Transcript | Governing for the Worst El Niño on Record | 27-10-26

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Hello, everyone, and welcome to this panel on Governing for the worst El Nino on record.

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My name is Alio Matekainen, and I'm a Senior Learning Designer here at Apoliticol.

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I'm sure everyone who is participating in this panel has noticed that the climate is changing. This year, many across the world have also felt the effects of El Nino from Indonesia's wildfires and stronger hurricanes in the East Pacific

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to heat waves in Europe and floods in Mozambique

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This really put spotlight on countries' resilience and government's ability to protect our people in an increasingly volatile climate

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And at this event, we'll explore how public servants can better understand the climate risk they face, how to use that knowledge to build resilience, and how the way we govern for resilience might have to change as the climate and the overall risk landscape we find ourselves in

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change to

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For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, a very warm welcome to you. A political is the world's largest network for government used by more than half a million public servants and policymakers across 170 countries.

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We're a strategic partner to governments helping them prepare the workforces for the future by upskilling through expert-led learning programs and peer communities

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As well as by building innovative AI-powered tools designed for and with governments

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It would be really great to hear from and about all of you, too. So I do invite you all to post in the chat where you're joining us from and what organization you work for.

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And while you're introducing yourself in the chat, I'll just mention three housekeeping pieces of information. Firstly, this event is recorded for on-demand viewing on Apolitical's website

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So please don't record it yourself. We'll also be using the recording to generate event insights, including with AI powered software. And as this session is running on a Zoom webinar

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We will not collect your video or audio data, but any personal data you share in the chat may be captured.

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Please do find contact details for privacy concerns in the A Political homepage footer if you want to know more about that.

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And secondly, closed captions are available in your own language, and you can toggle them on or off on your screen settings. My colleague will also post this information in the chat so you can see how to do it if you want to do that.

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And finally, we are really excited to be developing a brand new government resilience campus to equip leaders at all levels of government with the tools, the insights, and the connections they need to navigate a rapidly changing global risk landscape.

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And that allows them to move from crisis management to systemic redesign.

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If this is of interest to you.

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Do join the waitlist now to be among the first to see the new campus, and you will find a link to that in the chat. My colleague will put that in there now as well, so you can go have a look at that after the event.

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Now, before we introduce our three fantastic speakers today, we're just going to run a few quick polls to get a sense of where you're all coming into today's session from. So let's have a look at the first poll.

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The question here is, where is your government least prepared for climate shocks?

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Is it planning before crisis, coordinating across departments and agencies, protecting infrastructure and essential services, reaching vulnerable communities, or funding long-term resilience?

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And again, the question was, where is your government least prepared for climate shocks

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Planning before crisis, coordinating across departments and agencies, protecting infrastructure and essential services, or reaching vulnerable communities or funding long-term resilience.

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And we can see the answers are ticking in nicely here. We can start to see

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A nice spread. We have a clear candidate standing out as the most entered one. We have funding long-term resilience. Just about half of you are saying that funding long-term resilience is

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the area where your government is least prepared for climate shocks at the moment.

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I'm sure we'll come back to that later in the later the event. We'll bring it up in the panel or the Q&A later

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Let's head to the second poll. The question here is, what would help you build resilience more effectively in your role?

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And just to be very clear, hereby resilience, we mean the ability of your jurisdiction to cope with, adapt to, and recover from climate shocks and still thrive.

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So the question is, what would help you build resilience more effectively in your role?

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And the options are practical tools and frameworks, examples from other governments

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Better data and risk information, stronger cross-government coordination

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and more funding and investment.

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So I'll give you just a second to get your answers into this question. What would help you build resilience more effectively in your role?

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We'll see as the answers

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Come in

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We do see a similar pattern to the first one. We have more funding and investments taking the lead with stronger costs, government coordination, a close second.

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So we definitely see a theme here around funding and investment and one around cross-government coordination and collaboration as well.

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Excellent. Thank you so much for participating in

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to pause. I'm just going to open the chat and see where we have people joining from today. So it's really lovely to see lots of names here, lots of places. We have Wales, we have Ecuador, Midlands in the UK, we have Canada

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A few from Canada, it's really, really lovely to see all of you. Please do keep the answers coming in. We have Cape Town as well. Very lovely to see a good spread. Please do keep your answers coming into the chat. We would love to know where you're from

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And what organization you are working for

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Now, onto the really exciting part where we are going to introduce our three fantastic speakers because we're really fortunate to have three brilliant guests joining us today. We have Nua, Ananya, and Jakob.

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is a principal Advisor for Resilience and climate adaptation at ICLA Europe.

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No as an award-winning spatial planner and architect and has over 15 years of experience across UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Bank, and the Arab Urban Development Institute.

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She holds a PhD in urban resilience and has published extensively on disaster risk governance, urban informality, and climate resilience in the Middle East and North Africa region. Welcome to you, Noah

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And I'm also really happy to say welcome to Ananya Ramich, who is a senior research associate at the Institute for Environment and Human Security at the United Nations University.

