

# EVICTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

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CONFRONTING THE GENDERED  
IMPACTS OF CLIMATE-INDUCED  
DISPLACEMENT



# Table of contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Climate change-induced displacement: An undeniable reality</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. What climate-induced displacement means for women and girls</b>	<b>8</b>
Extreme events: Storms and floods	
Slow-onset disasters: Droughts and rising sea levels	
The dangerous journey of migration	
<b>3. How climate change exacerbates displacement drivers</b>	<b>13</b>
Climate crisis-induced drivers of displacement	
Future climate change will further escalate displacement	
Projections of mass displacement	
<b>4. Confronting climate-induced displacement through gender-transformative adaptation and resilience-building</b>	<b>18</b>
Adaptation and disaster risk reduction reduce drivers of displacement	
CARE's gender-transformative adaptation experience and priorities	
Migration and its potential adaptation benefits	
Planned relocation: Benefits and drawbacks	
Legal protection for the rights of "climate migrants"	
<b>5. Recommendations for a gender-transformative response to climate-induced displacement</b>	<b>24</b>
Recent progress towards an international policy framework	
Finance for adaptation and humanitarian work, and the gaps	
A gender-transformative response to climate displacement	

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# Foreword

In a world in which poverty is increasingly concentrated in vulnerable or fragile states, and fragility is increasingly driven by climate change, climate-induced displacement has become one of the most visible manifestations of the relationship between ecological and societal breakdown. Newest figures from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reveal that over 70% of the 33 million newly displaced people (2019) had climate-related triggers. Poor and marginalised people are being driven from their homes with greater frequency and in greater numbers as they are struck by storms, heat waves, floods, rising sea levels and other threats caused and exacerbated by climate change.

The impacts of recent climate disasters in developing countries that are also enduring COVID-19, such as Vanuatu, Fiji, Bangladesh, the Philippines and India, have revealed the harsh reality that people experience. Not only did these events cause displacement, they also brought harm to people already on the move, like refugees in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, or migrant workers in India.

This injustice is further compounded for women and girls, particularly in developing countries. Systemic gender inequalities in leadership and decision-making limits their access to resources and inhibits their ability to withstand the impacts of climate change, to access basic services and to recover from climate-related disasters.

The impact of the climate crisis on people's lives, experiences and material conditions differ based on their gender and sexuality. Our activities in response can increase and reinforce, or reduce, existing inequalities. Integrating gender into every stage of a response is therefore a core part of CARE's work.

This report outlines the causes and consequences of climate-induced displacement, and how the triple injustice of climate change, poverty and gender inequality must be met by transformative action: to support more gender-equal and resilient communities in sustainable environments. In this report, CARE draws on key scientific findings as well as its own experience and, most importantly, the experiences of the people CARE seeks to support in managing compound risks: women and girls in vulnerable situations.

Several global agreements and commitments highlight responsibilities and approaches for addressing climate displacement. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the Grand Bargain, amongst others. However, these commitments still lack a concerted and accountable effort to ensure those displaced as a result of climate change will be able to obtain the protection they need, and to exercise their rights. Systematic inclusion of women in decision-making and leadership at all levels is essential to finding appropriate solutions and holding decision-makers accountable.

These solutions will cost money. But the costs of inaction will be much greater. Ramping up financial support, including from countries whose prosperity was built on carbon-intensive industries, is a matter of global economic, social, gender and environmental justice. Bold new funding for truly gender-transformative climate adaptation, which is essential to tackle the root causes of climate injustice, can alleviate some of the pressures that force people to flee. As highlighted by the Global Commission on Adaptation, this funding also represents a trillion dollar opportunity that must be pursued in tandem with concerted efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

Scaling-up gender-transformative climate adaptation and resilience, while transitioning the global economy toward carbon neutrality, are essential elements of any strategy to reduce the occurrence of climate displacement, just as a coordinated gender-transformative approach must underpin efforts to support those already on the move. As the climate crisis continues to overwhelm societies and make increasing numbers of communities uninhabitable, CARE calls on all relevant actors, particularly governments, decision-makers, and humanitarian and development actors, to do their part to build a safer, more equitable, inclusive and resilient future that harnesses the power of women and girls within their communities.

**Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro,**  
CARE International  
Secretary General





# Executive Summary

## Tackling the triple injustices: Gender, climate, social

Climate-induced displacement is an option of last resort. It preys on those who are unable to adapt to the ecological and social consequences of climate change, whether due to lack of resources or other inequities. For most of these people, climate-induced displacement is triggered by direct physical harm from extreme weather events or slow-onset impacts, but also by indirect consequences on food insecurity and conflict over natural resources and land rights. According to UNOCHA, 8 of the world's worst food crises are linked to both conflict and climate shocks<sup>i</sup>. Out of the 33.4 million newly displaced people in 2019, 70% were due to climate-related disasters<sup>ii</sup>. Over the past 10 years (2008-2018), 90% of the people displaced by disasters (approx. 23 million people per year) have had weather-related triggers.

The vast majority of those forced from their homes as a result of climate change live in developing countries. Responsible for less than 4 % of climate change-causing greenhouse gases, these countries lack resources to support alternative forms of climate adaptation - such as drought-resistant seed varieties, floodwater management and early warning systems. And developed countries are collectively failing to live up to their promise to deliver 100 billion USD in new and additional climate finance as part of the Paris Agreement.

Climate change displacement is further compounded for women and girls in developing countries who are disproportionately impacted. For example, in 2018 more than half of the 41 million people internally displaced were women.<sup>iii</sup> The world is grounded in an exclusive system of inequality; white men are often leaders and decision makers in industry, business, politics, and all major institutions. Women, particularly women of colour, are systematically underrepresented in decision making spaces at all levels that prevent or respond to climate change.

Women also bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change. Prevailing gender inequality often intersects with other forms of vulnerabilities which limit women and girls' access to resources and decision-making power, inhibiting their ability to withstand the impacts of climate change, access basic services and recover from climate-related disasters. Thus, gender-transformative approaches that put women and girls at the centre are not an option, but a must.<sup>iv</sup>

Climate-induced displacement must be understood, and policy responses developed, through the intersecting lenses of gender justice, climate justice and social justice. Climate-induced displacement can be minimized through ambitious and immediate actions to increase resilience to the disruptions caused by climate change, while promoting more inclusive and sustainable communities. It can be managed to ensure positive outcomes for communities and societies that host those who have fled their homes, as well as those that have been left behind. When climate-induced disasters cannot be avoided, inclusive and gender-transformative approaches can ensure a more efficient and effective emergency response and recovery.

## Climate crisis: Driver of displacement

Scientists and climate experts expect forced displacement to be one of the most common and damaging impacts on the world's most vulnerable populations if we fail to keep global average temperature rise below 1.5°C, as envisaged by the Paris Agreement. Under current policies, the world is heading towards a 3 to 4°C increase (above pre-industrial levels) within 80 years, with increasingly disastrous consequences; this could leave significant areas of the planet uninhabitable, with estimates that by 2070 three billion people may face Saharan heat levels. Science indicates that globally we need to at least halve global carbon emissions by 2030, particularly by shifting away from harmful fossil fuels and targeting the world's biggest offenders of climate change. These offenders have caused the majority of current and historic emissions,



and are comprised of richer countries and male-dominated parts of societies. The World Bank estimates that the number of internally displaced people due to climate change may be four times as high in 2050 in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America at the current rates of warming compared to a scenario compatible with the Paris Agreement. Other studies estimate that 250 million people will be displaced internally by 2050 in the absence of strong climate adaptation.

### Women and girls: The discriminatory causes and impacts of climate change

The impacts of climate change are felt differently based on one's gender. Three key factors explain why women and girls are more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change. First, the climate crisis exacerbates gender inequality and makes it harder to achieve gender justice. Women and girls often have an unequal and demanding responsibility to care for children and the elderly which makes it harder and more cumbersome to leave home. Women displaced by disasters also face an increased risk of gender based violence, including domestic violence, forced marriage and trafficking. Second, social and cultural norms and barriers mean that women are less likely to be involved in decisions about how to prevent, mitigate and cope with climate change, including leaving their homes. Third, women and girls do most of the subsistence farming in poor countries and are the primary providers of food, water and fuel, which become scarce due to climate change. Women are also on the frontlines when it comes to combating climate change. They help protect the food and nutrition security of their families and communities, and play a critical role in overcoming the challenges of the climate crisis.<sup>1</sup>

### Act with care: A gender-just approach to building climate resilience

Given that the impacts of climate change are felt differently based on one's gender, so must the approaches for addressing these impacts. CARE and our partners help displaced people, both through direct humanitarian aid in regions where climate change exacerbates natural risks and conflict, as well as through longer-term, gender-transformative climate resilience measures. Food aid, resilience and livelihood measures, and water and sanitation infrastructure help deal with the immediate consequences of climate change. In CARE's experience, effective gender-transformative climate change adaptation can help reduce climate-induced displacement by supporting people's resilience.

**“Given that the impacts of climate change are felt differently based on one's gender, so must the approaches for addressing these impacts.”**

### The time for gender-transformative solutions to climate-induced displacement is now

Immediate action is needed to put women and girls at the centre of efforts to build communities' resilience to climate change, and to help those who have already been affected by climate-induced displacement. CARE has long been advocating for ambitious international climate policies in support of the most vulnerable, for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and for gender transformative approaches that put women in the driving seat as leaders of adaptation, climate resilience programs that can prevent displacement, and emergency response interventions through the Grand Bargain and other global humanitarian agreements.

