POLICY BRIEF

Policy Responses to Climate Impacts in Light of Fragility, Instability, and Climate Security Dynamics

How to Manage the Double Burden?

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Executive Summary

In this policy brief, we critically examine the 'double burden' for countries that are highly vulnerable to and affected by climate change impacts while experiencing political instability, fragility, or conflict. Vulnerabilities compound and effective responses are constrained in these states, which receive disproportionately low and insufficient support through climate finance and tend to be forgotten in climate action. The global fragility landscape is becoming increasingly complex, marked by the convergence of unprecedented climate extremes, rising state fragility, and the related deepening of socio-economic vulnerabilities. The 1.5-degree limit of global average temperature increase was exceeded in 2024. There now is a high risk for escalating compound risks, with mounting human and economic losses, including loss of life and intense pressure on social cohesion. This comes as already more than two billion people live in highly or extremely fragile contexts – a number which is only expected to rise.

Policy responses in fragile and conflict-affected settings need to be thoroughly context-specific. Policy makers thus face complex challenges, the finance gap being a central obstacle. Current climate finance flows remain biased towards stable contexts, leaving critical gaps for those most in need. Concrete barriers that restrict access include donor risk perceptions, burdensome procedures, and preference for large-scale projects, which often exceed local capacity. Debt distress further amplifies the need for grants, yet the global share of grant-based finance remains limited. Despite these structural obstacles, locally embedded responses demonstrate the potential for flexible, trust-based, and highly adaptive approaches that bypass the rigidities of conventional finance.

At the international level, recognition is emerging, albeit slowly. Initiatives such as the COP28 Declaration on Peace and Security, the COP29 Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief, and Recovery, and the Network of Climate Vulnerable Countries affected by Conflicts or High Levels of Humanitarian Needs have made their case for the necessary approaches and/or formulated concrete demands to close the climate-fragility-finance-gap.

The upcoming COP30 provides much needed opportunities for the international climate policy regime to lower the pressure on double affected countries. Closing the climate ambition gap is central to enable development towards increased resilience. It can help to prevent, reduce, or deal with climate impacts through mitigation, adaptation, and L&D action, including support for affected countries through increased climate finance, especially in fragile contexts.

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Content

Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
ANSAs	Armed Non-State Actors
AR5	IPCC Fifth Assessment Report
AR6	IPCC Sixth Assessment Report
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
BCCTF	Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund
DAEs	Direct Access Entities
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERRs	Emergency Response Rooms
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage
GCF	Green Climate Fund
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDOS	German Institute of Development and Sustainability
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KNU	Karen National Union
L&D	Loss and Damage
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
RCCC	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
SAP	Simplified Approval Process
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

1 Introduction

The climate crisis is approaching a new phase with unpredictable and irreversible impacts;[1] more countries affected by compounding risks following these impacts, and increased state fragility, instability, or conflicts. This leads to a double exposure and vulnerability for people and communities whose risks are determined by with the same factors (social, political, economic).

Affected countries hence face two distinct internal challenges: a) to maintain political prioritisation on systematic planning and implementation of preventive or response measures to climate impacts; and b) to navigate the funding conditions required to access and effectively use climate finance from various sources.

These countries are embedded in a global system that is currently facing multiple crises. The geopolitical setting exacerbates the imminent challenges even further for them. The ongoing wars in Ukraine, Sudan, Congo, and the Middle East add pressure on the system, aggravated by the United States (US) withdrawing from its multilateral engagement and financial support, for example by shutting down the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), exiting the Paris Agreement, and cutting financial contributions to UN institutions and climate finance. These dynamics are further complicated as other Global North countries reshape and reshuffle their priorities in international policy with less emphasis on climate policy. This has led to budget cuts for Official Development Aid (ODA) and hence climate finance, entrenching the challenge of adequate and predictable provision.

In fragile and conflict-affected contexts,[2] constrained fiscal space and governance concerns risk marginalising these countries further in emerging climate finance mechanisms. They are already struggling with international financial support through multilateral funds as their unstable political context often limits access and hence reduces funding.

In this policy brief, we give an overview of the conditions countries are facing in light of instability, fragility, and climate security dynamics, with a perspective on compounding risks as well as the financial framework they are placed into. We present examples of a) of how countries internally and regionally react to the challenges, b) of international political initiatives to address the specific situation, and c) concrete recommendations for international climate policy.[3] We draw our findings from a multi-stakeholder workshop on 'Government responses to climate impacts in light of instability and climate security dynamics' organised by Germanwatch and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), in collaboration with the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS).[4]

[1] Ripple and Wolf (2024).
[2] See definitions in 2.1.
[3] Even if other policy areas are closely connected to the challenges discussed in the policy brief, the focus of this publication lies on international climate policy.
[4] Participants included representatives from governments, CSOs, and academia from Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Ghana, and Germany and took place on 20 June 2025 in Bonn, Germany, at the sidelines of the UNFCCC SB62 session.

2 Background: Compound Risks and Climate Security Challenges in Climate-vulnerable Countries

In this chapter, we explore how fragility and climate change interact to create complex and compounding risks in vulnerable countries. Fragility is increasingly recognised as multi-dimensional and dynamic, spanning political, economic, social, and institutional domains, and affecting both conflict-affected and seemingly stable states. At the same time, climate change is driving unprecedented extremes that intensify vulnerabilities and strain already fragile governance systems. Added together, this pressure amplifies risks to human security, good governance, and stability, underscoring the urgency of tailored responses in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

2.1 Unstable and fragile political contexts

The concept of fragility is broad and multi-dimensional with no single agreed definition. While often associated with conflict-affected or institutionally weak states, current frameworks increasingly recognise that fragility can manifest in diverse forms and across a wide range of contexts. Previous studies on state fragility have made it possible to group its factors into several categories: demographic, economic, social, political, and institutional.[5] Early definitions, such as those developed by the World Bank in the 1990s, had focused primarily on states' limited capacity to implement economic reforms. Since then, the concept has expanded to encompass additional dimensions such as territorial security, levels of violence, basic public services, political legitimacy, and equitable economic opportunities for all citizens.[6]

'The Fragile States Index' by the Fund for Peace has further expanded our understanding of fragility by highlighting not only the pressures that all states experience but also by identifying when pressures push states towards the brink of failure.[7] The index evaluates fragility across 12 indicators, including demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced persons, group grievance, human flight and brain drain, economic inequality, economy, state legitimacy, public services, human rights, security apparatus, factionalised elites, and external intervention.[8] This conceptual expansion challenges the conventional imaginaries of fragility as something framed as 'failed' states, underscoring instead that fragility can exist in contexts commonly perceived as stable, or emerge in response to global or national systemic shocks. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) 'States of Fragility 2025' report reflects the rising complexity and scope of fragility in the current global context.[9] As of 2025, 61 contexts are classified as experiencing high or extreme fragility, collectively representing 2.1 billion people – 25% of the world's population – and 72% of the global extreme poor in 2024, a figure projected to increase to 92% by 2040. This underscores the growing convergence of fragility and global risk.