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Ananya has a background in architecture, urban planning, and climate research, and her work focuses on urban development, climate risk, and equitable adaptation.

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And any user's participatory approaches to bring community perspectives and field-based insights into research, policy, and decision-making on resilience in cities.

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And completing our panel, I'm really happy to say welcome to Jakob Grandin, who is the Head of Climate and Risk Section at the City of Bergen in Norway. The rainiest city in Europe, if I remember correctly.

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Where he leads the strategic work on climate mitigation, circularity, and adaptation.

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Jacob's work focuses on how the city and its institutions can strengthen climate resilience, prepare for cascading risks, and translate systems thinking into practice.

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Yagov also brings a background in sustainability research, higher education, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

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And you can go and read the full bios of all three speakers by visiting the resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen, and then head into the speaker section there.

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Welcome to all three of our speakers. It's really, really lovely to have you here

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Before we get into the panel, let's kick things off with an icebreaker. No pun intended here, by the way. You'll each have about 30 seconds to share your responses.

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And the icebreaker today is, if you could add any person to your resilience team, real or fictional, who would it be and why?

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And we'd love to hear the answers of everyone here today, so while our speakers have a second to think about their answers, I would like to invite the audience to share your answers in the chat as well.

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Noah, I'm going to turn to you first. If you could add any person to your resilience team, real or fictional, who would be and why?

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Okay, so thanks, Oliver, for all the interesting questions. So I picked a real personality, a bit popular one, and I was always impressed with her work, and her name is Dr. Wagne Matani

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She's the founder of the Greenbelt Movement for the ones who don't know about her, but also she's the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, actually. And the reason why I have chosen her is the amazing work that she proved when it comes into climate resilience by starting at the grassroot level

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And engaging a huge number of African women in growing plants, basically, and bringing that realm of understanding resilience and what does it mean for community-based

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You know, survival and protection. So that's mine. But yeah, happy to hear from everyone as well.

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Thanks so much. I'm sure we'll come back to those skills and qualities of building community, organizing at grassroots level and the importance of doing that, both how to do it well, how it might be challenging. So I'm sure we'll come back to that later at the panel

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Ananya, let's turn to you. Who would you add to your resilience team

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Thanks, Oliver. So I actually thought about, it's a hypothetical, but more of a role. So I was thinking of an artist, potentially a theater artist

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And the idea of why an artist, because, I mean, all of our understanding of the world today is through complex models and statistics and maps, but I think there's a big gap in really sort of connecting to how we experience the world. We experience challenges. And I think

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Art and artists can be not just very instrumental in communicating science, but also to help us imagine the world that we're trying to work towards. So that would be my dream team member.

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I'm sure the audience will have a lot of ideas what artists to include here, but I think the skills of communicating and helping us imagine different worlds is something I know we'll come back to later as well.

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Jakob, who would you add to your resilience team and why

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It's a tricky question and it's just lovely to see all the different kind of ideas coming up in the chat as well, like Wonder Woman and the wolf. I was thinking about the science fiction author Margaret Atwood

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In a sense, I think it links to what you said, Ananya, that in a sense

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The rate of change is now so steep that kind of our calculations might have outrun our ability to actually imagine what's already happening. So we need people with a great imagination who are able to

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kind of connect the grand trends of change that we're in with kind of the human experience and the human perspective, because I think in the end, what we're working on is about kind of the quality of life of living beings, including humans.

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Fantastic. Thank you so much, Jakob. Let's see at the end of the panel how imaginative the audience thought the panel was today. Maybe that can be a challenge for all of us.

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Speaking of that, let's get straight into the panel. We're going to move through 3 parts. First, how to understand risk, then how to build resilience, and how to govern risk in the future.

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And Anya, I'm going to come to you first. Let's start with

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the foundation, when governments assess climate risks, what kind of things do they need to understand?

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Thanks, Oliver. Maybe I can start by saying let's all think of, let's say, let's use the example of flooding and think of a flooding statistic, hazard map and potentially a household survey.

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And the question I'd pose is how does this help us understand climate risk differently?

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And maybe to share an example from one of the projects that I was part of was the Mumbai Climate Action Plan, where we actually developed a specialized vulnerability assessment

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So, one insight was, let's say 35% of Mumbai's population was found to be living in areas close to flooding hotspots. But this information, for example, is not really enough. While it gives you the sense of scale, it doesn't tell you where. And then when we looked at this question.

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It was found that it's 67% of one ward's population. A ward is an administrative unit in an Indian city, that this population basically was exposed to flooding

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But this still doesn't give you a full picture, right? Are they all equally affected? Does it… do they have the same kind of impacts? And so, digging deeper, we realized about 50% of the households did not have a toilet within their residential premises. So the point that I'm trying to get to is that

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The idea of vulnerability to risks is multidimensional. There are many different factors that play out. If you look at a coastal city, it could attract affluent residential properties, it could have informal settlements, they're exposed to the same hazards, but they may not have the same capacities, and the vulnerabilities are also indeed very different.

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But also about households with older people, children might have limited mobility.