**In order to tackle climate-induced displacement in a gender-transformative and human-rights based way, CARE calls on all relevant actors, particularly governments, decision-makers and humanitarian and development actors, to do their part to build a safer, more equitable, inclusive and resilient future that harnesses the power of women and girls within their communities by:**

1. Ensuring that women and girls are able to play meaningful roles in shaping more ambitious climate resilience and displacement prevention and response policies and localized programs, and holding actors accountable.
2. Scaling-up climate action and public climate finance for developing countries, in particular for gender-transformative adaptation and disaster risk reduction, to address displacement drivers with local and women-led actions.
3. Directing at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local organisations, with a particular focus on women-led<sup>1</sup> and women's rights organizations.
4. Advance the national and international institutional and legal architecture so that it comprehensively addresses climate-induced displacement and provides protections to climate displaced people, particularly women, girls and highly vulnerable groups.

<sup>1</sup> Women-led organisations are any non-governmental, not-for-profit and non-political organisations where two-thirds of the board (including the chair) and management staff/volunteers are female and that focus on women and girls as the primary target group of programming.

# 1. Climate change-induced displacement: An undeniable reality ■

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C highlights a stark reality: climate change and its adverse impacts are being observed across the planet and will continue to unfold in both the near- and long-term future. The Special Report also identifies population displacement and lost livelihoods as key impacts that a 1.5°C temperature increase will have on disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, and highlights that children and women are most at risk.<sup>vi</sup>

The increasing link between climate change and human displacement is also finding its way into major policy resolutions. For example, the European Parliament noted in its 24th Conference of the Parties (COP 24) resolution that “the deepening implications of climate change for international security and regional stability stemming from environmental degradation, loss of livelihood, climate-induced displacement of people and associated forms of unrest where climate change can often be regarded as a threat multiplier.”<sup>vii</sup> The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) also clearly recognises climate change as an exacerbating factor for displacement and migration.<sup>viii</sup>

■ **“Climate displacement is not a potential phenomenon in the far future - it is today's reality.”**

Climate displacement is not a potential phenomenon in the far future—it is today's reality. Many people are forced to leave their homes, and end up worse off after moving; families are being split apart; households are becoming more vulnerable and forced further into poverty; and strains are increasing on the global health system.

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), from 2009 to 2018, an average of over 25 million people were displaced by disasters annually; roughly 2 million were displaced by geological hazards and the remaining 23 million by weather-related disasters.<sup>ix</sup> Globally, storms and floods caused almost 90% of displacements during this 10-year period. 2019 saw the highest number of newly displaced people (33.4 million) since 2012, with more than 70% displaced by weather-related disasters.<sup>x</sup> A 2016, CARE report, *Fleeing Climate Change*, found that, unless governments take strong preventive action and invest in adaptation, climate change-related phenomena, such as floods, droughts, famines and hurricanes, could push the total number of permanently displaced people as high as 250 million people, between now and 2050.<sup>xi</sup> With the temperature increases projected from current insufficient international climate ambition, areas where half of the world population are estimated to live in 2070 may become almost uninhabitable due to Sahara-like temperature levels.<sup>xii</sup> It is important to note that many of these figures are not gender-disaggregated, which needs to urgently change to avoid gender blindness and apply solutions appropriate to gender-differentiated impacts.

People forced to move because of climate change-related factors are not legally classified as “refugees,” based on a strict interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which says that to qualify as a refugee you need to be fleeing persecution. But the term “climate migrants” overshadows the harsh reality that people are increasingly being forced to move as a last resort, due to a complex set of interconnected drivers, including the growing impacts of the climate crisis. Therefore, given the lack of an adequate legal label, this report refers to these people as displaced.





### BOX 1:

## Climate-induced displacement, migration and relocation defined

When we refer to climate change displacement throughout this report and in policy scenarios, we mean climate-induced displacement in which the impacts of climate change act as a trigger or important contributor to people's movement. **Climate-induced displacement** is generally regarded as an unplanned, mostly involuntary movement or relocation of humans due to a climate change induced crisis or disaster from weather events; it includes both temporary as well as permanent displacement (e.g. if people cannot go back to their homes after a disaster).

In contrast, **climate-induced migration**, often confused with climate displacement, is when individuals make a premeditated decision to migrate because of climate change-related

factors (e.g. due to decreased availability of food, water, or economic opportunities). Such migration can be successful, but it can also be a form of **survival or erosive coping migration** (when people have little choice and find themselves in worse situations than before they relocated).<sup>xiii</sup> A third form of human mobility is **planned relocation**, which should not always be equated with voluntary movement; for example, when an island is inundated by sea-level rise and the process to leave is planned, inclusive and participatory, but people would rather stay where they are, if they had a choice. In reality, the distinction between the different types of human mobility is not 100% clear-cut.<sup>xiv</sup> Whether planned or unplanned, a decision to leave is typically unwanted, and women have often little to no say in the matter.

## Human mobility

Displacement	Migration	Planned relocation
Situations where people are forced to leave their home or place of habitual residence. Displacement is usually associated with intensive risk, where the occurrence of a disaster event is the primary driver of movement. It can take place within or across national borders.	Movements which are, to some degree, voluntary. This is usually associated with extensive risk, and can take place within or across national borders. The decision to move is complex and often linked to multiple drivers, including but not limited to climate risks.	An organised relocation, typically instigated, supervised and carried out by the state with the aim of reducing (usually extensive) weather and climate risks. Ideally, planned relocation should be undertaken transparently and with the informed consent of, or upon the request of the community. It should also be accompanied by resettlement (the restoration of communities and socio-economic conditions).

Source: Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility<sup>xv</sup>



## 2. What climate-induced displacement means for women and girls

Women and girls are often highly dependent on safe, sustainable access to local natural resources, such as water and firewood, for subsistence farming and family care responsibilities, and are more likely to be vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change and conflict. Social and cultural conditions and gender norms influence access to and control over resources and the division of labour. In many communities, women lack participation in decision-making. Overall, the systems that have brought about climate change and the widely inappropriate responses, have been and continue to be, dominated by men.

In emergency response and recovery, women's and girls' unique needs are not always treated with the same urgency as issues like shelter, water and food aid. Yet, internal displacement generally amplifies pre-existing vulnerabilities, including gender inequality and the risks of Gender Based Violence. Women across the world are, on average, economically, legally, politically and socially less empowered than men.<sup>xvi</sup> Thus, it is essential to ensure increased attention to gender, age and diversity in prevention, preparedness and responses to emergencies and climate impacts. Women must have a central role as change agents and in the design, implementation and evaluation of solutions.

CARE's key approaches to gender responsive emergency interventions and gender transformative climate resilience programmes include systematically and regularly conducting gender analysis to inform the investment in and support of women's meaningful participation and leadership at all

**“Women must have a central role as change agents and in the design, implementation and evaluation of solutions.”**

levels. It is important to challenge and change harmful gender norms and practices by investing in women led organizations; identifying and addressing policy gaps that affect women and girls rights; engendering budgets and monitoring and evaluation frameworks; using a gender and age marker to continuously track the centrality of gender in program cycles; and engaging men and boys to ensure mutual sensitisation and collective responsibility.

### Extreme events: Storms and floods

Poor women and children are up to 14 times more likely to be killed than men by a climate-fuelled disaster, such as a hurricane, typhoon, cyclone, or flood.<sup>xvii</sup> Additionally, most early warning systems for disasters and other emergencies are designed and used by men without considering gender. A number of cultural, social, economic and geographical factors make women and children particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including the following: women and girls often have an unequal and demanding responsibility to care for children, elderly and disabled family members as well as those with high health needs which makes it harder and more cumbersome for them to leave home; social conventions make



it difficult for women to leave home without their husbands; women often have little to no say in decision making in communities and households on matters related to displacement; and women tend to have less access to information on impending disasters as they are less likely to own a phone and less likely to be (digitally) literate.<sup>xxviii</sup> Women and adolescent girls in urban parts of **Bangladesh** were found to be particularly sensitive to health impacts from water logging and deteriorating water quality as a consequence of heavy rains, and faced particular challenges from being dependent on assistance from their male partners.<sup>xix</sup>

Women who are displaced by climate change related impacts often have less access to relief resources.<sup>xx</sup> Women displaced by disasters face an increased risk of gender based violence, including domestic violence and sexual violence.<sup>xxi</sup> Their physical, emotional and mental health may deteriorate, in part because of exposure to violence, the loss of social support networks and heavy caregiving burdens, which can increase anxiety, post-traumatic stress and other illnesses.<sup>xxii</sup> A recent International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report also found that “when countries and communities are unable or unprepared to cope with the impacts of climate change and weather-related disasters, compound stresses, such as a breakdown in economic systems, infrastructure and social services, including police and health centres, can increase gender inequality and foster proliferation of GBV [gender-based violence].”<sup>xxiii</sup>

Cyclones Idai and Kenneth brought massive devastation to **Mozambique, Malawi** and **Zimbabwe** in 2019, in particular through enormous amounts of rainfall. Climate change is likely to have contributed to the cyclones through warmer air and sea temperatures; sea-level rise which drives up storm surges; and droughts that dried up soils and, thus, increased the risk

of flash floods. Cyclone Idai destroyed 700,000 hectares of crops, with an estimated agricultural loss of at least USD 141 million. Over one year after, nearly 100,000 people continue to live in makeshift shelters and are alarmingly vulnerable to future climate shocks.<sup>xxiv</sup> Unfortunately, these data were not available in a sex-disaggregated form, pointing to limitations that need to be overcome. Both storms also struck places where people were already living in vulnerable conditions, such as poor communities in urban areas.<sup>xxv</sup> It was also found that local early-warning systems proved ineffective; there was limited pre-emptive relocation and, thus, people were insufficiently evacuated from the hazard areas.<sup>xxvi</sup> Women and girls affected by Cyclone Idai are still facing serious health risks due to lack of or limited access to basic healthcare and protection services, as well as shortages of menstrual hygiene support. CARE and others, including local organisations, are working with community volunteers to raise awareness on issues such as gender-based violence, sexual reproductive health and rights and protection at schools and in communities.<sup>2</sup>

