

**CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS INPUTS ON THE CALL ON THE “PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF MITIGATION, ADAPTATION, AND FINANCIAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON LOSS AND DAMAGE”**

Caritas Internationalis is a global confederation of 162 National Caritas member organizations and 7 Caritas Regional Offices that respond to humanitarian emergencies and promote integral human development and integral ecology, with special concern for the effects of climate change on the poor[[1]](#footnote-1) and its implications for the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights.[[2]](#footnote-2) Caritas Internationalis has its headquarters in Rome and two delegations to the United Nations in Geneva and New York.

This submission includes inputs from the following regions Africa (Malawi and Liberia), Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Syria and Iraq), Asia (India and Sri Lanka), Latin America (Colombia)

1. **What experiences and examples are particularly individuals and communities in vulnerable situations (as identified above) that have suffered loss and damage due to the adverse impacts of climate change are facing you aware of that**?

* While climate change impacts are felt across many sectors, the agriculture and water sectors, in particular, are severely affected due to their high level of dependency on climate variables, especially rainfall and temperature.
* Sri Lanka is vulnerable to the short- and long-term impacts of climate change that affect the country’s food systems, economy, and human lives and wellbeing. The most frequent natural hazards that affect Sri Lanka are **droughts, floods, landslides, cyclones, and coastal erosion**. 96 percent of disasters in Sri Lanka are caused by climates, such as flooding, landslides, extreme winds, and drought.
* **Cyclones** have increased in frequency and magnitude each year, which attest to the climate change. In Malawi for example, in 2019 the country was hit by cyclone Idai that affected about 975,000 people with 86,976 displaced, 60 killed and 672 injured in the aftermaths of the cyclone. In 2021 Tropical storms Anna and Gombe affected a total of 17 districts across the country and more than 945,728 Households were affected, with 190,000 Households displaced, 46 deaths, 18 missing and 206 injuries, approximately 71,716 hectares (ha) of crops washed away and 36,803 combined livestock species lost/injured.
* **Agriculture Crop and livestock losses**: Increase in the rising rivers has affected communities by generating total loss of agricultural and livestock production. High intensity rainfall is causing topsoil loss and soil erosion leading to the siltation in water reservoirs, rivers and sedimentation in the sea. This is further affecting water storage capacity of the water structures (like lakes, ponds) leading to water stress in summer and further affecting the carrying capacity of sea. Floods experienced are also causing crop loss from submergence and resulting in the food security especially in the rural areas Delayed rainfall is also causing drought leading to crop loss and migration of the poor and marginalized people. Drinking water unavailability.
* **Water:** Climate Change is reducing water unavailability. Increased demand for water due to low rainfall has caused water sources to run dry. Most communities affected do not have access to adequate and safe water for drinking. Sources and sanitation facilities, carrying runoff and waste into streams and lakes, and contaminate the water supply. This scarcity is resulting in increased costs of water and depriving households of opportunities to collect the amount of safe water needed for proper handwashing and hygiene and limiting children’s ability to grow up healthy and strong.
* Most low-lying atolls and coastal communities- are in danger of salination due to rising sea level, tide, seawater incursion and inundation. Food sources like sago in coastal swamplands of Oceania are dying from seawater. New and introduced plants diseases and vectors like mosquitos spreading malaria are emerging because of changing temperature in places like the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.
* Communities located near the sea Coast have lost access to territory, cultural heritage, and means of livelihood (fishing), tradition and fishing vessels disrupted, due the high level of sea erosion. Caritas Oceania reports that people in the South Pacific are losing their islands to rising sea levels
* Other documented losses include deaths, injured people, fully/partially damaged houses and other Infrastructure, school children are unable to go to school.
* Further loss and damage on already stressed communities: For example in Syria, the debris left by the ongoing conflict, and further Turkey’s Euphrates River water cutting, has lead into loss of pasture areas. The lack of rain has further affected vegetation growth and access to water for flocks of sheep. As such, the unavailability of flocks has made meat prices hike very fast resulting in many families not being able to feed their children with sheep meat until receiving donation of a peace of sacrificed sheep on Al-Adha feast.

1. **What legislation, policies and practices do you think are necessary to provide redress for particularly individuals and communities in vulnerable situations that have suffered and will continue to suffer loss and damage due to the adverse impacts of climate change**?

