

Climate change and humanitarian change

Challenging norms, mandates and practices

Dr Andrea Steinke

November 2023

CHA

CENTRE FOR
HUMANITARIAN
ACTION

Climate change and humanitarian change

Challenging norms, mandates and practices

Dr Andrea Steinke

November 2023

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	5
Executive Summary	6
1. Introduction	8
Status quo – new climate structures and positions	9
2. Norms and Principles	10
Humanity - to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings	10
Impartiality – based on need alone	10
Neutrality – not take sides or engage in controversies	11
Independence – being autonomous from political objectives	12
Blood, sweat and tears - the colonial denominator	13
3. Mandates	14
Climate and conflict	15
4. Operations	16
5. Summary	17
Endnotes	18
Bibliography	18
Imprint	22

List of Abbreviations

BMU	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection	IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center
BMWK	Federal Ministry for Economics and Climate Action	IDP	Internally displaced people
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
CCRI	Children’s Climate Risk Index	IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
CHA	Centre for Humanitarian Action	IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
COP	Conference of the Parties	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CPHP	Centre for Planetary Health Policy	PIK	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
CRED	Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters	REH	Reseau Environnement Humanitaire
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	UNHRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
FFB	Forecast-based Financing	WTO	World Trade Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product		
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office		
GNDR	Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction		
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace		
IASC	Interagency Standing Committee		
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent		
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies		

Executive Summary

Climate change is poised to reshape the humanitarian sector

The situation is alarming. Disasters related to climate change, such as storms, wildfires, drought, flooding, and heatwaves, have almost tripled in the past 40 years. Environmental risks are becoming increasingly complex, with weather-related disasters growing in frequency and triggering severe ripple effects across all sectors of society. As a result, the humanitarian sector will be faced with a growing number of crises and disasters, characterized by greater frequency, larger scale and heightened magnitude.

Climate change is poised to reshape the humanitarian sector, presenting a “sink or swim” situation. While some necessary adjustments and processes have already been initiated, the bulk of the journey still lies ahead. Currently, the entire humanitarian system, along with humanitarian organisations, is ill-prepared and lacking the necessary financial, technical and capacity resources to effectively address the multifaceted impacts of the climate crisis.

The future of humanitarian action revolves around two fundamental paradigms: scaling-up, adapting the scope of humanitarian action to the projected requirements, and skilling-up, adapting the capacities and qualifications necessary to respond adequately. This transformation is essential, even in the face of diminishing resources for individual crises and ongoing reductions in humanitarian budgets. In fact, it is precisely these challenges, exacerbated by global warming, that necessitate a profound shift in the humanitarian sector's approach.

To inform further change-making, the paper will look into three central areas of adaption: (1) the operational area of implementing humanitarian programmes, (2) the norms and principles that inform the how and why of humanitarian climate action as well as the humanitarian future overall and (3) the examination of the current mandate of humanitarian action.

Methods in brief

This paper is primarily based on a literature review and three subsequent stakeholder consultation workshops. The initial two consultations took place exclusively with representatives from German humanitarian NGOs, primarily from the policy departments. The third workshop discussed the results of the prior research process with members of donor governments and humanitarian experts. Additional insights were derived from external consultation processes and expert roundtables.

Key Findings

- 1,5 degrees of global warming is a planetary boundary (Armstrong McKay et al. 2022). Humanitarian aid needs to invest in mitigation measures to help reduce emissions, adaptation measures to support regions and communities in adjusting to the consequences of global warming and take a stand in Loss and Damage, concerning the responsibilities for those situations that can no longer be mitigated nor adapted to.
- A re-evaluation of the core humanitarian principles, their centrality and their adequacy in addressing the climate crisis is necessary to strengthen the basis for future humanitarian decision-making.
- The climate crisis further informs the debate about the boundaries of the humanitarian mandate and its connectivity to other aid sectors, including development assistance. This broadens and contextualizes the familiar nexus discussion.
- The temporality of humanitarian engagement stands as a central parameter of necessary change-making. First and foremost, temporal aspects are important in terms of the operations undertaken, from being less reactive and more preventive, agile and anticipatory. Given the increasing protractedness of crisis exacerbated by climate change, humanitarian actors are well advised to consider adapting the timelines of their programming cycles.
- Lastly, the temporal dimension has the capacity to initiate humanitarian conversations about responsibilities concerning both the present and the future, deriving from past and present inequities. This includes, for instance, discussions under the current Loss and Damage debates. Additionally, it offers an opportunity to contemplate a positive humanitarian idea of the future and the role of humanitarian engagement in co-creating this future.

1. Introduction - A long time coming

„The scale of the potential humanitarian challenge presented by climate change in the future is huge. This is a defining moment to ensure that the challenge is not insurmountable and human suffering is minimized“. (IASC 2009, cited in Herbeck 2013)

This quote from the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) is one and a half decades old. Today, humanitarian professionals continue to voice similar demands. It is evident that the defining moment to effectively address the challenge of climate change and its impact on humanitarian assistance has long since passed, with the defined and desired outcome of preventing its escalation into insurmountable challenges remaining elusive.

As of 2023, it appears the planet is on a trajectory towards this scenario. Any further delay in concerted action, reads the latest IPCC report, will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all (Pförtner et al. 2022).

Recent evidence to support that claim is deeply concerning: From 2015 to 2022, we experienced the eight warmest years on record

From 2015 to 2022, we experienced the eight warmest years on record

(‘Past Eight Years Confirmed to Be the Eight Warmest on Record’ 2023). Six of the nine planetary boundaries, understood as “processes that are critical for maintaining the stability and resilience of Earth system as a whole,” have already been breached (Richardson et al. 2023). Among the 16 tipping points that influence and safeguard the global climate, five are predicted to shift with just 1.5 degrees Celsius of global warming (Armstrong McKay et al. 2022). While the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold was long the subject of political negotiation and leverage, recent evidence suggests that planet Earth will most likely reach its physical limits by this demarcation (Rockström 2022). It is a must that is no longer negotiable: “Our past and current greenhouse gas emissions are certainly the greatest source of anthropogenic environmental harm ever. Present and foreseeable damages induced by anthropogenic interference with the climate system are unique in their range and scope” (Mayer 2016). The predominant use of fossil fuels is largely responsible for this situation, and there is currently no binding agreement in sight to curtail the extraction, processing and burning of fossil fuels.

The humanitarian sector is at a turning point (Steinke 2022). This moment is seminal not only for humanitarian organisations but for the future of the entire humanitarian system. Climate change is already reshaping the humanitarian landscape. In fact, as seen in the introductory quote, it started to change humanitarian need some time ago. However, in the past, the humanitarian sector has failed to effectively inform policy in a coherent and strategic manner, which is both necessary and appropriate.

In one way or another, the humanitarian way of working must change and will inevitably evolve

In one way or another, the humanitarian way of working must change and will inevitably evolve. Failing to adapt would lead to the humanitarian system’s overexertion and ultimate

obscurity. Humanitarian need is already skyrocketing. In 2022 alone, projections indicated that 274 million people required humanitarian assistance, marking an increase of 14 per cent from the year prior, which itself set records. Currently, 339 million people are in need of humanitarian support (UN OCHA 2022).

Based on current greenhouse gas emission levels, estimates for climate-induced displacements predict that as many as 3.5 billion people may need to relocate from regions with mean annual temperatures exceeding 29 degrees by 2070, just 50 years from now (Xu et al. 2020). In 2022, one hundred million people have already been displaced due to climate change and conflict, with 32.6 million people internally displaced within their own countries in the same period of time (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) 2023). In the Sahel region alone, 5 million were displaced, with 3 million experiencing internal displacement.