[5] Dimitrova and Triki (2018)
[6] World Bank (n.d.).
[7] The Fund for Peace (2023).
[8] The Fund for Peace (2019).
[9] OECD (2025).

Focus Box 1: Global fragility trends since 2015[10]

Since 2015, fragility trends have diverged across dimensions and regions. Fragility has decreased particularly in countries such as Timor-Leste, the Maldives, the Gambia, Armenia, Qatar, and Moldova – many of which have recently undergone democratic transitions. Conversely, it has deteriorated in Venezuela, Syria, Myanmar, and Nicaragua.

Security, political, and economic fragility have worsened globally. Security fragility has increased in 93 of 177 contexts, reflecting the rise of multiple forms of violence. Political and social fragility have increased in 107 contexts, largely due to a global wave of autocratisation. Economic fragility has risen in over half (94) of the contexts. While environmental fragility has remained relatively stable, regions such as the Middle East and the Sahel show increasing stress. Human fragility has improved in many places. Notably, 135 contexts have seen a decrease in human fragility, with Sierra Leone, Iraq, Nigeria, and Bangladesh showing the most progress. In contrast, North Korea, Venezuela, and Libya have seen worsening human fragility, often linked to conflict, economic crises, and dependence on natural resources.

Fragility profiles remain context-specific and multi-dimensional. In Libya and Syria, declines in security fragility coexist with persistent political and societal fragility – which the report terms 'negative peace'. Afghanistan shows similar complexity: less armed conflict but worsening societal fragility, especially for women and girls. Conflicts in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Ukraine have driven up security fragility. However, Ukraine stands out for maintaining medium-to-low overall fragility largely due to sustained international support. By contrast, Lebanon's resilience has declined due to regional conflict and prolonged economic crisis, while Haiti's rising fragility stems from organised criminal violence and weak state capacity.

One of the most significant of these risks is climate change.[11] According to the 'Sixth Assessment Report' (AR6) of the IPCC, a country or region is considered 'vulnerable' to climate change when climate hazards (e.g. drought, flood, heatwaves) have a disproportionately negative impact due to the limited capacity of people and institutions to cope and adapt.[12] This lack of capacity often stems from long-standing development challenges such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure, displacement, institutional weakness, and broader state fragility.

Importantly, these structural challenges rarely occur in isolation. They interact and reinforce one another, shaping how societies experience and respond to climate impacts. As a result, climate change is increasingly understood not just as a threat multiplier that amplifies existing vulnerabilities and risks of instability, but also as a catalyst for deeper fragility, contributing to displacement, erosion of governance, and breakdowns in social cohesion.[13]

In contrast, an emerging perspective also pushes back against assumptions of linear causality. This perspective cautions against the threat multiplier narrative, particularly where it reflects a militarised view of human security. Instead, it frames climate impacts and conflict as co-occurring crises, overlapping but not necessarily causally linked, each placing simultaneous pressure on vulnerable populations.[14]

[10] Ibid.
[11] Polchar and Alfonzo Santamaria (2024).
[12] IPCC (2022).
[13] Arnold and WPF USA (2017).
[14] Raleigh et al. (2024).

Important to note here is that as climate-related disasters intensify, the involvement of military forces in disaster response, resource allocation, and security measures has increased. While this approach may seem practical in emergency scenarios and mainly stable countries, it can also exacerbate existing conflicts, particularly in fragile states.[15] The presence of military forces can escalate tensions, particularly in regions with simmering local conflicts. Moreover, the shift in focus from civilian-led climate adaptation to military intervention risks sidelining the broader humanitarian needs of affected populations, contributing to further instability and marginalisation. Thus, while militarised responses may seem necessary in times of crisis, they can in some contexts inadvertently worsen conflicts and undermine long-term peace and stability. As such, more sustainable and inclusive approaches are needed to address the intersection of climate change and conflict.

In terms of the different roles of the different actors, when functioning governments do exist, state actors remain central to the formal architecture of climate governance.[16] National governments are typically responsible for setting climate priorities, co-ordinating across ministries and sectors, and submitting commitments under frameworks such as the Paris Agreement. Their role is particularly pronounced in the planning and financing of climate response, which often require cross-cutting, long-term strategies. However, in highly fragile and conflict-affected settings, the very foundation of state-led climate planning can be absent or contested. Here, the political landscape fundamentally shapes not just how climate action is carried out but restricts who is able to act. As fragility increasingly overlaps with climate vulnerability, growing recognition of the need to engage and understand the engagement with armed non-state actors (ANSAs) and de facto authorities is growing (see Focus Box 2).[17]

[15] Gilbert (2012).
[16] Petzold et al. (2023).
[17] Jackson et al. (2023).

Focus Box 2: Role of ANSAs in climate action

Armed groups constitute an expansive category of diverse actors with different interests, capacities, and levels of internal and external control. Groups such as the Karen National Union (KNU) in Myanmar or Al-Shabaab in Somalia have various established institutions, structures, and rules to govern the territory they control and the populations within them.[18] But as evident from humanitarian and peacebuilding work, we know that engaging with armed actors and de facto authorities is often a prerequisite to working in conflict areas.[19] Though fraught with legal and ethical challenges, engaging these actors is increasingly viewed as necessary for equitable and effective climate responses.

One core argument is grounded in rights-based principles: all people, regardless of territorial control or political status, are entitled to a safe and sustainable environment. For millions living in ANSA-controlled regions,[20] adaptation measures, such as improved access to water or drought-resilient livelihoods, can directly improve well-being. For instance, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) created institutions for controlling land use and enforcing limits to cultivation. Similarly, the KNU in Myanmar operates its own departments focusing on land, forestry, and wildlife conservation and even collaborates with global organisations such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).[21]

Excluding ANSA-controlled areas not only neglects some of the most climate-vulnerable populations but also risks undermining the completeness and coherence of national climate strategies. From a pragmatic standpoint, ANSAs often control ecologically important or resource-rich areas. Their co-operation may be crucial for landscape-level interventions or for ensuring the functionality of shared systems like rangelands or river basins. In some cases, local-level collaboration has yielded better resource governance outcomes.