* **Legislation**
* There need for existing pieces of legislation on climate change to recognize and respond to emergencies caused by climate change which are treated as currently treated as mere disasters.
* There is need to put in place laws and Policies that reinforce local systems and invest in local capacities in order to facilitate humanitarian operations by (African) local actors, including local NGOs who are at the forefront of responding to climate change-induced disasters[[3]](#footnote-3). This includes passing domestic policies and legislation that further localization and hold international Grand Bargain signatories to account for their commitments.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Iraq should consider new legislation to shift the government's current farm support programme from subsidizing agricultural production to supporting the use of sustainable agricultural irrigation and production methods.
* **Policies**
* Climate Change policies to move towards a green economy that integrates Green Accounting, Green Energy, Green Industries, Green Agriculture, Green Cities and Buildings, Green Transport, Green Trading, Green Infrastructure, and Green Services.
* Deliberate policies to reinforce budgetary allocation to assist affected communities that suffer loss and damage.
* Deliberate policies to ensure National and Local Disaster Management Agencies are funded effectively in order respond to the adverse impacts of Climate Change
* Polices towards the conservation of raindrops like well recharging and water harvesting.
* **Practices**.
* Promoting climate resilient and sustainable agriculture to reduce carbon emission and to produce safe food so that the health risk can be reduced.
* Robust WASH interventions and innovations are needed for low-lying communities whose clean water sources are becoming scarce. Governments, backed by adequate public and private funding streams, should integrate sanitation and hygiene into all Climate change and Disaster related policies, and development priorities.
* While it is extremely necessary to support replacing fossil fuels, there is need for consideration of cost effective low carbon economic activities that take into account the ability of communities already suffering loss and damage. In Syria for example, 90% of Syrian people are under poverty line. Therefore, they cannot afford to buy solar equipment. The Government is said to encourage projects aimed to establish wind energy generation farms but may not be easy with the unilateral sanctions.
* In Iraq, the government is implementing a recovery project of replanting 20-30 million trees within two years to restore previous losses. In the long term, the programme aims to plant one billion trees across Iraq by 2030.These are practices that should be replicated.
* Launch of nationwide public awareness campaign programmes to inform and promote climate and energy efficiency policies, using social and traditional media, and encourage changes in individual habits. These campaigns should also promote sustainable water and land management practices.
* Increased use of renewable energy.

1. **Please provide examples of policies and practices (including legal remedies) and concepts of how States, business enterprises, civil society and intergovernmental organizations’ can provide redress and remedies for individual and communities in vulnerable situations who have suffered loss and damage to the adverse impacts of climate change.**

* **Case example:** Colombia has an adaptation fund that promotes sustainable development with comprehensive adaptation projects that reduce the fiscal vulnerability of the State and the population, associated with the implementation of resources in mitigation works, improvement of road infrastructure, delivery of housing to the affected population and training in good production practices. The growth of these adaptation and mitigation funds should be promoted, generating mandatory contributions by all citizens in relation to the carbon footprint generated.
* Increase awareness campaigns on early warning systems and community mobilization for people to move away from disaster prone areas. This should be coupled with increased access to basic services like health, education etc. in areas where people are reallocated
* Ensure that there are functional DRR structures (committees) and evacuation centers that are gender responsive and with basic amenities for survival
* Provide regular funds earmarked for emergency relief in disaster prone areas rather than over-reliance on donor support. In Papua New Guinea, government has developed its first National WASH policy 2015-2030 with funding support from UNICEF and EU. However, there is no clear path of mainstreaming the implementation of the policy in response to climate change. This could be made effective if government provides technical oversight of policy and funds while CSOs, CBOs and churches play the humanitarian implementation through their extensive network of expertise.
* Empower referral structures and follow-up mechanisms for complaints redress including issues of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and trafficking[[5]](#footnote-5) for those suffering loss and damage.
* Develop contingency plans that help to respond to climate disasters leading to loss and damage and invest in recovery projects and programmes..