In January 2020, a storm hit northwest of **Madagascar** which affected approximately 126,000 people, killed 35, and damaged or flooded 15,000 houses. Main national roads were damaged, as well as thousands of rice and crop fields. While many of those displaced were able to return to their homes a few weeks after, poor families who could not afford to rebuild their damaged houses remain in a critical situation and are still unable to return.<sup>xxvii</sup> Many of the communities affected are patriarchal; men are powerholders and women have almost no prerogative, neither in decision-making nor in the use of resources within households. Box 2 provides other examples of the harm that climate-induced extreme events have brought to people in recent months, including triggering displacement.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of CARE programmes on climate change and resilience, see <https://careclimatechange.org/where-we-work/>



## BOX 2:

### Women suffering in silence - displacement and gender-based violence in climate-induced crises

**Ethiopia** is one of the world's most drought-prone countries; unpredictable rains and, in some years, the complete failure of seasonal rains are linked to climate change. While the country contributes only 0.27% to global greenhouse gas emissions, it suffers greatly from the impact of the climate crisis. In 2019, an estimated 200,000 people lost their homes in Ethiopia. The resulting overcrowded shelters and the lack of access to basic services have increased the risk of gender-based violence for women and girls. Women and girls affected by the drought also face an increased risk of sexual violence as they have to travel further and more often to fetch water.

The crisis in the **Lake Chad Basin** has many faces: 10 years of conflict and violence, poverty, hunger, displacement, and the sinking water levels of the lake have led to nearly 10 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. The burden of displacement does not only pose exceptional challenges to the refugees, but also puts a strain on host communities. Marriage of under-aged girls is widespread and sexual violence as well as exposure to trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence is rampant because of the armed conflict.

**Kenya** has been facing droughts in recent years, with the most severe hitting the country in 2016/17. Scientists found that the probability of drought in Kenya has doubled because of rising sea-surface temperatures. In 2019, rainfall was at least 20% below average, leading to a prolonged drought and adding to consecutive failed harvesting seasons that have destroyed livelihoods and diminished the ability of communities to cope. When there are not low amounts of rainfall, there is far too much: heavy rains displaced tens of thousands of people during the fall months and destroyed farmland and livestock. This worsened an already dire food situation in the country. One example for how gender inequalities have been worsened is that more families are resorting to early marriage for their daughters.

*Source: adapted from CARE, 2019: [Suffering in Silence](#)<sup>xliii</sup>*

### Slow-onset disasters: Droughts and rising sea levels

People and communities facing slow-onset climate change impacts, like sea-level rise and increasing droughts and desertification, may decide to migrate as a coping strategy when they see no other choice for dignified work, living in safety or supporting themselves and their families. They are not displaced by sudden-onset disasters, but migrate because of deteriorating conditions. This migration has disproportionate impacts on women, and the poorest people often do not have the resources to migrate. In Africa and Asia, migration is dominated by men, while women with fewer resources and rights stay at home to care for children, the elderly, and other vulnerable household members.<sup>xxviii</sup> When men migrate,

women's and girls' paid and unpaid workloads intensify, and family food security, child care, education, and work opportunities often suffer.<sup>xxix</sup>

In the Jashpur district in **India**, the main climate change impacts felt in the villages are a decrease in total amount of rainfall, increasingly erratic rainfall, an increase in average temperatures, and a higher probability of heat waves. In addition, the forest cover has drastically decreased over the past decades due to slash and burn farming, harvesting of non-sustainable forest products, mining activities and urbanizing - activities led primarily by male-dominated decision-makers. Consecutive crop failures, low access to water for irrigation and consumption, and limited access to markets and fragile live-

lihoods exacerbate food insecurity risks. To cope with the situation, people either seek external support, reduce their food consumption, or leave their households for daily labour work or for several months to work in cities or mines. As part of the project “Where the Rain Falls”, CARE India has worked with Adivasi women and girls to enhance their capacities, capabilities and confidence to adapt to climate change, for example, through promoting sustainable agriculture practices and rainwater harvesting; supporting their inclusive and effective collectives to facilitate access to opportunities, entitlements, resources, services, and markets; and improving governance and resources management.<sup>xxx</sup>

In the flood-prone Kurigram District of **Bangladesh**, the overwhelming majority of migrants are male (97%), yet women and children bear most of the social costs of migration. Women and children often assume responsibility for the cultivation of family land and work as casual laborers to feed the family and repay debts. An additional by-product of male migration is that adolescent girls and young women face sexual harassment in the absence of male household members, leading to social stigma and early forced marriage.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Similarly, in **Northern Mali**, male-dominated migration is a strategy to deal with more frequent and unpredictable droughts. Women are left behind to cope with the changing climate, increasing their vulnerability by adding to their already high workload.<sup>xxxii</sup> Other studies have found that **Nepal, Ecuador, Peru, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia** are also countries where men cope with climate change by migrating, whereas women, who have fewer assets and more family responsibilities, are unlikely to be able to move, leaving them more exposed to climate impacts.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Experience from **Vietnam** shows that gender roles may also shift in the positive direction, when rural women’s migration to urban areas leads to their employment, for example, in light manufacturing, social work, and health care sectors. In their wives’ absence, husbands have taken on greater responsibilities for care of household members, housework, and agriculture. These changes in the gender division of labour have seen women gain influence in household purchasing and investment decisions.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Although the cause of this example from Vietnam has not been related to climate change, this case and others provide insight on how climate-induced displacement and migration may also lead to positive changes in gender norms. However, targeted actions are required to pursue positive transformations in gender norms that tackle deeper structures of inequality, which is core to CARE’s approach.

### The dangerous journey of migration

Both displacement and migration can be particularly dangerous for women and unaccompanied children, especially girls, who are at a greater risk of experiencing traumatic violence, such as rape, kidnapping, sexual exploitation, and even death, while on the move<sup>xxxv</sup>. Women and children are particularly susceptible to human trafficking and the heinous forms of exploitation that it entails.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

CARE’s report *Far From Home: The 13 Worst Refugee Crises for Girls*<sup>xxxvii</sup> exposes the abuses that girls can suffer in transit and in refugee camps when they are displaced. Rates of teen pregnancy and child, early and forced marriage can soar as a consequence of girls being forced into “survival sex” for food and other basic needs; these girls are coerced into marriages or abusive relations to support themselves and their families for economic and social survival, and often miss school for extended periods or drop out all together as their schooling is deprioritised compared to their brothers.





A recent comprehensive literature review undertaken by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) concluded that displacement and disruption of communities induced by extreme weather events, climate change, or climate conflicts might result in women and children being exposed to sexual and intimate partner violence (IPV) in and outside of evacuation camps; inequitable access to - or availability of - recovery services, information and support; and coercion of transactional sex.<sup>XXXVIII</sup>

Displacement in areas with high levels of poverty, deteriorated environmental and social situations, or high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change may lead to a further deterioration of human rights and an increase in gender-based violence.<sup>XXXIX</sup> When people are displaced to particularly vulnerable areas, such as highly populated large cities, their precarious situation may be exacerbated even further by climate change impacts. In July 2019, flooding and landslides displaced several thousand refugees in **Bangladesh** in the camps near

Cox's Bazar, damaging thousands of shelters and reportedly causing the death of at least two people.<sup>XL</sup> In May 2020, when Bangladesh was devastatingly hit by Cyclone Amphan during the COVID-19 crisis, CARE experienced that jointly tackling the coronavirus crisis with regard to social distancing, hygiene measures and quarantine situations while preparing for the cyclone landfall proved particularly challenging. Across the country, people had to gather in packed cyclone shelters to protect themselves from the storm, rendering efforts of social distancing almost impossible.<sup>XLI</sup>

**Lebanon** and **Jordan** are using international climate finance to increase the resilience of people displaced by crises; for example, the countries are using funding from the UN Adaptation Fund to address water shortages in urban host settlements. This provides a good example that other nations can learn from, and shows that there is potential for a much more systematic increase in global finance for crisis-related resilience programmes.<sup>XLII</sup>





### 3. How climate change exacerbates displacement drivers

In recent years, scientists have made significant progress in better understanding whether and how much climate change has exacerbated extreme weather events. Scientists have found that climate change has influenced a number of extreme weather events, resulting in increased risks, particularly for the most vulnerable (Table 1). It is important to note that extreme weather

events do not always result in displacement, but can also cause human suffering in other ways, such as from enormous heat stress and water scarcity. These impacts particularly affect women and girls, for example, those who are water collectors face greater risks, from gender-based violence to health and safety risks when collecting water for themselves and their families.

