



Plan International, Inc.

RESPONSE TO CALL FOR INPUTS ON THE IMPACT OF LOSS AND DAMAGE FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Geneva, January 2024

Plan International has developed this submission to inform the Secretary-General's analytical study on the impact of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights, exploring equity-based approaches and solutions to addressing the same, to be presented at the Human Rights Council at its fifty-seventh session. We have responded to certain questions of the Call for inputs.

Plan International, Inc. is an independent non-governmental organisation and is in General Consultative Status with ECOSOC. Founded in 1937, Plan International is one of the oldest and largest children's rights organisations in the world. We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls in both development and humanitarian contexts. Working with children and young people in more than 80 countries around the world, we tackle the root causes of inequality faced by children, especially girls, through our programme and influencing activities.

Questionnaire

- 1. Please describe through concrete examples and stories the impacts of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights in your country. Please indicate whether the impact was exceptional or whether an example of many similarly situated cases**

Climate-induced loss and damage threaten to increase inequality. Plan International's brief *From the Frontlines: Youth Call for Action to Address Loss and Damage Caused by Climate Change*¹, examines the meaning and impact of loss and damage through an intersectional, youth-centred, and gender lens. Climate change is already affecting millions of children's and youth's lives, particularly girls and young women. Passing on the escalating impacts of human-induced climate change to future generations is a moral issue. Children and youth today will face the worst loss and damage of any generation to date, despite being the least responsible for its cause. Loss and damage and the wider ramifications are already being felt every day, with children and youth facing growing economic insecurity, inequality, poverty, hunger, lack of access to education and health services, threats to current or future livelihoods, risk of violence against girls and women and the loss of loved ones. Financing is urgently needed to address loss and damage and meet the existing and future needs and rights of the most vulnerable children and youth, considering intergenerational equity, gender and inclusion.

- 2. Please describe any relevant quantitative and qualitative data as well as mechanisms and tools to measure, monitor, report on, and evaluate the impacts of loss and damage, including from extreme weather and slow-onset events, on the full enjoyment of human rights. Please take into account, inter alia, the disproportionate effects on women and girls, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, persons living in poverty and others in vulnerable situations.**

Like all disasters, whether rapid or slow onset, climate-induced loss and damage is felt the most by groups experiencing the greatest marginalization. An intersectional lens on loss and damage recognizes that across sectors and regions, the most vulnerable and marginalized

¹ Plan International (2022) https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/10/Loss-Damage-Brief_Pages-2022-min.pdf

people and systems – such as low-income nations and communities, women, children and youth – are disproportionately affected by the impact of human-induced climate change².

Children and youth today will face the worst loss and damage of any generation to date, despite being the least responsible for its cause. Loss and damage caused by climate change is the greatest intergenerational injustice youth face today – especially girls in low-income countries and countries that are most affected where communities are experiencing the severest impacts of the climate crisis daily. The impacts of loss and damage from climate change are already being felt every day, with youth and children facing growing economic insecurity, inequality, poverty, hunger, lack of access to education and health services, threats to livelihoods, risks of gender-based violence and the loss of loved ones. These are some examples of indicators to monitor the impact of loss and damage:

- **Economic insecurity.** The costs of loss and damage will be passed on from one generation to the next. While the human costs of loss and damage for today's youth and children and future generations are incalculable, the estimated economic cost is staggering. By 2030, the financial cost of loss and damage for developing countries is estimated at bn \$290-580 billion (USD) annually³ and, by 2050 is estimated to reach to \$1 to 1.8 trillion (USD) annually⁴. These costs represent threats to economic stability and security, especially for the poorest communities affected by climate shocks. The climate crisis threatens to lead to a 30% decrease in Africa's GDP (gross domestic product) by 2050⁵. The Vulnerable (V20), a coalition of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, has lost an estimated \$525 billion over the past 20 years due to the negative impacts of climate change⁶.