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And therefore, it's important to look at all of this in a very interconnected manner, and the idea is that climate risk assessment is not just a tool to understand risk, but it's a tool to manage risks. And what this requires us to do is to move away from, let's say, city-level averages

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Look at more granular neighborhood level variations, intra-city variations, disaggregate our data to how it moves between people of different ages, socioeconomic group, gender, different occupations, and finally bring this all

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sort of together to understand what conditions within which risk really manifests. And so, sort of, for me, the takeaway is, a flood hazard map can tell you where the hazard is

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But the risk assessment will tell you what happens when the flood water gets there. So it's really about knowing where's the hazard? Who is vulnerable? Where are these people living? And what does it really do to them?

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Thanks so much, Nanya. I think you really brought up how complicated this is as well. It's not just assessing one population's exposure to one risk. There are so many dimensions to take into account at the same time to get some useful information that can help us manage those risks

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Jacob, I'll come to you now because in the city of Bergen, you recently carried out a citywide climate risk assessment. How did you go about approaching that process and what did it reveal to you that you might not have seen if you had just looked at individual risks or different departments separately?

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Thank you. And I think what you said, Ananya, really resonates with our experience here in Bergen as well. So I work for the or my section is part of the urban Environment Agency in our city, which is one of our kind of operational agencies. We're responsible for roads, for parks and so forth. And I think what we're realizing now

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is that climate risk is really moving away from being a future problem towards becoming more of an operational reality in the present.

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And

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At the same time, our sense is that we have different ways of kind of dealing with risk in cities, but to kind of capture the long-term climate trends, we also need to kind of extend the time horizon. And I think the other thing that we have experienced is that many of the really important climate risks tend to kind of fall in between

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different institutional silos.

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One of the things we worked on in Bergen was to ensure that we got kind of a cross-sectoral approach towards kind of our risk assessment.

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What we did was that

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We created three different kind of expert groups across the different technical agencies in the municipalities. We had 15 different kind of expert to technical environments represented in a process

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Identifying climate risk across three kind of overall themes. One was kind of spatial planning, another one was buildings and infrastructure. And the third one was kind of service delivery and emergency preparedness.

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And we did this because we wanted to kind of bring the people who really knew their fields the best into the room to kind of get the best possible risk assessment. But I think

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The way we organized this gave us much more than we could have expected, and I tend to come back to this insight that one of our kind of public health professionals that were part of one of the groups told me, was that she said, you always kind of approach public health as kind of a service problem

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But actually, this is a problem of infrastructure

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And I think what this showed me was that climate risk really kind of emerged at kind of the intersection of different kind of sectors in the municipality

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And also that we need to, when we work with climate risk, we need to kind of also recognize the non-climate drivers of risk to kind of get them all kind of cross-sectoral and holistic approach. So I think we learned a lot from this process and

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I think one of the most important things was to kind of create this kind of broad ownership of the challenges that we identified together in these groups.

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Thanks so much, Aghav. Yeah, it's a really interesting phrase, right? When you start seeing something not just as a service, but also as an infrastructure problem at the same time. And I'll be curious to hear how many people in the audience recognize that as well. You can put it in the chat if that's something you recognize from your work

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Before we get into the governance side of things, I want to bring you in as well, Nuha, because

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Today, governments have access to more climate data than they have ever had

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But what kind of information actually helps them make better decisions? And where do you see the most important gaps today?

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Thank you. Thanks, Oliver for the questioning as well for the inputs from the previous two speakers, I think it links very well to that point about

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The fact of are we actually collecting data for having more data or are we actually getting that data to produce the decision making process that can help us generate evidence in the extremely

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I would say uncertain level of uncertainty that you are facing now, in particular with El Nino. And I might just want to highlight a little bit on the main title for our discussion today, because we cannot speak about El Nino without speaking about

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The definition of uncertainty, in particular when you speak about climate data, we have, and we still do really depend a lot on weather and climate data that's been generated by the general Met Offices, and now we are coming also more into geospatial data that is being integrated

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But then I think the main question that we always need to be asking ourselves is, how can we actually combine that global data projections

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The local environmental monitoring, with the community knowledge, because one of the very interesting maybe stories that I can share here is the feedback that we have received from the municipality, the metropolitan municipality of Izmir that we're currently working on in a project

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under the Urban Climate Resilience Program, and we just came into the ending of a four years project of climate resilience assessment at the local level of two communities within Izmir

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And what was interesting to see that journey from the beginning to the end with the feedback of one of the key representatives at the municipality, he said, we used to have the data to know what are the climate vulnerabilities within our city

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But we never knew the people who are actually living there until we came to understand exactly and interact with those peoples on the ground. So I think for me, this is a very strong message that, yes, the precision of the climate projections are important

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But the assessment of the local impact of our interventions is even more important and finding the mechanisms and the key ways or methodologies to measure those results. Because with the uncertainty of El Nino, El Nino is not you, it has been there since it was first recorded in the 187

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But what it gives us is the continuous lesson and the very powerful warning that it's not only about the climate projections, but how these climate projections actually interact with elements of the socioeconomic elements, the poverty, energy, infrastructure

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And what does it mean actually when it comes into assessing the impact of our interventions? So maybe to close here, Oliver, what is it for the governments to do is

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Start looking into what are the traditional weather models mean to us

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How can we better understand the historical patterns and the forecast immediate hazards, but also going beyond the prediction into what is only likely to happen and start planning for what is plausible

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Thank you.

