actionaid

ActionAid Association (India)

Decoding COP

An Activist's Handbook

COP30 Edition

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Contents

What is This Handbook On

This handbook is an introduction to the Conference of the Parties (COP) — the world's most important gathering on climate change. Each year, governments, corporations, and civil society come together at COP to decide how humanity will respond to the climate crisis. But behind the formal speeches and technical negotiations lie deeper struggles — between rich and poor nations, between fossil fuel interests and communities fighting to survive, between promises made and actions delayed.

For climate activists, understanding COP is essential. It is both a space of challenge and opportunity — where the voices of farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, youth, and workers must rise above the noise of greenwashing and political compromise. The outcomes of these meetings shape not only global climate policy but also the daily lives and futures of people everywhere.

This handbook invites activists to look beyond the jargon, to understand how power operates within COP, and to find ways to reclaim that space for climate justice — ensuring that the decisions taken in negotiation halls truly serve people and the planet, not profit and power.

Who is this This Handbook For

Here's a lightly edited version of your text — all original meaning and tone retained, with only minor corrections for grammar, consistency, and flow:

This handbook is written for anyone who wants to understand climate negotiations from a justice perspective and connect global climate politics to local realities. Specifically, it's designed for:

- **Grassroots activists and community organizers** working on climate justice, environmental rights, or social movements who want to understand what happens at COP and how it affects their campaigns on the ground.
- **Indigenous Peoples' representatives and leaders** defending territorial rights, forests, and traditional knowledge, who need to know how decisions about carbon markets, adaptation finance, or just transitions could impact their communities.

- **Labour union members and workers** in fossil fuel industries, agriculture, or informal sectors facing climate-driven economic shifts, who want to ensure that climate action includes protections for livelihoods and decent work.
- **Women's rights advocates and feminist organizers** pushing for gender-responsive climate policies and ensuring women's voices — especially from frontline communities — are heard in climate decision-making.
- **Youth climate activists** demanding intergenerational justice and accountability from leaders, whether organizing school strikes, attending COPs, or building local resilience projects.
- **Farmers, fishers, and forest-dependent communities** experiencing climate impacts firsthand — droughts, floods, changing seasons, disappearing fish stocks, and more — who want to understand the policies and finance mechanisms that could support or threaten their ways of life.
- **Civil society networks in the Asia-Pacific region** advocating on climate finance, loss and damage, adaptation, or human rights, who need accessible summaries of complex negotiations to inform advocacy strategies.
- **Students, journalists, and concerned citizens** who want to cut through the jargon and understand what's really at stake at COP30 — not just what governments promise, but what it means for people and the planet.

You don't need to be a climate policy expert to use this handbook.

If you care about climate justice — the idea that those who contributed least to the crisis shouldn't bear the heaviest burdens, and that solutions must be fair, inclusive, and respect human rights — this is for you.

How is This Handbook Organized

Chapter 1 is on COP Basics: Key facts about the UN climate framework, what happens at COP meetings, who's who in the process, and a glossary of common terms. Start here if you're new to climate negotiations.

Chapter 2 is on Big Topics: An overview of major climate justice issues like finance, loss and damage, adaptation, fossil fuels, carbon markets, food, forests, health, heat etc. Each topic includes real-life examples from Asia-Pacific and ends with a tool or checklist for action.

Chapter 3 is on the COP30 Agenda: A closer look at what's on the table for COP30 in 2025 including NDCs, the New Finance Goal (NCQG), the Loss & Damage Fund, the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), Article 6 (carbon markets), and Just Transition. We explain these buzzwords and why they matter to local communities.

Annexure provides Quick reference to a Glossary of terms,

Chapter 1

COP Basics

What is UNFCCC?

UNFCCC stands for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a global treaty adopted in 1992 to tackle climate change. Almost every country on Earth has signed on. The treaty's goal is to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. In simple terms, it's an international agreement that says, "Let's all work together to stop climate change from getting out of control."