- **Inequality.** Loss and damage threaten to increase inequality. Inequality is compounded by the fact that wealthy countries, home to 15 percent of the global population, have contributed an estimated 92 percent of historical greenhouse gas emissions and are responsible for 37 percent of current emissions⁷. Between 1990 and 2015, the richest one percent of the world's population were responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the poorest 50 percent, or 3.1 billion people⁸. While Africa has contributed only 3.8 percent to global greenhouse gas emissions, it is the continent most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and is already suffering severe loss and damage⁹. Countries that are highly exposed to climate-related hazards are also often the least prepared and the least resourced for undertaking climate action to respond to higher temperatures and increasing disasters. Approximately 3.6 billion people, more than half the world's population, live in areas characterized as being highly vulnerable to climate change hazards, driven by long-standing patterns of marginalization, colonialism and unstable and unsustainable socio-economic development. The IPCC acknowledges that today's "development challenges causing high vulnerability are influenced by historical and ongoing patterns of inequity such as colonialism, especially for many Indigenous Peoples and local communities¹⁰. Women and girls face unique barriers to sexual and reproductive health, education, safety and livelihoods due to

² UN, Youth and the SDGs, (2022)

³ IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, February 2022

⁴ Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Unpacking finance for Loss and Damage, November 2021

⁵ M. Burke, S. Hsiang, S. & E. Miguel, Global non-linear effect of temperature on economic production, Nature, 527, 235–239, 2015

⁶ Vulnerable 20 Group, Climate Vulnerable Economies Loss Report, June 2022

⁷ Historic emissions are from J. Hickel. Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: an equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary, The Lancet, Planetary Health, Vol. 4, Issue 9, e399–404, September 2020

⁸ Oxfam, Confronting carbon inequality, September 2021.

⁹ IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Summary for Policymakers Headline Statements, February 2022.

¹⁰ IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, Summary for policymakers, 2022

gender inequality. For them, climate impacts are heightened because in times of crisis exacerbated by the not-yet-recovered Covid-19 pandemic, harmful social and gender norms are exacerbated, leading to an increase in child, early and forced marriage, gender-based violence and unpaid care work as well as limitations in accessing school¹¹.

- **Poverty, livelihoods and food insecurity.** Climate-induced loss and damage affects poverty and livelihoods. Climate change will push an estimated additional 135 million people into poverty by 2030¹². The climate crisis is already rolling back decades of progress and putting the SDGs off track. Women and girls represent 43% of the agricultural workforce in lower-income countries, where temperatures are heating up faster, making climate change and agricultural development an urgent gender issue¹³. When livelihoods are threatened due to extreme-weather events, women and girls face increased income insecurity. They are increasingly more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because they are the majority of the world's poor and more dependent on the natural resources, which are at risk due to extreme-weather events¹⁴. As loss and damage impacts escalate, today's generation and future generations will face increased poverty.

- **Disaster and displacement.** The climate crisis, including the impacts of loss and damage, is driving displacement. Climate change and the resulting loss of land and access to resources could push more than 200 million people to leave their homes by 2050¹⁵. Extreme-weather events already cause more than 20 million people to move to other parts of their countries every year¹⁶. The gendered impacts of displacement are particularly severe for women and girls, who make up over 80 percent of people currently displaced by climate-related events¹⁷. During times of displacement and migration, women and girls are at particular risk of sexual and gender-based violence as well as child, early and forced marriage and frequently lack access to health services. Children on the move lack access to education and training opportunities, protection mechanisms and the safety of their traditional communities.

