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FRANCE'S HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

2023 – 2027



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FOREWORD

■ A world in crisis, a world of crises

The world is undergoing unprecedented upheaval.

In the space of a few years, crises have multiplied, overlapped, and become chronic. Some have changed in nature, others in scale, to an extent hitherto unknown. The subsequent rise in humanitarian needs demonstrates the impact of these trends on vulnerable populations, whose numbers are increasing every year.

In Afghanistan, the return to power of the Taliban regime has plunged the country into extreme poverty and led women and girls to disappear from the public space, deprived of access to education. **In Ukraine**, for nearly two years now, civilian populations have been the victims of the greatest conflict to take place on European soil in the 21st century. **In the Sahel**, the expansion of non-State armed groups, the rise of violent extremism and successive coups d'état have aggravated an already dramatic humanitarian situation. **In the Middle East**, geopolitical tensions combine with terrorism and violations of international law, with tragic humanitarian consequences. **The war in Gaza** is a recent illustration, and **the ongoing conflict in Syria** is another. **In Nagorno-Karabakh**, the resumption of fighting has resulted in the forced displacement of thousands of people. Increasing disasters, the impact of climate change and the resurgence of global epidemics all present challenges for crisis response systems, as recently demonstrated by **the earthquake in Morocco, floods in Libya and COVID-19**.

Humanitarian action is increasingly vital, but it faces ever-greater obstacles. Humanitarian space, described as a "common heritage" by the French

President, has been put at risk by violent conflicts, which spare no one, not even those responding to the needs of populations on the ground. The difficulties of humanitarian access – sometimes brought about through deliberate strategies – are heightened not only by violence against civilian populations and insufficient financing, but also by increased administrative roadblocks and checks affecting the delivery of aid.

■ France delivering on its commitments

France's 2018-2022 Humanitarian Strategy already aimed to better respond to the impacts of crises and conflicts.

This strategy first of all allocated an exceptional increase in funding for humanitarian action, allowing France to become the third leading European donor and one of the top ten donors worldwide.¹ The symbolic threshold of €500 million allocated to humanitarian aid was surpassed at the end of 2022. New budgetary facilities were set up to ensure the ability to respond to an unforeseen major crisis. Last year, France was thus able to continue providing humanitarian aid in countries that were the subject of past presidential commitments (Syria, the Sahel), while responding to the Ukrainian crisis and maintaining a presence in countries facing what are often described as "forgotten crises", such as Venezuela and Myanmar.

France's resurgence on the humanitarian scene has also led to the diversification of its operating methods and partners. Increased in-kind aid operations, the deployment of public expert missions, the mobilization of local government and foundations, and reinforced interministerial cooperation have allowed France to provide a tailored response to each crisis that is suitable for the actors involved on the ground. This wide range of methods of action enabled, for example,

1. Source: European Commission.

the development of a relevant response on each side of the border between Turkey and Syria, in the wake of the earthquakes in February 2023.

The integration of cross-cutting priorities, such as gender equality and the climate, were also included in this strategy for a modernized approach to humanitarian aid, as demonstrated by the drafting of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment, adopted by the Council of the European Union in March 2022, and the generalized use of OECD markers.

Despite an increasingly hostile context, France has continued its defence of international humanitarian law. Our commitment to combatting the adverse consequences of sanctions on humanitarian space has been one of the guiding principles behind our action, in particular within the United Nations and the European Union.

As an active stakeholder in existing intergovernmental mechanisms, France has also taken the initiative in launching new fora for dialogue. The Call for Humanitarian Action in September 2019 and the organization of the first European Humanitarian Forum in March 2022 under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union both illustrate the central role France now plays in the field of humanitarian diplomacy.

■ A new strategy adapted to new humanitarian challenges

Where the 2018-2022 humanitarian strategy reaffirmed France's position on the international stage, the 2023-2027 strategy must be an opportunity to reinforce the commitments already made and renew the methods of humanitarian responses.

Humanitarian aid funding will reach €1 billion per year by 2025, making France the second leading European donor and the fourth worldwide. This is an ambitious choice at a time when the humanitarian funding gap has never been greater and everyone's involvement is essential. Beyond the amount of funding, there is a need for more sustainable responses to protracted crises as part of the nexus approach, without losing the ability to react to

emergencies and unforeseen events that characterizes French aid. France will also continue to respond to the needs of populations as a whole, by taking action in all sectors covered by humanitarian aid (i.e. food, nutrition, water, hygiene and sanitation, health, protection, mine clearance, etc.).

The defence of international humanitarian law will remain a priority, to reinforce the protection of civilian populations and humanitarian aid providers in times of war. The founding principles of aid – humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality – will be upheld in order to promote its dissemination, understanding and respect by as many people as possible.

Issues related to gender, children and climate will be even more strongly factored into the humanitarian response. Gender equality and the rights of women and girls will become a major focus, with the goal of ensuring that 85% of French humanitarian funding integrates this dimension by 2027. The impact of environmental and climate-related crises on humanitarian needs will be incorporated into France's humanitarian action and disaster response will be reinforced. Child protection will be a cross-cutting and systematic priority of French humanitarian aid. Special attention will still be given to the populations most affected by crises and conflicts – i.e., not only women and girls, from adolescents to children, but also children and young people in general, as well as forcibly displaced persons and people with disabilities.

France's humanitarian action must also be better coordinated with that of the European Union, particularly with regard to the European Humanitarian Response Capacity.

Ultimately, this new strategy should, by bringing aid funding to €1 billion per year by 2025, strengthen France's position as a key humanitarian actor, at a time when the need to uphold neutral, independent and impartial action is greater than ever.

Catherine Colonna
Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

1/

DEFENDING THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND ENSURING RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The respect and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian principles and the protection of humanitarian space are priorities that France has consistently promoted and defended.

Since introducing its last strategy, France has launched new initiatives to mobilize the international community around the values that must remain the bedrock of all humanitarian action.²

The new strategy follows the same approach, envisioning a world in which humanitarian space is permanently safeguarded as a “common heritage”, to borrow the words used by French President Emmanuel Macron in his speech at the United Nations in September 2020.