Climate change exacts a toll in terms of lives and livable futures lost, and it also comes with immense financial costs. In 2022, each of the 29 disasters, such as the flooding in Pakistan, heatwaves in Europe and drought in the Horn of Africa, cost more than USD 1 billion (United Nations’ High-Level Expert Group 2022). Insurance companies rang the alarm bells, too: 18 per cent of global GDP will be lost by 2050 if no mitigation action is taken (‘World Economy Set to Lose | Swiss Re’ 2021).

Disasters related to climate change – storms, fires, drought, flooding, heatwaves – have almost tripled in the last 40 years (see figure 1, page 11). Environmental risks are becoming complex, and weather-related disasters are becoming more frequent, with severe cascading effects on all sectors of society.

Environmental risks are becoming complex, and weather-related disasters are becoming more frequent

However, the entire humanitarian system and humanitarian organisations are ill-prepared and under-equipped to face the financial, technical, and capacity-related challenges posed by the climate crisis. Two core paradigms

for the future of humanitarian efforts are scaling-up – involving adapting the scope of humanitarian action to the projected requirements, and skilling-up – focusing on adapting the capacities and qualifications necessary to respond adequately. There are calls for a “new humanitarianism” (Marin and Naess 2017) or even “climate humanitarianism” (Slim 2021). Change is needed; this encompasses revising the way humanitarian organisations plan and run their operations, adapting to the new largely harmful climate while mitigating its effects. It also involves reconsidering the norms and principles that are the foundation of humanitarian work, along with the humanitarian mandate and its limitations, especially considering its short-term cycled thinking.

Status quo – new climate structures and positions

While the outlook appears bleak, there has been some movement in the humanitarian and adjacent relevant sectors. In 2021, the Climate Charter of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 2021 were launched. This charter, consisting of seven core commitments, is a result of a long consultation process involving a wide range of actors and organisations, including the ICVA network, InterAction, IASC and many more. To date, 308 humanitarian organisations, along with eight supporting countries, have signed it. The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) introduced the Environmental Minimum Recommendations and Requirements in 2020 as a part of a broader long-term greening operations process. These recommendations introduce six principles and will ultimately link the receipt of DG ECHO funding to compliance with these principles.

New positions and institutions have been established in Germany and on the international stage to integrate climate change considerations into political decision-making processes. In 2022, the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) appointed a State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action. Additionally, within GFFO, new inner ministerial linkages have been established, such as with the unit focusing on “geopolitics of climate change, climate and security and water diplomacy”. There is a concerted effort to foster a close exchange with humanitarian divisions. GFFO is also responsible for forging a climate foreign policy strategy in concert with the Federal Ministry for Economic

Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for Economics and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMU). At the German Council on Foreign Relations in 2021, the Center for Climate and Foreign Policy was launched to address the intersection of German foreign policy with climate change considerations, particularly in terms of security and displacement. At the United Nations level, the UNHCR has appointed a special advisor on climate change in 2020. In the same year, the position of Climate Security and Environmental Advisor to Somalia was created.

Prioritising an ambitious international climate policy is seen as an investment in national security (Bosch and Vinke 2022; Pohl 2022). In June 2023, Germany published its first national security strategy, therein recognizing the climate crisis as a threat to livelihoods and economies, thus affecting security in Germany and around the world. “Curbing the climate crisis and dealing with its consequences is one of the fundamental and most pressing tasks of this century” (German Federal Government 2023), the strategy reads.

The forthcoming guidelines for the German government’s climate foreign policy represent the next central piece of federal policy-making and are anticipated to be released in the second half of 2023. According to the Special Envoy for International Climate Action, the uppermost objective of German Climate Foreign Policy is compliance with the 1,5-degree boundary of global warming.

The aim of this paper is to collect, synthesize and present some of the reflections regarding the impact of climate change on humanitarian norms, principles, mandates and operations. These insights stem from several stakeholder consultations with representatives of NGOs from

the German humanitarian community, donor governments, scholars, participation in relevant consultation processes, expert roundtables and a review of relevant literature.

2. Norms and Principles

The norms and principles of humanitarian action function as the inner compass for its actors, guiding them through challenges and difficult decision-making processes. Scholars and institutions recognise that, alongside the evolving nature of armed conflict, the comprehensive global impact of climate change is an important factor calling for the re-evaluation of the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence (Clarke and Parris 2022; Marin and Naess 2017).

Humanity - to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings

When considering the fundamental humanitarian principle of “humanity” in the context of climate change and its effects, the main question is: what and who does this concept encompass? Some argue in favour of extending it to other spheres not initially considered when these humanitarian principles were formalised (Slim 2022). Therefore, the climate crisis calls for a recognition that non-human life, including all life on the planet, is seminal for the survival of the planet. Climate scientist Rockström stresses that the world is not only living through a climate crisis but a planetary crisis (PIK 2023). Consequently, investing in the sustenance of ecosystems and safeguarding biodiversity is key to safeguarding the principle of humanity as “the purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings” (UN OCHA 2012). In the global health sector, a range of different initiatives have emerged in recent years to address planetary health as “the interconnections between human, animal and ecosystem health and encompasses a broad, transdisciplinary understanding of the influences on, and conditions for, human health today and in the future” (CPHP n.d.).

Another re-interpretation of “humanity” in the context of climate change warns against turning a blind eye to the absence of sustainable living conditions for communities, effectively trapping them in their suffering. With some regions becoming irredeemably uninhabitable due to climate change: “encouraging people to stay by patching up communities through repeated humanitarian interventions only worsens their circumstances – particularly in contexts with ongoing rapid population growth. Such tragic circumstances require durable long-term solutions involving noncoercive relocation and resettlement to areas where humanitarian funds can help build a secure future, rather than investing money in areas that lack such viability” (Clarke and Parris 2022).

Impartiality – based on need alone

In essence, the principle of impartiality revolves around the allocation of resources and the challenge of distributing them fairly within the constraints of financial limitations, political considerations and accessibility.

The potential trade-offs and challenges to the principle of impartiality long predate the current harmful dynamics inflicted by climate change. However, the anticipated surge of global needs due to climate change creates further distress to the humanitarian principle of impartiality. When need is overwhelming and resources and funding are scarce, it is increasingly difficult to base the delivery of aid on need alone. There are initiatives that aim at including climate change into the equation of humanitarian need, such as the INFORM Climate Change Risk Index¹ and the Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI)².

Integrating a “quantification of need” (Glasman 2020) for climate-induced emergencies, analogous to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for malnutrition, would be one way to safeguard the core humanitarian principle of impartiality. Additionally, existing classification standards, such as the IPC scale, could be scrutinised and expanded to encompass climate change impacts in the future. The precise relationships and hierarchies between different classification systems remain subject to determination.

How can future needs be made part of the equation in terms of impartiality?

Furthermore, unlike other crises presenting humanitarian challenges, the climate crisis is not only a current crisis but is certain to be a future crisis affecting the entire Earth system. This prompts questions about the meaning of “based on need alone” when extrapolated into the future. How can future needs be made part of the equation in terms of impartiality? These are important questions that need to be considered.