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Thanks so much, and thank you so much for underlining the inherent uncertainty and increasing uncertainty and unpredictability of this as well. So we will come back to at the last part of this panel.

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I really want to highlight something you said that I thought was so nice. You said we have the data, but we don't know the people. That's a real challenge. And Ananya, I want to ask you about that because participatory processes are often built into adaptation plans

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Their influence can vary quite a lot

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What does meaningful participation of the local people that we want to understand look like? And what does that meaningful participation that actually helps improve resilience look like in practice?

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Thanks so much, Oliver. And I think that was a fantastic setting the scene by Nua for this and a great segue into participation is sort

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really knowing the people that we are working with and trying to address risks. And I think the question of meaningful participation for me sort of in 2 parts. The idea is, what is the process and why we are doing it because

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One is sort of the actual action, but also the motivation behind it sort of really influences the outcome of it. So to the first part of what really this process entails is that participation is not just about bringing the process closer to people

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But it's also about enabling people, providing the conditions that they can actually meaningfully engage and influence the decisions that eventually actually affect their everyday life

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So this is not just about giving people a voice, but to make sure that the voice actually can have and the role that it should have in planning, in decision making, in implementation. So this means, what does this mean for

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practical planning of participatory processes is that we need to think about who can participate and under what conditions. So it's not just about sort of organizing a workshop, have a long list of people that you're going to invite, have KPIs that are built on a sort of numbers, rather than the quality of the interaction

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So maybe I'd like to share an example from a recent workshop we had in a coastal city. I spoke of Mumbai, which was on the west coast, now I'm referring to WISAG, which sits on the east coast of India. And we were working with a group of women coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds, working in different occupations, and we were trying to discuss the idea of heat and health

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And how does that play out? And for us, in designing this engagement, some of the most important considerations were when did we actually hold this workshop

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What was the location? If we're looking at different socioeconomic groups, having a location that already makes them feel not comfortable to enter. These seem like very small details, but they

make a very big difference in the way what people bring to the people, what does power and positionality really mean

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These might seem like big words, but they're very real things that we all sort of encounter on a daily basis. So it started from understanding the language of moderation, making sure who was moderating at the table, what does it mean to have the presence of certain people in the room, making sure that women, for example, have caregiving responsibilities, so making sure that that is something that we bear in mind before expecting their presence

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Or, when it is, for example, daily wage earners to consider the income loss that we have. And this really sort of connects to Noah's point that are we collecting data for the sake of it? Because a lot of times, if we're on the field, people ask you

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We've had tens of people that come and ask us the same question, but what really is changing, you know, in our lives? And to me, this is

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Something that really keeps me up at night every time I've had to go back to field and ask questions without having something meaningful always to sort of bring back.

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So as sort of conclude the idea of what is meaningful participation is that simply inviting people does not really mean that everybody has the same opportunity to participate and to sort of contribute. And the second one is about the idea of sustained engagement. We saw that from the audience on funding

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But also from the idea of making sure that we continue to engage with people

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We fall into the trap of a lot of pilot projects and sort of very tokenistic engagement. And this is something that unfortunately doesn't help build trust. And in a context of uncertainty, I think one big

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resource we need to build as communities, as communities of practice, as decision makers, as people, is to be able to build trust. And I think that is something that will only come with, sort of, sustained

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interaction, not just having taking information from them and not bringing it back. And an example to also see why data does not capture all of the information is that the same two words of heat and health brought very different answers to the table

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There was a group that spoke about not having the right protective gear, or another group of women that spoke about living and working in the same place, and this made it very difficult to sort of be able to cope with, let's say, indoor heat conditions.

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And

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Unless we'd spoken to these people, to us, heat would still have felt more of a monolithic sort of problem, or vulnerable people as a homogenous group, vulnerable groups as sort of a homogenous setting. And

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Interacting with them also made us realize that they don't just bring challenges, but they bring solutions. They bring capacities to address these solutions. And therefore, participatory processes should not end at only asking them, hey, what's the problem? Can you tell us what the challenges are? But what do you think would work? What do you think you're already doing? Because there are a lot of times that

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There are solutions already in place, and it's important to sort of acknowledge, support, and build on these processes and solutions that people have established. And therefore, it's very important, I think, for authorities, decision makers to be able to make

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sure that these processes are transparent about their decisions that come out of these engagements, and to make sure that the processes really sort of reflect the conversations, the time that we've sort of people, and the ideas that they bring.

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and to the table.

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Thank you so much for that, Andy, and also for bringing all these practical examples of it. It's incredible when you think of it, how many small details really impact how successful that participatory process will be. And I also really like that you highlighted how

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and the the communities also bring solutions as well as they help you understand the problem, but bring solutions as well. And both you and Nuha agreed that we, of course, not don't want to collect data just for the sake of it. We wanted to inform the decision to make so we can shape people can help shape policy and implementation

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And on that point, Jakob, I would like to ask you that once a government has identified its climate risk, have done the climate assessment, the risk assessment

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How does it use that assessment to turn it into changes in everyday policy and planning and investment?