1.1/ Preserving humanitarian space and protecting civilian populations and humanitarian workers

In numerous theatres of conflict, the violence of the parties involved continues to jeopardize the neutrality of humanitarian space and hinders the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs). Populations continue to face difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid, remaining

without solutions despite international mobilization to respond to their needs. As we enter 2024, which marks the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the rise in attacks on the people protected by these texts calls for increased efforts to promote and defend respect for IHL.

Consequently, France reasserts the need to implement and comply with IHL, including in cyberspace, through all channels and in all relevant fora. It is committed to continuing to play a key role in promoting IHL, preserving humanitarian space and protecting civilian populations and humanitarian workers.

At national level, France will remain vigilant and contribute to speaking out against IHL violations in theatres of conflict. It will continue to contribute to the documenting of crimes to enable the trials of those responsible, and shoulder its national legal responsibilities. It will develop training and awareness-raising in IHL and humanitarian principles for all relevant actors, such as national authorities, military personnel and armed groups. It will pay special attention to the populations most affected by crises and conflicts – i.e., women and girls, from adolescents to children, as well as children and young people in general, forcibly displaced persons, and people with disabilities. It will condemn attacks against humanitarian workers.

At European Union level, France will work to build a network of contact points in Member States to

2. For example: (i) the Call for Humanitarian Action, launched with Germany in 2019; (ii) presiding over a meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on protecting humanitarian space in 2021; and (iii) co-leading, on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, an initiative to reinforce the protection of humanitarian personnel, infrastructure and respect for international humanitarian law.

facilitate strong joint communication, particularly to speak out against IHL violations.

At multilateral level, France will continue its efforts in support of the initiative to limit the use of veto power, in cases of mass atrocities, at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), General Assembly, and Human Rights Council (HRC). It will provide continued support to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and United Nations investigative mechanisms. It will strive for the implementation of UNSC resolutions in this area, including thematic resolutions. To that end, France will support the full application of UNSC Resolution 2417 (2018), which condemns the use of famine as a weapon of war. It will mobilize all French aid instruments in line with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. France will therefore play a full role in maintaining and expanding international mobilization to meet the needs of the humanitarian system so it can tackle crises.

France will also maintain its commitment to fostering tangible solutions that will bolster the protection of international solidarity stakeholders. To that end, it will facilitate the access of NGOs to specific resources to contribute to their safety and security risk management costs. It will also work with other donors to encourage humanitarian actors to implement efficient safety risk management plans. What's more, France will maintain its commitment to improving the collection and sharing of data in the field with a view to maintaining high levels of operational security. It will also contribute to strengthening NGOs' capabilities to commit to humanitarian negotiations in order to bring about sustainable access founded on humanitarian principles.

Building on its commitment to the efficient and unhindered delivery of aid, France will continue to mobilize to prevent and combat administrative and financial constraints on humanitarian action (e.g. visa restrictions, NGO registration issues, taxation of humanitarian activities and personnel, customs restrictions, etc.). It will rely on its diplomatic network to raise local awareness of the impact of these measures on civil populations and humanitarian personnel. It will also work more widely to launch an initiative to make limiting bureaucratic obstacles to humanitarian action a condition for the preservation of humanitarian space.

France will reaffirm its commitment and desire to work to ensure that the principles of IHL governing the conduct of hostilities are observed, including in relation to the use of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, lethal autonomous weapons systems and, more generally, matters related to the arms trade. It will attach particular importance to the protection of civilian populations, notably by promoting the implementation and universalization of the international Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA), known as the "Dublin Declaration".

To monitor the operationalization of its commitments, a report on the implementation of IHL will be carried out by 2027.

1.2/ Limiting the unintended adverse impacts of international sanctions on humanitarian action

Sanctions are an essential instrument to help maintain international peace and security. They are part of a political strategy that aims to prevent and resolve conflicts and to fight against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism, violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations.

Nonetheless, their implementation can indirectly affect humanitarian aid projects, and in certain cases can even present a risk of criminalization. In response, and in keeping with the announcements made by the French President at the National Humanitarian Conference (NHC) in 2020, a study was carried out in collaboration with humanitarian stakeholders on the sanctions regimes of the European Union and the United Nations, and how to preserve this instrument without imposing negative constraints on initiatives taken in support of populations.

In December 2022, these considerations led to the UN Security Council's adoption, with France's support, of Resolution 2664, which provides for a generalized and cross-cutting exemption in all UN sanctions regimes.

France will take action to support the transposition of UNSC Resolution 2664 into EU law and national legislation. It will continue the work of clarifying the content of sanctions regimes with regard to the adoption of humanitarian exemptions in order to ensure the harmonization of the language of the texts adopted by the United Nations and the European Union, as well as the drafting and regular updating of guidelines for humanitarian stakeholders. France will also more broadly implement the cross-cutting approach determined by the Council concerning the introduction of humanitarian clauses in the EU's autonomous sanctions regimes.

In parallel, France will seek to ensure regular consultation with humanitarian organizations involved in the fight against the unintended negative consequences of sanctions on humanitarian space, and, as far as possible, their inclusion in mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of sanctions. It will also reassert its stance against the screening of final beneficiaries of aid, in line with humanitarian principles.

As part of the new strategy, France will adapt its training programmes, notably those provided to operational legal advisers, to take into consideration the challenges posed by the resurgence of high-intensity international armed conflicts on European soil. It will ensure that the Manual on the Law of Military Operations, published in 2023, is more widely distributed to partners, and that it is regularly updated. The promotion of military best practices concerning the integration of IHL into operational procedures and doctrines will continue to be encouraged in international military fora.

1.3/ Promoting IHL in the operational practices of the armed forces

Since introducing its previous strategy, France has developed a national IHL training plan, in consultation with the ICRC, the French Red Cross, the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF) and the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH). This national plan has mobilized the Ministry of Justice, Ministry for the Armed Forces and Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs in promoting IHL in the operational practices of the armed forces.

