

Headline messages from ‘Building a Resilient Future’ prepared for the United Nations Secretary General’s Climate Action Summit

On 22nd September, over 50 organizations collaborated on the [Building a Resilient Future](#) held at the New School. Commitments from over 900 delegates spotlighted urgent proactive resilience building approaches in support of the UN Climate Action Summit.

Incremental change is insufficient. These actions and initiatives need to be urgently scaled to accelerate transformation towards a resilient future that serves the most vulnerable communities and those most impacted by climate change and related systemic stresses. **If we fail on these commitments, we fail on the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.**

Mainstreaming evidence on best practice will deliver sustainable climate, health and livelihood outcomes.

- The evidence base of practices, methods and tools that promote equitable and inclusive resilience building is growing. Global initiatives, such as [BRACED](#) the “Commission on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification (SAI) or the [EAT-Lancet Commission](#) and [Resilience Insights Report 2019](#) are showing how systems can be transformed to deliver sustainable climate, health and livelihood outcomes. This knowledge must be mainstreamed.

Early warning systems will be critical for saving lives under climate uncertainty.

- Early warning and action systems are and will increasingly be critical to help save lives, protect assets, and lower costs of responding to humanitarian consequences of shocks.

Nature based solutions are the foundation of resilience to climate change.

- Nature-based Solutions (NbS) that conserve, sustainably manage and restore natural ecosystems offer flexibility and adaptation to a range of climate change impacts. In urban areas NbS provide cost-effective solutions for multiple climate hazards simultaneously, in locations where many people are at risk.

Accelerating the transformation of food systems to sustainably, healthily and equitably feed the planet is critical

- Food systems are our most tangible leverage points for addressing climate change. Research, policy and business are initiating collaborative action at multiple scales to assess the potential of multiple transformative pathways.

Social equity, empowered stakeholders – especially the youth – are integral to transformation.

- Our success in the uptake of resilience building actions hinges on ensuring that social equity and empowered stakeholders are integral to the processes. If we invest in technology but don’t invest in community cohesion and adaptation our efforts will be worthless.

Inclusive Actions (involving youth, women, people living with disabilities, and indigenous communities) where local communities are agents of a resilient future are fundamental to sustainable change.

- Social capital (e.g. community cohesion) is an essential ingredient for resilience to climate and conflict risks as well as to design integrative resilience interventions programming.
- By valuing and supporting traditional knowledge and governance systems in local communities we can catalyse transformative changes on the ground, especially when complemented with science and supported by NGOs, private sector and policymakers.
- We need to acknowledge and speak to both formal and informal power structures as they are key to building peace
- Mercy Corps has brought communities of pastoralists in the Sahel together, turning climate change into a catalyst for peace, a common enemy of pastoralist communities Climate change provides an intersectional perspective from which to seek innovative sustainability transformations.
- Communication and ICT is a powerful and critical enabler for community resilience, to communicate risks, for early warning systems, and to build social cohesion.

Embedding resilience in National planning and policies by Governments, IFIs and investors is imperative for addressing integrated climate and conflict risks

- We need to remove barriers to Nature Based Solutions (NbS) in policy and regulations. To this end, governments need to move from single- to multi-purpose infrastructure. This can be done by using comprehensive cost-benefit frameworks that allow adequate calculations of the many co-benefits of NbS for climate resilience.
- Human security challenges of today are hard security problems of tomorrow. We must build institutional capacities for cooperative resource management among communities that do not cooperate. National adaptation plans (NAPs) are an important tool and way forward in understanding integrated climate and conflict risks. Next steps lies in making NAPs coherent across national boundaries.

Getting money to where it matters and support the actions of grassroots communities on building a sustainable and resilient future.

- While LDCs are the most affected by climate change, support does not reach communities that need it the most. In order to become agents of positive change, communities need control over their own funding and not have to rely on short-term programs or projects.
- Community-driven funds – such as SDI’s Urban Poor Fund International – give the urban poor direct control over development and climate funding.
- To simplify the access to funding we need to improve communities’ technological capacity, decentralise financial instruments, and aggregate local-level interventions to reduce transition costs.
- To finance climate change resilience we need to move away from short-term programs and projects, and strive for structural and systemic change at the country level.
- For funding to reach the most critical areas, we need to monitor and value impacts in fragile and vulnerable contexts. These need to be followed over the long-term, as interventions often outlast project funding timeframes.

- Building equality is not only a question of finance as money alone cannot bring empowerment. We need to direct funds to the Global South, lead organisations must be Southern and address southern needs/gaps with programmes like the [Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change \(LUCCC\)](#) initiative.

Strengthened partnerships and collaborations will break down silos and barriers.

- The Ocean Resilience and Risk Action Alliance (ORRAA) is a multi-stakeholder collaboration between governments, financial institutions, the insurance industry, environmental organizations and stakeholders from the Global South. It seeks to unlock and incentivize private investments and blended finance into coastal natural capital in LDCs and SIDS to pioneer ground-breaking products that both address ocean risk and build resilience.
- Mercy Corps partners with the private sector to provide social investment funds to small enterprises.