

Humanitarian Aid Accelerator

Submission to GSLTF | Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah | August 2025

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that will make the old model obsolete." Buckminster Fuller.

Summary

Climate-related disasters are escalating in frequency and intensity, disproportionately affecting countries in the Global South that have contributed the least to global emissions. Meanwhile, aid from the Global North to support relief is inadequate, highly intermediated and based on principles of charity not solidarity. The Global Solidarity Levies Task Force (GSLTF) can transform the international humanitarian system by allocating some revenues from global solidarity levies to a pooled, pre-positioned fund that would enable rapid, equitable, and accountable disbursement of emergency aid directly to emergency coordination mechanisms in climate-vulnerable nations. Even if small and limited to a few countries at first, such a Humanitarian Aid Accelerator reducing (working title) would show what a new solidarity-based and more efficient humanitarian system could look like.

Introduction

Almost a decade ago, I was asked by the then UN Secretary General to serve on a High-Level Panel to look at the future of Humanitarian Financing. In our final report, '[Too Important to Fail](#)', published in 2016, we highlighted the huge shortfalls between what was required to fund humanitarian relief and what the international aid system was able to deliver. We also put forward several ideas for new forms and sources of humanitarian finance, including those raised from solidarity levies.

Unfortunately, if the gap between humanitarian need and response was big back then, today, it's bigger than ever. In 2016, there were around 125 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Today, it is around 300 million people. Over the decade to 2021, [appeal requirements almost quadrupled from US\\$10.5 billion to US\\$38.4 billion](#). As a result, on average UN-coordinated appeals have met only 60% of their funding requirements over the past decade. By the end of July 2025, [only 17% of the estimated US\\$45 billion needed](#) in humanitarian aid had been provided by donors, whose aid budgets are shrinking.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis means that extreme weather-related emergencies like floods or drought are increasing in frequency and intensity, already accounting for 90% of [A recent Oxfam report](#) estimates that humanitarian need arising from these disasters is eight times higher than it was 20 years ago, but that for every \$2 needed for UN weather-related

appeals, donor countries are only providing \$1. [According to the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), around 90% of the deaths from storms, the deadliest type of weather-related disaster, occur in lower-income countries. This means that developing countries are at the frontline of climate breakdown but have limited – and now reduced – access to the resources needed to respond and recover from the emergencies.

Finally, as CEO of Oxfam Great Britain, one of the world's oldest and largest humanitarian agencies, I saw first-hand how slow, inefficient, fragmented, and donor-driven the international system can be. Solidarity levies offer a promising revenue stream not just to correct this imbalance but help design a global humanitarian system that is fit for the future. I urge the GSLTF to consider assigning some revenue from solidarity levies to a pooled funding mechanism that would:

- Pre-position funds for rapid disbursement directly to developing countries
- Empower developing countries to lead their own emergency responses
- Ensure transparency and accountability through efficient and robust governance
- Help bring climate justice principles into humanitarian finance

Such a facility would operate as a global public good, governed by a multi-stakeholder board and designed to complement existing humanitarian mechanisms while filling critical gaps in speed, equity, and autonomy.

Proposal

The Humanitarian Aid Accelerator (HAA) (working title) would be capitalized through a portion revenues from existing and future solidarity levies, ideally those targeting to climate-damaging activities such as aviation to give an explicit and compelling link between climate breakdown and weather-related disasters.

In the first instance, the HAA would involve members of the aviation solidarity coalition that was announced in Jun 2025 but this could be expanded to other countries over time.

In the first phase, the levies could flow directly between coalition members (e.g. from France to Somalia when disaster strikes in the latter) but, over time, pooled funds might need to be hosted in an agency such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (which already hosts several humanitarian pooled funds) or within another trusted multilateral institution. In such an arrangement, administrative overhead would need to be capped (e.g. at 5%) so that the vast majority of funds would go directly to frontline emergency response.