Secondly, as Clarke and Parris discussed, “impartiality does not necessarily lead to the most efficient use of resources and relief of the greatest suffering” (Clarke and Parris 2022). This dilemma is evident when deciding whether to allocate resources to a few individuals in high-need, yet hard-to-access areas with relatively high costs or to a larger number of individuals in great need, such as those in IDP camps, illustrating the trade-offs between addressing the most acute need and achieving the widest coverage. Efficient use of resources is especially critical in light of the expected increase in climate-related crises in the near future, combined with diminishing humanitarian budgets partly due to polycrisis events such as pandemics and wars. Balancing these conflicting objectives becomes paramount.

Climate-related disasters almost tripled in current decade compared to 1980s

Flood occurrences tripled, while the number of extreme-temperature was six times more during the same period.

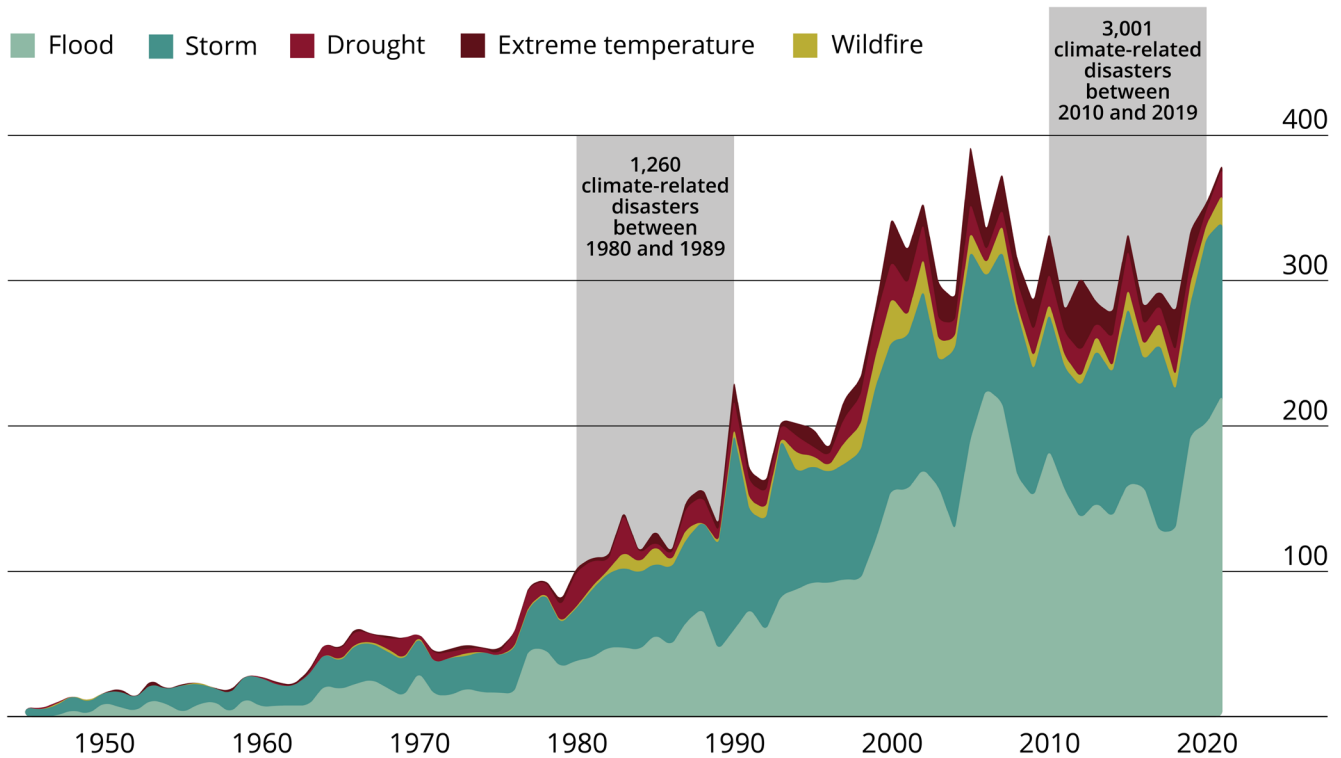


Figure 1: Global Humanitarian Overview 2023
Source: WTO/CRED; adapted by CHA

Neutrality – not take sides or engage in controversies

Similar to independence – and in contrast to the more normative principles of humanity and impartiality – neutrality is often regarded as an instrumental principle (Mierop 2015). Neutrality, characterized by not taking sides, serves as a prerequisite to gain access to all parties involved in a conflict, particularly crucial for operational neutrality (Cutts 1998). The primary requirement of the principle of neutrality is to abstain from becoming involved in political or ideological controversies.

Much like the Black Lives Matter movement, which has been discussed as a moment of reckoning for the humanitarian sector (Healy 2021; Ali and Romain Murphy 2020), the issue of climate justice presents a similar controversy. The scientific evidence is very clear: those who have least contributed to climate change will bear the highest costs, including loss of life, resources, infrastructure, and opportunities for liveable futures. The devastating 2022 floods in Pakistan once again exemplify this reality. While Pakistan’s greenhouse gas emissions account for only one per cent of the global total, it is among the ten

countries most affected by climate change. In August 2022, one-third of the whole country was underwater, more than one thousand people died, and more than 30 million people were internally displaced. Colonised people, People of Colour and those with limited resources are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change, both within nation-states and in global relations. Across the world, economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

The spatial distribution of environmental risks mirrors the historically generated unequal distribution of access to power, capital and knowledge. It is often within this divide that humanitarian action operates both spatially and politically, aiming to mend the wounds that this divide has inflicted on regions and people. Similar to other claims for justice, climate justice approaches are inherently political and can sometimes create tensions with dogmatic

The spatial distribution of environmental risks mirrors the historically generated unequal distribution of access to power, capital and knowledge

understandings of neutrality. While some humanitarian organisations have started to engage in climate justice initiatives, others remain reluctant. Unlike the collective headway made in the greening operations arena, reflections on climate justice remain singular expressions of individual NGOs. Two possible reasons for organisational reluctance to enter into this debate include the fear of losing a donor base, particularly from donor governments historically and currently complicit in fossil fuel extraction and uncontrolled carbon emissions. Additionally, there is concern that such engagement may jeopardise the NGO's perception as a neutral actor in conflicts related to climate change.

Nevertheless, some aid experts are arguing for the convergence of aid, climate science and climate activism to form alliances. This would entail necessary internal reflection processes (Herbeck 2013; Söderberg and Clarke 2022).

From a legal perspective, climate change is framed as an act of violence, specifically 'slow violence'

As climate justice is inherently a rights-based approach, the discussion of climate change under the umbrella of neutrality also touches upon another issue: the delicate and at times uneasy relationship of humanitarianism to human rights (Barnett 2020).

The human rights organisation Amnesty International deemed the "failure of governments to act on climate change biggest inter-generational human rights violation in history" ('Geneva: UN Must Recognize the Right to a Healthy Environment' 2021). The UN has even referred to the risk of climate apartheid ('World Faces "Climate Apartheid" Risk | UN News 2019). From a legal perspective, climate change is framed as an act of violence, specifically as 'slow violence', acknowledging that climate change doesn't always manifest in sudden events but often takes the form of slow-onset disasters like droughts (Dehm 2020). Some authors have discussed adding a human rights lens to the Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus to facilitate climate justice (Smieszek 2022).

The 27th Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change held in Egypt in November 2022, in many respects, fell short of expectations, particularly on mitigation. However, it received praise for making headway in addressing Loss and Damage through the establishment of a fund infrastructure. The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with climate change impacts formalised the discussion around Loss and Damage in 2013. The framework of Loss and Damage encompasses various understandings and aspects, including adaptation and mitigation, risk management, limits to adaptation and an existential perspective "highlighting inevitable harm and unavoidable transformation for some people and systems" (Pförtner et al. 2022).