Table 1. Examples of weather disasters with a scientifically-proven influence from climate change

Event	The role of human-caused climate change in increasing the risk of the event
<b>2015 Egyptian heat waves</b>	Impacts on human health from heat waves increased due to anthropogenic climate change. <sup>XLIV</sup>
<b>2015 heat and humidity in India and Pakistan</b>	Deadly heatwaves in India and Pakistan in the summer of 2015 were exacerbated by anthropogenic climate change. <sup>XLV</sup>
<b>2015 heat and drought in Indonesia</b>	El Niño and human-induced climate change substantially increased the likelihood of rainfall deficits and high temperatures in Indonesia. <sup>XLVI</sup>
<b>2015/16 Southern African flash droughts</b>	Flash droughts in Southern Africa tripled in intensity compared to the last 60 years, mainly due to climate change. <sup>XLVII</sup>
<b>2015/16 El Niño in the Central Equatorial Pacific</b>	Record-setting sea-surface temperatures, linked to an anthropogenically forced trend, during the 2015/16 El Niño. <sup>XLVIII</sup>
<b>2016 heat extremes in Asia</b>	The 2016 heat waves across Asia would not have occurred without climate change. The 2015/16 El Niño also contributed to regional heat extremes across Southeast Asia. <sup>XLIX</sup>
<b>2016 drought and poor harvests in Southern Africa linked to strong El Niño</b>	Climate change increased the intensity of the 2015/16 El Niño, contributing to further decreases in precipitation, crop production, and food availability in Southern Africa. <sup>L</sup>

The 2015/2016 El Niño droughts, which are estimated to have impacted around 60 million people<sup>LI</sup>, had a major impact on people and communities CARE works with in Africa and Asia-Pacific. CARE provided support to more than 2.7 million people in various countries, including Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. People were particularly in need of food aid, disaster risk reduction, cash transfers, and measures to address challenges in water, sanitation, and hygiene.

## Climate crisis-induced drivers of displacement











The climate crisis interacts with various factors to cause displacement. As the IDMC spells out:


*Complex and interdependent risk drivers—including poverty and inequality, political instability and state fragility, water stress and food insecurity, climate change and environmental degradation, unsustainable development and poor*


*urban planning—combine in different ways in different countries to increase people's exposure and vulnerability to displacement.*<sup>LI</sup>


The IPCC *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* also confirmed that “multiple drivers and embedded social processes influence the magnitude and pattern of livelihoods and poverty, and the changing structure of communities related to migration, displacement, and conflict.”<sup>LI</sup> Climate change both directly drives displacement, such as through extreme weather events that destroy homes or flood communities, and indirectly, such as through increased water stress or food insecurity that forces people to leave their homes to seek other livelihoods (see Figure 1). The risks from climate change impacts are expected to increase in many areas and, thus, further exacerbate displacement drivers. The relative contribution of climate change to displacement compared to other drivers, such as conflict, poverty and prevailing gender equality, may vary from place to place.


Figure 1. Drivers of climate change-induced displacement


Displacement driver	Displacement impacts:		Links to other economic and human security dimensions
	Short-term	Long-term	
Destroyed housing  	Emergence of unplanned settlements	Increased cost of housing in host community	Disease outbreaks caused by poor sanitation in substandard housing
Land grabs	Cost of building, renting or buying new housing	Investments in housing and infrastructure in host community	Unplanned settlements contributing to environmental degradation
Limited livelihood opportunities   	Loss of assets Inability to cultivate crops	Decline in working conditions and wages caused by increased competition for scarce jobs	Rise in malnutrition and associated health concerns
Food insecurity and malnutrition  	Competition for work in the host community	Less capacity to save, buy and invest	Rise in poverty-driven criminality
Environmental degradation and deforestation  	Reduced access to ecosystem-dependent livelihoods	Natural resource scarcity and economic degradation in host and transit areas	Loss of livelihoods caused by environmental degradation
Sudden- and slow-onset hazards and associated loss of livelihoods 	Higher exposure and vulnerability to hazards		Conflict over resources between IDPs and host communities


 Higher risk from heavy precipitation

 Increased land area affected by flood hazards

 Impacts of heatwaves

 Higher risk from droughts and precipitation deficits, reduced yields

 Higher sea-level rise and increased saltwater intrusion

 Loss of ecosystems

Source: adapted by CARE from IDMC, 2018<sup>LI</sup>

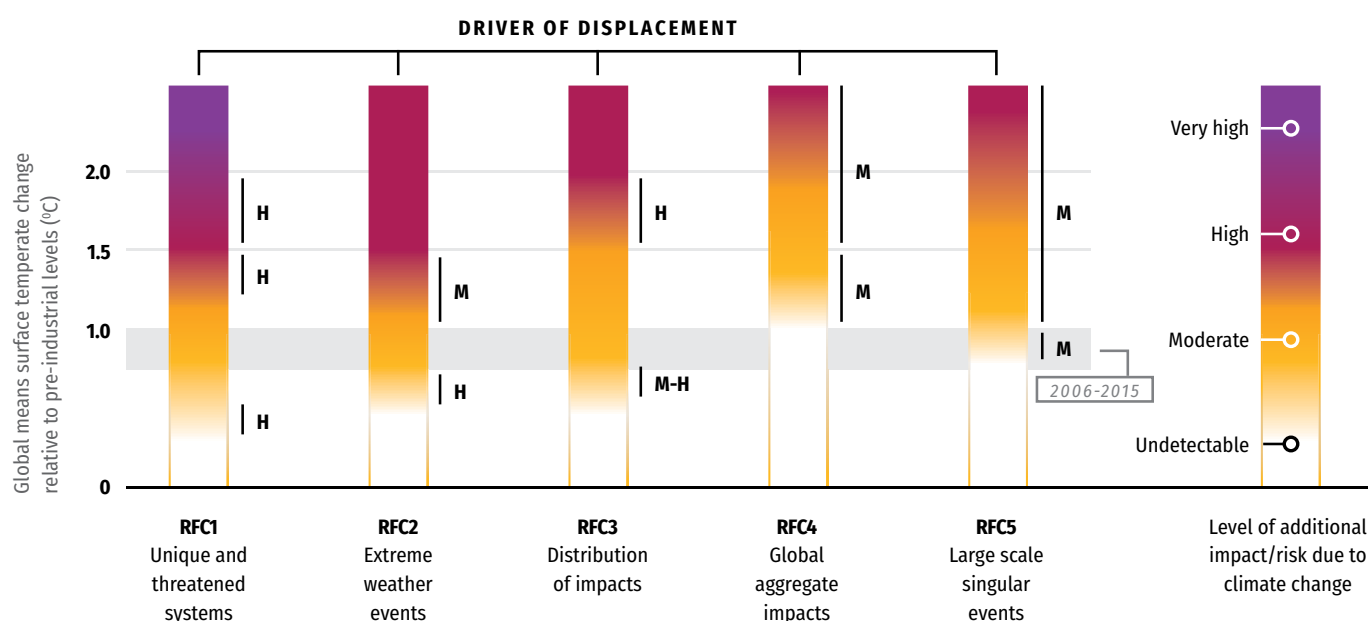


## Future climate change will further escalate displacement

The projected escalation and impacts of future climate change paint a concerning picture. Major risk categories, the so-called “reasons for concern,” (see Figure 2), become increasingly likely to occur if global mean temperatures rise more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Globally, the current emission reduction pledges put the world on a pathway towards 3°C or more by the end of this century, leading the world into a high (deep red) or very high (purple) risk sphere, as indicated in Figure 2. Some of these risks are already known to be causing both displacement and migration, such as extreme weather events and sea-level rise. The risk of displacement increases significantly as climate change worsens and temperatures continue to rise.

Climate change is on a disastrous trajectory to cause widespread human and ecological suffering. For example, it is estimated that a 4°C warming would cause more than 80% of the world’s population to be affected by climate change impacts occurring simultaneously in multiple sectors, such as agriculture and water.<sup>LV</sup> If a 4°C scenario is reached by 2100, hundreds of millions of people will be affected by coastal flooding and displaced due to land loss; sea-level rise will flood the land currently inhabited by 627 million people; and risks from hurricanes and floods are projected to increase which will drive both displacement and migration.<sup>LVI</sup> Box 3 highlights the main findings related to climate-induced displacement from the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C and Special Report on Climate and Land.

Figure 2. ‘Reasons for concern’ potentially driving displacement risks<sup>3</sup>



CARE illustration based on IPCC SR 1.5C

<sup>3</sup> The five integrative reasons for concern (RFCs) provide a framework for summarizing key impacts and risks across sectors and regions, and were originally introduced in the IPCC Third Assessment Report. They include: RFC1: Unique and threatened systems: ecological and human systems that have restricted geographic ranges constrained by climate-related conditions (such as coral reefs, the Arctic and its indigenous people, mountain glaciers and biodiversity hotspots); RFC2 Extreme weather events: risks/impacts to human health, livelihoods, assets and ecosystems from extreme weather events such as heat waves, heavy rain, drought and associated wildfires, and coastal flooding. RFC3 Distribution of impacts: risks/impacts that disproportionately affect particular groups due to uneven distribution of physical climate change hazards, exposure or vulnerability. RFC4 Global aggregate impacts: global monetary damage, global-scale degradation and loss of ecosystems and biodiversity. RFC5 Large-scale singular events: are relatively large, abrupt and sometimes irreversible changes in systems that are caused by global warming. Examples include the disintegration of major ice sheets such as from Greenland or the West Antarctic (with potentially several meters of sea-level rise in the long term). IPCC, 2018.