A growing body of work also sees engagement on climate issues as a possible entry point for peacebuilding.[22] Joint work on climate response may enable trust-building and open dialogue in otherwise blocked political settings. Yet, this potential must be weighed against real risks, such as aid diversion, legitimisation of armed groups, and adverse impacts on vulnerable populations, especially women and girls.[23]

Finally, we briefly introduce the IDOS's eight-cluster typology of state fragility[24] (even though we will not use it for evaluation or analysis in this paper). [25] The typology reflects the diversity of fragile and conflict-affected settings and offers a useful heuristic to conceptualise the different institutional and governance conditions under which climate adaptation and Loss and Damage (L&D) responses may be pursued. Crucially, we understand fragility as dynamic and context-specific, and any references

[18] Ibid.
[19] MacLeod et al. (2016), Walch (2018).
[20] Bamber-Zryd and ICRC (2023).
[21] South (2023).
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] IDOS (n.d.).
[25] This typology is introduced solely to illustrate the range of settings relevant to climate policy efforts discussed in this paper. It is not intended as a classification mechanism or as a basis for comparison. Rather, it supports the broader aim of enabling a more differentiated and grounded discussion about how climate policy unfolds across diverse political and institutional landscapes.

to fragility mean to underscore the structural and situational complexity of governance – not to generalise or label individual states. The IDOS typology outlines the following clusters:

Table 1: Typology of State Fragility

State classification	Description	Examples from 2024
'Dysfunctional States'	Very low authority, capacity, and legitimacy	Mali, Sudan, Libya, and Myanmar
'Low-Cap-Leg States'	Moderate authority, but low capacity and legitimacy	Ethiopia, Venezuela, Russia, and Pakistan
'Low-Authority States'	Moderate legitimacy and capacity, but weak control over violence	Mexico, Colombia, Ukraine, and Niger
'Low-Capacity States'	Sufficient authority and legitimacy, but weak service delivery	India, Madagascar, Ghana, and Benin
'Low-Legitimacy States'	High authority and capacity, but low popular legitimacy	Egypt, Algeria, Turkey, and China
'Semi-Functional States'	Moderate levels across all dimensions	Kenya, Tunisia, Indonesia, and Brazil
'Illiberal-Functioning States'	Strong authority and service delivery, but low democratic legitimacy	Romania, Italy, Slovakia, and Malaysia.
'Well-Functioning States'	High capacity, legitimacy, and control	Australia, Japan, France, and Chile

Source: Based on IDOS (n.d.)

2.2 Increasing climate impacts and compound risks

The climate crisis is intensifying and so are its impacts. 2024 was the hottest year on record and marks the first year with average global temperature 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels,[26] the lower end of the temperature limit set by the Paris Agreement. This threshold has happened sooner than estimated, leading to increasing (irreversible) impacts and risks.[27] With historical air, sea surface temperature, and ice extent records broken in 2023 and 2024, the climate crisis has entered a critical and unpredictable phase,[28] putting especially countries with low coping capacities under pressure. Attribution science has made a major jump between AR5 ('Fifth Assessment Report') and AR6, proving with even more clarity that extreme weather events like tropical storms or floods occur more

[26] Copernicus (2025).
[27] Kotz et al. (2024).
[28] Ripple et al. (2024).

frequently and/or intensely as a result of climate change.[29] Extreme weather events have severe consequences for countries and communities that experience growing need to adapt and to face increasing losses and damages. Between 1993 and 2022, more than 765,000 people lost their lives worldwide, and economic losses from more than 9,400 extreme weather events totalled nearly USD 4.2 trillion.[30] With the global temperature increase, tipping points in the climate system are drawing closer – as do unforeseeable and dangerous dynamics with potentially uncontrollable fallout.[31]

At the intersection of fragility and worsening climate impacts, fragile countries face even greater hardship and vulnerability where compounding risks and hazards occur. In countries with weak institutions or in conflict, these challenges can amplify one another, exacerbating vulnerabilities. This, in turn, can decrease countries' capacity to deliver climate action,[32] including effective adaptation and addressing L&D – another step in the downward spiral.

2.3 Climate and security risks

The security dimension of climate change also influences the interplay of fragility and climate impacts. As such, security has made its way into international politics and debates. Climate change can severely influence peace and security as a 'threat multiplier.' Its concrete impacts largely depend on social, economic, and natural circumstances.[33] Climate impacts can multiply risks that lead to increased insecurity, overburden state capacity, and make vulnerable communities even more susceptible to threats.[34]

As a 'non-traditional' security threat, climate change impacts endanger human security. The concept of Human Security integrates 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want,' drawing on aspects of human rights, human development, peacekeeping, and conflict prevention. Climate impacts pose 'widespread and cross-cutting challenges to survival, livelihood, and dignity of people.'[35] This involves personal and state, economic and environmental levels and can in turn impact different human security dimensions, among others: food security and the risk of malnutrition or undernutrition (e.g. due to crop failure from drought), physical security and risks for bodily integrity caused by extreme events, economic security and risks to livelihoods.[36]

The effect of climate impacts on increased human mobility (including forced migration and displacement) illustrates how climate change affects human security. Climate change may force people to leave their homes by threatening livelihoods, living conditions, and the environment, and jeopardising human rights. Extreme events such as heavy rain or storms bring sudden destruction on settlements and infrastructure (from roads to water supply), forcing people to immediately leave their living environment.

[29] IPCC (2023).
[30] Adil et al. (2025).
[31] McKay et al. (2022).
[32] UNDP (2021).
[33] Schleussner et al. (2016).
[34] Busby et al. (2018).
[35] UNGA (2012).
[36] For a comprehensive list of human security categories and dimensions, and examples of related climate change threats, see Schultheiß, Künzel, Schwarz. (2025).

The displaced usually don't cross borders. In 2024 alone, 45.8 million were internally displaced due to natural disasters[37] – the highest figure since 2008.[38] If not planned and executed well, these movements can lead to social tension. Climate-induced migration from rural to peri-urban areas, for instance, can lead to tension in case of labour shortage or inadequate urban infrastructure.[39] Regarding cross-border movements, tensions can arise from overburdening in receiving countries. Concrete numbers on cross-border displacement due to disasters are lacking.

Slow onset processes such as sea level rise, or less sudden extreme events such as droughts, pose different challenges for populations, leading to a growing pressure in the decision to migrate. Migration due to slow onset processes are rather difficult to quantify, as push factors work mainly in an indirect fashion.