- The UNFCCC set up basic principles. One key principle is "common but differentiated responsibilities", which means all countries should act on climate change, but richer, industrialized countries who caused most of the problem with decades of emissions should do more and help others. Poorer nations have contributed little to climate change, so the treaty recognizes they need support both on financial and technological to address it.
- The UNFCCC itself didn't have binding limits or big actions at first, it was a framework for countries to negotiate specific agreements later. Think of it as the foundation of a house, with later deals building the walls and roof. Two major agreements under the UNFCCC are the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, focusing on reducing emissions from developed countries and the Paris Agreement in 2015, where all countries pledge climate actions.

In short, the UNFCCC is the international family meeting where everyone agreed 'climate change is real, and we must cooperate.' It created the structure for ongoing climate talks and action.

What is COP?

COP stands for 'Conference of the Parties'. It's basically the annual climate summit of the UNFCCC. Every year, leaders and delegates from nearly every country on Earth come together at a COP to discuss and decide how to tackle climate change. If the UNFCCC is the global climate treaty, the COP is the meeting where that treaty is put into action, reviewed, and advanced.

Key facts about COPs:

- **Annual Meetings:** The COP takes place once a year or occasionally twice if a special session is called. Each COP is numbered. For example, COP30 is the 30th Conference since these meetings started in the first was COP1 in 1995. In 2025, COP30 will meet November 10–21, 2025 in Belém, Brazil.
- **Who Attends:** Delegations from almost 200 countries governments attend, plus thousands of observers including NGOs, scientific institutions, indigenous peoples' groups, youth networks, women's organizations, labor unions, and businesses. It's like a huge climate parliament. Negotiators represent their governments who are the 'Parties' to the treaty, but civil society groups also show up to propose, advocate, protest, and share their stories on what working and what is not.
- **What Do They Do:** At COP, countries negotiate global goals and rules for climate action. They make decisions by consensus. This is where the big international deals are struck, e.g. the Paris Agreement was agreed at COP21. Countries also present their plans like targets to cut emissions, called NDCs, and report progress. There are often intense debates that can run all night in the final days as countries bargain over wording and commitments.
- **Changing Venue:** Each year a different nation hosts the COP, rotating among regions. This emphasizes that climate change is a global problem requiring collaboration everywhere. COP30 in Brazil will be notable as a COP in the Amazon region, highlighting rainforests and indigenous peoples. Last year's COP29 was in Baku, Azerbaijan, and COP28 was in Dubai, UAE.
- **Why It's Important:** COPs are where climate promises get turned into concrete steps. They are the pivotal platform for international climate negotiations. Decisions made at COP trickle down into national policies and funding. Also, COPs draw media and public attention to the climate crisis, which can pressure leaders to act. If you hear about global climate news each year like "nations agree to limit warming to 1.5°C" or "countries create fund for climate damages", it's usually coming out of a COP meeting.

In short, a COP is where the world meets to tackle climate change, set goals, reviewing progress, and trying to increase ambition. It's far from perfect, but it's a key space for global climate governance.

Who's Who in the Climate Process?

The climate negotiations involve a lot of different players. Here's a quick who's who:

- **Parties:** In UN language, Parties are the countries that have ratified the UNFCCC. They are the decision-makers at COP. Each Party sends negotiators, diplomats, and climate experts to hammer out texts. Often environment ministers or even heads of state come for high-level segments. The groups listed below forms the broad community of climate governance. The formal decisions are made by the countries as Parties, but pressure and ideas from other stakeholders can shape those decisions. Grassroots activists like you usually engage via civil society networks for instance, by joining social movement campaigns for climate finance or an indigenous delegation highlighting land rights. Over time, climate negotiations have slowly opened more space for these voices, recognizing that solving climate change requires all of society.