### BOX 3:

## Climate change and displacement: Key findings from the IPCC reports (adapted)

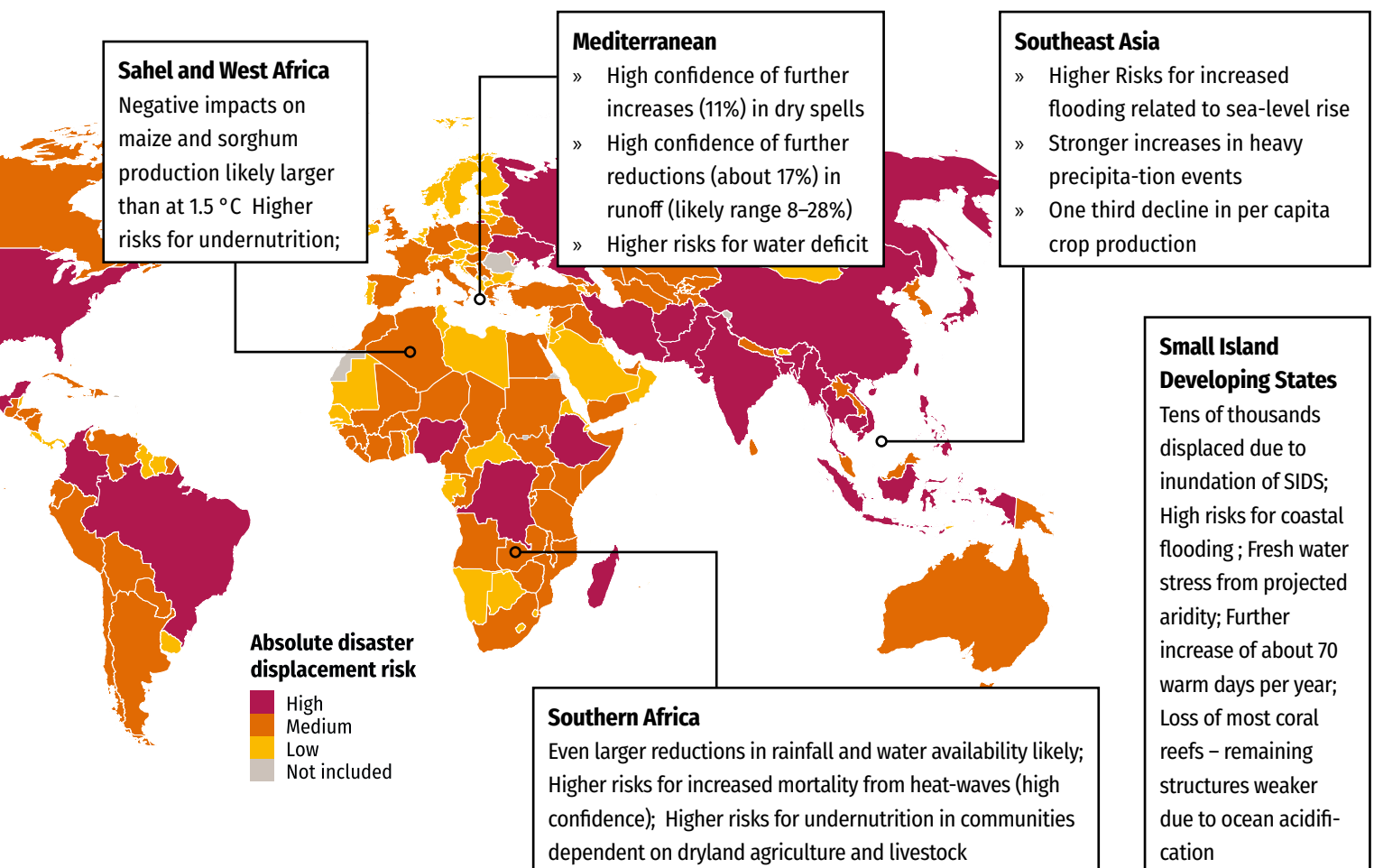
### IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C:

- » The impacts of a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature would disproportionately affect disadvantaged and vulnerable populations through food insecurity, higher food prices, income losses, lost livelihood opportunities, adverse health impacts, and population displacement.
- » Migration in small islands (internally and across islands) will increase due to multiple causes and for multiple purposes, such as better livelihood opportunities and increasingly due to sea-level rise.
- » Out-migration in agriculturally-dependent communities is significantly associated with global temperature rise.
- » Countries where at least 50 million people will be exposed to sea-level rise with an emission scenario of 1.5°C temperature rise above today's level (assuming no adaptation or protection at all) include China, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, United States, and Vietnam.

### IPCC Special Report on Climate and Land<sup>LVI</sup>:

- » Some studies report significant population displacement from the tropics related to systemic livelihood disruption in agriculture systems.
- » Climate change can lead to land degradation, even with the implementation of measures intended to avoid, reduce, or reverse the degradation. In some situations, exceeding the limits of adaptation can trigger escalating losses or result in undesirable transformational changes, such as forced migration, conflicts, or poverty.
- » Extreme weather and slow-onset climate events may lead to increased displacement, disrupted food chains, and threatened livelihoods, and contribute to exacerbated stresses for conflict.

**Figure 3: Projections for selected climate change impacts at a 2°C increase above pre-industrial levels compared to 1.5°C (text boxes in the graph), and the current risk of displacement by country (colours in map)**



Source: own illustration, based on IPCC and IDMC

## Projections of mass displacement

The recent IPCC reports did not provide a projection on the number of people expected to be displaced by climate change.<sup>LVIII</sup> However, various recent reports give an idea of the scale of climate-induced displacement. For example, in 2016, a CARE report estimated that unless governments take strong preventive action and invest in adaptation, “the number of people permanently displaced by climate change-related phenomena such as floods, droughts, famines, and hurricanes will be closer to 250 million, between now and 2050.”<sup>LIX</sup> At the time of that report and with data sources used, gender disaggregation of the data was not possible.

The World Bank report *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration* considers the impact of different climate scenarios on climate-induced displacement.<sup>LX</sup> It contains projections for the number of internally displaced people from climate change in relation to different temperature scenarios. The report found that, at higher warming scenarios (3.2–5.4°C by 2100), up to 143 million people are likely to be internally displaced in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, which is two to four times higher than a scenario with more stringent climate protection (2°C in 2050 and stabilising thereafter). While the report does not provide gender disaggregated numbers in terms of men and women affected, it notes that “women and girls experience greater disadvantage than men from pervasive discrimination and structural inequalities in access to, and control of, resources.”<sup>LXI</sup> However, it is critical to have a more in-depth understanding of the gender, age and other characteristics of communities at risk, as such data are fundamentally important to changing the systems and underlying structures that cause inequality.

By 2050, sea-level rise under a high-emissions scenario may push average annual coastal floods above land that is currently home to more than 300 million people, a number which is three times higher than current estimates, according to a Climate Central study published in *Nature Communications*.<sup>LXII</sup> However, even these numbers may prove to be conservative in light of the accelerating impacts of climate change and the risks of passing tipping points which might further escalate disruptions in the climate system and, consequently, in our economic and social systems.

The IPCC special reports on global warming of 1.5°C, land, and oceans clearly confirm that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would decrease the risk of climate change-induced displacement.<sup>LXIII</sup> The more than 180 governments that signed and ratified the Paris Agreement have committed to achieving the 1.5°C temperature limit. To prevent a rise above 1.5°C, there needs to be a global reduction of total greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030. Independent analysis shows that when considering equity and fairness all climate plans submitted by G20 countries are insufficient to prevent a rise above 1.5°C, and need to be significantly improved in 2020.<sup>LXIV</sup>

Some adverse impacts of climate change can be avoided through proactive adaptation and disaster risk reduction. However, without gender-transformative adaptation the consequences of climate change will be severe. The Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) concluded that the needs of women, especially women in poverty, “tend to go unrecognized, leaving them increasingly vulnerable and further behind educationally, economically, and politically,” making a clear case for a gender-transformative approach to adaptation.

The Global Commission on Adaptation found that “without adaptation:

- » Climate change may depress growth in global agriculture yields up to 30% by 2050. The 500 million small farms around the world will be most affected.
- » The number of people who may lack sufficient water, at least one month per year, will soar from 3.6 billion today to more than 5 billion by 2050.
- » Rising seas and greater storm surges could force hundreds of millions of people in coastal cities from their homes, with a total cost to coastal urban areas of more than \$1 trillion each year by 2050.
- » Climate change could push more than 100 million people within developing countries below the poverty line by 2030.” Overall, the Global Commission on Adaptation highlighted that “successful adaptation requires a fundamental transformation in how water is managed, just as successful mitigation demands a complete transformation of the energy system. Without such a transformation, violence, civil war, and mass displacements could increase—and people in poverty now, who are more likely to rely on rainfed agriculture and to live on the most marginal lands, will suffer the most.”<sup>LXV</sup>





## 4. Confronting climate-induced displacement through gender-transformative adaptation and resilience-building ■

### Adaptation and disaster risk reduction reduce drivers of displacement

Climate change adaptation, including climate-smart disaster risk reduction and resilience-building, can prevent and reduce forced displacement. Applying effective adaptation measures to extreme weather and slow-onset events also protects fundamental human rights. As the Office of the High-Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) stated, “efforts to address the root causes of displacement in the context of climate change should seek to protect rights, strengthen social protection systems, reduce disaster risk and exposure, and increase adaptive capacity.”<sup>LXVI</sup> Women and girls face a greater risk of certain human rights violations, including the right to live free from violence, and are more likely to need social protection, especially if responsible for care and parenting. Thus, it is vital that efforts to tackle the root causes of displacement consider the differentiated causes and impacts on women and girls.