2/

ADAPTING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO OVERLAPPING CRISES

2.1/ Taking better account of the environmental and climate dimension

Climate change, biodiversity loss and the degradation of local environments make up one of the primary factors driving humanitarian crises and needs. This reality calls for a new approach to French humanitarian action.

As the French President highlighted at the first European Humanitarian Forum in 2022, the new humanitarian strategy must contribute to establishing a humanitarian system that prevents, prepares for, anticipates and responds to the risks and consequences of climate change.

From now on, France's response to humanitarian crises must serve to strengthen the resilience and crisis response capacity of States and populations, and limit the negative impact of humanitarian aid on climate and the environment.

a) Stepping up disaster preparedness, anticipation and prevention

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), disasters were responsible for 53% of internal displacements worldwide (32.6 million people) in 2022, becoming the leading cause of internal displacement, before conflicts. OCHA anticipates a growing increase in these population movements and estimates that the number of internally displaced persons will exceed 143 million by 2050.

In response to this situation, France is taking action to ensure better adaptation to climate change, build populations' resilience, and guarantee security, safety

and risk prevention. Reiterated in the French Programming Act of 4 August 2021 on inclusive development and the fight against global inequalities, these goals require shifting towards a more anticipatory humanitarian system, as stated in the G7 Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crisis Compact adopted in 2021.

France will strive to better prevent and address climate and environmental risks in humanitarian action, in particular by strengthening access to more resilient basic infrastructure and stepping up actions related to water, hygiene and sanitation, for example. It will work to implement anticipatory and disaster preparedness actions in order to help limit the increase in humanitarian needs and population displacements caused by the effects of climate change. France furthermore believes in the impact of predefined action plans and reliable monitoring and early warning systems, as well as funding that can be predictably and quickly made available to maintain stability. For this reason, it has supported the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative since it was launched at COP21, and will continue to do so in 2024. In parallel, France will continue its support of the Global Shield against Climate Risks initiative, which aims to develop insurance solutions and financing tailored to the climate risks in vulnerable countries.

France will also expand its capacity to provide emergency assistance in response to disasters, in keeping with the commitments of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment, as well as the Climate and Environment and Environment Charter initiated by the International Red Cross Movement. Ministry personnel will also be provided with training in identifying climate and environmental factors in the onset of crises, in order to ensure that these issues are better taken into account in France's humanitarian response. The risks

of instability and insecurity arising from climate change must be better integrated into national adaptation plans.

France will also work to develop contingency funding mechanisms with its main partners in order to give humanitarian aid stakeholders the capacity to mobilize for initially unscheduled actions in emergencies.

Links between Team France's anticipatory, preparedness and emergency actions, particularly with the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), will be strengthened, to promote alignment between the work of humanitarian, development, climate and civil protection stakeholders.

THE HUMANITARIAN AID DONORS' DECLARATION ON CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Co-developed with French humanitarian stakeholders through the climate and humanitarian aid working group beginning in 2021
- Adopted by the Council of the European Union at the initiative of France and the European Commission in March 2022
- Presented at the European Humanitarian Forum in March 2022

THE DECLARATION'S 4 COMMITMENTS

1. Encourage greater investment in work to prevent, prepare for, anticipate and respond to disasters within a systemic, multi-risk approach, particularly with and for the most vulnerable communities, by including civil society, the humanitarian sector and the private sector of developed and developing countries.

2. Contribute to improving cooperation and partnerships between governments, donors and aid actors. Strengthening such coordination could help limit the risk of aspects that worsen crises, including human mobility, and strengthen the implementation

of appropriate responses in terms of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and longer-term development.

3. Increase efforts to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of humanitarian activities on biodiversity in order to help achieve the Paris Agreement's global warming limitation goals.

4. Foster the creation of the conditions required for international humanitarian organizations and local partners to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

PRE-POSITIONED STOCKS

In the interest of efficiency and reducing the footprint of its action, France uses storage solutions located near zones frequently impacted by disasters.

This strategic and comprehensive pre-positioning enables a wider range of humanitarian operations and faster response times, particularly for populations in remote areas. It notably favours increased participation in the implementation of the FRANZ arrangement, which since 1992 has

enabled regional coordination of emergency response efforts with Australia and New Zealand, in line with France's Indo-Pacific Strategy introduced in 2018.

The stockpiles contain essential emergency supplies (non-perishable and maintenance-free) that can be rapidly delivered if a country in the region requests assistance. They are designed to meet the immediate needs of 2,500 people, particularly in terms of shelter and drinking water.

HUMANITARIAN STOCK IN GUADELOUPE

The stockpile is located in the **civil protection mine clearance centre** in Pointe-à-Pitre, under an agreement signed on 5 September 2019 by the Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) and the Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Crisis Management (DGSCGC).

Should stocks need to be deployed, their handling will be managed by the DGSCGC, with the support of a private transporter commissioned by the CDCS, and in coordination with the Regional Intervention Platform for the Americas and the Caribbean (PIRAC).

HUMANITARIAN STOCK IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

Humanitarian stocks are kept in the **Sainte Amélie military zone of the Armed Forces of French Polynesia (FAPF)**, under the agreement between the CDCS and FAPF signed on 27 March 2020.

The everyday management of the stock is overseen by the **territorial delegation of the Red Cross**. The supplies were delivered with the support of the CMA CGM Foundation, and the stock was inaugurated in July 2020, in the presence of the High Commissioner of the Republic in French Polynesia.

HUMANITARIAN STOCK IN NEW CALEDONIA

The CDCS has stored stock in Nouméa with the **territorial delegation of the French Red Cross in New Caledonia** since the signing of a partnership agreement between the CDCS and the French Red Cross on 19 August 2019.

The territorial delegation of the Red Cross is responsible for the handling of supplies in the event of an emergency.