While the specific operational details of the Loss and Damage fund are still being worked out, its establishment itself is viewed as a success after years of discussion and demands put forward by countries already affected by climate change. To transform the fund from offering primarily technical exchange and expertise into a mechanism that aligns more closely with climate justice claims and seeks a just distribution of costs, intense negotiations will be required. These discussions will benefit from corroborations delivered by humanitarians. At the same time, humanitarian actors are faced with the possible 'humanitarianisation' of the future fund, particularly at the hands of major emitters "aiming at steering loss and damage away from an explicit link with climate justice and towards a more technocratic understanding of damage limitation and recovery from climate shocks" (Slim 2023). Weighing up the implications and consequences and taking an informed position in Loss and Damage matters is crucial to the reputation and accountability of the humanitarian sector. Moreover, the debate surrounding the future fund represents an opportunity and a momentum to reflect on and reshape global norms on humanitarian action (Steinke and Hövelmann 2023).

Independence – being autonomous from political objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented

In relation to the principle of independence, two key points are of importance to the climate change discussion. Firstly, some of the largest donors of humanitarian aid are also the largest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions. Consider Germany, which not only stands as the European Union's largest economy but is also the second-largest global humanitarian donor (Hövelmann and Südhoff 2022). Further, Germany contributes the largest share to the WHO and civilian crisis prevention (Global Public Policy Institute 2021). On the other hand, Germany also accounts for the highest greenhouse gas emissions in the EU, both historically cumulatively, annually and per capita. Investing in climate change adaptation and mitigation in other countries without credible and binding commitments to significantly reduce emissions at home and adhering to the "no-harm" principle as stipulated in international law (Mayer 2016) can be perceived as indulgence trading, with the help of and performed by international NGOs. Similar criticisms have been voiced regarding Germany's recent climate foreign policy initiatives, as it influences other countries to transition to sustainable energy sources while simultaneously investing in outdated "bridge technologies" for rapid energy generation at home. Coherency in domestic and foreign policy is seen as a prerequisite for legitimacy and accountability (Kahlen 2022).

Another factor impacting the instrumental principle of independence (Healy 2021) is the increasing privatisation

of care and service, which also extends its influence to the humanitarian field. While public-private partnerships contribute to the much-needed flexibility and innovative potential required to find solutions for the climate crisis, the increasing involvement of the private sector also comes with potential challenges. “With states increasingly rescinding responsibilities to wealthy global elites and philanthropists, certain types of solutions are never entertained, such as significantly increasing taxes or strengthening environmental regulations, labour laws, or building codes” (Clarke and Parris 2022). These challenges include direct trade-offs between the business model of industries rooted in fossil fuel extraction, their involvement in policymaking, decision-making and their corporate commitments to reducing emissions and fostering more sustainable futures.

UN Secretary-General Guterres warned of loopholes in the current net-zero commitments that are “big enough for diesel trucks to drive through” (“COP27: “Zero Tolerance for Greenwashing” | UN News 2022). A recent UN report on Net Zero Commitments by business actors titled “Integrity Matters” specifically addresses the practise of corporate greenwashing and establishes five core principles and ten recommendations to deal with the challenges at hand.

Lastly, the concept of climate security has come under scrutiny as a policy field to serve the specific political objectives of donor governments. The relationship between climate change and (national) security is suspected of framing migration not as one of many adaptation strategies to climate change but as a complex security threat, with the ultimate aim of making migration from more affected, poorer regions to less affected, wealthier regions impossible. To prevent humanitarian actors from being co-opted by these political objectives in the climate-security nexus, it would be highly beneficial to establish a clear and distinct definition of human security – a concept introduced by philosopher Amartya Sen and diplomat Ogata Sadako in the early 2000s as a freedom and rights-based approach to security (Sen 2000; Ogata and Cels 2003). Such a definition can serve as the linchpin for consideration around climate and security (Vivekananda 2022; IISD 2015).

To prevent humanitarian actors from being co-opted, it would be highly beneficial to establish a clear and distinct definition of human security

Blood, sweat and tears - the colonial denominator

Asked about the “elephant in the room” when it comes to climate finance – vulnerable countries allegedly being debt- and corruption stricken –, Mia Mottley, the Prime Minister of Barbados, took the colonial past as a starting point of her response: “When our blood, sweat and tears finance the industrial revolution, and the industrial revolution then causes the climate crisis and then I have to pay for the consequences of the climate crisis because of the industrial revolution financed by our blood, sweat and tears, then I think they have no moral authority to tell me anything about the financing of the climate crisis or about why we don’t have enough.”

It is of utmost importance for humanitarians to imagine new futures. But for those futures to be just, the past needs to be taken into account. There is no “zero point” (Castro-Gómez 2005), no blank slate, from which to begin with. The histories of humanitarians are intimately entangled with those of affected populations (Rejali 2020). Often, they build upon histories of violence and conflict that create the frameworks of contemporary conflicts, too.

To use Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s metaphor of “re-membering” (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o 2009), the past, the present and the future can no longer be conceived in a dis-membered way, but have to be “re-membered” for the transformation necessary to face the humanitarian fallout of the climate crisis.

Referring to differing conceptions of what constitutes past, present and future, scholars have scrutinized the “colonization of time in policy-making through the dominant concepts of climate history(ies) and climate future(s) as a colonial practice of knowledge production in global climate governance” (Wilkins and Datchoua-Tirvaudey 2022). Interpreted through that prism, one could argue that humanitarians presently use mental models of time inherited from colonialism that better fit the existing humanitarian project and funding cycle than what the situations at hand demand. Grounding humanitarian decision-making and actions in a triangulation of past, present and future actions would be one way to facilitate the necessary transformations.

3. Mandates

The increasing intensity and frequency of climate change-related disasters and their compounded effects are raising questions about the mandate of humanitarian organisations. In essence, the individual mandate defines 1) the scope of action of a humanitarian organisation, in technical and legal terms, and 2) the beneficiary on whose behalf the action is performed (Doctors without Borders n.d.; Slim and Bradley 2013).

The humanitarian mandate typically involves providing emergency assistance and relief operations to people affected by acute, sudden-onset and slow-onset crises. The duration and depth of the intervention distinguish it from longer-term and more far-reaching development projects. Most aid organisations are multi-mandated, providing humanitarian relief and development assistance.

The challenges posed by the climate crisis can be seen as a prime example of implementing the Humanitarian-Development Nexus. This concept involves the integration and harmonization of different types of mandates and operations to realise joint collective outcomes. In particular, when discussing the humanitarian principle of humanity, the climate crisis is the global dynamic that prompts a re-evaluation of the suitability solely addressing immediate suffering. It also raises concerns about potentially condemning people to “ongoing and repeated suffering within an environment that has irrevocably changed by climate” (Clarke and Parris 2022).

Extending the humanitarian mandate to a broader and more integrated response can facilitate coherent action in the climate sector. However, this increased integration may also lead to more trade-offs, as cautioned by single-mandated humanitarian organisations. Under the nexus umbrella, principled humanitarian action is faced with the possible risk of being co-opted into government-led responses, potentially serving military objectives that are inconsistent with the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence (Hövelmann 2020; Steinke 2021).