Some developing countries explicitly regard adaptation measures as a strategy for people to remain where they live in their national climate plans under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (the so-called Nationally Determined Contributions). For example, Chad seeks to improve inter-community grassland areas; Nigeria highlights the need to strengthen capacity to anticipate disasters and impacts on internal migration and security, and to strengthen rural infra-

structure and the availability of jobs to discourage out-migration; and Sudan envisages to improve access to water and achieve water security in climate-vulnerable areas to discourage communities from migrating.<sup>LXVII</sup> Also, the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration encourages countries to “develop adaptation and resilience strategies to sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, [...] taking into account the potential implications for migration, while recognizing that adaptation in the country of origin is a priority”, and also to integrate displacement considerations into disaster risk reduction and adaptation strategies.<sup>LXVIII</sup>

### CARE’s gender-transformative adaptation experience and priorities

Women’s empowerment is at the heart of CARE’s approach to transform systems and structures that cause gender inequality. Women’s empowerment is addressed through the lens of poor women’s struggles to achieve their full and equal human rights. In these struggles, women strive to balance practical, daily, and individual achievements with strategic, collective, and long-term work to challenge biased social rules and institutions. Therefore, CARE defines women’s empowerment as the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realize her full human rights – the interplay of changes in: agency- her own aspirations and capabilities; structure - the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices; and relations - the power relations through which she negotiates her path.<sup>LXIX</sup>

CARE engages in a variety of adaptation activities in developing countries, in particular, promoting community-based adaptation (CBA) and using a range of empowering participatory, learning and action techniques to support a rights-based approach to implement its projects. CARE has used participatory risk assessment tools (the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis with a specific gender lens), gender analysis, and gender action plans to better understand the vulnerabilities and capacities of target communities. CARE's Rapid Gender Analyses (RGAs), gender and conflict analyses, and emerging approaches like 'Women Lead in Emergencies', a flagship CARE programme looking at women's leadership in humanitarian settings, also add a gender-lens to prevention and adaptation efforts. Increasing resilience is a key cross-cutting approach in CARE's programmatic work, and CARE's Resilience Marker provides a tool that allows teams to self-assess how well resilience has been integrated into their work, with a particular focus on vulnerable individuals and communities, including women and girls.<sup>LXX</sup>

Women's participation in decision-making, as well as the monitoring, review, and evaluation of climate change impacts and commitments, are critical to closing protection gaps by ensuring the effective implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures relevant to women and girls.<sup>LXXI</sup> CARE's experience from its climate-resilient agriculture work shows that it is essential to recognise and champion the important role of women and men as agents of change in agricultural adaptation, rather than reducing them to "vulnerable groups".<sup>LXXII</sup>

Tackling gender inequality, improving livelihoods, and protecting against specific climate risks are core features of many CARE programmes and CARE's efforts to help communities adapt. In highly vulnerable countries, CARE has actively tested and implemented gender transformative community-based adaptation approaches, including in areas that "exhibited early signs of failed livelihoods and forced out-migration of climate change victims," such as in the South-Western region of **Bangladesh**.<sup>LXXIII</sup> Women identified priority activities in this context, including (a) supporting livelihoods skills, including arrangement for initial start-up capital and linkages with micro-credit institutions and value chains; (b) training on income generating activities (IGA); and (c) capacity building on agricultural adaptation, including varietal choice and management of crop-specific agronomic practices and inputs, with a strong livelihood component.<sup>LXXIV</sup>

CARE also supported communities in **Vanuatu** to improve their resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events before Tropical Cyclone Pam hit in 2015. CARE's work included setting up

and training Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees, working to ensure equal female membership, providing gender and leadership training, facilitating emergency simulations, providing emergency equipment, and giving training in the use and maintenance of emergency equipment. An external study found that CARE's gender-responsive disaster risk reduction programming reduced impacts and damage in the communities when compared to control groups.<sup>LXXV</sup>

**Somalia** has been severely hit by droughts caused by El Niño and La Niña over the last years, with millions of people affected and displaced. The Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) programme, part of CARE's Economic Development programme, was introduced in Somalia in 2011 to meet the economic needs of vulnerable women. In the programme, beneficiaries receive a business start-up grant and are enrolled in business training courses, such as book-keeping, leadership skills, entrepreneurship, business plan development, and budget management. The participants are then expected to join a group of 15 women in making a weekly or biweekly contribution that feeds into a revolving fund. The women are able to acquire loans from the fund. The VSLA programme was particularly useful for increasing resilience against economic shocks and food insecurity among members and their communities during the 2016 drought in Somalia.

When **Cambodia** experienced its worst drought in a decade in 2016, gender-responsive humanitarian aid and programming by CARE ensured that the response to the drought included the concerns and needs of women and girls. CARE did not need to respond in the communities where it was already engaging in women's leadership and resilience. Women who were interviewed said they had access to improved water infrastructure, resilient agricultural businesses that continued to function during the drought, and a financial support system.

The recurrence of droughts and repeated shocks, compounded by depleted soil and natural resources, as well as population increase, has heightened the levels of the population's vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity in the Sahel region, contributing to migration and displacement. A study was conducted on the role of VSLAs in building resilience in Mali; these VSLA groups were formed as community groups to support women who were excluded from traditional banks and financial institutions. The study concluded that the impact of VSLA groups demonstrated that saving and loan activities increase the capacity of households and communities to adapt to and absorb recurring shocks. VSLA activities support social and economic development and strengthen women's voices by boosting their self-esteem and allowing them to play a bigger role within their community.<sup>LXXVI</sup>

## BOX 4:

### CARE's work in India: Improving livelihoods to reduce migration pressures

In India, in the Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh and Buldhana district of Maharashtra, CARE has been working with over 4500 marginalized tribal women from 50 villages. These women are highly dependent on rainfed agriculture, particularly paddy, and face many challenges due to climate change, including water stress, erratic rainfalls, deterioration of soil quality and fertility, and declining agro-biodiversity. With changing weather patterns and very low expertise on how to adapt to these changes, the productivity of their paddy fields is worsening. The women need to migrate every year with their families to other areas to find work and food simply because their paddy fields are not producing enough.

CARE is supporting these women, their families and communities by setting up and strengthening self-help groups to help them gain self-confidence and financial skills so that they are not reluctant to participate in climate change activities, and feel confident enough to raise their needs and ideas.

After seven years of project implementation, women are now better able to plan their agricultural activities because they are engaged in participatory scenario planning. Before the rainy season starts, and as soon as a seasonal climate forecast is made available by the meteorological department, the women and their communities, including the traditional forecaster, meet with local authorities to create an action plan for the rainy season. Then, twice a week, weather information that is received from the local agriculture university is shared through village information boards and messaged to cell phones. With this climate informa-

tion at hand, the women and their families can properly plan their agricultural activities. In selected villages, mini-weather stations were set-up by CARE in collaboration with the meteorological department and are being monitored by women, to provide farmers with locally-accurate weather data on a daily basis.

But having weather information is not enough. People need to be able to act upon this information. CARE builds the capacities of women farmers by:

- » Training women on agricultural techniques by conducting Farmer Field Schools and holding functional literacy and leadership sessions at the village level.
- » Empowering women by promoting their active participation in local governance organizations and facilitating their access to inputs, markets and services.
- » Generating supportive relations within the communities and households, thus facilitating equitable decision-making through gender dialogues and promotion of male champions to advocate on gender issues.

The results of this program are convincing. After several years of program implementation, there has been an increase in income from agriculture production (33%), a decrease in food insecurity (only a fourth of the households are now food insecure), and a decrease in the number of days of seasonal migration (almost down to a third, from 31 days to 12 days per year). These changes have occurred over a time span of six years of programme implementation, between 2014 to 2019.

### Migration and its potential adaptation benefits

Migration can increase resilience and be an effective strategy to adapt to climate change when it is a choice rather than the last resort. Where migration occurs, it is strategic and effective to think about how to use it to build community resilience; this consideration should involve the inclusion and contributions of migrants in their new “homes,” as well as their relationships and contributions to former home communities or their place of origin.

A number of developing countries have identified migration as an adaptation strategy in their national climate plans (NDCs), such as Egypt (migration from the coasts due to

sea-level rise as an agricultural adaptation strategy), Haiti (internal and external migration and planned relocation from areas highly vulnerable to floods), and Venezuela (building 800,000 homes to respond to emergencies arising from torrential rains).<sup>LXXVII</sup>

An important perspective in the displacement context is the value that migrants and displaced people can add to effective adaptation in their new homes. The inclusion of communities, migrants, displaced persons and local governments in decision making processes have “proven instrumental in encouraging adaptation action and in strengthening the link between migrants and displaced persons and their local communities.”<sup>LXXVIII</sup>



For example, CARE in **Thailand** (Raks Thai Foundation) has been involved in project activities and research as part of the TransRe project in order to better understand the positive and negative effects of migration on community resilience.<sup>LXXIX</sup> Positive impacts include (a) financial remittances that help sustain rural livelihoods; (b) social remittances that may change social norms and institutions and increase ideas, knowledge, and skills to drive adaptive changes (e.g., through the application of mobile technologies); and (c) “translocal connectedness” and participation back home (e.g., when skilled migrants temporarily return to, or work remotely with, their home communities). These factors also relate to the key capacities identified in CARE’s Increasing Resilience Framework, namely to anticipate risks, absorb shocks, adapt to evolving conditions, and transform through systematic changes in behaviours and enabling environments.<sup>LXXX</sup> On the downside, migration can also result in declining labour availability and community skill sets, disruption of social

cohesion, increasing socio-economic disparities, burdening of those left-behind as well as those who have migrated, and separation of families.<sup>LXXXI</sup>

### Planned relocation: Benefits and drawbacks

In many cases, and with climate change impacts unfolding, leaving home is the only viable option for people in vulnerable areas. For slow-onset climate impacts, such as sea-level rise, relocating can be planned and partially self-determined, sometimes for entire communities to a specific area, with the potential to harness co-benefits despite significant drawbacks (see Table 2). Planned relocation is therefore different from a less planned, more individual type of migration in which migrants often have much greater uncertainty about their future in the region to where they migrate. In principle, planned relocation is also possible for areas that frequently face displacement-inducing disaster events, such as storms or floods.