A new partnership between the CDCS and the French Red Cross will reinforce and expand France's disaster prevention and response capabilities.

b) Reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the environmental and biodiversity footprint of humanitarian action, and promoting the adoption of environmentally responsible practices

France's humanitarian action must contribute to achieving the targets set by the international community, including the Paris Agreement's global warming limitation goals, and stabilizing, if not reversing, biodiversity loss, in accordance with the objectives set under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022. France will promote measures that have a positive impact on the environment and biodiversity.

In this regard, France will continue the cooperation efforts between European donors to ensure the implementation of the Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment and its expansion to new signatories. At EU level, France will call for the implementation of a joint exercise to quantify signatory countries' greenhouse gas emissions resulting from humanitarian aid, in order to make progress towards reducing its environmental footprint.

France will support accelerating the efforts of humanitarian stakeholders to factor environmental and climate impacts into their activities, both in the development of their projects and in their transition towards more environmentally responsible and low-carbon practices.

2.2/ Pursuing efforts in the area of food security and nutrition

In 2023, more than 238 million people living in 48 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity. This number has risen over recent years due to the increase in conflicts, economic shocks and major climate events. The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine have heightened the phenomena already observed since 2014.

In light of this situation, France has significantly increased its funding to provide populations with food and nutrition assistance. Between 2019 and 2022, the appropriations allocated to programmed food assistance (PFA) increased more than fourfold.³ In total, all humanitarian channels combined, France contributed over €265 million to food security and nutrition in 2022.

France's mobilization has also taken the form of impetus for initiatives at multilateral level, such as the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) in March 2022, which aims to respond to emergencies and contribute to strengthening local food sovereignty. In 2023, it presided over a ministerial side event on "A Call for Food Security" on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

As part of the new strategy, long-term improvement of food and nutritional security remains a core priority for France.

a) Stepping up food assistance for populations and improving their resilience

France will continue to implement the principles of the Food Assistance Convention adopted in London and ratified by France in 2017. On a financial level, French efforts will concentrate on the most critical needs, to address situations of severe food and nutritional insecurity and take action in areas facing high levels of chronic fragility, particularly those exposed to natural disasters. For the purposes of

³. Increase from €33.5 million to €140.4 million.

efficiency, these actions should be coordinated with those taken in the water, hygiene and sanitation sector.

Protracted crises will also be the focus of increased support, through mobilization of all French aid instruments as part of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach.

France will continue its support of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) managed by the World Food Programme (WFP), to ensure the continuity of passenger and light cargo transport services and medical and security evacuation capabilities that are vital to the entire humanitarian community. This renewed support is part of the development of France's partnership with the WFP to fight against food insecurity and malnutrition.

France will encourage local and regional procurement, as well as purchasing from small producers, particularly women and young people, to locally strengthen the resilience of food systems.

b) Combatting malnutrition, particularly among children and mothers

No region in the world is spared from child malnutrition. Numerous countries even face the "triple burden" of nutritional deficiencies, undernutrition and overweight, regularly deplored within the UN system.⁴

To provide a comprehensive response to malnutrition, at least 50% of the annual allocation for PFA will target projects dedicated to nutrition. Particular priority will be given to undernutrition and the crucial period of the first 1,000 days (from conception until a child's second birthday).

At multilateral level, France will mobilize as part of the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, to continue to engage the international community in fighting against malnutrition. Efforts made as part of the Global School Meals Coalition will also be continued.

THE SCHOOL MEALS COALITION

- Launched in September 2021 at the initiative of the WFP, France and Finland at the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the Coalition's aim is to provide every child with access to a healthy, nutritious meal in school by 2030.
- The Coalition held its first global meeting in Paris on 18 and 19 October 2023, under the high patronage of the President of the French Republic.
- Brazil joined France and Finland as co-chairs of the Coalition in October 2023.

2.3/ Reinforcing actions related to health and continuity of care

Conflicts, crises and disasters prevent people and communities from accessing quality healthcare and basic services, such as vaccination. Furthermore, healthcare personnel and infrastructures are regularly the target of violence and hindrances, with long-term repercussions on the viability of healthcare systems. In a reversal of progress made at the beginning of the century, physical and mental health progression curves are thus tending to level off or even revert in several parts of the world, such as in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen.

In response, France will remain true to its historical commitment to the continuity of care, even in crisis situations, as reaffirmed in its 2023-2027 Strategy for Global Health. It is thus committed to preserving the most affected populations' access to healthcare providers, services and products, including mental health care and psychosocial support. Specific focus will be placed on the situation of refugees and

⁴ In 2022, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, 22.3% of children under the age of 5 were affected by stunting (chronic undernutrition), 6.8% by wasting (acute undernutrition) and 5.6% by overweight.

MULTILATERAL PARTNERSHIPS IN GLOBAL HEALTH ALSO MOBILIZED IN EMERGENCIES OR HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance recently developed its emergency programme through two initiatives:

(i) The creation of a Humanitarian Buffer, which was introduced as part of the administration of the COVAX platform in 2021 and aims to supply COVID-19 vaccine doses to displaced populations.

(ii) The update of its policy for action in fragile settings and emergencies in June 2022, which aims to both expand Gavi's support to refugee populations and offer the Alliance additional leeway to react promptly to acute emergencies.

For its part, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria deploys an emergency fund, which has been increasingly mobilized. Since its creation in 2014, a total of USD 110 million has been disbursed in response to humanitarian emergencies and crises, such as in Afghanistan, Ukraine and Pakistan.

As part of its contribution to the Global Fund, France will also mobilize its L'Initiative programme, managed by Expertise France, which funds civil society organizations working in the health field in crisis zones, such as in Ukraine and Myanmar (particularly support for health development projects).

displaced people. Preventing and responding to epidemics, particularly those involving waterborne diseases, will also remain a key component of French assistance.

In addition, France will support the continuity of humanitarian care services through the mobilization of all available global health instruments, in both bilateral and partnership frameworks. Emergency medical assistance and sending healthcare supplies will remain a major focus of French assistance. At multilateral level, France will maintain its contribution to specialized funds, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to implement emergency programmes.