Following the recognition of conflict as the paradigmatic challenge impacting the humanitarian sector, the humanitarian community initiated discussions and operationalisations of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP or Triple) Nexus as an extension of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus from 2016 onwards (Südhoff, Hövelmann, and Steinke 2020). Subsequently, organisations called for the inclusion of climate change within the HDP Nexus. Mena et al. favour this option over the addition of climate change as a distinct fourth element to the nexus, as the latter “risks fragmenting, rather than linking and integrating, sustainability priorities from global to local scales” (Mena et al. 2022). The discussions surrounding extending the humanitarian assistance mandate to en-

compass non-human life within the framework of planetary health, as introduced earlier in this paper, is one way to more coherently integrate climate change adaptation, mitigation and advocacy into the mandate of humanitarianism.

One of the central aspects of mandate-related discussions is the temporal dimension of the humanitarian mandate. Concerning the entry point for humanitarian assistance in a crisis, the concept and practise of anticipatory action have made a lot of headway in recent years. This approach encourages humanitarian actors to adopt a more proactive and forward-thinking stance. It aims to engage early, with the dual objectives of mitigating or even preventing disasters from escalating and avoiding being overwhelmed by unpreventable disasters. While there is considerable focus and discourse on the outset of a disaster or crisis, less attention is given to the equally important question of when a crisis is considered to be concluded.

The current design of the humanitarian sector is still very much focused on the present.

Nevertheless, the current design, self-concept and operation methods of the humanitarian sector are still very much focused on the present. It often fails to

draw insights from the past to address current challenges and lacks forward-thinking in constructing positive scenarios for the future. This propensity is exacerbated by the oftentimes apolitical nature of humanitarian assistance, where the act of envisioning positive future change is already construed as a political act in contradiction to humanitarian principles.

Scholars have stressed that the humanitarian epistemologies of the future are often framed in the “emergency imaginary” (Calhoun 2010; Opitz and Tellmann 2015). “This notion of “emergency” then tends to “defuturize” – or empty – the future because it presents us with a heightened sense of discontinuity, rendering the future more contingent” (Brun 2016). Places like Za’atari, Kutupalong and Kakuma, large encampments of displaced people often persisting for decades, are spatial testaments, the most tangible embodiments, of a humanitarian sector being “stuck in the present” (Brun 2016). From the perspective of humanitarianism there is no history and no future in those camps, only the present. This perspective is backed by quantitative data. Protracted forced displacement crises already last 26 years on average (UNHCR 2015). Climate change is projected to amplify that.

Climate change and its consequences, exemplified by the increasing recurrence, frequency and extent of extreme weather phenomena such as droughts, floods and heat-

waves, will likely result in a seamless merging of one crisis to the next. This may evolve into the “new normal” of humanitarian crisis for decades to come. In the stakeholder consultations, it has become evident that the current time frames within which humanitarian assistance operates do not align well with the realities and dynamics at hand. Moreover, they often do not synchronize with the temporalities of funding cycles. To adequately tackle the challenges the climate crisis poses, humanitarian assistance must adopt a perspective that encompasses longer timeframes.

On one hand, the temporal limitations are due to the need to avoid potential abuses of humanitarian aid for political ends. On the other hand, it's the short-term, project-cycle-driven financial framework imposed by donor governments that hinders the ability to design humanitarian interventions for longer periods of time.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), as a component of the humanitarian mandate, suggests a commitment to investing in the future and thus, adopting longer-term approaches. However, when it comes to adaptation, “any ‘longer-term humanitarian measure’ does not in itself constitute climate change adaptation. Transforming the conditions, relations and processes that cause vulnera-

bility will often require changes in the way humanitarian interventions are planned and designed” (Nagoda, Eriksen, and Hetland 2017).

Another potential path that climate change and the escalating future needs may drive the humanitarian sector toward is retreating to the narrowly defined core mandate of humanitarian action. In practise, this may entail only reacting when disasters occur, strictly confining interventions to emergency relief and abstaining from any mid- or long-term activities and solutions to the crisis at hand. A swift transition to interventions by collaborating with development organisations – in the spirit of coherency as suggested by the nexus approach – would be facilitated.

Both scenarios – extending or reducing the mandate of humanitarian action – are only feasible when some form of Nexus thinking (DuBois 2020) forms the basis for humanitarian assistance. This implies, for example, the inclusion of coherent risk analysis to assess the potential effects of humanitarian action on the objectives of the development sector and peace initiatives. In particular, the climate-conflict nexus requires greater scrutiny and evidence from humanitarian programming.

Climate and conflict

When analysing the different mandates of aid organisations and their relationalities to each other under the HDP nexus umbrella, conflict plays an increasing role. The intricate relationship between climate change and conflict dynamics has been the subject of much academic and policy research in the past (Mena et al. 2022). Because of the complexity and multicausality of conflict, there is weak evidence for a monocausal link between climate change and conflict. However, most research concludes that climate change indirectly impacts and increases conflicts. The impacts of a diverse range of events related to climate change, such as sea level rise, increase in temperature and the frequency of extreme weather events, are projected to cascade into all sectors of human and non-human life. Climate change amplifies existing societal inequalities and other economic, social and political risk factors that negatively impact the ability of societies and actors to both avoid and mediate violent conflict. Climate change multiplies risks and threats and aggravates conflict on all levels, from larger inter-state conflicts to smaller violence in and between communities. In displacement contexts, for example, climate change exacerbates conflicts over land, water, and other resources between displaced populations and host communities.

From a humanitarian perspective, this is particularly relevant because 80 per cent of all humanitarian need is already driven by conflict (World Bank Group 2020). UN organisations expect

climate change to further exacerbate this (UN OCHA 2016). In 2019, 13 of the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change had a Humanitarian Response Plan in place and were also affected by conflict and violence (Peters et al. 2020). 80 per cent of those affected by disasters triggered by natural hazards often subsumed under the misleading term “natural disasters”, live in conflict-affected environments (World Bank Group 2020). Half of the countries with a UN peacekeeping mission currently in place are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts (Black et al. 2022). “Countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change also saw 95 per cent of all conflict-related displacements in 2021” (UN OCHA 2022).

Conflict, especially violent conflict, does have direct effects on climate as well. The escalation of war can put more pressure on the environment and biodiversity and accelerate the climate crisis by targeting fossil fuel infrastructures, emitting CO₂ through military production and exertion and investing financial and human resources in military mobilisation instead of climate mitigation and adaptation.

All of these facts call for more scrutiny and evidence on the inter-workings of climate change and conflict from and through humanitarians as the ones mandated to deal with the output and the consequences of climate change and conflict.

4. Operations

The operational level of humanitarian assistance is the most concrete arena of necessary change-making. In recent years, significant progress has already been made, most notably in the field of foresight and anticipation. Earlier discussions and conceptualisations surrounding vulnerability, resilience programming and Disaster Risk Reduction made headway and provided the grounds for preventive action.

The sector has invested in shifting some of its focus from responsive to preventive ways of working (Marin and Naess 2017). Anticipatory Action is a convolute of acts consisting of three basic elements: trigger, signifying when and where a certain crisis is about to happen, Early Action protocols setting preventive measures in motion, and Forecast-based Financing (FFB) as a financial mechanism that sets in before a crisis happens.

To further build on the comparative advantage of Anticipatory Action, stakeholders from humanitarian NGOs, during a workshop convened by CHA in June 2022, put forward recommendations. These suggestions include the synchronisation of contingency planning with early warning systems, the strengthening of referral systems from humanitarian to development assistance, and the practising of hot spot mapping for a coherent assessment of different types of crises in a certain region and their interrelations.