Projections indicate that mobility will increase as a consequence of the climate crisis. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, experts estimate more than 140 million people are affected, and potentially forced to move, by 2050.[40] Beyond that, some populations do not have the capacities to migrate and remain 'trapped' at their places of origin.

The exact influence of climate impacts on conflict (intrastate or interstate) has been researched and discussed in academic and political spheres. As a threat multiplier, climate impacts can exacerbate existing danger and conflict constellations. The IPCC finds that while the primary reasons for violent conflict lie within socioeconomic conditions, governance (including fragility) and ethnic fragmentation, impacts of climate change heighten risks for people already living in conflict-affected areas. By exacerbating vulnerabilities, more frequent climate shocks and extremes can increasingly affect intrastate conflict.[41] Regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel, where the climate crisis, resource scarcity, and political instability intertwine, are particularly precarious.[42] Studies show that a warming of 4°C could increase the risk of armed conflict by up to 26%.[43]

Even if scientific evidence shows that climate change can impact conflict settings, the relationship is complex and highly context specific. Some studies show that extreme events and armed conflicts can mutually exacerbate the respective damage they cause, the exact mechanisms however remain unclear.[44]

Highly vulnerable countries are much more affected by human security threats. This is crucial as the IPCC established a strong connection between vulnerability and state fragility.[45] At the same time, fragile or conflict-affected countries are less likely to respond to climate impacts.[46]

[37] More than half of those displacements happened due to storms, including major cyclones in countries such as Bangladesh, China, the Philippines, and the US.
[38] IDMC (2025).
[39] Vinke et al. (2021).
[40] IPCC (2018).
[41] IPCC (2022), Robinson (2020), Schleussner et al. (2016).
[42] Other drivers, such as low socioeconomic development and low capabilities of the state, are judged to be substantially more influential, and the mechanisms of climate–conflict linkages remain uncertain. At any rate, intensifying climate change is estimated to increase future risks of conflict.
[43] Mach et al. (2019).
[44] Von Uexkull et al. (2016).
[45] IPCC (2023).
[46] Busby et al. (2018).

3 Policy Responses and Developments in 'Double Burden' Settings – Examples from Practice

In this section, we explore and illustrate how national climate response priorities are shaped, maintained, and at times disrupted in practice. Drawing on insights from a multi-stakeholder workshop, we show that national climate agendas are rarely determined solely by the urgency of environmental risks. Participants included representatives from governments, CSOs, and academia from countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Ghana, and Germany, some of which meet one or more fragility or instability criteria, while at the same time being vulnerable to climate change. It took place on 20 June 2025 in Bonn, Germany, at the sidelines of the UNFCCC SB62 sessions in the context of an L&D focussed project.

National climate agendas often emerge from context-specific political realities, which include institutional stability, leadership transitions, and their alignment with development imperatives, followed by wider regional dynamics that can enable or constrain action.

3.1 Context-dependent climate prioritisation

Workshop participants from diverse regional contexts reflected on how the continuity and prioritisation of climate policies are deeply context-specific. Rather than responding solely to environmental urgency, national climate agendas were often found to be shaped by institutional durability, political transitions, and development trade-offs.

Several participants emphasised that institutional continuity is important in maintaining climate priorities during political change. In Bangladesh, for example, a shift in political leadership did not dismantle climate planning structures because the civil service remained intact and aligned with both the outgoing and incoming leadership. The remaining civil servants ensured bureaucratic stability and hence a relatively smooth transition, including by maintaining climate impacts policies as a national priority (see Focus Box 3).

Focus Box 3: Institutionalising L&D in times of political transition, the case of Bangladesh

The concept of a national mechanism for L&D in Bangladesh focuses on a comprehensive political structure to align all relevant policies at the national level (e.g. concerning climate policy and disaster management, including relevant funds) to strengthen the countries' response to L&D. The idea was initiated by civil society and later taken up politically by the previous government in 2016. Although the political transition affected momentum and visibility (due to the fall of government in August 2024 and the shift to the acting transitional government), the civil service maintained ownership, ensuring continuity. In 2025, Bangladesh launched a formal National Framework on Loss and Damage (NFLD), laying the groundwork for a fully operational National Mechanism for Loss and Damage (NMLD). This reflects how bureaucratic stability can sustain climate priorities across political shifts. Bangladesh has become a frontrunner in institutionalising L&D through a two-tiered national system: the NFLD, which sets the strategic vision, and the NMLD, which can drive implementation. The NFLD outlines a multisectoral approach to assessing and addressing both economic and non-economic losses, especially for vulnerable communities in high-risk coastal and riverine areas. It integrates L&D into national development planning, aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals and climate strategies, supports international finance readiness (e.g. Green Climate Fund), and advances standardised assessment methodologies.

The NMLD shall translate this strategy into practice through: 1) co-ordinated engagement with government, civil society, and communities; 2) streamlined access to international L&D funding, including the UNFCCC L&D Fund; 3) robust data systems for monitoring and reporting; 4) locally grounded programmes that reflect frontline community needs.

Designed to strengthen national preparedness and absorptive capacity, the NMLD enhances vertical co-ordination, linking national policy with community-level planning, evidence generation, and participatory monitoring. Together, the NFLD and NMLD could form a coherent governance architecture that positions Bangladesh as a model for institutionalising L&D in climate-vulnerable contexts.

Examples from countries such as Bangladesh were revealed to promote injustice despite continued focus on climate impacts policies: climate spending is often biased towards urban settings, for example infrastructure, and thus fails to prioritise the local level and those most vulnerable to climate impacts (see Focus Box 4). Reasons for that include a lack of transparent and evidence-based allocation, which can be exacerbated through funding conditions set forth by international climate funds.

Focus Box 4: National climate finance spending in Bangladesh

Current discourse on climate finance in highly vulnerable countries reveals significant fragilities – particularly, how funding reaches local communities. Climate funding distribution in Bangladesh only partially aligns with its actual climate vulnerability profile.

The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), established to implement a series of climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes under the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), has funded a total of 656 projects with USD 305 million[47] since its inception in 2009 until 2024. While being recognised worldwide as a trailblazing example of climate finance, the BCCTF also reveals gaps in equity and justice in its spending patterns. Of concern is the issue of urban and political bias that became apparent when projects were concentrated in areas that are not the most climate vulnerable, while coastal districts like Satkhira and Khulna received proportionately fewer resources. This imbalance undermines the principle of directing funds to those most at risk. Additionally, there is an overemphasis on infrastructure, with a dominant focus on hard assets like embankments and roads. Furthermore, there is a notable neglect of knowledge and innovation, and capacity building and institutional strengthening. This underinvestment restricts the country's ability to generate data, support climate science, and develop early warning systems – tools vital for adaptive, forward-looking climate strategies. Together these gaps point to a pressing need for more inclusive, equitable, and forward thinking climate finance in Bangladesh.