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That's a good point, and I think it's also a good question and also something that's kind of an ongoing job. So just kind of link to this kind of general idea also kind of stakeholder participation. My sense is that

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The most important outcome of the work we did on the climate risk assessment was not really the report itself, but it was kind of the common learning journey we had across departments that I think made everyone feel kind of ownership for the results. And that means that also

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the people that were involved in this process are now kind of ambassadors for this work. So I think that's a really good and important point here. And I think the second point is also that as part of this work

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We did quite a lot of kind of stakeholder engagement and collaboration with actors across Canada, the city of Bergen. Because I think it's really important also to make sure that we also work towards kind of a broader culture of

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adaptation, basically, where different actors kind of know their role in this kind of landscape. That could be a kind of finance actors, or local businesses, or the insurers, and we talk to each other from time to time, but I think

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In the next year, if we need to work towards kind of maybe aligning our approach a little bit. And I think one of the really interesting things we did was that we also had some stakeholder participation with kind of the residents of Bergen.

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The directive here was that we needed to focus on kind of the vulnerable groups. But I think we tried to reframe that towards making sure that actually the people we talked to are actually the groups that have kind of special kind of experience and special knowledge that is kind of particularly valuable

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for kind of understanding climate adaptation.

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And what came out from this process is basically that

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Also, the residents of Bergen, they want to do more, but they don't really know how. So I think here we really need to kind of find the municipality can play a certain role in this, but I guess as many of us know that as soon as we start advising people who also claim a lot of responsibility. So maybe this is one of those

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areas where we can kind of collaborate with insurers, for example, that have kind of direct connection with their customers, and they can kind of provide some of their their advice. So I think that's kind of the overall idea. But I think the next step for me would be to

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Operationalize these insights into our kind of everyday routines. I often talk about the fact that we need to kind of make our climate work less green and more gray. And what I mean with that is to make it more relevant

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here and now. So, and for our agency, that's partly about road standards. What standards do we kind of maintain our roads for? And that… can we get kind of a climate perspective into that? We're actually made significant progress

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towards making the city more climate robust, even though we might not always get, kind of, the most kind

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Ambition skills in order, because I think that's kind of the previous way we were thinking about these things where we were really kind of competing about the best targets. And I think what we should compete about now is kind of being best in the class in operationalize these insights.

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That's a great point, Jacob, and you can also see how you see that narrative shifting as well at the global stage as well with the international negotiation process where we say now that we're moving from the era of ambition into the era of implementation and the less green, more gray slogan.

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So a free one for everyone to use now, and I can see it ties really nicely back to your point on how to see something that's not just a server, but an infrastructure problem as well, so really anchoring it in that.

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No, I want to ask you about one specific thing because one of the more recognizable tools at many countries' disposal are early warning systems that can help identify threats before they become disasters

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But, of course, a warning only matches if someone has the ability to act on it

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So, can you say a little bit about what makes an early warning system actually work in practice?

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Sure, sure, Oliver. So, when we speak about anabolic system, I think the first point that comes into our mind, or we need to

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Let's say assess on the ground is the ability to detect the hazards, but also the ability to prevent the hazards from becoming a disaster. And that's something that we come to hear a lot in different conversations around

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Anticipatory action, and how can we actually prepare through the early warning system messages. And I believe also the El Nino experience also demonstrate significantly why this matters. Today, scientists can monitor the sea surface temperatures, but can we actually sign… with that scientific knowledge alone

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Protect the livelihoods and the household that might not have access to food in a certain area, or a farmer who cannot afford to adapt, or a municipality that maybe lacks the actual resources, not only to respond, but also for early preparedness.

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So from my perspective, I believe that an effective early warning system that can help work in practice actually needs to operate with very three key, I would say, unbroken parts of a social technical chain. And here I would like to highlight on the social elements in particular

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So the first part is the risk knowledge. The second is the monitoring and forecasting, and the third one is the communication. And if any of these links fails, unfortunately, one of the key elements that has been highlighted in the poll earlier by the participants was around investments

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Unfortunately, the adaptation investment in particular is going to be compromised. And I will come in a minute to highlight why am I emphasizing on adaptation in particular

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On the first link, and it comes into the risk knowledge, simply, when we speak about early warnings and the understanding of hazards, it's also here that in order for the early warning system to be effective, we need to understand the exposure.