The challenges posed by the climate crisis underscore the growing importance of localisation.

Moreover, the delegation of early warning and early action systems to local structures has been repeatedly mentioned as one way to realise policy objectives subsumed under the frame “localisation of humanitarian aid”. This approach can serve as a gateway to more equality, ownership and participation in tackling humanitarian crises as a whole. Additionally, it offers an opportunity to reduce the carbon footprint of humanitarian organisations. If anything, the challenges posed by the climate crisis underscore the growing importance of localisation. It signifies the possibility and necessity of a mutual exchange of experiences and skills, while simultaneously shifting resources and decision-making power to local entities.

The Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR) has recently launched a call to action for decision-makers to scale up and enable structures necessary for locally-led Anticipatory Action (Nick 2023).

Another humanitarian issue area that demands positive and necessary changes is the greening of organisational

operations. Many humanitarian organisations have already issued self-enforcing regulations aimed at reducing their environmental footprint. These measures encompass efforts to reduce travel, minimize the unnecessary importance of resources, abstain from investing in harmful energy production, and also consider the secondary emissions stemming from financial flows and investments.

A positive example of inter-organisational coordination is the Humanitarian Environment Network (Reseau Environnement Humanitaire REH), established in France in 2012. The network positions itself as a platform for sharing experiences, developing tools and advocating for the integration of environmental considerations within the humanitarian sector. Under its umbrella, eleven French NGOs committed to reducing their emissions by 50 per cent by 2030.

On the donor side, DG ECHO launched the Minimum Environmental Requirements and Recommendations in 2020, aiming to promote an environmentally sustainable approach across projects, programmes and the organisation itself (‘DG ECHO’s Approach to Reducing the Environmental Footprint of Humanitarian Aid’ n.d.). Although some of these measures have already been implemented, the DG ECHO requirements are expected to be fully operational and obligatory for organisations receiving DG ECHO funding, spanning organisational and project levels, as well as initiatives for greening DG ECHO itself, by 2024.

Beyond the efforts to make the current humanitarian approach more environmentally friendly, the standing operating procedures of humanitarian assistance are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These procedures need to be part of the adaptation processes, encompassing areas such as humanitarian supply chains and shelter solutions.

The operational domain is also the one where institutional and organisational barriers become evident. Stakeholder consultations have identified a series of factors that hinder humanitarian organisations from driving the necessary changes to address the challenges posed by climate change: change fatigue and a certain inertia within the system and among its practitioners staff shortages and disruptive turnover, a lack of expertise in the field of climate change, silos within organisations, particularly between humanitarian and development departments, similar silos within donor organisations and financial dependencies, ineffective and exclusive decision-making processes and leadership issues. While these assessments may be seen as general impediments

to humanitarian change, not specific to climate change, the importance of individual organisational readiness cannot be overstated. The climate crisis has been characterised as a leadership crisis, as addressing the enor-

mous challenges connected to climate change requires decisive and courageous leadership (Owen-Burge 2021; '1.5 Degree Climate Pledge "on Life Support" | UN News 2022).

5. Summary

The evidence on climate change is clear and unequivocal (Pförtner et al. 2022). The climate crisis and its severe effects on the livelihoods and well-being of humankind will increasingly dictate the dynamics and priorities of international aid. There will be more disasters, they will occur more frequently and their overall impact on societies will increase. The humanitarian sector will be faced with cascading and compounding risks, including its own responses becoming risks themselves.

1,5 degrees of global warming is a critical planetary boundary (Armstrong McKay et al. 2022). Humanitarian aid must invest in mitigation measures to reduce emissions, adaptation measures to support regions and communities in adjusting to the consequences of global warming and take a stance in Loss and Damage, addressing the responsibilities for situations that can no longer be mitigated or adapted to.

As the challenges increase, the resources to adequately face them are becoming scarcer. Germany, the world's second-largest humanitarian donor, for example, is facing budget cuts of about one-third in humanitarian assistance next year. Consequently, decisions regarding the allocation of resources, crisis prioritisation, and the priority given to different groups of people with a crisis are pending.

As this paper's inquiry into the issue related to norms and principles, mandates and operations has suggested, adequately addressing the challenges posed by the climate crisis may require more than mere reform and a reduction in the environmental footprint. Instead, it may necessitate profound institutional and collaborative change.

Humanitarian actors consistently stress that solving the climate crisis and adapting to its negative effects is not the sole responsibility of, nor should it be solely burdened upon, humanitarian action. However, as the sector is closely linked to the devastating consequences of climate change and mandated to alleviate the suffering of those affected, the humanitarian sector has a significant stake in the game.

Imagining and creating new forms of alliances within the sector and with other sectors is one aspect of an appro-

priate and integrated response to the climate crisis. This crisis informs the debate about the boundaries of the humanitarian mandate and its connectivity to other aid sectors, such as development assistance, and broadens and contextualizes familiar nexus discussions.

Collaborative efforts and self-imposed commitments, such as those under the umbrella of the Humanitarian Environment Network in France, are another piece of the puzzle. Localisation is integral not only to greening aid but also to addressing questions of ownership, power sharing and responsibilities, while also providing affected communities with expertise and financial resources to face climate change. In terms of the normative dimension of humanitarian aid, the climate crisis presents an opportunity to examine and re-evaluate the founding principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence – for their adequacy and consistency in the era of the climate crisis and the "new normal" of prolonged crises it will bring.

Given the increasing protractedness of crises intensified by climate change, humanitarian actors are advised to consider adapting the timelines of programming cycles. Building on the change-making underway in terms of anticipatory humanitarian action and extending the temporal framework beyond operational practices to encompass normative considerations and mandate questions can help liberate the humanitarian sector from being "stuck in the present". The temporal dimension has the potential to stimulate humanitarian discussions about past responsibilities, such as those within the ongoing Loss and Damage debates, as well as discussions about a positive humanitarian vision of the future and the role of humanitarian engagement in co-creating this future. For its own benefit, the humanitarian sector will benefit from positive scenarios to work towards and thrive in.

Regardless of whether the whole sector or individual organisations within it choose to expand or reduce the humanitarian mandate, one way or another, skilling-up, scaling-up and futuring-up will be the core paradigms of the humanitarian future in a planetary system severely affected by climate change.

Endnotes

- 1 The INFORM Climate Change Risk Index provides “quantified estimates of the impacts of climate change on the future risk of humanitarian crises and disaster”.
- 2 UNICEF has recently established the Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI), ranking countries “based on children’s exposure to climate and environmental shocks”