2.4/ Establishing the rights of women and girls and gender equality as strategic priorities of humanitarian assistance

Gender inequalities and sexual violence are intensified by crises and conflicts, of which women and girls, from adolescents to children, are the first victims. The interruption of sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health services, as well as difficulties in accessing modern contraception methods and comprehensive abortion care, have a direct impact on the rise in humanitarian needs among women, girls and gender minorities.

An effective humanitarian response must promote inclusive solutions. It must also be able to meet the needs of populations as a whole, while taking into account the differentiated effects of crises on individual situations. France must therefore continue

to improve the inclusion of the most affected populations in humanitarian assistance. The respect and promotion of the fundamental rights of women, girls and gender minorities, and their effective participation in the decision-making and aid delivery process, are therefore essential levers for their empowerment and the reinforcement of their capabilities. Taking into account the specific needs of forcibly displaced persons and people with disabilities will also remain a major focus of French assistance, in line with initiatives undertaken for the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian assistance.⁵

More specifically, by adopting a feminist foreign policy in 2019, France made the rights of women and girls, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights priorities of its international action. It also established an International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018-2022), currently in the process of being renewed, and is involved in implementing the European Union's third Gender Action Plan (GAP III). France is promoting and implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, in particular through its third national action plan.

a) Improving consideration for the rights of women and girls and gender equality in humanitarian assistance

As part of this new strategy, France will renew its commitment to the cross-cutting and systematic integration of gender equality and the rights of women and girls into the humanitarian response. It will continue to support initiatives that take gender equality and the rights of women and girls into account, as well as the specific needs and risks involved. It will place a particular focus on supporting local organizations for the rights of women and girls and those that have been identified as feminist.

In keeping with these commitments, reaffirmed by the Minister on International Women's Day on 8 March 2023, France will increase the share of funding aimed at promoting gender equality and the rights of women and girls in humanitarian settings in its contributions to United Nations agencies.

More broadly, 85% of French humanitarian aid funding must integrate issues related to gender equality and the rights of women and girls by 2027, and 20% focusing on them primarily, in accordance with the objectives of the European Union's third Gender Action Plan (GAP III). Humanitarian partners will thus be encouraged to support and promote projects that address this priority. Special emphasis will be placed on emergency education initiatives, ensuring the rights of girls to an education, and those focused on sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health in crisis settings. French humanitarian aid funding will follow the commitments enshrined in the Act of 4 August 2021, aiming for 75% of bilateral funding to integrate gender equality objectives and 20% to target them specifically.

At bilateral, European and multilateral level, France will encourage States and humanitarian stakeholders to adhere to the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact, launched at the Generation Equality Forum in 2021. It will highlight the need to take into account the significant impact crises have on women and girls and provide an appropriate humanitarian response. It will continue its support for the specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as UN Women and UNFPA, and for international initiatives promoting an inclusive humanitarian response.

b) Preventing and combatting sexual and gender-based violence

France will support actions to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence. It will encourage the deployment of infrastructures that protect survivors and the systematic implementation of mechanisms to prevent and address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It will continue to develop specific tools, particularly with regard to training. It will also pursue its commitment to supporting the principles set out as part of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, which was launched in 2013.

⁵ These include the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action launched in 2016, as well as the Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action drawn up by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2019.

To ensure the implementation of this objective, France will continue to develop specialized tools, in particular training in developing humanitarian action that integrates gender issues and the protection of women and girls against sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

More specifically, the fight against impunity for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence will be a priority for France, along with care for survivors.

France will continue to support the Global Survivors Fund, which was launched under the French G7 Presidency in 2019 and co-founded by Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege, who were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018.

Lastly, in keeping with France's 2023-2027 international strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights, France is committed to promoting the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for sexual

and reproductive health, including access to emergency contraception and comprehensive abortion care, with medical abortions as a vital humanitarian response.

c) Increasing the involvement of women and girls in humanitarian action and decision making processes

France will promote the access and effective contribution of women, who are essential contributors to humanitarian action and conflict resolution, to all relevant spaces for dialogue, negotiation and decision making at national, European and multilateral level.

FRANCE'S COMMITMENTS FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

- Support for the launch of the **Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence** in 2019, renewed for three years (2024-2026)

- Creation of the Support Fund for Feminist Organizations (FSOF) in 2020 and contribution of **€134 million (2020-2022)**, with a renewed commitment of **€250 million (2023-2027)**

- **France's International Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2023-2027)**

- **France's international strategy for feminist diplomacy**

2.5/ Protecting children, promoting their rights and advancing education in emergencies

According to UNESCO, 127 million children and adolescents live in a country affected by crisis or conflict, representing over half of the global out-of-school population. This situation predominantly affects adolescent and young girls, who account for two thirds of young people unable to pursue their secondary education.

Faced with this reality, France will remain actively committed to supporting access to an inclusive and quality education for the most affected children and adolescents in emergencies, as it emphasized by endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration presented in 2015 and by supporting UNSC Resolution 2601 (2012). It will participate in implementing initiatives led by the European Union, which already allocates 10% of its annual humanitarian budget to education in emergencies.

In response, France is committed to adopting an approach based on children's rights and placing the protection of childhood and children's rights, including the right to education, at the heart of its cross-cutting and systematic priorities for humanitarian action, in keeping with the Programming Act of 4 August 2021 on inclusive development and the fight against global inequalities.

It will increase funding dedicated to promoting access to inclusive, quality education in emergencies, through a multi-sector approach to holistically meet children's needs (physical and mental health, food, etc.) and increase opportunities for learning in a safe and inclusive environment. It will prioritize the most affected and marginalized children and adolescents, such as those who are displaced, refugees, abandoned, orphaned, disabled or living in remote areas. Specific focus will also be given to adolescent and young girls.

France will continue to support and promote the participation of children and young people (including organizations working in the field of children and youth, and children and young people advocating for their rights) in humanitarian action and the resolution of crises and conflicts, and in programmes and projects concerning them, in line with the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. It will support the access and effective contribution of children and young people to all relevant spaces for dialogue, negotiation and decision-making at national, European and multilateral level.

