



# Putting People First

## A global strategy

2019 – 2026

**hope**  
in **action** 

PUTTING  
PEOPLE FIRST

**actalliance**

Action by Churches Together (ACT Alliance) is a coalition of more than 150 churches and church-related organisations working together in over 140 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, race or nationality, keeping with the highest international codes and standards. ACT Alliance is faith-motivated, rights-based, impact-focused, and is committed to working ecumenically and inter-religiously, with the communities we seek to serve and accompany at the centre of our work.

## Why do we need a global strategy?

In order to respond to the rapidly changing global context and the innumerable challenges facing us, ACT has developed a strategy for the next eight years that provides a framework for how we can respond to these issues in a way that fosters a just, peaceful and inclusive world and is true to our Christian values.

### Key aspects of the changing context in which we work are:

- **Climate change:** a key driver of poverty and an inhibitor of sustainable development.
- **Large-scale forced displacement:** people are forced to move because of climate change, natural disasters, poverty and conflict.
- **Depletion of natural resources:** we are using more than the world can sustain resulting in a detrimental impact on the earth.

- **Growing inequality:** a widening gap between the haves and have-nots both within and between countries.
- **Insecurity and polarisation:** the rise in xenophobia, racist extremism and nationalistic policies are negatively impacting global responses to poverty and injustice.
- **Political dynamics and new agendas:** the intergovernmental system is increasingly unfit to tackle some of the challenges of today.
- **Technology:** social media is connecting people as never before with positive and negative results.

Overarching these challenges are specific issues and situations that directly affect the work of ACT and its members:

- **Global Frameworks:** the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness, World Humanitarian Summit and the Paris Agreement provide global platforms to confront challenges affecting ethics and humanitarian values and principles.
- **Role of religion and faith:** there is a growing recognition of the importance of religion in the world.
- **Shrinking civil society space:** increasing red tape and restrictions in the name of combating terrorism.
- **Changing media ecosystems:** traditional, digital and other media can be democratic tools for grassroots mobilisation but are vulnerable to censorship and information control.
- **Resource allocation:** resources allocated for official development assistance and humanitarian aid are increasingly used as a tool for achieving political goals.
- **The private sector:** increasing prominence of the private sector in shaping development policy and delivering humanitarian and development plans with funding increasingly going towards the private sector at the cost of funding for civil society actors.

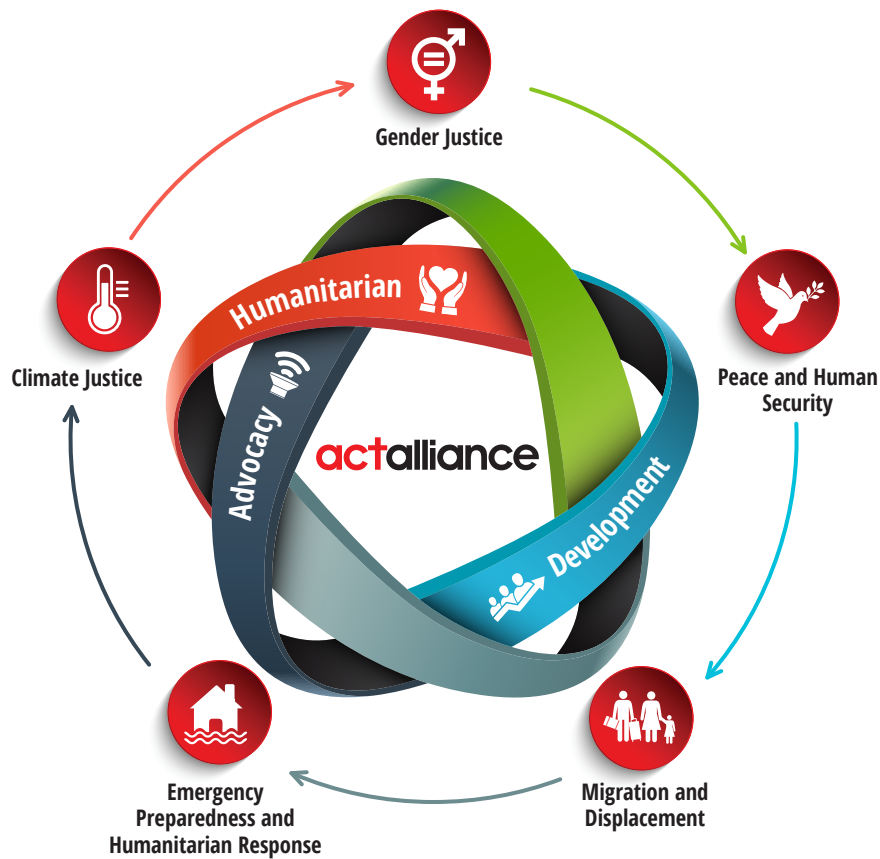
## What we will do

ACT will respond, under its humanitarian, development and advocacy umbrella, to the changing and volatile context of today through a holistic and integrated programme that builds on the distinct mandates and expertise of our membership. ACT's work will be coherent, relevant and effective to the contexts and communities its members serve.

ACT will promote a stronger participation of affected communities and local and national organisations; it will focus on taking action so that all people's rights are upheld; it will build on the opportunities for faith-based organisations to increase their understanding and visibility of the role that they play; it will work to counter inequalities and economic injustice and place a strong emphasis on 'local agency'.