Within the parties, there are groupings:

- **Developed vs Developing Countries:** The UNFCCC originally labeled some as 'Annex I' of industrialized nations and others as 'Non-Annex I' of mostly developing countries. Today the lines blur as some developing countries have grown, but generally, negotiations still have a North-South dynamic with developing nations pushing the rich to do more and provide support.
- **G77 + China:** A coalition of over 130 developing countries that often negotiates as a bloc to amplify their voice includes Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and small island nations. For instance, they jointly demand more climate finance and equity. Within the G77 are subgroups like:
- **Least Developed Countries (LDCs):** 46 of the poorest nations, very vulnerable to climate impacts, low capacity.
- **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS):** low-lying island nations from the Pacific, Caribbean, etc. that face sea level rise and storm threats; they champion keeping warming below 1.5°C and getting loss & damage support.
- **African Group and Arab Group:** regional groupings with their own priorities.
- **BASIC:** Brazil, South Africa, India, China, large emerging economies who often coordinate on issues like finance and equity.
- **BRICS+:** BRICS+ is now an expanded group of major developing and emerging economies including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and new members like Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE who are increasingly coordinating on climate finance, equity, and technology priorities ahead of COP30.

- **Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF):** an informal group of countries most vulnerable to climate change across regions, e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Maldives. They push for ambitious action and justice.
- Developed country groups: e.g. the European Union negotiates as a bloc of 27 countries, the Umbrella Group which includes the U.S., Canada, Russia, Japan, Australia, etc. often coordinates positions, and Environmental Integrity Group (EIG) like Switzerland, South Korea, Mexico.
- COP Presidency: Each COP is hosted by a country that holds the COP Presidency. They play an important role in steering discussions, proposing compromise texts, and showcasing certain themes. For example, COP30's president will be Brazil which may highlight forests and indigenous rights. The Presidency often sets the tone: e.g. Fiji presided over COP23 and brought Pacific climate resilience to the forefront.
- UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC Secretariat): A UN office based in Bonn, Germany that supports the negotiations organizing meetings, providing technical expertise, collecting country reports, etc. Think of them as the administrators of the climate convention.

Non- Party Participants

There are non-party participants who don't directly negotiate but influence the process:

- Environmental NGOs (ENGOs): Groups like Climate Action, ActionAid, 350.org, Greenpeace, WWF, etc. They lobby for strong climate action and provide needful analysis.
- Indigenous Peoples Organizations (IPOs): Representatives of Indigenous communities worldwide. They have a formal caucus in the talks. Indigenous voices have become more prominent, arguing for rights like land rights, Free Prior Informed Consent and recognition that they are guardians of forests and traditional knowledge.
- Youth Movements: Young people, including groups like YOUNGO official youth constituency and movements like Fridays for Future, are very vocal. They remind leaders of intergenerational justice that youth will live with the consequences of today's decisions. Youth have staged massive marches at COPs and even sit in some delegations as advisors.
- Women and Gender Groups: There's a constituency focusing on gender equality in climate action, ensuring women's voices are heard and policies

are gender responsive. Women from grassroots communities often give powerful testimonies e.g. a woman farmer explaining how drought affects her and why women need to be in solution-making.

- Labor Unions: They bring the perspective of workers and the need for a 'just transition' protecting jobs and livelihoods as we shift to a green economy. The trade union group fights for decent work and social justice in climate policies.
- Local Governments and Cities: Mayors and regional officials attend to push for urban climate action and get support for city-level initiatives.
- Businesses and Investors: From renewable energy companies to fossil fuel lobbyists, many industry representatives show up. There is controversy when big polluters like oil companies have a large presence, observers warn they can water down ambition. At the same time, some progressive businesses come to showcase green solutions or support strong agreements like companies wanting clear carbon markets or finance mechanisms.
- Scientists and Academics: The Scientists are represented mainly via the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC, which isn't part of negotiations but whose assessment reports e.g. warning that 1.5°C warming limit is critical hugely influence the talks. Scientists often hold side events at COPs to present latest findings. You may also hear about the World Meteorological Organization WMO and UN Environment Programme UNEP providing input on climate data and policy.