1. **Please provide examples of ways in which States, the business enterprises, civil society and intergovernmental organizations have provided redress and remedies for individuals and communities in vulnerable situations who have suffered loss and damage due to the adverse effects of climate change.**

* In Liberia, businesses and non-governmental organizations have responded to the needs of communities and individuals affected by losses and damages related to climate change. This has been through the provision of shelter, short and term assistance in micro financing for women and provision of alternative form of livelihood in the case of Fishing communities relocated due to loss of the fishing territory as the result of sea erosion.
* In the case of Colombia, works associated with the relocation of families affected by winter waves are identified, as in the case of Cali, where 120 families that could be affected by landslides were relocated. Gramalote, located in the department of Santander, is a clear example of the state's response.
* Egypt is striving to improve air quality. However, the government is implementing programs targeting the most polluting sectors and areas and regulating industrial emissions.
* Provision of food and non-food items, including cash transfers and WASH facilities including water treatment, rehabilitation of water points
* Rehabilitation/construction of houses for the affected and supported with recovery programmes such as winter cropping and alternative irrigation sources. This also includes assistance to build back better using locally available resources and harnessing indigenous knowledge to combat climate change challenges.
* In Papua New Guinea, the recent King Tide Disaster in December 2021 demonstrated the effectiveness of partnerships and integration in addressing the immediate impact of King Tide through relief supplies. NGOs, CBOs, and faith-based Organizations were able to support the government through the local disaster office with disaster relief items like food and hygiene kits while government only spent on logistics and coordination.
* As food and water become scarcer, Caritas continues to help indigenous communities map their resources and campaign to raise awareness about the harmful effects of climate change. Caritas agencies work to strengthen coping mechanisms through interventions in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, improved water and sanitation measures and community managed risk reduction programmes.

1. **What international, regional and national policies and legal approaches are necessary to protect current and future generations and achieve intergenerational justice for particularly for individuals and communities, from the adverse impacts of climate change?**

**National policies**

* With the vast natural resources of Land, forest and other untapped minerals, National Governments should put in place policies that address deforestation, protect the forest and timber usually used for furniture. Though the export of these raw materials brings in foreign currency, the future survivor of the next generation should be of national priority.
* Government to ensure crop insurance and social protection to the vulnerable communities and the affected.
* Promote renewable energy sources and low carbon emission ways of living

**Regional Policies**

* Legislation to safeguard resource governance and ensure sustainable ecosystem functioning and biodiversity, and which protects the rights of future generations.

**International policies**

* Global mitigation funds for the fight against climate change, associated with the most affected populations at the global level. These resources must have a focus on direct responses, such as promoting reforestation, carbon footprint, fiscal responsibility of the largest producers of CO2 and responsibility of all citizens in common.
* Adoption of a model statute on legal remedies for climate change that will directly respond to those affected by climate change. This will include clarifying procedural rules.

1. **In 2021 at 26th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), some Parties and civil society organization’s proposed a new financial facility to support loss and damage.**
   1. **Please provide ideas and concepts on how a new facility would operate and how the funds needed to underwrite this fund would be established and maintained.**

* Currently, the mechanisms available under the (UNFCCC) are working towards minimizing Loss and Damage through mitigation and adaptation; however, they do not provide means for addressing the lost properties by the vulnerable communities. For example, it does not go beyond helping disaster victims recover from the impacts of climate change and go beyond their ability to adapt. As such, the Loss and Damage Fund Facility is critical for the existing gap in climate finance. Given the rising scale of climate-related damages, developed countries should take the responsibility to finance the fund for the developing nations to benefit. All developing country Parties to UNFCCC should be eligible to receive funding support from the Loss and Damage Fund Facility, irrespective of a potential contribution to the fund and its scale, to cover economic and non-economic losses and damages. This should be coupled with the development of guidelines and proper legal frameworks that will provide an enabling environment to ensure that there is transparency in the utilization of the fund. This fund should also be accessed by the Civil Society entities
* Developed country governments to pledge bilateral finance to address loss and damage.
  1. **Please provide ideas and concepts on how a new financial facility for loss and damage could provide redress and remedies for individuals and communities in vulnerable situations who have suffered loss and damage due to the adverse impacts of climate change.**
* The increasing frequency of extreme weather events due to climate change is putting more pressure on already over-stretched and underfunded humanitarian systems. The costs of the destruction from storms, droughts and floods is also increasing inequality in vulnerable and low-income communities. The operationalization of the Loss and Damage fund facility will lessen the burden of the affected communities who in the process lose lives of their beloved ones, homes, schools, jobs, culture, land, Indigenous and local knowledge and biodiversity which cannot be regained/ compensated through adaptation and mitigation funds.
* Government response to immediate loss and damage has bureaucratic protocols, thus delaying the response and preventing loss and damage during climate-infused disasters. The facility should allow communities to have easy access without rigorous application procedure. Perhaps lead INGOs with specialty in enhancing response to Climate Change can be bid as principal recipient of grants from the facility each year while CSOs can be  sub-recipients working directly with affected community or though their CBOs to build their capacity and maximize local knowledge and best practice for mitigation and adaption.
* The facility supported with a good system of monitoring and triggering alerts should be established. The facility should also be able to fund immediate assessment no less than 24 hours in the event of disaster and response of relief supplies of food and water coupled with rehabilitation.
* Funds should be obtained through national dedicated grants to finance part of the costs invested
* A new facility should integrate renewable energy.