**Table 2. Planned relocation (and differences to forced displacement) in response to sea-level rise**

Responses		Potential effectiveness <i>in terms of reducing sea-level rise</i>	Advantages <i>(beyond risk reduction)</i>	Co-benefits	Drawbacks	Economic efficiency	Governance challenges
RETREAT	Planned relocation	Effective if alternative safe localities are available	Sea level risks at origin can be eliminated	Access to improved services (health, education, housing), job opportunities and economic growth	Loss of social cohesion, cultural identity and well-being. Depressed services (health, education, housing), job opportunities and economic growth	Limited evidence	Reconciling the divergent interests arising from relocating people from point of origin and destination
	Forced displacement	Addresses only immediate risk at place of origin	Not applicable	Not applicable	Range from loss of life to loss of livelihoods and sovereignty	Not applicable	Raises complex humanitarian questions on livelihoods, human rights and equity

Source: IPCC, 2019<sup>LXXXII</sup>

When the relocation of populations is planned, participatory, informed by gender analysis and people-centred, then it can be an adaptation strategy that protects people from the permanent loss of land and livelihoods. If done right, such planned relocation can even improve certain livelihood outcomes. Thus, it is important to implement planned relocation in a way that respects, protects and fulfils the rights of people, both those moving somewhere and those who are already living in areas where people move, and that helps to bridge gender gaps and address gender inequalities. However, the reality is that many people do not move in circumstances that allow or involve well-planned relocation, and many migrants end up in vulnerable situations. Even if the above conditions for successfully planned relocation are met, there is an involuntary nature to people being forced to leave their homes because they are flooded by sea-level rise; planned relocation should not be perceived as something that affected people would choose over staying in their homelands, if it was possible.

**“It is important to implement planned relocation in a way that respects, protects and fulfils the rights of people.”**

As such, planned relocation of communities to address climate change impacts is still a relatively new approach, but, unfortunately, will become more prevalent in the future. Some guidelines for planned relocation already highlight the importance of a gender-differentiated approach. For example, guidelines developed in Fiji stress the need for gender-disaggregated data and gender impact analysis when analysing the necessity of a relocation process to ensure “an inclusive and gender responsive consultative and participatory process to strengthen communities’ riposte to climate change impacts, and ensure community engagement and ownership in the relocation process.”<sup>LXXXIII</sup> Concrete evidence from village relocations in Fiji also indicate the gender dimensions brought

up in gender-disaggregated focus group discussions, for example, with women being regarded as secondary decision making on whether to relocate.<sup>LXXXIV</sup> A toolbox developed by UNHCR, International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and others also includes a number of entry points where gender should be considered (e.g. in relation to information sharing and property rights). The toolbox also highlights that planned relocation “can offer a way of redressing some of the inequalities around land and housing” which often have a strong gender dimension.<sup>LXXXV</sup>

**Legal protection for the rights of “climate migrants”**

The OHCHR makes it clear that the absence of a specific legal status for people who have been displaced by climate change, who do not fall under the category of a “refugee”, does not mean the absence of legal protection of their human rights:

- » In the context of climate change-related cross-border movement, international human rights laws, norms and standards offer the most comprehensive, people-centred, and flexible framework for the protection of all migrants in vulnerable situations, including those affected by climate change.
- » All persons are rights-holders, and all states have ratified at least one international human rights treaty, imposing obligations on all states to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights for all without discrimination.
- » Further, “human rights obligations, standards and principles have the potential to inform and strengthen international, regional and national policymaking in the area of climate change.”<sup>LXXXVI</sup>

A report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed to particular human rights which are at risk for women in vulnerable situations, where they face disproportionate risks from the adverse effects of climate change which can magnify gender inequalities. This includes challenges for the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights through inequalities in accessing the freedoms and resources needed, or particular risks to health rights in relation to sanitation, sexual harassment and exploitation.<sup>LXXXVII</sup>



The Global Migration Group's Working Group on Human Rights and Gender Equality has developed principles and practical guidance on the human rights protections entitled to all migrants in vulnerable situations, including those affected by climate change.<sup>LXXXVIII</sup> A specific section on protecting the human rights of women and girls highlights the following aspects: designing legislation, policy and programming to meet their specific needs; guaranteeing safety and freedom of expression in all screening and assessment situations; applying a robust gender analysis to all migration policies and programmes; eliminating sex-specific bans and discriminatory restrictions on women's and girls' migration; and ensuring that all relevant staff is capacitated to recognise and respect the needs and human rights of women and girls.<sup>LXXXIX</sup>

The recent first ruling of the UN Human Rights Committee on a complaint by an individual seeking asylum from climate

change impacts, described as a “landmark ruling,” constitutes that “countries may not deport individuals who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to life,” and adds to the existing legal protection.<sup>XC</sup> The working group also clarified that individuals seeking asylum status are not required to prove that they would face imminent harm if returned to their countries.

Overall, states have the responsibility to facilitate migration with dignity for all migrants and address their specific needs for human rights protection, including those affected by climate change. Protection needs include access to water, sanitation, food, housing, health care, social security, education, and decent work. States should also put appropriate mechanisms in place to guarantee that all migrants who require human rights protection and are unable to return to their countries because of climate change are provided with an effective legal status.<sup>XCI</sup>







## 5. Recommendations for a gender-transformative response to climate-induced displacement

Climate-induced displacement needs to be tackled urgently, both by cutting emissions and preparing for and addressing the climate change impacts that cause displacement. Humanitarian action has a key role to play in assisting those affected by the climate crisis, specifically those who are displaced and suffer from climate impacts. All measures to address the climate crisis must be inclusive, people-centred, gender-transformative, and involve relevant stakeholders at all levels - in particular, those people and communities most affected.

### Recent progress towards an international policy framework

It is clear that climate change impacts, particularly at a global average temperature rise above 1.5°C, will significantly undermine the effective enjoyment of a broad array of rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Primarily, it is the responsibility of countries to develop mitigation and adaptation measures that do not adversely affect the full enjoyment of human rights, including specific rights of women and girls and at risk minorities, such as LGBTQI+ communities and disabled, ethnic and religious minorities.

In recent years, there has been progress on closing, or at least narrowing, international policy gaps in the context of climate change and displacement, which was still critical a couple of years ago, as identified by the Overseas Development Insti-

tute.<sup>xcii</sup> The Paris Agreement acknowledges the relationship between climate change and the enjoyment of human rights, which has led to the establishment of an inter-agency and multi-stakeholder Taskforce on Displacement under the UNFCCC international mechanism on loss and damage. The taskforce has provided governments with frameworks that can help them appropriately address the challenges of the climate and displacement crisis, such as recommendations adopted by COP24.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration also reflects commitments by governments to address climate change and displacement through more integrated approaches and strategies. A big difference in the legal foundations of international climate law is that, in contrast to the migration compact, they are based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities. As climate change and the resulting displacement are largely caused by the emissions of a small group of wealthy countries and people living on this planet, those same countries are also responsible to reduce their harm and contribute appropriately to solving the problems faced by countries that are least responsible and hit hardest, including through financial support. From 2020 to 2021, a key opportunity to advance the global institutional approach to address these challenges will be the work of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which will give particular attention to displacement and climate change.<sup>xciii</sup>



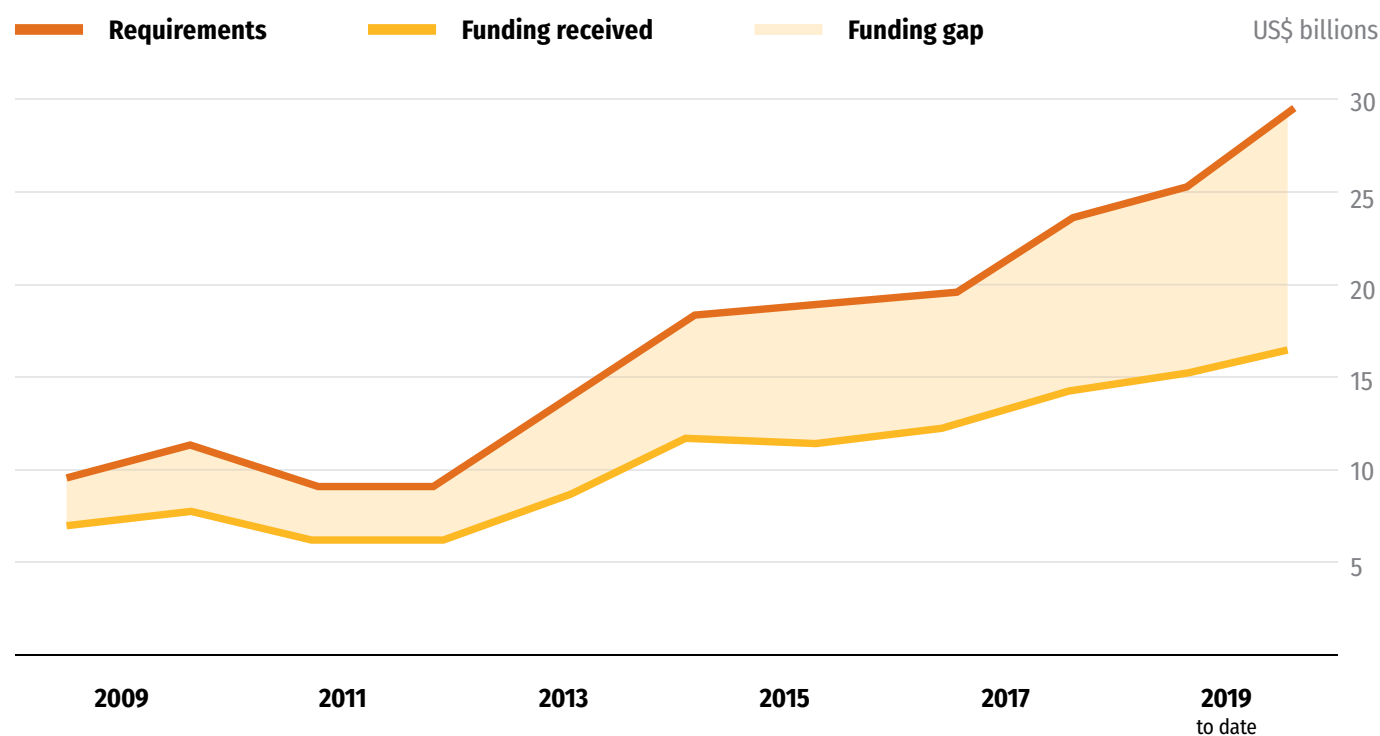
## Finance for adaptation and humanitarian work, and the gaps