Bibliography

- 1.5 Degree Climate Pledge “on Life Support”, Guterres Tells Leaders during Frank Exchanges | UN News. 2022. 21 September 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1127381>
- Ali, Degan, and Marie-Rose Romain Murphy. 2020. Black Lives Matter Is Also a Reckoning for Foreign Aid and International NGOs. OpenDemocracy (blog). 19 July 2020. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/black-lives-matter-also-reckoning-foreign-aid-and-international-ngos/>
- Armstrong McKay, David I., Arie Staal, Jesse F. Abrams, Ricarda Winkelmann, Boris Sakschewski, Sina Loriani, Ingo Fetzer, Sarah E. Cornell, Johan Rockström, and Timothy M. Lenton. 2022. Exceeding 1.5°C Global Warming Could Trigger Multiple Climate Tipping Points. *Science* 377 (6611): eabn7950. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abn7950>
- Barnett, Michael N., ed. 2020. *Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A World of Differences? Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108872485>
- Black, Richard, Joshua Busby, Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Cedric de Coning, Hafsa Maalim, Claire McAllister, Melvis Ndiloseh, et al. 2022. *Environment of Peace: Security in a New Era of Risk*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://doi.org/10.55163/LCLS7037>
- Bosch, Tim, and Kira Vinke. 2022. Integrating Climate in Germany’s National Security Strategy | DGAP. 2022. <https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/integrating-climate-germanys-national-security-strategy>
- Brun, Cathrine. 2016. There Is No Future in Humanitarianism: Emergency, Temporality and Protracted Displacement. *History and Anthropology* 27 (August): 393–410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2016.1207637>
- Calhoun, Craig. 2010. The Idea of Emergency: Humanitarian Action and Global (Dis)Order. In *Contemporary States of Emergency. The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions.*, 29–58. New York: Zone Books.
- Castro-Gómez, Santiago. 2005. *La hybris del punto cero: ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816)*. 1. ed. Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.
- Clarke, Matthew, and Brett W Parris. 2022. Do Humanitarian Principles Still Fit Their Purpose? Suggested Values for a New Global Environment, *TRC Journal of Humanitarian Action*, 1(2). <https://trcjha.com/?p=901>
- COP27: “Zero Tolerance for Greenwashing”, Guterres Says as New Report Cracks down on Empty Net-Zero Pledges | UN News. 2022. 8 November 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130317>
- CPHP. n.d. What is planetary health? | CPHP | Centre for Planetary Health Policy. Accessed 22 January 2023. <https://cphp-berlin.de/en/focus-areas/what-is-planetary-health/>
- Cutts, Mark. 1998. Politics and Humanitarianism. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 17 (1): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/17.1.1-b>
- Dehm, Julia. 2020. Climate Change, “Slow Violence” and the Indefinite Deferral of Responsibility for “Loss and Damage”. *Griffith Law Review* 29 (2): 220–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10383441.2020.1790101>

- DG ECHO's Approach to Reducing the Environmental Footprint of Humanitarian Aid. n.d. Accessed 11 March 2023. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/climate-change-and-environment/dg-echos-approach-reducing-environmental-footprint-humanitarian-aid_en
- Doctors without Borders | The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law. n.d. Accessed 9 March 2023. <https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/mandate/>
- DuBois, Marc. 2020. The Triple Nexus - Threat or Opportunity for Humanitarian Principles? Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-05-discussionpaper-triple-nexus-threat-opportunity-humanitarian-principles-dubois-1.pdf>
- Geneva: UN Must Recognize the Right to a Healthy Environment'. 2021. Amnesty International. 13 September 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/09/geneva-un-must-recognize-the-right-to-a-healthy-environment/>
- German Federal Government. 2023. National Security Strategy: Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany.
- Glasman, Joël. 2020. Humanitarianism and the Quantification of Human Needs: Minimal Humanity. London.
- Global Public Policy Institute. 2021. Follow the Money: Investing in Crisis Prevention. <https://followthemoney.gppi.net>
- Healy, Sean. 2021. Neutrality: Principle or Tool? Humanitarian Practice Network (blog). 19 August 2021. <https://odihpn.org/publication/neutrality-principle-or-tool/>
- Herbeck, Johannes. 2013. Am Rande Der Klimabewegung - Humanitäre Organisationen. In: Die Internationale Klimabewegung. Ein Handbuch, 449–65. Springer VS Wiesbaden. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-01970-9>
- Hövelmann, Sonja. 2020. Triple Nexus in Pakistan: catering to a governmental narrative or enabling independent humanitarian action? Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/triple-nexus-in-pakistan/>
- Hövelmann, Sonja, and Ralf Südhoff. 2022. Discussion Paper: Deutschland Auf Seinem Langen Weg Vom Payer Zum Player – Internationale Wahrnehmungen Deutscher Humanitärer Hilfe'. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. https://www.chaberlin.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2022/11/cha-discussion-paper-vom-payer-zum-player-f-web.pdf
- IISD. 2015. Policy Brief: Human Security and Climate Change | SDG Knowledge Hub | IISD. 2015. <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/policy-briefs/human-security-and-climate-change/>
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC). 2023. Global Report on Internal Displacement. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023/>
- Kahlen, Lucas. 2022. Koalition Braucht Dringend Einheitliche Klima-Außenpolitik. NewClimate Institute. 2022. <https://newclimate.org/news/koalition-braucht-dringend-einheitliche-klima-aussenpolitik>
- Marin, Andrei, and Lars Otto Naess. 2017. Climate Change Adaptation Through Humanitarian Aid? Promises, Perils and Potentials of the "New Humanitarianism". IDS Bulletin 48 (4). <https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2017.150>
- Mayer, Benoit. 2016. The Relevance of the No-Harm Principle to Climate Change Law and Politics. SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2914121>
- Mena, Rodrigo, Summer Brown, Laura E. R. Peters, Ilan Kelman, and Hyeonggeun Ji. 2022. Connecting Disasters and Climate Change to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, November 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166221129633>
- Mierop, Ed Schenkenberg van. 2015. Coming Clean on Neutrality and Independence: The Need to Assess the Application of Humanitarian Principles. International Review of the Red Cross 97 (897–898): 295–318. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S181638311500065X>

- Nagoda, Sigrid, Siri Eriksen, and Øivind Hetland. 2017. What Does Climate Change Adaptation Mean for Humanitarian Assistance? Guiding Principles for Policymakers and Practitioners. *COURTING CATASTROPHE? HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND PRACTICE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE*, IDS Bulletin, 48 (4).
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. 2009. *Re-Membering Africa*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Nick. 2023. Scaling up Locally-Led Anticipatory Action - so That No One Is Left Behind. GNDP (blog). 16 March 2023. <https://www.gndp.org/scaling-up-locally-led-anticipatory-action-so-that-no-one-is-left-behind/>
- Ogata, Sadako, and Johan Cels. 2003. Human Security—Protecting and Empowering the People. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 9 (3): 273–82. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-00903002>
- Opitz, Sven, and Ute Tellmann. 2015. Future Emergencies: Temporal Politics in Law and Economy. *Theory, Culture & Society* 32 (2): 107–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276414560416>
- Owen-Burge, Charlotte. 2021. Dr Katharine Wilkinson: “The Climate Crisis Is a Leadership Crisis”. *Climate Champions*. 21 July 2021. <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/dr-katharine-wilkinson-the-climate-crisis-is-a-leadership-crisis/>
- Past Eight Years Confirmed to Be the Eight Warmest on Record. 2023. 11 January 2023. <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/past-eight-years-confirmed-be-eight-warmest-record>
- Peters, Katie, Mairi Dupar, Sarah Opitz-Stapleton, Emma Lovell, Mirianna Budimir, Sarah Brown, and Yue Cao. 2020. *Climate Change, Conflict and Fragility: An Evidence Review and Recommendations for Research and Action*. London: ODI <https://odi.org/en/publications/climate-change-conflict-and-fragility-an-evidence-review-and-recommendations-for-research-and-action/>
- Pförtner, H.-O., D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, and M. Tignor. 2022. IPCC Summary for Policymakers. *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. IPCC. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009325844.001>
- PIK. 2023. *Wissenschaft in Davos Im Vordergrund — Potsdam-Institut Für Klimafolgenforschung*. 2023. <https://www.pik-potsdam.de/de/aktuelles/nachrichten/wissenschaft-steht-in-davos-im-vordergrund>
- Pohl, Benjamin. 2022. *National Security Means Addressing the Climate Crisis*. 2022. <https://fourninesecurity.de/2022/11/13/national-security-means-addressing-the-climate-crisis>
- Rejali, Saman. 2020. *Race, Equity, and Neo-Colonial Legacies: Identifying Paths Forward for Principled Humanitarian Action*. *Humanitarian Law & Policy Blog* (blog). 16 July 2020. <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2020/07/16/race-equity-neo-colonial-legacies-humanitarian/>
- Richardson, Katherine, Will Steffen, Wolfgang Lucht, Jørgen Bendtsen, Sarah E. Cornell, Jonathan F. Donges, Markus Drüke, et al. 2023. *Earth beyond Six of Nine Planetary Boundaries*. *Science Advances* 9 (37): eadh2458. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adh2458>
- Rockström, Johan. 2022. *Leading the Charge through Earth’s New Normal*. *World Economic Forum*. 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2023/sessions/leading-the-charge-through-earths-new-normal/>
- Sen, Amartya. 2000. *Why Human Security?* <https://www.ucipfg.com/Repositorio/MCSH/MCSH-05/BLOQUE-ACADEMICO/Unidad-01/complementarias/3.pdf>
- Slim, Hugo. 2021. *COP 26: It’s Time to Pivot from War Aid to Climate Aid – Opinion – Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre*. 2021. <https://www.climatecentre.org/7150/cop-26-its-time-to-pivot-from-war-aid-to-climate-aid-opinion/>
- . 2022. *Solferino 21: Warfare, Civilians and Humanitarians in the Twenty-First Century*. C. Hurst (Publishers) Limited. <https://books.google.de/books?id=vKOjzGEACAAJ>
- . 2023. *Is it right to count humanitarian aid as loss and damage?* *The Humanitarian Blog - a joint initiative by the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) and the Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA)* 29 August 2023. <https://www.chaberlin.org/blog/is-it-right-to-count-humanitarian-aid-as-loss-and-damage-2/>