In both phases, the HAA will need an effective governing Board composed of:

- Representatives from contributing countries
- Representatives from eligible recipient countries

- Civil society and humanitarian organizations
- Independent experts in climate justice and disaster response

Countries eligible to draw from the HAA must meet two criteria:

- Classification as low- or middle-income by the World Bank
- Verification of a weather-related disaster (e.g., floods, droughts, cyclones) by an independent monitoring body (e.g. the International Disaster Database (EM-DAT))

Access will be trigger-based, not application-based, to ensure speed and reduce bureaucratic delays. Funds will be disbursed within 72 hours of verification.

The HAA will offer tiered disbursements based on severity, for example a localized disaster might have an initial ceiling of US\$5 million to help provide shelter and food aid, but a national-scale disaster might involve a US\$50 million payout to cover large-scale response and reconstruction. Transparency will be ensured through:

- Public dashboards tracking disbursements
- Annual audits by third-party evaluators
- Community feedback loops to assess impact and equity.

Despite calls for reform, current the humanitarian system defaults to settled patterns for the distribution of funding (e.g. UN agencies consistently receive more than half of all public humanitarian assistance). The HAA would be innovative in that funds would be distributed directly to support national emergency responses, led by government agencies working with non-state actors. Most countries have emergency response coordination mechanisms that involve government, civil society and private sector actors but these actors – including governments – usually seek funds on their own from various sources when disaster strikes. The HAA would deliver a more efficient system, and, importantly, help strengthen national disaster response systems for the long-term.

The HAA would also foster innovation around Monitoring and Evaluation in the humanitarian system. Here are some ways of supporting accountability and learning.

Metric	Indicator	Frequency
Response Time	Avg. hours to disbursement	Real-time
Equity Index	% of funds to low-income countries	Quarterly
Impact Score	Lives saved, infrastructure restored	Annual
Transparency Rating	Audit results, public reporting	Annual
Community Satisfaction	Feedback from affected populations	Post-disbursement

The HAA takes its inspiration from the linking of the 2006 French levy on air tickets, which created a link to Unitaid and provided innovative and reliable source of funds for global health programmes. Linking global solidarity revenues to humanitarian relief would create arguably an even more compelling case, given how widespread support there is for disaster relief even amongst publics that are sceptical about overall disaster assistance. By linking levies from climate-damaging activities such as aviation to those facing the brutal consequences of climate breakdown would be ground-breaking and compelling.

The HAA will deliver measurable benefits across five domains:

- **Speed.** The HAA would reduce average humanitarian response time from weeks to hours, enabling life-saving interventions before crises escalate.
- **Equity.** It would prioritize countries with the least fiscal space and help shift power from donor-driven aid to recipient-led response.
- **Resilience.** By supporting early recovery and infrastructure repair, the HAA will help reduce the long-term economic shocks from disasters.
- **Solidarity.** The HAA would be a tangible way of showing global responsibility for climate impacts and building trust between Global North and South.
- **Innovation.** The HAA would show how solidarity levies can fund global public goods (in an area that publics are sympathetic to) and should create a replicable model for other sectors (e.g. health, education).

There would, naturally, be some risks associated with this proposal but I am confident these can be managed. For example, political resistance to levy redistribution to these causes could be mitigated through effective communication of the benefits and efficiencies of this system. Like all aid programmes, there is a risk around misuse of funds but this could be mitigated through audits, tiered disbursements, and innovation in tracking expenditure. There is also a risk of the HAA only raising relatively small funds compared to the scale of need but this would be mitigated by presenting this as a pilot.

The Humanitarian Aid Accelerator would be more than just a fund; it would be a moral and practical innovation. It would reimagine humanitarian aid as a right, not a privilege, and solidarity levies as tools for justice, not charity. By redistributing global revenues to those most affected by climate disasters, we can build a future where no country faces catastrophe alone.

I urge the GSLTF to invest in a mechanism such as the HAA to catalyse a new era of equitable, rapid, and dignified humanitarian response. I would be happy to provide more information or help think through some more design principles and implementation options.