France will develop specific training programmes for teachers and education staff working in humanitarian settings. It will work to promote greater resilience in education systems by encouraging synergies and coordination between the various humanitarian, development and peacebuilding stakeholders.

At bilateral, multilateral and European level, France will continue its advocacy emphasizing the importance of primary and secondary education as a lever for protecting children and adolescents against crises, in conjunction with the stakeholders involved. It will promote the Paris Principles and Commitments, which were adopted in 2007 to not only protect children from being used and recruited by armed groups or armed forces, but also facilitate their release and reintegration into their communities. France will also continue to rally support for the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, created in 2017. Moreover, it will continue its involvement in the fight against impunity, by providing support to dedicated international mechanisms.

All of these priorities will be upheld through France's support for Education Cannot Wait, a multilateral fund hosted by UNICEF dedicated to education in emergencies and protracted crises, with a contribution of €40 million allocated for the 2024-2027 period.

3/

INCREASING RESOURCES FOR FRENCH HUMANITARIAN AID AND TRANSFORMING HOW IT IS DELIVERED TO MEET GROWING NEEDS

3.1/ Raising France's humanitarian contribution target to €1 billion per year by 2025

The previous strategy aimed to double the resources dedicated to French humanitarian action, setting a target of €500 million per year by 2022. This goal was exceeded, with contributions reaching €653 million in 2022. This increase of resources has allowed France to become the third leading European donor, and one of the top ten donors worldwide.

As part of this strategy, France is committing to maintaining its efforts to reach the target of €1 billion per year by 2025, in accordance with the new policy guidelines set by the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) on 18 July 2023. France is thus positioned to become the second leading European donor and fourth worldwide.

To develop a more concerted humanitarian response, a meeting involving the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs and France's partners will now be held annually.

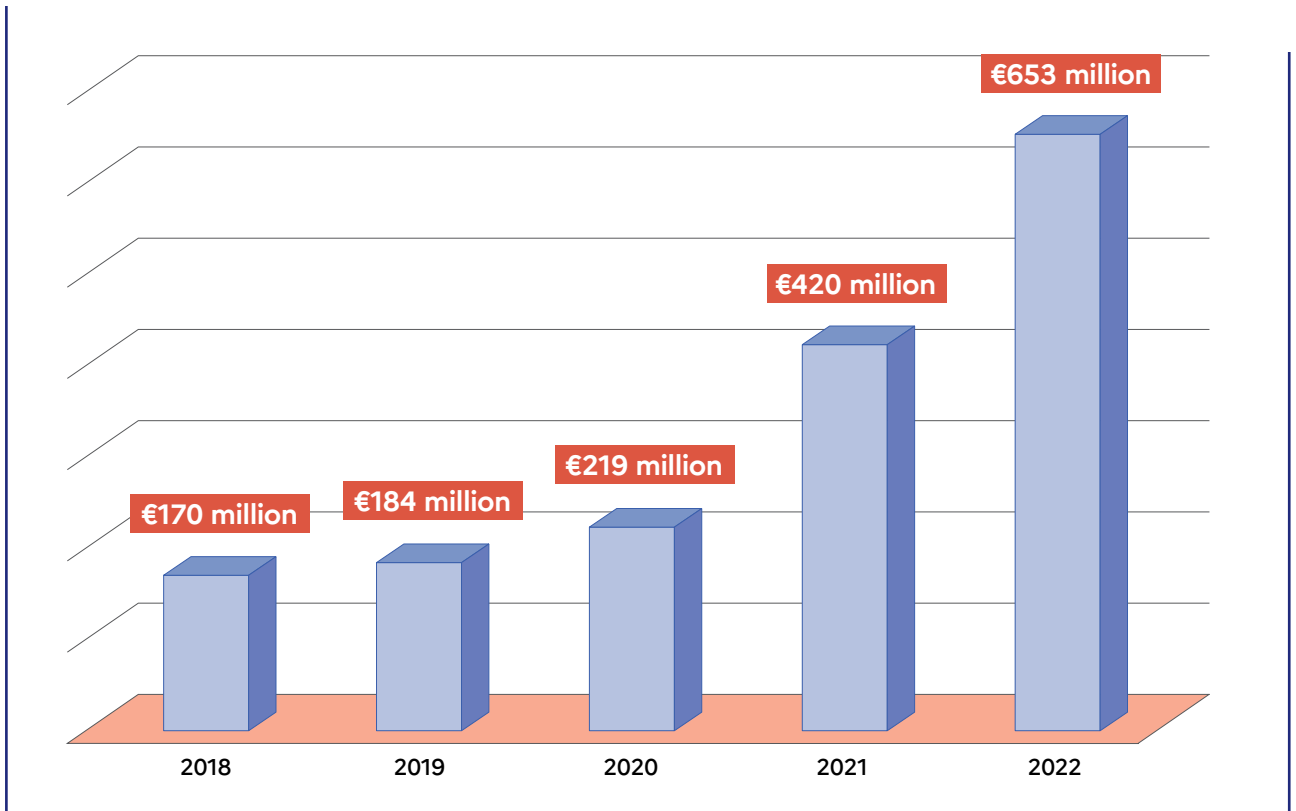
3.2/ Offering flexible funding instruments and investing in humanitarian innovation

To strengthen humanitarian actors' operational capabilities and improve crisis response, France initiated efforts to rethink aid delivery methods, to better adapt them to the realities on the ground and the rapid evolution of crises. These considerations highlighted the need to develop more flexible funding instruments based on strategic partnerships.

With this aim, the Crisis and Support Centre (CDCS) will test the deployment of strategic multi-year partnerships with NGOs recognized for their expertise and operational and management capacities. This new approach will strengthen the emergency response capabilities of the CDCS's main partners and thus better respond to protracted crises. At the same time, France will increase its contributions to the flexible funds of United Nations agencies and international organizations.