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So it has to be connected to the local information about water availability, about crop dependency, about food prices, about public health, even displacement patterns. And that's something that we did emphasize a lot on in our very recent position paper that we published at Ecole that is looking into the intersection between climate change

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conflict and displacement, because whenever there is a disruption in a certain field or a certain sector within the city, and that's something that Jakob have emphasized on, then we can see that happening in other sectors and in other parts of the world. The second link, when it comes into the monitoring and the forecasting

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As I highlighted earlier, we have the national agency's data, but when we look into what does that mean for the potential pressures on long-term water supplies or agricultural livelihoods and the crop supply chain, then that's something that moves from

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A boundary of a country, or a city, or a region into a continental boundary, so the monitoring is key. But then going back into the local level, which I think that is the most critical, and I found it the most challenging part of that cycle, is the fact of communicating the messages. Are we actually

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communicating the messages in the local languages, the formats that can be understood for people on the ground, and can be trusted, so not only understood, but trusted, because that's something that we are experiencing in one of the projects that I'm engaged in as part of my voluntary role as the

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chairperson for the Sudan Urban Development Think Tank

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Well, we have the Daraja Sudan project, which is a project that is looked into people-centered weather and early warning approach, and it actually focuses on how can we translate the early warning information that we receive from the Met Off

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to the local languages, or simple audio formats and very basic channels that people use on a regular basis, like WhatsApp, or even interactive voice responses that facilitates a lot the use of AI, but also looks into the local dialects, not only in one

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language as in Arabic in Sudan, but also looking into local dialects. So the key message I want to close with here is the aim is to connect the scientific information that is being delivered by the early warning systems to the realities of the people's daily lives

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And make sure that that have an impact on preparedness, not only response

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Thanks so much, Nawa, and it's really nice to hear how you're all tying this back together to the lives of real people and these lives are obviously evolving lives, as we all know, like conditions change and we all know that and all feel that the climate is changing very rapidly as well. You talked about

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the uncertainty and unpredictability of that before as well, Noah. So, Ananya, I would like to ask you a little bit more about that. So if resilience is an ongoing process rather than a one-off assessment or one-off plan

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How can governments make sure that resilience plans also keep evolving as risks and evidence and local needs change?

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Thanks, Oliver. Indeed

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You just mentioned in your question, I think it's important to start by recognizing that risks are dynamic

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And resilience is a process. So that puts things in motion, things that are changing and things that we've got to keep up with continuously, but also being sort of responsive to changing needs.

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And in this context, it's important to acknowledge, for example, that risk assessment is a snapshot in time, and therefore it's important to sort of have feedback loops, continued engagement, sort of iterations, and sort of really keeping ourselves

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Up to date on what the reality is on the ground are.

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The second is sort of connected to the idea of forecasting is to bridge the gap between forecast and sort of anticipating what that can do to people and eventually translating that into action. So while El Nino has lots of science behind it for predictions, I think to really then

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Translate this into subjective realities of what it could do. That becomes the starting point for action, because a forecast to me is still very distant as an everyday… if I'm an everyday consumer of, let's say, a newspaper or even trying to read something, let's say, online, which is a bit more

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topic specific. So, as I said, this requires sort of establishing

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more institutional processes, feedback loops, starting from the way it's implemented to sort of having an evaluation with stakeholders, how that evaluation went, and building an institutional memory such that it sort of continues beyond political cycles

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Continues beyond duration of plans. We have 5-year, 10-year, 15-year plans, but neither do risks or hazards follow temporal or spatial boundaries. So sort of really recognizing this

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And of course, sort of bringing back the point that I mentioned earlier is sort of building trust, which I think is really, really key in this

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sort of in dealing with this issue. And one maybe sort of more real-world example to share is that there's a very interesting governance mechanism called the Sachivalam system, which in English would sort of loosely translate into a secretariat system. And the idea is that it's sort of a tiered system, such that eventually the smallest, sort of, the

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The smallest unit of the system is a volunteer. That's the designation, and they're responsible for about 50 households in the city. What this does is build a one-on-one interaction between the government

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And the residents of the city. And this helps to build a sort of give a face, but also a pathway

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to share concerns, to bring ideas, to have a mechanism to discuss things. And this has proven, although it started with the idea of public service delivery, it was very useful in this particular city that is prone to cyclone risks that a lot of people were extremely skeptical about moving to evacuation shelters

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While I acknowledge that the reason for the skepticism could be varied, but the volunteers played a very important role because of the trust that they had to convince people to move to vacation shelters. And this is not a sort of a trust that they built only during the disaster, but this was something that was built over the years

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It was built through regular interaction, it was built through being there for people on a daily basis. And this is something, I think, for governments, for decision makers, for authorities that manage risks in our cities is to ensure that

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There are sustained relationships. There are mechanisms, because participation also requires infrastructure. Infrastructure is not just a physical thing. So infrastructure is participation, institutional memory is such that things are not lost under certain sort of time bound

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Projects

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pilot interventions or certain, let's say, changes in political leadership.

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And therefore, I would say that

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While building resilience is

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A shared responsibility, it's a collective effort. It also requires us to sort of be extremely responsive to the changes and learn to prioritize, because there is no way we can do everything at all times, and then we're probably not going to do anything right. So it's important to say, what should we focus on

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And I think all of the tools, all of the entry points that we've shared are sort of important ways in which that can help us

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What next or what first?