To be effective and just, climate finance must evolve into a system that is resilient, equitable and evidence based. This requires shifting from ad-hoc and politically influenced spending towards transparent, evidence-based allocation grounded in core principles: climate vulnerability[48] (e.g exposure to slow onset processes and extreme events) and adaptive capacity[49] (poverty, fiscal spending, and institutional strength). Integrating both ensures that funding reaches vulnerable communities least able to respond on their own.

To reduce systemic fragility, climate finance must be predictable and long term, allowing communities to plan beyond project cycles. Funding decisions must be based on publicly available criteria, with mechanisms to track results and adjust over time. It is hence essential for climate finance to shift from a fragile, fragmented system to one that is strategic, just, and resilient.

Kenya was raised as an example of how climate policy is increasingly being framed in terms of national economic development and social well-being. One example was the increase in youth employment programmes linked to climate action, realising a double benefit by creating green jobs and addressing economic vulnerabilities. Participants said these kinds of integrated approaches are promising because they align climate goals with visible, politically salient co-benefits. Still, concerns were raised about the scale and sustainability of such programmes as many remain small and donor-dependent, lacking deep institutionalisation within national climate and development strategies.

In contexts affected more visibly by conflict or political instability, a growing number of countries are beginning to integrate peace and security considerations into their national climate policies,

[47] Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (2024).
[48] Khan et al. (2020).
[49] Brooks & Adger (2005).

recognising that climate impacts often exacerbate the drivers of fragility. Somalia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0 exemplifies this shift, positioning L&D as a central pillar of its climate response while embedding conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding provisions throughout.[50] Somalia's NDC proposes concrete institutional reforms, including the establishment of a national L&D financing strategy, a dedicated L&D fund, and systems to quantify and report climate-attributable losses across sectors. On the ground, the government plans to invest USD 200 million to restore degraded rangelands and to build drought-resilient livestock systems; another USD 500 million in expanding rural and peri-urban water supply. Both is critical for reducing displacement and safeguarding pastoralist livelihoods. At the same time, the NDC explicitly addresses the security dimensions of climate impacts, noting how resource scarcity and displacement fuel local tensions and recruitment into armed groups. In response, Somalia plans to mainstream conflict-sensitive approaches across climate planning, including participatory natural resource governance, early warning systems, and the integration of peacebuilding indicators into monitoring frameworks. These include tracking reductions in local conflict, improved access to livelihoods, and inclusion of marginalised groups in climate governance.

3.2 Regional dynamics and missed opportunities

The workshop participants also highlighted the importance of regional dynamics in shaping national policy space. In South Asia, for instance, participants noted that climate risks like floods or glacial melt frequently affect multiple countries at once. Yet, the absence of regional L&D frameworks, due in part to political tensions, such as between India and Pakistan, prevents co-ordinated response. This was described as a lost opportunity, where shared vulnerabilities are not matched by shared planning. Similar dynamics were observed in West Africa, where the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has adopted a climate strategy, but its implementation varies widely between countries depending on their internal political stability. Ghana was seen as an example of relatively stable engagement, while Burkina Faso struggles to implement its commitments amid ongoing turmoil. Importantly, while regional co-operation is crucial for addressing transboundary climate impacts, the increase of these very impacts can also threaten the stability and continuity of collaborations (see Focus Box 5).

[50] Federal Government of Somalia and MoCC (2025).

Focus Box 5: Fragility in transboundary water sharing agreements between neighbouring countries

Fragility in transboundary water sharing agreements is becoming increasingly evident in South Asia, driven not only by climate change but also by political instability and the erosion of co-operative frameworks.[51] While climate-related stresses such as glacier retreat and irregular monsoons are exacerbating the problem, lack of robust diplomatic mechanisms and political co-ordination is turning environmental stress into geopolitical risk.

The Himalayan glaciers, which feed the Indus and Ganges-Brahmaputra basins, are retreating rapidly, a trend expected to intensify in the coming years.[52] While glacial melt may temporarily increase river flows, it will eventually reduce groundwater recharge, threatening long-term water availability. Simultaneously, monsoon rains are projected to become more erratic and intense, increasing flood risks.[53] These climatic shifts are placing immense pressure on already strained transboundary water relationships between upstream and downstream countries.

Bangladesh offers a stark example of this fragility. In August 2024, a flash flood devastated eastern Bangladesh, affecting 5.8 million people and displacing more than half a million. [54] The disaster reignited contentious debates on the science and politics of shared water resources between India and Bangladesh. With more than 90% of its river flows originating outside its borders, Bangladesh's water security is profoundly dependent on upstream decisions. Unilateral management choices by neighbouring India can result in either devastating floods or crippling droughts.[55] This vulnerability highlights how the absence of reliable diplomatic mechanisms and mutual trust undermines effective water governance and amplifies the effects of climate events.

Similar fragility is observed in the Indus basin with broader geopolitical tensions. In April 2025, India suspended a key water-sharing agreement with Pakistan, citing terrorism in Kashmir.[56] This marked the latest in a series of diplomatic escalations resulting in armed conflict war between the two countries. These cases illustrate a broader regional pattern: transboundary river fragility is no longer driven solely by environmental variables, but increasingly by political failure and the collapse of institutional co-operation. Without renewed investment in co-operative water diplomacy and adaptive governance, South Asia risks deepening both its ecological vulnerabilities and its political fault lines.

[51] IPCC (2022).
[52] Binte et al. (2024), Climate Diplomacy (2025).
[53] Stolbova et al. (2016).
[54] WHO (2024).
[55] Binte et al. (2024).
[56] Clary (2025).

4 Finance Gap for Fragile Contexts in International Climate Finance

4.1 Provision of international climate finance

In the UN climate regime (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC), Global North countries have committed to provide or mobilise USD 100 billion from 2020 annually to Global South countries to support their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. Measures to address L&D were not included in this sum. The goal was only achieved in 2022 for the first time, with two years delay. In 2022, USD 115.9 billion in climate finance for developing countries were provided and mobilised. Even though 80% of this sum was public finance, only 32% of this 80% went to adaptation finance, failing to achieve the 50% target for a fair balance between mitigation and adaptation finance. Especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries, this a worrying figure. While public adaptation finance summed up to USD 28 billion in 2022, there is a wide gap to estimated adaptation needs (USD 215–387 billion annually).[57] Only 28% of total climate finance was provided as grants,[58] leaving much of the financial burden with the climate change–affected countries – a challenge specifically for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

In 2024, at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance of USD 300 billion annually from 2025 onwards was agreed upon. In terms of adequacy and sufficiency of funds and thematic areas included, the outcome was far from the needs calculated. Again (like the USD 100 billion goal), it does not include a share of L&D funding. For fragile and conflict-affected countries, the situation is even more severe: even with this amount, these countries are currently largely excluded from access to climate finance.