Humanitarian innovation must also receive increased and better support. The "Humanitarian Innovation" call for projects, launched following the National Humanitarian Conference in 2020 and promoted by the CDCS, will not only be renewed, but the amounts awarded will increase. The selected projects will be

FRENCH HUMANITARIAN AID (IN MILLIONS OF EUROS)



more systematically shared with other donors, in particular DG ECHO, to encourage their scale-up and the sharing of innovative practices in the humanitarian sector. In addition, an event dedicated to humanitarian innovation will continue to be held annually, to foster the exchange of best practices and the development of synergies. France will also continue to support innovative initiatives led by United Nations agencies, the ICRC and the IFRC.

3.3/ Developing an appropriate risk control policy and increasing public accountability and information

Since humanitarian aid targets geographic areas affected by crisis and conflict, it must be the subject of a robust risk control policy, in keeping with the commitments of the French government, in particular concerning the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. Such a policy must nonetheless remain flexible and not become a disproportionate obstacle to a prompt and effective humanitarian response.

In line with the statements made by the French President at the National Humanitarian Conference in 2020, France will also develop a more partnership-based approach in terms of accountability and risk control, with a greater focus on dialogue with NGOs. It will strengthen its audit and evaluation policy to improve the impact analysis of funded projects. Consideration will be given to the implementation of a preventive accountability approach, consisting of increased due diligence prior to granting funding to offer partners greater flexibility in project monitoring.

In addition, France will continue efforts to harmonize, simplify and digitize procedures within the Ministry. An in-depth study of the accountability frameworks applied by different Team France donors will contribute to ensuring consistency.

Increasing measures to ensure accountability must not fall solely on humanitarian partners. With this in mind, France will involve NGOs in monitoring the implementation of the 2023–2027 Humanitarian Strategy and will maintain regular and inclusive dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, in particular when organizing the National Humanitarian Conference every two years. It will also increase policy dialogue with the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations and specialized international organizations.

Communications on French humanitarian action will be stepped up, with the aim of ensuring greater transparency in the delivery of aid and increasing public information. An annual report on humanitarian aid will be published, components of which will be widely shared. Specific actions will be implemented to better inform the populations receiving aid.

4/

DEPLOYING AGILE AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN AID THROUGH DIVERSIFIED AND RENEWED PARTNERSHIPS

4.1/ Implementing a common humanitarian policy at European level

The first European Humanitarian Forum was held in 2022, fulfilling a commitment made by President Macron at the preceding National Humanitarian Conference. An initiative launched under the French Presidency of the Council of the EU, this annual event has become a highlight on the European humanitarian agenda. At this first forum, the French President called for the development of a “common humanitarian policy”, which the 2023-2027 Humanitarian Strategy of the French Republic must embody.

a) Coordinating French humanitarian action with the European Union’s action and tools

The European Union’s emergency response mechanisms are an increasingly important basis for French humanitarian action. At the same time, coordination between the EU Member States is growing, in particular through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), introduced under the French Presidency of the Council of the EU.

France will strengthen its partnership with the European Union (EU) and its Member States in the humanitarian field, in particular with regard to logistical support for partners. Coordination with delegations of the European Union will furthermore

be stepped up at local level to ensure greater coherence with the work of Team Europe. In concrete terms, this strengthening of the links between the diplomatic networks of France and the European Union will also enable best practices to be shared and common partners to be identified, and will encourage joint funding.

b) Making humanitarian action a top European priority

With the aim of developing a true “common humanitarian policy”, France will ensure that humanitarian issues remain a priority in all European fora for dialogue. It will work to harmonize the positions of the EU and its Member States, not only within European bodies but in international and multilateral bodies as well, particularly within the United Nations.

To ensure that climate and environmental issues remain at the top of the European humanitarian agenda, France will support the European Commission in monitoring the implementation of the commitments of the Humanitarian Aid Donors’ Declaration on Climate and Environment. In this regard, France will co-organize annual dedicated monitoring meetings with the European Union. It will also continue efforts to rally further support for this declaration.

4.2/ Improving coordination with other humanitarian aid donors

In response to crises and conflicts, France promotes a comprehensive and long-term approach to more effectively anticipate risks and address the root causes of fragility. With this aim, it is already working to improve coordination between stakeholders involved in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, including the AFD.

This approach will remain the preferred framework of action for Team France, to increase aid effectiveness, better meet populations' needs and contribute to international security. These various coordination efforts must not cause humanitarian principles to be called into question.

France will continue and increase its participation in fora for dialogue for humanitarian aid donors. It will be active in Grand Bargain meetings, and in support of initiatives to share best practices between humanitarian donors, such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative.

To broaden the donor base, France will encourage the development of new cooperation initiatives with emerging and potential humanitarian aid donors, in keeping with the common EU approach to this issue adopted in May 2023.

4.3/ Envisioning new forms of partnership with local government and the private sector

Local government already plays a role in international emergency response action. It can contribute to a support fund, the Local Government External Action Fund (FACECO), to help finance the emergency assistance implemented by the State.⁶ In addition to making financial contributions to France's action, local governments can also get involved directly through their own instruments and decentralized cooperation. Interactions between central and local government could increase further through more regular exchanges with associations representing French municipalities, departments and regions.

THE GRAND BARGAIN

The Grand Bargain, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May 2016, is an agreement between 66 donors – including France – and humanitarian organizations with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, closing the financing gap for humanitarian aid, broadening the donor base and working to shrink needs.

The signatories are focused on the following six priorities:

- Localization of humanitarian aid
- Quality funding
- Nexus approach
- Participation of affected people
- Anticipatory action
- Innovative funding models

6. Between 2018 and 2023, the contributions of local government to this support fund reached nearly €11.5 million, €8.6 million of which was received in 2022 alone in response to the impacts of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

The position of foundations and the private sector in humanitarian assistance will also be strengthened in order to support the French emergency response. In 2023, the Council of the EU encouraged efforts to establish partnerships between the humanitarian and private sectors, in its conclusions on the measures to be taken to close the humanitarian funding gap. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs already applies a proactive policy with regard to the private sector, which can contribute to emergency assistance through a dedicated support fund.⁷ It also carries out humanitarian initiatives in partnership with foundations, in particular through the provision of donations in kind or operational capabilities.