- Slim, Hugo, and Miriam Bradley. 2013. Principled Humanitarian Action & Ethical Tensions in Multi-Mandate Organizations in Armed Conflict. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/Slim,%20WV%20Multi-Mandate%20Ethics%20FinalDraft.pdf
- Smieszek, Magdalena. 2022. Climate Justice and Solidarity Rights: Peace, Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and a Healthy Environment. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 17 (3): 379–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166221133709>
- Söderberg, Mattias, and Paul Knox Clarke. 2022. Aid and Activism Need to Join Forces on Climate “Loss and Damage” | Context. 2022. <https://www.context.news/climate-risks/opinion/aid-and-activism-need-to-join-forces-on-climate-loss-and-damage>
- Steinke, Andrea. 2021. Triple Nexus in Mali: Coordination, Securitisation and Blurred Lines. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/the-triple-nexus-in-mali-coordination-securitisation-and-blurred-lines/>
- . 2022. At a Turning Point – Climate Change and the Responsibilities of Humanitarian Actors. *Public Anthropologist* (blog). 16 October 2022. <https://publicanthropologist.cmi.no/2022/10/16/climate-change-is-the-game-change-to-the-humanitarian-world/>
- Steinke, Andrea, and Sonja Hövelmann. 2023. Loss and Damage – a Humanitarian Kairos Moment. *Humanitarian Practice Network*. 3 October 2023. <https://odihpn.org/publication/loss-and-damage-a-humanitarian-kairos-moment/>
- Südhoff, Ralf, Sonja Hövelmann, and Andrea Steinke. 2020. The Triple Nexus in Practice: Challenges and Options for Multi-Mandated Organisations. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/the-triple-nexus-in-practice-challenges-and-options-for-multi-mandated-organisations-2/>
- UN OCHA. 2012. OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles. https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf
- . 2022. Global Humanitarian Overview 2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2023-enaresfr>
- UNHCR. 2015. *Global Trends Forced Displacement 2015*. UNHCR.
- United Nations’ High-Level Expert Group. 2022. Integrity Matters: Net Zero Commitments by Businesses, Financial Institutions, Cities and Regions. https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/high-level_expert_group_n7b.pdf
- Vivekananda, Janani. 2022. Why Climate Change Matters for Human Security. United Nations University. https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8836/UNUUNEP_Vivekananda_RHER.pdf
- Wilkens, Jan, and Alvine R C Datchoua-Tirvaudey. 2022. Researching Climate Justice: A Decolonial Approach to Global Climate Governance. *International Affairs* 98 (1): 125–43. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaab209>
- World Bank Group. 2020. *World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence 2020–2025*. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/844591582815510521/World-Bank-Group-Strategy-for-Fragility-Conflict-and-Violence-2020-2025>
- World Economy Set to Lose up to 18% GDP from Climate Change If No Action Taken, Reveals Swiss Re Institute’s Stress-Test Analysis | Swiss Re. 2021. 22 April 2021. <https://www.swissre.com/media/press-release/nr-20210422-economics-of-climate-change-risks.html>
- World Faces “Climate Apartheid” Risk, 120 More Million in Poverty: UN Expert | UN News. 2019. 25 June 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1041261>
- Xu, Chi, Timothy A. Kohler, Timothy M. Lenton, Jens-Christian Svenning, and Marten Scheffer. 2020. Future of the Human Climate Niche. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117 (21): 11350–55. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1910114117>

Imprint

© Centre for Humanitarian Action, November 2023.

About the author:

Dr Andrea Steinke is a research fellow at the Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA). She leads the research project on Climate Change and Humanitarian Change as well as the project on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace-Nexus. Her research interests include the anthropology of humanitarianism, the temporalities of humanitarian action and the dynamics of stabilisation and securitisation.

Recommended Citation

Steinke, Andrea. 2023. Climate change and humanitarian change. Challenging norms, mandates and practices. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action.

Other CHA Publications

CHA, and GELI. 2023. Leadership and humanitarian change – why more collaboration and transformation is needed. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/leadership-and-humanitarian-change/>

Hövelmann, Sonja. and Ralf Südhoff 2023. Principled Payer, but Purposeful Player? Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/principled-payer-but-purposeful-player-2/>

Kreidler, C., Hövelmann, S. and Spencer, A. 2023. Germany's rise as a humanitarian donor: the interplay of narratives, new foreign policy ambition and domestic interests. HPG working paper. London: ODI <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/germanys-rise-as-a-humanitarian-donor/>

Pellowska, Darina. 2023: "Localisation in practice – facilitating equitable partnership in humanitarian project management". Berlin, Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/localisation-in-practice/>

Steinke, Andrea, and Sonja Hövelmann. 2021. Whose Health Matters: Trust and Mistrust in Humanitarian Crisis and Global Health Interventions. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/whose-health-matters-2/>

Südhoff, Ralf, and Berit Reich. 2023. World Food Crisis – why it has little to do with Russia's attack on Ukraine and how it can be addressed. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/world-food-crisis/>

Südhoff, Ralf, Sonja Hövelmann, and Andrea Steinke. 2020. The Triple Nexus in Practice: Challenges and Options for Multi-Mandated Organisations. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/the-triple-nexus-in-practice-challenges-and-options-for-multi-mandated-organisations-2/>

Westland, Eddo. 2023. Humanitarian Topic explained: Forgotten Crisis. Berlin: Centre for Humanitarian Action. <https://www.chaberlin.org/en/publications/forgotten-crises-to-go/>



CHA - Centre for Humanitarian Action e.V.

Wallstrasse 15a
10179 Berlin
+49 (0)30 2864 5701
info@chaberlin.org

November 2023