In addition, ACT will aim to align its work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda through policy development, implementation and monitoring of national implementation plans in collaboration with members.

ACT's work will engage particularly with goal 5 – gender equality, goal 10 – reduced inequalities, goal 13 – climate change and goal 16 – peace, justice and strong institutions. ACT Forums will identify their own areas of engagement with the SDGs based on their respective contexts.



◀ *ACT's Global Strategy interconnects the thematic and programmatic work of the Alliance. The programmatic priorities for the strategic period are outlined on the next page.*

## ■ The programmatic priorities for the strategic period are:



### 1 | Climate Justice

ACT will promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement through lobbying, advocacy, mobilisation and campaigning at national, regional and global levels. It will promote community resilience through climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and mitigation programmes. It will strengthen its role as a faith-based actor by engaging in ecumenical and faith-inspired climate justice initiatives and partnerships that mobilise the moral and ethical imperative for global solidarity with people and communities affected by climate change. It will respond to the impacts of climate change through its humanitarian mechanism. ACT will support its forums through capacity building for climate justice advocacy and programming.



### 2 | Gender Justice

ACT will focus on the implementation of its gender policy by members and will produce quality resources and online training opportunities. ACT will facilitate the sharing of best practices among members. ACT will develop strong national, regional and global partnerships with interfaith, ecumenical and UN agencies, in which ACT forums and local partners will actively participate within a variety of multi-stakeholder networks to promote gender justice.



### **3 | Peace and Human Security**

ACT will implement actions aimed at resolving conflicts and sustaining peace and justice as well as strengthening instruments that prevent conflict. It will involve members in peace-building, conflict transformation and reconciliation, particularly including youth, women and peace education.



### **4 | Migration and Displacement**

ACT will advocate for the human rights of migrants and displaced people and will ensure that their voices are heard at a global, regional and national level. ACT members and ecumenical partners will improve their work on rights-based protection and advocacy for migrants and displaced people.



### **5 | Emergency Preparedness and Humanitarian Response**

ACT will ensure a stronger participation of affected communities and local and national organisations in preparedness and humanitarian response, and a greater investment in disaster risk reduction and resilience. ACT will enhance its strong reputation for delivering high-quality humanitarian programming and will strengthen its brand in this respect.

## ■ How we will do it— Strategies for implementation

### Key approaches

Recognising the diversity of the context within which ACT members work, we will ensure membership engagement and participation in the planning and monitoring of ACT's new strategy to enhance effectiveness and impact. Furthermore, ACT will build more relevant partnerships to maximise benefits for our members and will align with stakeholders who share our values. ACT will uphold the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and Sphere Standards.





## Specific strategies

- **Forums will be central** to responding to ACT's mandate and implementing the work of the Alliance. This will be based on shared working, joint planning and the full participation of members.
- ACT will foster a culture of **active member engagement**, offering an inclusive sharing model for all.
- ACT will increase its **influence** by building more international partnerships with a range of stakeholders to maximise impact and sustainability for members and the communities they serve.
- ACT will build its brand, increasing its position in the media and improving the **quality and relevance** of materials. ACT will work with members to build their **communications capacity**. Key to this will be a story-telling culture, a people-centred approach and a focus on local voices.
- ACT will support **collaboration in fundraising** among members and assist in building the skills of the Alliance in institutional funding and management.
- ACT will create **spaces for forums and members** to engage creatively with one another. The Alliance will explore, develop and pilot new approaches to programming, funding, measuring impact and the use of technologies.
- ACT will demonstrate **accountability** in every aspect of its work. This will strengthen the work and impact of our forums and membership, which includes planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- ACT will increase its focus on how it measures change and impact through a **results-driven, evidence-based** approach. These results will inform members about how the collective work undertaken is generating positive impact for the communities they serve.
- ACT will develop **learning and knowledge management** capacities to enable the sharing of experiences and lessons learned. ACT will store data and video stories so that they are accessible to all members, to increase our ability to raise resources at the forum level and to enhance our advocacy work. The sharing of learning, experience, knowledge and innovation will be supported by an ACT Alliance Academy.

## Supporting Structures

ACT will support these strategies through national, sub-regional and regional forums, and advisory groups, ensuring accountability to ACT's General Assembly. ACT will enable and facilitate member interaction, and sharing, and will involve members in the leadership of national forums.

ACT's Secretariat will support the work of the forums by connecting members through forums and wider global processes and ongoing developments that will help inform members' work. It will facilitate members' working together to strengthen the forums and will build on existing relationships and establish new ones. It will also help the development of partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. It will facilitate the input of youth in the life of the alliance in recognition of the substantial proportion of youth populations in the majority of countries where our members work. It will facilitate spaces for new and creative thinking to address issues of poverty and injustice and create opportunities for leadership development.

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PHOTO: VAL VESSA / UNSPLASH.COM

FRONT COVER PHOTO:  
A Rohingya girl walks  
between makeshift  
shelters in the Jamtoli  
Refugee Camp  
near Cox's Bazar,  
Bangladesh, where  
ACT Alliance provides  
humanitarian support  
for the refugees.  
PAUL JEFFREY/ACT