Apart from the unequal and unfair distribution of climate finance to different countries and country groups, another challenge lies in the provision of climate finance. In the current geopolitical situation, we observe decisive cuts in ODA and hence climate finance in donor countries. The resurgence of right wing or nationalist governments in parts of the Global North threatens to slow down the pace and thwart the direction of international climate solidarity and funding commitments.

Comparing ODA levels between 2024 and 2025 already shows an expected decrease from USD 198,669 to 168,633 million. Not surprisingly, the United States make the most drastic cuts (more than halving their quota between 2024 and 2026), followed by Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and others (of the 17 countries that provide ODA). Fortunately, there are countries with an expected and planned increase of ODA, e.g. Italy, Japan, and South Korea, which will however not compensate the cuts.[59]

In 2025, climate litigation achieved central milestones, proving that polluters such as high-emitting and high-income countries or companies can be held legally accountable for climate action and harm. Climate litigators strengthen the legal foundation for others to demand stronger action on

[57] UNEP (2024).
[58] OECD (2024).
[59] Donor Tracker (2025).

mitigation, adaptation, L&D, and climate finance, and are thus highly relevant to the UNFCCC process.[60] Specifically the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has affirmed a legally binding duty of developed countries to provide financial resources to developing states for mitigation, adaptation, and addressing L&D, underpinning affected countries' demands.[61]

4.2 Underfinancing through limited access to climate finance

A striking pattern emerges in access to climate finance: the more unstable the context, the less climate finance it receives. Distribution is skewed towards more stable contexts, both between and within countries.[62] Despite growing recognition of the vulnerability of fragile and conflict-affected states to climate impacts, access to climate finance in these settings remains limited, uneven, and procedurally constrained.[63] This is especially true for climate and development actors, while humanitarian actors try to work on climate in conflict-affected and fragile settings, but lack capacities[64] as the humanitarian sector is already heavily overburdened and underfinanced.[65]

For 2022, this meant only USD 8.4 billion of climate finance went to conflict-affected countries according to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).[66] In terms of funding per capita through vertical climate funds, in fragile and extremely fragile countries together, people received USD 8.8 per person in average compared to USD 161.7 in non-fragile countries; extremely fragile states averaged just USD 2.1, compared to USD 10.8 for fragile states overall.[67]According to the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Climate Security Mechanism, between 2014 and 2021, only one extremely fragile state ranked among the top 15 recipients of vertical fund finance.[68]

In terms of modalities, debt-inducing instruments remain a serious concern. Many fragile and conflict-affected contexts are already in, or at high risk of, debt distress. According to the UN Secretary-General's Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance, over half of low-income countries are already experiencing or are at high risk of debt distress.[69] In these contexts, grant-based finance becomes not only preferable but also essential, as loan instruments risk deepening fiscal instability and debt vulnerability.

This pattern points to an implicit penalisation of fragility, despite its strong correlation with and mutually reinforcing effect on climate vulnerability. Insufficient climate finances access hence excludes those countries from measures to decrease their climate-induced vulnerability and in turn lower climate-related security risks.[70]

In terms of exclusion or insufficient access to climate finance, several obstacles have been identified, including:

- Perceived risks of potential donors on security, political instability, and hence uncertain project outcomes.[71]

[60] Klein et al. (2025).
[61] ICJ (2025) para 263ff.
[62] UNDP (2021), ICRC et. al. (2022).
[63] Meijer and Ahmad (2024).
[64] ICRC et al. (2022).
[65] UNOCHA (2024).
[66] Gulati et al. (2024).
[67] Between 2014 and 2021; UNDP (2021).
[68] UNDP (2021).
[69] Bhattacharya et al. (2020).
[70] UNDP (2021).
[71] ICRC (2022).

- Mismatch between on the one hand **regulations and bureaucratic requirements**, and on the other **lack of institutional capacity** in affected countries unable to meet conditions related to factors such as application procedures and fiduciary requirements, project management, or lacking the ability to fulfil donor-preference for large-scale projects.[72,73]
    - Many fragile or conflict-affected contexts **lack the technical, administrative, and policy infrastructure** and expertise to meet the fiduciary and procedural standards of vertical funds (like the GCF).[74]
- Lack of capacity, (climate) expertise, and experience to **design projects** for these contexts, and small number of implementing partners.[75]
- **Logistical constraints** and insecurity for project implementation.[76]
- **Lack of co-ordination** of actors with different mandates and expertise within countries.[77]
- Institutional silos and hence **lack of conflict-sensitive climate programming**.[78]
- Insufficient access to **climate data and information**.[79]
- **Additional costs, more time, likely delays**, e.g. through security measures for staff and communities or interruptions/delays due to conflict.[80]
- **Risk of elite capture** and/or misappropriation and impact upon funding commitments.[81]

As a result, the current architecture of climate finance reproduces broader asymmetries in the international aid system, where geopolitical stability and administrative functionality are informal but decisive criteria for access.

At the centre of measures to counter these obstacles and risks are peace-positive and conflict-sensitive approaches to climate finance and the acknowledgement and use of co-benefits that emerge through climate action for peace, security, and stability, especially for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

The current framework often fails to accommodate needs and abilities of fragile and conflict-affected contexts, but alternative models of access and accountability are emerging from within fragile contexts themselves. For instance, Sudan's Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs), forming a grassroots infrastructure of care and crisis response, mobilise flexible, trust-based flows of diaspora funding to deliver aid more effectively than many formal mechanisms (see Focus Box 5). These models challenge prevailing assumptions about risk and capacity and reveal that, in many cases, it is the rigid international systems, not local contexts, which undermine effectiveness.

[72] ICRC et al. (2022).
[73] ICRC (2021).
[74] Dampha et al. (2024).
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] ICRC et al. (2022).
[78] Ibid.
[79] Sitati et al. (2021).
[80] UNDP (2021).
[81] Ibid.