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Thank you so much, Naya. There's one word in particular you mentioned that I want to come back to that was feedback loops, because that's both relevant for the process of keeping plans in practice up to date, but it also describes the escalating changes in our global systems. So Jakob, I want to come to you now

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And as we just have a few minutes left of the panel before we head into Q&A.

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I want to ask you, many governments systems were built to manage these quite predictable risks and often within individual sectors. What are some of the most important ways that governance has to change when climate risks compound

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They cascade across systems and they become increasingly nonlinear

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And I think this is kind of our dilemma right now is that the nature risk is also changing. We're moving from linear to nonlinear risks. We're moving from single to compound risks, and we're moving from kind of bounded risks

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to kind of transboundary or cascading risks, but I still think that the way we govern risk and the way we can also tune our risk assessments are really based on linear, bounded

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And single risks to a large extent, in different ways, we try to kind of extend this

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We've tried to play with this a bit in our risk assessment, where we have kind of chapters on compound risk and on transboundary risk, but I would still say that the main push of our risk assessment is still quite linear

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Because it's really difficult to kind of explore more kind of non-linear futures through kind of the climate indices that we use as cities to kind of, yeah, work on our risk assessments. So I think one really interesting thing that we did together with researchers in Bergen and also at Lund University in Sweden was that we created this

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Future work called Bye by Brigham, which explores kind of climate futures in kind of a World Heritage Area in Bergen. And I think through that work

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We were actually able

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In a storyline approach to explore non-linear change, kind of the interlinkages between kind of social and ecological trends, for example, kind of the stability of insurance. And we were also, which I think what's really interesting, able to explore adaptation

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futures beyond the status quo. As a municipality, we tend to become very kind of technical in terms of the measures we propose, but in this kind of more narrative approach, we were able to

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explore much more kind of social and softer approaches to adaptation that I wouldn't be able to kind of propose to our politicians yet, but I think there are still really important to have on our radar. So I think moving towards more kind of narrative approaches

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Stress testing things for more risks and moving maybe in our adaptation approaches away from the idea of fail safe, where we try to kind of optimize optimize for kind of unlimited number of risks that we think that we can know towards maybe safe to fail approaches where we

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try to make our cities robust across multiple different climate futures.

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Thanks so much, Ago. It's really good to hear your reflections on dealing with climate risks that are cutting across systems, cascading, becoming nonlinear. Nuha, I would like to turn to you for the final question of the panel before we head into a Q&A

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Because now we talked about this cascading climate risk, but climate shocks rarely happen in isolation. So how could governments build resilience when climate risk overlap with other types of risk like conflict or displacement, economic insecurity, or other types of crises?

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Yes, yes, Oliver. I think one of the, I would start by going back to one of the points I highlighted earlier, but also what Jakob has mentioned now, which is that you have the right to fail, but then test and how that means. But

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How does that actually mean when I speak about it, about climate shocks that do not occur in a political or what we call the social vacuum? So there are consequences that cannot be understood through the climate data. And that's something also that we have learned from Malinio, because if you go and look into the history of it and how the famine that has been caused back in the early 80s

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And then also what that was the scale of that catastrophe that is being repeated again and again with the existing political crisis around the food market, the inadequate social protection systems that were not established at that time

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And still, we do lack some of them in a lot of our countries to date. So the basic answer for that is the El Nino. It gives you the transcript, just highlights how the global food system can really transmit the local climate shocks across borders

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We can see how the war in Ukraine, or maybe the crisis in the Middle East, actually is actually affecting the wider geopolitical pressures on food security within our own cities and countries that we live in today.

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So, and I would just like to highlight this from one perspective Europe work on climate change in particular and the Ukraine recovery roadmap

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Where we are advocating a lot into what we call integrated resilience approach. So there is no one way to deal with the problem, but having this multi, I would say, layered understanding of the underlying risks behind it. So if we are looking, for example, in a flood prone area in a fragile setting

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Then we also need to look into what does that mean for the exposure, not only for the existing communities, but also for the displaced communities. But then, again, adding into that another layer of complexity about, for example, displacement patterns

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And the dynamic movement and the dynamic needs of these displaced populations. One of also the important elements, I think, that have been highlighted in the discussion earlier around adaptation. I just want to indicate again that the early warning system, for example, is one of an adaptation measure that can be implemented

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But now that we are heading off to COP31 and a lot of the emphasis around mitigations and mitigation is definitely key, reducing emissions that's driving the long-term climate hazards, but adaptation is reducing the impact. So if we are aiming for long-term prevention of the existing challenges that we have across data, across

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Intersectionality between the different hazards, then we need to also look into how can we measure climate mitigation, sorry, climate adaptation as well. Over to you, Oliver

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Thank you so much, Noah, and thank you to all three of you on the panel. It was really, really wonderful. And to the audience, remember that you can still share any questions you have for the panel in the Q&A tab at the bottom of the screen. We'll get to them in just a second

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While you do type in your questions for the panel, I also want to share that apolitical is currently gathering insights to understand how shocks like climate change or geopolitical instability are affecting the daily work of public servants and policymakers

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Like you all, and we'd really appreciate your help by filling out the survey. My colleague will share in the chat just now. It takes about 10 minutes to complete and it gives you the chance to share your experience and help us build a clearer picture of the challenges public servants face around the world who work on resilience.

