COP31 Side Event Concept Note

Disaster Risk Reduction in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings:
Fragility should change how we invest in resilience, not whether we invest

- Date**:** 12 November 2026
- Location**:** Mediterranean Pavilion
- Time**:** 5.45pm-6.45pm

Background

During COP31, together with several partners, Oxfam and the Union for the Mediterranean will convene a high-level roundtable entitled *Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings (FCAS).* The discussion will bring together actors from humanitarian, development, climate, academic, philanthropic and multilateral communities to explore how climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and conflict-sensitive approaches can be better integrated in some of the world's most vulnerable contexts, namely in fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS) - with the Mediterranean region serving as case example during the discussion.

Climate risk, disaster risk, and conflict risk cannot be treated separately in fragile settings. While evidence and practical solutions already exist, financing systems, institutional mandates, and policy frameworks remain fragmented and insufficiently adapted to FCAS realities. The discussion will focus on several priorities, including more flexible and long-term financing, stronger locally led approaches, better integration of adaptation, DRR and anticipatory action, and increased attention to (and narrative building around) prevention rather than response alone.

The Mediterranean region provides a compelling lens through which to continue this conversation. Climate change is intensifying droughts, heatwaves, water scarcity, food insecurity, displacement pressures and disaster risks across the region. In countries affected by fragility and conflict, these challenges are compounded by governance constraints, economic instability and ongoing humanitarian needs. Yet these contexts also demonstrate remarkable local resilience and provide important lessons for how climate finance and adaptation investments can be delivered effectively in fragile environments.

Objective

This COP31 event will focus on action by bringing together policymakers, climate funds, UN agencies and practitioners to identify concrete pathways for scaling adaptation and DRR investments in FCAS, with a particular focus on the Mediterranean region.

The session will explore:

- How climate adaptation and DRR investments can be better designed for fragile and conflict-affected contexts.
- What reforms are needed to make climate finance more accessible, flexible and risk-informed.
- How locally led approaches can strengthen resilience while contributing to social cohesion and stability.
- What role international climate funds, governments and multilateral institutions can play in scaling preventive action.
- How lessons from the Mediterranean can inform global efforts to build resilience in FCAS.

Guiding Question

How can the international community scale climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction investments in fragile and conflict-affected settings, ensuring that climate finance reaches those most vulnerable to climate, disaster and conflict risks?

Proposed Speakers

Facilitator/moderator

- *Safa' Al Jayoussi*, Head of Oxfam Climate Initiative, **Oxfam** (confirmed)

Panellists and speakers

- *Loretta Hieber Girardet*, Chief of Risk Knowledge Branch, **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)** (confirmed)
- *Elizabeth Dykstra-McCarthy*, Climate Policy Specialist, **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** (confirmed)
- *Joan Borrell*, Deputy Secretary General for Stability and Resilience, **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** (confirmed)
- *Neha Sharma,* Lead for Results, Impact and Knowledge, **Adaptation Fund** (confirmed)
- *Sally Abi Khalil*, Regional Director SWANA, **Oxfam** (confirmed)
- **Government representative from a Mediterranean FCAS country** (Lebanon, Syria or other relevant context)
- *Name to be confirmed*, **Pau Costa Foundation**

- *Ambassador Bakyt Dzhusupov***,** Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Issues**, OSCE**

Format

60-minute interactive panel discussion. The idea is not to have a classic panel set-up but rather a circular set-up where participants and speakers sit in a circle. Several participants will have been asked to prepare "provocations" in advance of the sessions. The two moderators from Oxfam and UfM would also be spread out, this in order to create a more balanced and inviting space for discussion.

Section	Timeframe
Opening remarks from Oxfam and UfM	10 mins
Introductory interview with participants	10 mins
Roundtable provocations	25 mins
Audience Q&A and reflections	10 mins
Closing call to action	5 mins

Expected Outcomes

The event will:

- Elevate the visibility of FCAS within global adaptation and climate finance discussions.
- Strengthen dialogue between climate finance institutions, governments and civil society on investing in resilience in fragile settings.
- Generate practical recommendations for making adaptation and DRR finance more accessible, flexible and locally led.
- Build momentum toward a broader coalition advocating for prevention-oriented climate action in FCAS.
- Lay the groundwork for a post-COP community of practice and potential joint agenda among participating institutions.

Key message to be explored during the session

Fragility should change *how* we invest in resilience, not whether we invest. As climate impacts intensify across fragile and conflict-affected settings, adaptation and disaster risk reduction must become a core pillar of climate action. By connecting climate finance, locally led resilience, disaster risk reduction and conflict-sensitive programming, the international community can move from repeatedly financing crises to investing in prevention, resilience and long-term stability.

Preparation

Once all speakers and co-facilitators have been confirmed, a set of questions will be drafted in collaboration and sent to the speakers and co-facilitators in advance of planned session. This will be done in the week commencing 2 November.