As part of the UN climate negotiations and the Paris Agreement, developed countries are committed to provide USD 100 billion per year by 2020 for climate action in developing countries, with an equal balance between mitigation and adaptation. Unfortunately, climate finance from public sources is rising too slowly; in 2017, it was only at USD 54 billion, with 20% marked for adaptation.<sup>xciv</sup> Current levels of public finance, and even the goal of 100 billion per year, lag far behind the costs of adaptation in developing countries which are estimated to be in the order of 140 to 300 billion annually by 2030.<sup>xcv</sup> New and innovative finance sources, such as carbon taxes, fossil fuel extraction levy, and aviation and maritime transport levies, could generate billions of USD for climate action, and should be pursued by governments.<sup>xcvi</sup> Analysis by CARE also indicates that adaptation finance rarely fully incorporates gender equality. For example, below 10% of adaptation finance provided by most G7 countries considers gender equality as a key objective.<sup>xcvii</sup> Therefore, tracking and reporting on how much of that finance supports gender equality actions and responses is critical and must be improved. In recent years,

there has been some slow progress in enhancing direct access to funding by institutions in developed countries' as an important component of country ownership, but, according to estimates, less than 10% of climate finance was earmarked for local action between 2013 and 2016.<sup>xcviii</sup>

According to UNOCHA, in 2019 only about 54% out of the USD 29.7 bn assessed as humanitarian finance needs were met (Figure 4), leaving significant gaps in providing urgently needed finance. Less than 1% of total humanitarian finance was for gender-based violence, despite its increasing pervasiveness. This reflects a concerning trend of a widening gap between the funding required and the funding received (see Figure 4). Insufficient leadership of local actors in implementing funds is also a challenge in humanitarian finance. IDMC concludes that "After more than two decades of local, national and international efforts to respond to internal displacement as a humanitarian issue, the gulf between international principles and aspirations and local and national realities is as wide as ever", pointing to the dire need for longer-term development initiatives and funding for solutions to displacement.<sup>xcix</sup>

Figure 4. Humanitarian funding gap (2009-2019)



Source. UNOCHA 2020<sup>c</sup>

Although a significant number of countries suffering from humanitarian emergencies are also highly climate vulnerable, a recent study of five countries found that only 3% of projects included in inter-agency appeals had a climate change component, and less than half of those appeals received funding.<sup>41</sup> Thus, there is also the need to advance the integration of climate change components into humanitarian action. Positively, however, humanitarian-specific funding approaches like forecast-based finance have been pioneered and increasingly receive attention in climate discussions, for example in technical work on loss and damage.

The international community, as well as individual governments, have largely failed to implement a system or response commensurate to the problems emerging with the climate and displacement crisis. Such a response must reduce displacement triggers through preventive action, provide protection to those who are affected and suffer from loss and damage, and ensure the rights of those who migrate - whether as their last resort or not. Without urgent action, those most affected by climate change, particularly women and girls, bear devastating, and even deadly, consequences.

### A gender-transformative response to climate displacement

Immediate action is needed to put women and girls at the centre of concerted efforts to build communities' resilience to climate change, and to help those who have already been affected by climate-induced displacement. CARE has long been advocating for ambitious international climate policies in support of the most vulnerable and the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and supports the Grand Bargain and other global humanitarian agreements.

**In order to tackle climate-induced displacement in a gender-transformative and human-rights based way, CARE calls on all relevant actors, particularly governments, decision-makers and humanitarian and development actors, to do their part to build a safer, more equitable, inclusive and resilient future that harnesses the power of women and girls within their communities:**

**Ensure that women and girls play meaningful leadership roles and shape more ambitious policies and localised programs. Ensure that systems are in place so that women and girls can hold decision-makers accountable in the context of climate-induced displacement.**

- » **Humanitarian actors and policy makers must revisit planning and programming mechanisms at all levels** when addressing climate-induced displacement to ensure

women friendly spaces and mechanisms suitable to the local circumstances are created at all levels. This will enable gender-responsive needs assessments, humanitarian programming plans and accountability mechanisms, such as peer reviews and after action reviews, to genuinely include women's and girls' perspectives.

- » **Actions to address the climate and displacement context must be grounded in sound gender analyses.** CARE pioneered initiatives like the Rapid Gender Analyses (RGAs), gender and conflict analyses, and the Gender Marker are now well tested. These must be adapted to climate crises, including mass displacement events, as well as used in complex crises. Ensuring that women-friendly spaces are available to ensure we seek women's and girls' inputs, and influence and listen to their recommendations without them fearing backlash.
- » **Organisations that represent women and girls and that promote gender equality must play an influential role in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and plans relevant to climate and displacement.** This means ensuring that they play a leading role to influence and shape climate policies and national climate plans. **Governments must better integrate gender equality efforts and displacement considerations in national adaptation and disaster risk reduction action plans,** an important contribution to the implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan adopted at COP25. Where people and communities are vulnerable and at particular risk from being displaced and harmed by climate change, targeted adaptation, disaster risk reduction, rehabilitation and recovery measures should receive particular attention.

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**Scale up climate action and public climate finance for developing countries, particularly adaptation finance, to address displacement drivers with locally led actions.**

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- » **All countries are expected to submit new and enhanced national climate plans (NDCs) in 2020,** with particular responsibilities for major emitting countries, such as the G20. Collectively, the climate plans should aim to at least halve CO2 emissions globally by 2030 to be compatible with the 1.5°C limit and reduce the exacerbation of climate-induced displacement drivers. These plans should also guide economic recovery measures in response to COVID-19, including promoting renewable energies for sustainable livelihoods in displacement settings.
- » **Provide proactive, gender-transformative adaptation, disaster risk reduction, early-warning, social protection and insurance measures** that effectively enable all community members, especially those who are most

vulnerable, to prevent and withstand climate shocks and reduce the pressure to leave their homes. As much as possible, local communities, including women and girls, need to be leading such measures.

- » **Developed countries must increase climate finance in line with the USD 100bn commitment**, and further scale-up beyond 2020, based on their particular responsibilities. International grant-based co-financing of such measures is a matter of justice, and currently only about 20% of the climate finance provided by developed countries is for adaptation, instead of the 50% indicated through the Paris Agreement.
- » **At least 85% of adaptation finance should target gender equality** as an explicit objective by 2023, at the latest. In most countries, climate projects supported by public finance do not adequately prioritise gender equality - this must urgently change.
- » **Governments must promote new sources of finance to generate truly additional finance.** To increase investments into gender-transformative adaptation and disaster risk reduction which helps to address displacement drivers, governments must promote measures such as carbon taxes, a fossil fuel extraction levy, and aviation and maritime transport levies.

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**Direct at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local organisations<sup>4</sup>, with a particular focus on women-led and women's rights organizations.**

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- » **Ensure aid is local as possible and as international as necessary by deliberately including women-led and gender justice organizations in decision-making.** The Grand Bargain commitments include ensuring direct funding for local organizations, including in refugee settlements and settings of Internally Displaced People. Women-led and gender justice organisations play a critical role in humanitarian response, as they are far more likely to invest in interventions that reflect women's and girls' needs and priorities, including protection from gender-based violence; access to services for gender-based violence survivors; access to critical sexual and reproductive health and rights services; emergency obstetric care;

support for pregnant and lactating women; and menstrual hygiene management interventions.

- » **Existing coordination mechanisms currently dominated by international agencies need to open for more national actors**, including women led organizations.

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**Develop an institutional and legal architecture that provides protections from climate-related displacement, particularly for women and girls.**

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- » **End the legal vacuum for climate-displaced people, and take into account the specific needs and circumstances of women and girls.** The situation where people displaced by climate change find themselves in a legal No Man's land must be ended. Countries and actors most responsible for climate change have a particular responsibility to support those affected to ensure their rights.
- » **The international community should embark upon a process to identify synergies and gaps between existing institutions and legal frameworks** in the displacement and climate change context in order to ensure a comprehensive and effective response. This should include the UN Security Council, UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, the Global Compact on Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees, the UN Human Rights Council Ruling, and other fora. This must also improve the coordination of humanitarian actors and those involved in climate change action on the ground, within and beyond the UN system.
- » **National level institutions must enhance collaboration and coordination across standard thematic boundaries.** A multi-faceted challenge, such as climate-induced displacement, requires collaboration and coordination amongst a large number of stakeholders, both within governments as well as with outside stakeholders, and every country should ensure it has appropriate coordination mechanisms in place.

*These recommendations are not CARE's attempt to provide a comprehensive answer, but to highlight some key areas of concern, where much more ambitious action can make a true difference to the lives of those affected by climate-induced displacement.*

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<sup>4</sup> Women-led organisations are any non-governmental, not-for-profit and non-political organisation where two-thirds of its board (incl. chair) and management staff/volunteers (incl. Executive Director) are female, and it focuses on women and girls as primary target group of its programming.



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