Focus Box 6: Sudan's ERRs as alternative architecture of response in fragile settings

The Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) emerged in April 2023 as a decentralised grassroots response to Sudan's escalating war. They drew on the infrastructure of the Neighbourhood Resistance Committees (NRCs), which had organised protest mobilisation since the 2018 revolution. As formal institutions collapsed, ERRs rapidly assumed core humanitarian, developmental, and response roles, such as supporting hospitals, running communal kitchens, establishing emergency hubs in besieged neighbourhoods, and constructing sand-dams for floods prevention. ERRs operate independently at the local level, yet remain nationally connected through trust-based networks. Rooted in 'nafeer' (a Sudanese tradition of collective mobilisation) they are able to mount swift, culturally sound responses in high-risk environments. In the absence of functional state structures and amid patchy international aid, ERRs have become the primary responders in many urban and non-urban areas.

A critical pillar of ERRs' sustainability is the Sudanese diaspora. Monthly contributions, channelled through informal, solidarity-driven networks, have proven more reliable than many formal aid mechanisms. This funding model gives ERRs the flexibility to respond effectively to rapidly changing needs, including a range of relief, response, and prevention measures. Importantly, their work is not being stalled by bureaucratic hurdles or invasive documentation requirements. Their effectiveness lies precisely in their ability to circumvent the inertia, conditionalities, and fragmentation of the international aid system. The lesson from this model is that flexible, trust-based, and locally embedded funding mechanisms can be highly effective in fragile contexts. However, this also does not absolve the state or international actors from their responsibility to provide adequate, co-ordinated, and accountable support.

4.3 Approaches to the challenge in the climate regime

Status quo of multilateral climate funds' work in fragile and conflict-affected contexts

Multilateral climate funds and their frameworks play a decisive role when fragile and conflict-affected countries are challenged with access to climate finance and hence underfinancing. Examples from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF) show that awareness for this challenge is rising. They were found to indirectly address peace and security related risks but not to address these risks in their programming, through defined co-benefits for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, for example.[82]

In the GCF context, initiatives were designed to improve the climate finance accessibility, such as the GCF's Simplified Approval Process (SAP), which could also improve fragile countries' access. However, some of the eligibility requirements are poorly suited for these settings.[83] For instance,

[82] UNDP (2021).
[83] GCF (n.d. a).

SAP mandates that project proposals carry 'minimal to no environmental and social risks.' Such essential safeguards[84] are clearly intended to streamline low-risk proposals and avoid harm, in practice however, they disqualify many interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Here, environmental and social risks are often structural and cannot be meaningfully separated from the operating context. Minimal risk is hence rarely guaranteed. As a result, these countries are often ineligible for the very mechanisms meant to improve their access.

The GCF's accreditation mechanism further exemplifies the access challenges in practice. While the Fund has stated its goal of doubling the number of Direct Access Entities (DAEs) in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), current figures remain underwhelming. Of the 68 GCF-accredited DAEs, only 16 operate in LDCs, and half of these have not yet accessed funding.[85]

Nevertheless, the perspective seems to be more optimistic. According to its Executive Director, the GCF's Integrated Results Management Framework already uses indicators for impact on peace and security. These include links to early warning systems and improved food and water security.[86] As a concrete example, in 2024 the GCF approved a project of around USD 95 million in Somalia (1st on the Fragile State Index 2024).[87,88] This has been recognised as the 'first sizable support' for a conflict-affected country.[89] The GCF reportedly is trying to rethink its approach to work with fragile and conflict-affected countries, e.g. by bringing more flexibility to accommodate changes on the ground. One important argument in favour of this shift is that not supporting a project in a conflict-affected setting may raise more risks than supporting it.[90]

The AF does not have specific guidelines for projects in fragile and conflict-affected countries. In practice, it supports fragile and conflict-affected regions and addresses the climate impacts and challenges in vulnerable contexts through targeted interventions and projects. It aims to enhance the capacity of fragile and conflict-affected countries to cope with climate impacts through various measures, e.g. by enhancing water security, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and strengthening early warning systems. Examples are projects on irrigation in Ethiopia, land restoration in Mali, water management in Syria, and flood and drought systems in the Volta Basin.[91] In these settings, AF direct access modalities for local actors are particularly valuable, as national ownership cannot generally be secured here. A study assigned by the AF finds that the AF it could be even stronger to engage in fragile settings if, for example, it would adopt related policies to ensure projects are not only climate-responsive but also conflict-sensitive and context-specific (social, political, economic).[92]

The Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FrLD) aims to support 'developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to loss and damage.' The governing instruments and board decisions do not make direct reference to fragile or conflict-affected countries. However, principles and allocation criteria do reference fragile state finance. The FRLD 'will be responsive to country priorities and circumstances,' consider 'the scale of impacts of particular climate events relative to national circumstances, including but not limited to response capacities of the impacted countries,' safeguard against the overconcentration of support on certain groups of countries, and allocate a minimum percentage to SIDS and LDCs,[93] which was set to 50% in the start-up phase. A small grants modality that supports communities, Indigenous peoples,

[84] GCF (n.d. b).
[85] UNFCCC (2024).
[86] GCF (2022).
[87] The Fund for Peace (2025).
[88] GCF (2024).
[89] Goering (19 November 2024).
[90] Ibid.
[91] AF (2024).
[92] Ibid.
[93] UNFCCC (2024b).

and vulnerable groups is envisioned, but has so far not been prioritised by the board. Access to funds is being elaborated via direct support to governments, national or regional entities, accredited entities of other climate funds, and in collaboration with the Funding Arrangements, a non-finite group of relevant actors in responding to L&D.[94] At the first high-level dialogue of the FrLD and Funding Arrangements, actors urged the FRLD to establish a dedicated funding mechanism for fragile states (recognising the intersection of climate impacts and fragility) and to integrate conflict-sensitive metrics into climate strategies.[95]

Multilateral initiatives addressing the climate, security, and peace nexus

At the international level, mainly in the context of UNFCCC negotiations, the connection between climate, peace, security, and fragility has been drawn, and different attempts have been made to counter the related challenges.

In 2023 at **COP28**, the **Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace** was launched. It has been signed by 94 Parties and 43 organisations.[96] The Declaration formally links climate action to peacebuilding, conflict-sensitivity, and humanitarian response. Key focus is the recognition that conflict-affected or fragile countries or countries in humanitarian crises are more vulnerable towards climate change impacts while receiving the least climate finance. The Declaration sets three goals:

- Enhanced financial support for climate adaptation and resilience.
- Understanding and improving good practice and programming.
- Strengthen co-ordination, collaboration, and partnerships.[97]

To implement these goals, it has been outlined that partnerships are at the centre when aiming at peace-positive climate action and climate-informed peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. This includes, among others, advocacy for more funding flexibility, a whole-of-government approach and strengthening local actors.[98] There is no official record of progress since its inception in 2022.