- **Education and health.** There are multiple direct and indirect costs to education due to loss and damage. Damage to school buildings and injury of students and teachers can result in young people missing education days, with girls less likely to return to school. If current trends continue, by 2025 climate change will be a contributing factor in preventing at least 12.5 million girls from completing their education each year¹⁸. Girls' lack of access to education compounds their vulnerability as they have limited information about climate change, limited knowledge about what to do in a disaster and limited access to timely and life-saving early warning systems. Every dollar spent on girls' rights and education would generate a \$2.80 return – equivalent to billions of dollars in additional GDP¹⁹. Dropping out of school affects their lifetime earnings and the local, national and global economies²⁰. Reducing school interruption and educating girls means more working women with the potential to add up to

¹¹ Plan International, Effects of climate change on girls' rights

¹² World Bank, Global Action Urgently Needed to Halt Historic Threats to Poverty Reduction, October 2020

¹³ IPCC, Special Report on Climate Change and Land: Chapter 5, Food security, August 8, 2019

¹⁴ Rachel Yavinsky, Women more vulnerable to climate change, Population Research Bureau, December 2022.

¹⁵ World Bank, Climate Change Could Force 216 Million People to Migrate Within Their Own Countries by 2050, September 2021.

¹⁶ UNHCR, Climate change and disaster displacement, accessed August 8, 2022

¹⁷ UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Climate change exacerbates violence against women and girls, July 2022

¹⁸ Malala Fund, A greener, fairer future: Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education, September 24, 2021.

¹⁹ Plan International and Citi, The Case for Holistic Investment in Girls, October 2020.

²⁰ Wodon, Quentin; Montenegro, Claudio; Nguyen, Hoa; Onagoruwa, Adenike. 2018. Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls. The Cost of Not Educating Girls Notes Series. World Bank, 2018

\$12 trillion (USD) to global growth²¹. Girls' education is strongly linked with impactful climate action. Countries that have focused on girls' education have suffered far fewer losses from droughts and floods than countries with lower levels of girls' education. For every additional year of schooling a girl receives on average, her country's resilience to climate disasters can be expected to improve by 3.2 points on the ND-GAIN Index, which measures country-level vulnerability to climate change alongside readiness to improve resilience²².

- **Child marriage and gender violence.** Climate shocks and stresses routinely place girls, especially during adolescence, at increased risk of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, resulting in trauma and unplanned pregnancies, human trafficking and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage²³. They also cause disruption in access to sexual and reproductive health, family-planning services and maternal and postnatal care²⁴. Combined, these factors severely undermine their rights and abilities to build resilience and recover from climate change loss and damage disasters.

3. Please describe any specific measures, including public policies, legislation, practices, strategies, or institutional arrangements that your Government has undertaken or plans to undertake at a national, sectoral or sub-national level, in compliance with applicable international human rights law, to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, including equity-based approaches and solutions. Please also identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability, including means of implementation.

Plan International's research²⁵ on Climate Change and Education in Zambia and Zimbabwe found some local empowering responses to loss and damage.

In Zambia, the adaptation strategies that emerged include building tanks to capture and store water in Chipembi and building houses away from shores in Luapula. The research participants also reported growing of drought resistant crops such as cassava and sweet potato in Luapula and preserving or drying food such as vegetables, cassava and cow peas. Farming methods that adjust to the changing climate were reported as one of the strategies in Mambilima and in Luapula planting crops on higher ground was noted as an adaptation measure. Other girls in Chikomeni and Lupani spoke about tree planting in areas that were already affected by deforestation. In areas affected by drought, communities are also being taught water harvesting methods. Another adaptation method shared was around economic livelihoods. In Chipembi learning other skills like tailoring and hairdressing was reported as an ongoing initiative. Girls in Temfe and Kasoma shared their experiences with chicken rearing as a source of a viable livelihood.

In Chiredzi, Zimbabwe, the government is planning to convert the area around Chilonga into a green belt by planting lucerne grass. However, there have, however, been widespread complaints from the Chilonga community that such a project will render over 12,000 families landless, adding an extra layer of vulnerability to communities already impoverished by climate change. In both Chiredzi and Tsholotsho, farmers grow drought resistant crops. However,

²¹ Malala Fund, A greener, fairer future: Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education, September 24, 2021

²² Brookings Institute, Three ways to link girls' education actors to climate action, 2020. See also: University of Notre Dame, ND-GAIN Country Index.

²³ Plan International, Effects of climate change on girls' rights..

