

# PLANET PREPARE

*“Climate change is expected to cause more severe and more frequent natural hazards. As our cities and coasts grow more vulnerable, these hazards can lead to disasters that are far worse than those we have seen to date. We have a moral, social and economic obligation to build resilience by 2015. Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action will also help us reach the Millennium Development Goals.”* <sup>(3)</sup>

—Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, 2007

**Sundarbans, Bangladesh:** The world's largest mangrove forest is threatened by climate change and rising sea levels

Photo: Phillip Gain

## Executive Summary

*“There is a window of opportunity for avoiding the most damaging climate change impacts, but that window is closing: the world has less than a decade to change course. Actions taken – or not taken – ... will have a profound bearing on the future ... The world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities ... What is missing is a sense of urgency, human solidarity and collective interest.”* (2007/2008 Human Development Report) <sup>(4)</sup>

**Planet Prepare:** The negative effects of climate change are becoming more and more evident not least for those poor communities living in coastal areas across the Asia Pacific Region. Poor communities are regularly forced to live in the most inhospitable and marginalised locations which are frequently in areas most vulnerable to natural disasters. People in coastal zones in countries like Bangladesh are increasingly experiencing the double impact of rising sea levels compounded by more severe and frequent wind storms and storm surges. The two recent devastating Cyclones Nargis in Myanmar and Sidr in Bangladesh highlight the stark reality of this growing trend and the impact on vulnerable coastal populations. The causes and symptoms of climate change are well documented and rapidly gaining international prominence in macro policy dialogue. However, the immediate and imminent implications for communities World Vision works with in Asia Pacific are only

just starting to be realised. Even if greenhouse gases were reduced to zero tomorrow, an unstoppable pattern of environmental degradation and negative climatic change has been set in motion that is already severely eroding the security and livelihoods of millions of poor people across the Asia Pacific Region. This pattern of change is rapidly undoing years of development gains. Given the inertia of the Earth's climate system, the coming decades will see the climate crisis exacerbate to the detriment of poor communities. Unless there is an immediate political sea change towards decarbonising the global economy, future generations will be impacted by climate change on an order of magnitude not hereunto experienced by humanity. If decades of development gains are not to be lost to future climate disasters, development agencies and donor governments need to urgently shift the emphasis of development practice from disaster response to disaster preparedness,

including vulnerability analysis, risk reduction and the build-up of capacity and resilience at grassroots community level. More flexible organisational systems and practices that enable rapid adaptation are urgently needed, as are adaptive approaches to partnering with other organisations as co-implementers. Moreover, comprehensive disaster early warning mechanisms and long-term macro policy instruments for controlled migratory adjustments need to be innovated. Additionally, aid budgets must be refocussed towards risk reduction initiatives. The present global preparedness engagement of 4 percent (of an estimated US\$10 billion in annual humanitarian assistance) falls far short of future adaptation and "climate proofing" requirements.

**Fast Facts:** Climate change is fast converging on an unequal world. In the time it takes to read this publication – estimated at one hour – more than...

- 3.6 million barrels of oil will be consumed by the world – the majority will be burned and absorbed by the Earth's thin atmosphere <sup>(5)</sup>
- US\$ 400 million in revenue will be generated from the sale of this quantity of oil <sup>(6)</sup>
- 3.6 million metric tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) will be emitted into the atmosphere <sup>(7)</sup>
- 44 million cubic metres of meltwater will flow into the oceans from the melting of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica <sup>(8)</sup>
- 8 square kilometres of forest will be cut down, slashed or burned <sup>(9)</sup>
- 11 people in Bangladesh will lose their homes due to the effects of intensifying river erosion from the glacial meltdown in the Himalayas <sup>(10)</sup>
- 28,200 people will be affected by natural disasters <sup>(11)</sup>

**Preparedness:** As a joint publication by regional World Vision stakeholders, *Planet Prepare* explores and highlights opportunities to better protect development gains, research priorities, empower communities, partner and network together, advocate for justice, reinforce disaster defences, and educate children to be better prepared for an uncertain future. Acknowledging that as one of the leading development agencies World Vision will likely be needed more than ever before, Advocacy, Communications, Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs (HEA), and World Vision Singapore are aiming to reposition the humanitarian organisation of more than 31,000 employees in 98 nations <sup>(12)</sup> for heightened global disaster preparedness.



**Sundarbans, Bangladesh:** Regular low tide (top) and high tide (bottom)



If a cyclonic surge hits at the time of a high tide the effects are especially devastating

Photo: Johannes Luetz