Much like the Declaration, the **Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief, and Recovery** highlights the challenge of insufficient climate finance for fragile contexts and puts critical areas like water scarcity, food insecurity, land degradation and rehabilitation, and climate-induced displacement at the centre. It was launched in 2024 at COP29 by Azerbaijan, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

Additionally, the **Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace**[99] were launched and endorsed by countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, climate funds, and others. They aim at ensuring peace-positive and conflict-sensitive climate action/finance and build a basis to guide the implementation of the COP28 Declaration. The Baku Climate and Peace Action Hub shall act as a co-ordination platform to facilitate collaboration between national, regional, and international initiatives.[100] This could present a good opportunity to measure progress on this challenge.

[94] FRLD (2025a).
[95] FRLD (2025b).
[96] COP28 (2023), COP28 (2023b).
[97] COP28 (2023b).
[98] Schmelzer et al. (2024).
[99] Ecosystem for Peace (2024).
[100] UNFCCC (15 November 2024).

The Network of Climate Vulnerable Countries affected by Conflicts or High Levels of Humanitarian Needs (established in late 2024) consists of G7+ members Burundi, Chad, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Yemen, and others. COP29 presidency Azerbaijan supported its establishment, along with actors such as the ODI and the World Food Programme (WFP). The Network also brings to attention that fragile and conflict-affected countries are often forgotten by climate action and hence need to shoulder most of the impacts and costs on their own. The Network has underlined the decisive barriers for fragile and conflict-affected countries to access climate finance,[101] including weak institutions, which increases the challenge to reach the most vulnerable.[102] The Network members aspire to press this issue in climate negotiations, advocating for more and better climate financing tailored to conflict and humanitarian settings, and has issued a call for action demanding that the incoming Brazilian presidency set the issue high on the COP30 agenda.[103]

Durable solutions the Network aims to bring to the challenge may require the involvement of governments, climate funds, and communities, joined by humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and climate actors.[104] Concretely, the Networks's goals include:

a) Capacity building in member states to improve their capacity to absorb more finance.
b) Creating country platforms to support investors in identifying high-impact projects.[105]

Fragile and conflict-affected countries face substantial disadvantages in terms of access to climate finance. This is even more concerning against the background of further shrinking financial provisions in response to budget cuts of Global North countries. However, multilateral funds start recognising and acting on the gaps/challenges in funding conditions and initiatives, and affected countries have picked up the baton to put the issue on the international policy agenda.

5 Recommendations and Conclusion

Countries that are fragile, conflict-affected, or unstable while facing severe climate impacts bear a double burden. Both of its components reinforce each other and countries' vulnerability in return. Yet, countries have to overcome additional, structural, barriers to relief, especially those posed by international climate finance. We recommend a number of steps on different levels to lower pressure on states, and international climate policy and the UNFCCC process with its upcoming COP30 are at the centre of these solutions.

First and foremost, **drastic emission reductions and ambitious mitigation action**, especially of high-emitting and high-income countries, is a prerequisite to hold climate impacts at manageable scale without raising pressure on vulnerable countries.

- For **COP30**, countries should release their updated **NDCs** on time and make sure they are aligned with goals of the Paris Agreement and an adequate implementation plan.
- For countries affected by fragility or conflict who are in a position to do so, including relevant contextual information in their NDCs could provide valuable opportunities to highlight their unique challenges and support requirements to the international community.

[101] UNFCCC (2025).
[102] Ibid.
[103] Climate Home News (18 March 2025).
[104] UNFCCC (2025).
[105] Dickie & Jessop (15 November 2024).

Secondly, to be able to manage risks and impacts, **progress on Adaptation and L&D** will be inevitable.

- At **COP30**, Parties should ensure the **Global Goal on Adaptation** indicators can be disaggregated to capture adaptation progress in fragile and conflict-affected states.
- The **3rd review of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage** (WIM) (to be completed at COP30) should take into account the specific affectedness and vulnerability of fragile and conflict-affected countries. The **'L&D Gap Report'** (comparable to the 'Adaptation Gap Report') provides an opening to highlight the particular finance gap for fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Thirdly, the **increase of climate finance** (especially for adaptation and L&D) and **better funding conditions** that improve access for fragile and conflict-affected countries is central to supporting them and hence to lowering their vulnerability.

- With the inadequate NCQG of USD 300 billion and the L&D finance gap, high-emitting and high-income countries should make sure to provide their fair share in line with the principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities' (CBDRC), even in light of decreasing ODA levels. At **COP30**, the **Baku to Belém roadmap** needs to assign a share for L&D finance as well as increased adaptation finance, as part of identifying ways to mobilise at least USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035.

- **Multilateral climate funds** such as the GCF, AF, and FRLD need to **adjust their funding conditions** to enable fragile and conflict-affected countries' better access to additional finance and to better accommodate their double burden of affectedness, especially with a view on the most vulnerable populations. This could include a) a focus on grants and concessional finance, b) acceptance of higher risks, acceptance of additional upfront costs (due to security measures for staff and communities), plus potential delays,[106] and c): the funds should also apply lessons learnt from project funding in fragile setting (as in the recently initiated project in Somalia through the GCF).

- In line with adjustment of funding conditions of multilateral climate funds, climate action in fragile contexts must be guided by principles of **peace-positive programming, conflict sensitivity, and climate informed peacebuilding.**

Fourthly, we recommend that the **particular situation of fragile and conflict-affected climate-vulnerable countries be recognised**:

- Initiatives like the **Declaration on Peace and Security and Climate**, and the **Common Principles for Effective Climate Finance and Action for Relief, Recovery, and Peace** need to be implemented broadly, and progress on them needs to be measured. The **Network of Climate Vulnerable Countries affected by Conflicts or High Levels of Humanitarian Needs** should receive support in their call for attention in climate action policies.

COP30 presents a critical moment to track, evaluate, and elevate commitments to fragile states as climate change impacts intensify and the number of fragile states grows. Importantly, while adaptation has rightly received relatively more attention in these contexts, L&D remains underexplored, despite potentially even graver implications through both economic and non-economic losses fragile states face. Understanding and addressing L&D will be vital to address the full spectrum of climate risks in fragile settings. Ultimately, building resilience in fragile and conflict-affected states requires that climate finance and climate action be aligned with peace and stability, ensuring no region is left behind in the global response.

[106] See e.g. UNDP (2021) for more details.

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