²⁴ Linda C. Giudice, Erlidia F. Llamas-Clark, Nathaniel DeNicola, Santosh Pandipati, and Marya G. Zlatnik, Climate change, women's health, and the role of obstetricians and gynecologists in leadership, Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics, October 25, 2021.

²⁵ Feminist participatory action research: Climate Change and education in Zambia and Zimbabwe. <https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/03/Voices-from-Zim-and-Zam-Report-Sep2021.pdf>

these small grains are only sufficient for subsistence purposes and in most cases do not provide sufficient income for expenses such as school fees. In Chiredzi, farmers get some income from engaging in contract farming, growing sorghum for Delta Beverages, a beer and soft drink manufacturing company. Government has also laid down plans to construct sub-basins such as dams for surface water supply. Communities in both Chiredzi and Chilonga are resorting to livestock farming instead of growing crops. The Lowveld is a hub for livestock which can thrive under the harsh climatic conditions. Communities are also mobilising to reforest and replace trees that have been cut down by people who do brick moulding. The Environmental Management Agency (EMA), a regulatory body set up by government to enforce environment management laws, has also introduced a strict penalty system for people who cut down trees.

4. Please identify and share examples of promising practices and critical challenges in the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage, including examples that highlight multilateral cooperation and approaches, at global and regional levels, including equity-based approaches and solutions.

Plan International facilitated stakeholder mapping with the participants in the aforementioned research²⁶ and noted that there are few organisations working with the communities on adapting and mitigating against climate change. One of the few is Plan International who in response to the effects of climate change have been drilling boreholes so that the girls do not walk long distances to fetch water. They have also been providing dignity kits. These are kits that have sanitary pads, soaps, and other materials that young women need to enhance their menstrual hygiene, especially in cases of limited access to clean water which is one of the impacts of climate change. Other CSOs include Agricultural Cooperative, supporting struggling families, and the Kasongo Chomba Foundation which is focused on promoting entrepreneurship as a response to climate induced economic shocks.

The study noted that there are some organisations responding to the climate change crises that the communities find themselves in and these include Agritex who are assisting in the farming of drought resistance crops as well as access to markets. Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) also has a project for girls that is supporting school fees, uniforms, and sanitary pads. Through the village health workers, the Ministry of Health is supporting testing for malaria which is one of the conditions that has got worse because of changes in the climate.

However, these measures are a response to loss and damage and not a proactive solution that builds resilience and fights the causes of loss and damage.

5. Please provide specific recommendations, if possible, on how to address the critical challenges that have been identified, including actions to be taken at country, regional, and global levels, as well as by different groups of stakeholders, Governments, development agencies, financing institutions, and others.

Plan International supports the growing efforts to more meaningfully include and address children's needs and rights in UNFCCC processes and decisions. At the same time, Plan International advocates for all decisions to also consider the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on girls due to discriminatory social norms, and take action to advance both intergenerational and gender justice, in support of climate justice. The following

²⁶ *Ibid.*

recommendations²⁷ reflect Plan International's approach in upholding child rights, advancing equality for girls and supporting meaningful child and youth engagement. These recommendations are further developed in other advocacy materials cited in the submission²⁸.

- a. Ensure climate policies include actions to uphold children's rights, recognising the disproportionate impact on girls.
- b. Ensure adaptation and resilience efforts are child-centred, gender responsive and locally-led.
- c. Finance Loss and Damage taking into account gender and intergenerational equity.
- d. Increase climate finance that is gender responsive and accessible to girls and young women.
- e. Support girls' leadership in climate action, including through inclusive education.

6. Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action and justice that promotes the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage

Plan International refers too to its submission in response to the Special Rapporteur call for inputs on women, girls and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment²⁹.

²⁷ Plan International (2022): COP27 Policy and Advocacy Brief https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/11/External_Plan-Internationals-COP27-Policy-and-Advocacy-Brief_Short_FINAL.pdf

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Plan International (2022)