

## **Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape: Baseline Study**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The United Nations Climate Resilience Initiative: Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape (A2R) is a global, UN-led, multi-stakeholder initiative that strengthens climate resilience for vulnerable countries and people. Launched in November 2015 during the 21st Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, this initiative brings together governments, international agencies, regional initiatives, the private sector, civil society and academia. A2R addresses the urgent needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Africa and other vulnerable regions.

The initiative accelerates action on key aspects of climate resilience under its three pillars:

- **Anticipate** – Increased capacity to better anticipate and act on climate hazards and stresses through early warning and early action.
- **Absorb** – Increased capacity to absorb shocks by increasing access to climate risk insurance and social protection systems.
- **Reshape** – Increased capacity to reshape development pathways by transforming economies to reduce risks and root causes of vulnerabilities and support the sound management of physical infrastructure and ecosystems to foster climate resilience.

This report is a first attempt to establish a baseline. The report seeks to outline the current status of key indicators relevant to the three pillars. It also identifies some of the challenges faced in this analysis and suggests ways of overcoming them, so that we may, in the future, be able to provide a fuller picture of progress on these three key capacities for climate resilience.

### **METHODS**

Drawing heavily from research and reporting under the auspices of intergovernmental processes, this research focused on data sources relevant to climate resilience policy. With guidance from the A2R Leadership Group, we identified existing datasets that were available for at least two-thirds of the 114 countries included as part of the study.

Overwhelmingly, available data was found in the disaster risk reduction literature, and while this information offers important insights into climate resilience, it does not adequately capture slow-onset elements.

During each stage of the research, we have been cognizant of separating inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This research has identified the existence (or lack) of various elements relevant to climate resilience across countries of interest, but much less can be said definitively about the relative effectiveness of those elements.

### FINDINGS

#### 1. Anticipate

The Anticipate pillar centers on accelerating action around the establishment and strengthening of early warning-early action systems for addressing climate risk. With a focus on enhanced preparedness and early response to the increased vulnerabilities and risks associated with climate change, this pillar reflects the fundamental need to safeguard vulnerable communities and ensure that countries have the capacity to implement effective multi-hazard early warning and early action programs.

Results suggest that countries face challenges implementing comprehensive early warning systems. At the national level, only 2 out of 81 countries with available data report that integrated early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, although 77 suggest they have made some progress toward that goal. With all 114 countries reporting on the third indicator, we found only 31 having declared a national platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. . Most countries (58) report that their early warning programs account for the most vulnerable populations, and an additional 11 report some limited progress toward that aim. Similarly, 57 countries have systems in place that take into account local or traditional knowledge, with an additional 5 showing some progress. Fifty-one (51) countries, nearly half of the total included as part of this study, report that gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery have been adopted and institutionalized. Fifty-seven (57) countries report that their warnings are timely and reach at-risk populations.

#### 2. Absorb

Climate change impacts have resulted in significant financial losses to countries, adversely impacting lives and productive assets. Costs to the insurance industry are rising, and those increases are at least in part related to climate change. The relative ability of a country to absorb these shocks is an essential component of overall climate

resilience. Two dimensions of this pillar inform the data collected in this section: climate risk transfer pools and broader social protection mechanisms.

Results show that insurance markets to reduce risks associated with climate change are still nascent. Only 40 countries report the option to insure crop and property against climate impacts. Micro-insurance schemes exist but are not prevalent, with only 34 countries reporting access. Data show that reinsurance facilities are in place in only 32 countries, highlighting a relatively weak link between local, national, and international climate insurance pools. Social protection mechanisms are also found to have limited reach in the countries of interest. Only 12 countries report that more than 50% of their most vulnerable population participates in social protection mechanisms.

### 3. Reshape

This pillar focuses on national efforts to adopt climate-resilient development pathways. Understood to be a process, the creation of a climate-resilient pathway often includes reforming institutions to better manage change within complex socio-economic systems. These changes may be incremental or transformational, and should align with broader efforts to integrate sustainable development into national priorities. With both planning and financial dimensions, reshaping development here means integrating climate resilience into building and zoning codes, shifting funding priorities, updating national planning strategies, and building partnerships with the private sector.

Of the 66 countries that were found to have accessible national development plans, 49 have incorporated climate change, although the implementation and effectiveness of these measures remains unknown. Data revealed that of 76 countries with available data, 58 report the use of integrated planning, in which elements of climate resilience capacity are included in planning frameworks. Half of the 66 countries with available data point to their use of risk sensitive regulation in land zoning and private real estate development. Even more – 60 out of a total 76 with available data – report that impacts of disaster risk are taken into account in Environmental Impact Assessments. Fifty-six out of 76 countries with available data report that impacts of disaster risk created by major development projects are assessed, while 39 out of 65 countries report that costs and benefits of disaster risk are taken into account in the design and operation of major development projects.