1. **What actions are necessary to enhance actions by States, business enterprises, civil society and intergovernmental organisations to dramatically increase efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, including through support to developing countries, in particular small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing States, to limit the human rights impacts on particularly individuals and communities in vulnerable situations to the adverse impacts of climate change?**

* Integral holistic response that include affected communities in the decision making
* Enhanced education to the affected communities and the measures to be taken to improve their territories by enhancing the application of indigenous Knowledge
* Relocation of population affected by climate emergencies and improvement in environmental and food sustainability practices.
* Promote Climate Resilient sustainable farming practices through Agroecological principles
* Promote green initiatives promoting renewable energy sources and low carbon emission activities such as solar energy, energy saving stoves and fire briquettes made from agriculture wastes through community projects.
* Promote use of biodegradable materials in manufacturing; reuse and recycling of waste and regulate waste disposal by private waste disposal companies.
* Funding for eco system restoration such as protect the sacred groves, water conservation, soil health management, massive plantation afforestation in the coastal areas.
* CSOs to advocate for national government reviews of current laws relating to the environment corporate laws so that every government agency and multinational- and national business entity integrates climate change response on loss and damage as prerequisite of conducting business. Development plans, strategies and corporate plans should capture the legal requirement.

1. **What actions are necessary to enhance actions by States, business enterprises, civil society and intergovernmental organization to increase efforts to ensure that actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change contribute to reducing, and not exacerbating, the vulnerabilities of individuals and communities in vulnerable situations to the adverse impacts of climate change?**

* Government agencies responsible for Disaster management and prevention must be adequately funded and enhance partnerships with Civil Society organizations in order to collectively reduce the impacts of Climate Change.
* Restrictions on polluting practices through achievable and binding agreements. Direct agreements between developed and developing countries.
* Enhanced monitoring of the implementation of public policies on climate change by civil society
* Establish an independent Climate Advisory Committee, chaired by a distinguished scientific or commercial leader, to advise the Iraqi government on climate change strategy.
* Moving the co-ordination for adaptation and climate emergencies into powerful central bodies, such as the Office of the President
* Including considerations of climate change risks within long-term plans, poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies.
* Ensuring adequate resource allocation and effective budgetary support mechanisms for the incorporation of adaptation considerations in policies plans and programmes. .
* Provide human, financial and technical resources and services to support local adaptation.
* Ensure a supportive policy and institutional framework. This means devising policy incentives for risk management behavior, reviewing policies that increase climate-related vulnerabilities, and strengthening the institutions needed to manage communication and decision-making processes.
* For any initiatives and financing to address climate adaptation, there is need for mechanisms that are accessible at the local level and support locally led solutions; that ensure inclusion of the most affected people in decision-making; that prioritize the rights of the most affected people; and that are provided as grants, not loans.

1. Recently, Caritas Internationalis has launched an international Campaign “Together We Campaign on Integral Ecology”: https://www.caritas.org/togetherwe-2/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.caritas.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/climatejusticeEn.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://charter4change.org/2022/05/18/open-letter-from-198-african-civil-society-organizations-ahead-of-the-2022-african-union-humanitarian-summit-and-pledging-conference-available-in-english-french-portuguese/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 150618-Trafficking-in-persons-event-report-1.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)