is committed to ensure

this scalability considers the needs of most at-risk population through a gender, disability, and inclusion sensitive design and implementation.

PROGRAMME INTEGRATION

WFP is establishing links between AA and its wider programmes on cash-based transfers, social protection, emergency preparedness and response, nutrition, and resilience. By leverage existing capacities and networks, AA can be more impactful protecting development and resilience gains as well as reducing humanitarian needs from climate shocks.

EVIDENCE GENERATION

WFP is committed to generating the necessary evidence and share the knowledge from the activations and from people's experiences. Combining robust quantitative methods with inclusive qualitative ones, WFP will continue to flexibly adapt AA to the different contexts in which it operates to enable it to grow in an impactful and sustainable way, placing people at the centre.



WFP thanks its donors



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