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Great, now onto the Q&A. Please keep the questions coming. We'll start with some we got live on the day, and if we have time for it, go to the pre-submitted ones. If I can suggest to the panel that we do this as a rapid fire, so keep the answers short and snappy so we can get through as many of them as possible

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The first question I will address to you, Jakob. Because you mentioned how the assessment you made helped you collaborate across different departments and how it created ambassadors who really took on that role of leading some of this work

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So here's a question on some of the communication of that. How do you frame resiliency in consultation and in planning

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Do you frame it as a climate issue, as a social issue, a community issue, or a mix of them at the same time? And how did the framing affect the outcomes? Jakob, do you want to give that a go?

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Yeah, that's a really, really important question.

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We use the word robustness more and more rather than resilience, because I think that really highlights the importance of kind of redundancy between and across different systems

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I think for us to frame this to work, I think it's really important to focus on the co-benefits and to make sure that actually what we do is that we're working towards creating a safe and livable city for everyone, and we kind of do climate adaptation in the right way. That's kind of where

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heading. I'm also a bit worried, and I think we should all be about how we are now moving towards this kind of more kind of security framing of climate change and climate adaptation. I think we should all ask ourselves the question about what… how that kind of narrows our scope of options

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But I'll leave that for next time.

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Really good reflection, good cliffhanger for a future event on climate communications.

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The next question I would like to ask that to you, Nuha. We have a question here about the difference between disaster planning and systemic planning.

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So do we focus on extreme events or on long-term impacts such as heat or food security

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And what are the common resilience approaches that can help communities prepare for both? So both the disaster planning and the more systemic long-term planning.

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Okay, so that's a long question, but I tried to make it brief. On the first part of the question, the answer is both, unfortunately. So we can't focus on either or we need to think about a mechanism that can help measure both the short and the long term

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And adding into that the layers of uncertainties of other risks and hazards that might occur. For the second part, I believe that listening to the people is the key, because you would be amazed to what extent people can share their own experiences and bring solutions that

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For us practitioners, urban planners, or scientists might not have thought about

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Thanks so much, Noah. We have another question here, a pre-submitted question.

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For you and Anya, so the question here is

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What practical steps can governments, particularly in developing countries such as Honduras, take to protect vulnerable communities from extreme heat and wildfires whilst maintaining essential services and build more resilient infrastructures? There's a bunch of things in this one. Immediate step for vulnerable communities

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To protect them from things like extreme heat and wildfires.

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Thanks, Oliver. Great question and not an easy answer, especially in a rapid fire round, but maybe one important thing is to probably move away from the idea of heat only as an extreme and an acute threat. I think that

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already give us a different vantage point. We're going to look at heat very differently. It won't be a sort of temporally bounded event, but something that people can be exposed to for longer times at places that we've not thought of in the night, especially in cities

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And therefore, that would sort of be the question, or sort of the answer to the question on how do you deal with

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The idea of extreme heat. And I think particularly looking at vulnerable populations is to really disaggregate world does vulnerability mean? And I think I would then be summarizing what all the three of us said about this, which is about talking to people, which is about really hearing and linking

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It's sort of bridging the gaps between science, policymaking and experience to me. Unfortunately, it's like we're living in three worlds, and the idea is that can we start bridging words? Can we start blurting these boundaries? And I think as soon as we open up our doors and start

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Moving out of our vocabularies, our vantage points, I think we will know

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What is required, and in many places, people are already doing in the absence of formal measures. There are measures that people are taking, and I think it's about learning to build on that and having a more

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nuanced understanding of what and who and where vulnerability truly is.

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Thank you so much, Nadia, and well done for tying the ending back to the original question that kicked off the panel discussion.

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Thank you so much to our panel. We had some incredible wisdom from each of our speakers, and I'd like to ask you all to join me in giving Noa and Anya and Jakob a virtual round of applause.

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And most importantly, thanks to you as well, the audience, for investing your time with us and asking such great questions to our panel. It was really, really a joy to read all of the questions from you.

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The team is going to pull up a quick poll to find out how you felt about the event today, which will help us continue improving our content. And we do really appreciate your responses. And while you're responding to the poll, I want to share two more events that you can register for to join us again soon

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If you're not available to be there live, remember you can always register for the event in order to get the recording sent afterwards so you can catch up whenever it suits you.

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So the two events we have coming up, the first one is for the policymakers and researchers in the room. You can join us next week for a live demo of a comparative research tool purpose built for policymakers. It's called Policy Nova Closing the trust gap in AI Policy Research

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And in two weeks, we have how to manage stakeholders who want different things on navigating competing demands and keeping your work moving forward.

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Excellent. That's all we have time for today. We hope you find it really helpful and we want to say a huge thanks to our three speakers and to all of you in the audience for taking the time out of your busy days

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Do keep an eye out for the email that's coming your way with today's recording and resources.

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And we hope to see you at another apolitical event very soon. Have a great day, everyone. Bye.

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