4.4/ Developing interministerial cooperation

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs is increasingly playing an integrating role in emergency response, together with the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas France, the Ministry for the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Health and Prevention, among others. Such interministerial cooperation efforts notably include:

- 1. The organization of public expert missions:** production of drinking water, medical missions, search and rescue, satellite images;
- 2. The delegation of funds to embassies:** local procurement of supplies and equipment;
- 3. The provision of in-kind assistance:** sending supplies corresponding to the needs expressed by local authorities and humanitarian stakeholders, sometimes in connection with private and corporate foundations providing goods and services free of charge.

Interministerial cooperation will be continued and reinforced, to step up France's capacity to act as a provider of humanitarian assistance.

4.5/ Strengthening partnerships with local humanitarian stakeholders

Local humanitarian stakeholders are the best experts in crisis response, thanks to their knowledge of the situation on the ground and local populations. At the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, France already committed to supporting the localization of aid to ensure that these stakeholders hold a central role in assessing needs and delivering aid.

A broad consultation of 61 local humanitarian stakeholders launched in 2022 identified new recommendations to incorporate into France's 2023–2027 Humanitarian Strategy.

a) Promoting the inclusion of local humanitarian stakeholders in relevant fora for dialogue

France will support greater participation and consultation of local humanitarian stakeholders in relevant fora for dialogue, cooperation and negotiation at national, European and multilateral level. It will organize an international meeting in relation to the Grand Bargain and Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative to share best practices for localization.

France will repeat the consultation process with local humanitarian stakeholders initiated in 2022, in order to consult them during the mid-term assessment of the implementation of the 2023–2027 Humanitarian Strategy and ahead of the next strategy. The commitments undertaken by France in the humanitarian field will be more systematically presented to local NGOs, through French embassies.

⁷ Between 2018 and 2023, French companies' contributions to this support fund increased by a factor of fifty to reach over €2.5 million.

b) Supporting an increase in humanitarian funding focused on localization

France will continue to increase funding dedicated to localizing humanitarian aid by 2027, both by raising its contributions to funds such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the IFRC and the UN's Country Based Pooled Funds, and by increasing the amount of funding directly allocated to local NGOs.

France will work to improve the visibility of local humanitarian stakeholders and improve their access to various funding channels, in both the humanitarian and development sectors.

c) Ensuring local stakeholders' participation in French humanitarian action

France will foster the development of more equitable partnerships with local humanitarian stakeholders, to promote the value of local expertise while building their capacities through the transfer of skills between NGOs. More broadly, France is committed to supporting initiatives to develop the operational and organizational capabilities of local stakeholders to more effectively respond to emergencies.

France will seek to include local humanitarian stakeholders in the development and implementation of humanitarian projects as much as possible. Projects in consortium with local stakeholders will be given priority in the granting of funding.

SUMMARY OF FRANCE'S 2023–2027 HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

This strategy should, by bringing aid funding to **€1 billion per year by 2025**, **strengthen France's position as a leading humanitarian actor**, at a time when the need to uphold neutral, independent and impartial action is greater than ever.

1/ DEFENDING THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND ENSURING RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

- Preserving humanitarian space and protecting civilian populations and humanitarian workers
- Limiting the unintended adverse impacts of international sanctions on humanitarian action
- Promoting IHL in the operational practices of the armed forces

3/ INCREASING RESOURCES FOR FRENCH HUMANITARIAN AID AND TRANSFORMING HOW IT IS DELIVERED TO MEET GROWING NEEDS

- Raising France's humanitarian contribution target to €1 billion per year by 2025
- Offering flexible funding instruments and investing in humanitarian innovation
- Developing an appropriate risk control policy and increasing public accountability and information

2/ ADAPTING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO OVERLAPPING CRISES

- Taking better account of the environmental and climate dimension
- Pursuing efforts in the area of food security and nutrition
- Reinforcing actions related to health and continuity of care
- Establishing the rights of women and girls and gender equality as strategic priorities of humanitarian assistance
- Protecting children, promoting their rights and advancing education in emergencies

4/ DEPLOYING AGILE AND EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN AID THROUGH DIVERSIFIED AND RENEWED PARTNERSHIPS

- Implementing a common humanitarian policy at European level
- Improving coordination with other humanitarian aid donors
- Envisioning new forms of partnership with local government and the private sector
- Developing interministerial cooperation
- Strengthening partnerships with local humanitarian stakeholders

ANNEX

NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND COMMITMENTS IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

- Third Gender Action Plan of the European Union (GAP III)
- Paris Agreement on climate change
- 2030 Agenda
- Women, Peace and Security Agenda
- Youth, Peace and Security Agenda
- Call for Humanitarian Action (2019)
- Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (2013)
- Call to Action for Survival and Resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (2023)
- School Meals Coalition (2021)
- London Food Assistance Convention (ratified by France in 2017)
- Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2010)
- Council conclusions on the EU's humanitarian action (2021)
- Council conclusions on addressing the humanitarian funding gap (2023)
- Humanitarian Aid Donors' Declaration on Climate and Environment (2022)

- Safe Schools Declaration (2015)
- Global Shield against Climate Risks (2022)
- Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative (2021)
- Paris Principles and Commitments (2007)

FRENCH COMMITMENTS

- France's International Strategy for Gender Equality (2018-2022)
- France's International Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2023-2027)
- France's Strategy for Global Health (2023-2027)
- France's International Strategy for Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture (2019-2024)
- France's International Strategy for Water and Sanitation (2020-2030)
- France's International Strategy for Crisis Prevention (2023-2027)
- France's International Strategy for Education, Vocational Training and Inclusion (2017-2021)/ France's upcoming international strategy for basic education (2024-2028)
- France's Strategy for Civil Society and Civic Engagement (2023-2027)

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