Chapter 2

Big Topics in Climate Justice

In this chapter, we break down some major climate change topics that are especially relevant to climate justice and the Asia-Pacific region. For each topic, we'll explain the issue in simple terms, highlight real-life examples, and note what's being debated internationally. Crucially, we'll connect it back to why it matters for grassroots communities. At the end of each topic, look for Practical steps or questions to ask, these are meant to help you act or evaluate situations on the ground.

Climate Finance, Paying for Climate Action and Justice

One of the biggest questions in climate talks is 'Who pays for all this?', for cutting emissions, shifting to renewable energy and for protecting people from worsening floods, droughts, and storms. Climate finance refers to money that supports climate action. In a justice context, it especially means funds for developing countries in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America to implement climate solutions, since wealthy nations have more responsibility and resources.

The $100 Billion Promise (and beyond): Back in 2009, developed countries promised to mobilize $100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing nations with climate mitigation and adaptation. However, they fell short, contributions have hung around $80 billion or so and counting methods are disputed. This has caused frustration and an erosion of trust. 'Why should poor countries ramp up climate action if rich countries don't deliver promised support?'.

Now, the world is discussing a 'New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)' for climate finance to start in 2025. This is essentially a new target beyond $100 Billion. At COP29 in 2024 in Azerbaijan, countries finally agreed on a new finance goal of $300 billion per year by 2035. They also called for mobilizing an additional $1 trillion per year from all sources of public, private, etc. by 2035. That sounds

huge, but experts say even $1.3 trillion per year may be less than what is needed to truly address climate change. For instance, just adapting to climate impacts could cost developing countries 160 to 340 billion $ a year by 2030. So, finance is tight relative to needs. Many developing countries argued that $300 Billion by 2035 is 'far too low' and too late, given the climate emergency.

Types of Finance: Climate finance can come as grants, loans, or investments. It can flow through multilateral funds like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or via bilateral aid, etc. There is also a push for innovative sources, for example, taxing international shipping and aviation emissions to raise climate money, or special drawing rights from the IMF. Activists often call for 'climate reparations', or rich countries and polluting industries providing compensation for the climate damage their emissions caused, rooted in centuries of colonialism where wealthy nations extracted resources, built industrial wealth, and created the fossil fuel systems now threatening the very countries they once colonized.

Why It Matters Locally: Climate projects whether installing solar panels in a village, training farmers in climate-smart techniques, or building cyclone shelters, all need funding. Many developing nations have climate plans that declare, we will do 'some' with our own resources and do even more if we get international support'. If promised funds don't arrive, it could mean a seawall never gets built or a reforestation program stall. Also, when climate finance is done right, it can empower communities, e.g. a grant to a coastal town to restore mangroves, which buffers storms and provides fish nursery grounds, or money to an indigenous community to map and secure their forest land combining emissions reductions with livelihood benefits.

Justice Issues: The flow of climate finance so far has been inequitable. A large chunk has gone to middle-income countries for mitigation like large renewable energy projects, and too little to the poorest countries or to adaptation projects that directly help vulnerable communities. For example, small islands and LDCs combined receive only a small share of global climate finance, despite high needs. Also, much finance is in the form of loans. Countries like Fiji or Bangladesh ask, 'why should we incur debt to pay for problems caused by rich nations' pollution?' There are also concerns to ensure inclusive use of funds, are women, indigenous people, and local communities involved in deciding how climate funds are spent in their area? Are the projects respecting rights and benefiting those most at risk?

Asia-Pacific Examples:

- **Bangladesh:** It is a leader in adaptation but needs external support too. Bangladesh has estimated it needs $12.5 billion annually, approximately 3% of its GDP for its climate actions. While it has received international climate funds, Bangladesh still largely relies on its own budget allocation approximately $3.34 billion from its own resources in FY 2023-24. Meanwhile, climate-linked disasters are costly and cost Bangladesh approximately $3 billion annually. In 2022, Bangladesh was hit by catastrophic monsoon floods in June affecting the northeastern region, and by August 2022, one-third of the country was underwater following heavy rainfall. Such events highlight the need for much more funding for flood defenses, early warning systems, and recovery.
- **Pacific Islands:** Many small Pacific nations (like Tuvalu, Kiribati) have tiny economies and almost no capacity to fund big climate projects themselves. They depend on international finance for basics like sea walls, freshwater security, and relocating communities from eroding shores. At the same time, accessing these funds can be arduous (lots of paperwork and donor requirements). Pacific activists often highlight the absurdity that they must beg for funds to survive while they did little to cause the crisis. They advocate direct access to finance for communities and local governments.
- **India and Southeast Asia:** A lot of climate finance in Asia has gone to larger emerging economies like India, Indonesia, or Vietnam in the form of loans or investments for renewable energy, public transit, etc. This can indeed bring clean energy to millions. But activists are watching to ensure projects respect local rights. For instance, a big solar park or hydro dam funded as 'climate finance' shouldn't displace villages without proper consent or compensation.

In climate negotiations, developing countries constantly push "show us the money." It's not greed; it's about fairness and feasibility. They argue that everyone's climate goals depend on providing resources to those who need it. At COPs, you'll hear a lot of debates on climate finance numbers and rules for transparency, who contributes, etc. For grassroots movements, the key is to demand 'adequate, accessible, and accountable funding' so that climate solutions reach the people on the ground who need them most.

Checklist for Climate Finance to Holding Funders Accountable. (Use this checklist to evaluate climate finance projects or promises in your community or country.)

›› Is the funding a Grant or a Loan?

Grants are ideal for vulnerable communities where no repayment is needed. If it's a loan, will it put us in debt? Demand clarity on terms.

›› Who Contributes?

Are wealthy countries paying their fair share? For example, is your government's climate adaptation plan waiting on funds a rich country promised? You can pressure donors to deliver.

›› Where Is It Going?

Check if funds are reaching the local level. Are they building real resilience e.g. new wells, raised homes, community training, or stuck in bureaucracy? Advocate for a say in how money is used locally.

›› Community Involvement:

Are local stakeholders like women's groups, indigenous leaders, farmers, youth are involved in planning the project? If an international agency funds a project in your area, insist on community meetings and input. It's your right.

›› Social and Environmental Safeguards:

Does the project funded protect rights and livelihoods? Watch for red flags like land grabs, forced evictions, environmental harm. Good climate finance should have safeguards e.g. require Free, Prior, and Informed Consent FPIC for indigenous lands, assess impacts on communities.

›› Transparency:

Is it clear how much money is provided and what is it spent on? If not, push for public reporting. It's hard to hold anyone accountable in a fog of vague promises.

Using this checklist, community leaders can monitor climate finance and ensure it truly serves climate justice. Remember: climate finance isn't charity; it's part of the climate justice equation, a fair share from those who caused the problem to those suffering its effects.

Loss and Damage, Dealing with Climate Destruction That We Can't Adapt To

Around the world, people are experiencing climate impacts that are devastating, some are recoverable, many not. Think of a village washed away by a super typhoon, or farmland turned to desert after years of drought, or an island community forced to relocate because of rising seas, or of workers losing work due to recurrent heat waves and droughts. These are cases of Loss and Damage L&D. In climate change 'loss and damage' refers to harms from climate change beyond what one can adapt to or prevent. It includes sudden disasters like floods, cyclones, or wildfires, and slow-onset crises like sea-level rise, desertification, glacier melt that lead to loss of lives, loss of livelihoods, cultural loss, damage to homes, ecosystems, etc.

While 'adaptation' is about preparing and coping, loss and damage' is about the suffering that still happens when climate impacts exceed the limits of adaptation. It has a glaring injustice dimension that 'those most vulnerable, the poorest and historically lowest emitters' are facing the worst losses.

Climate Justice and Loss and Damage: Developing countries have for decades insisted that loss and damage (L&D) is a third pillar of climate action besides mitigation and adaptation. It is essentially 'When climate disasters strike, we need support to recover, and those who caused more of the problem should contribute to that support'. This used to be a restricted topic because rich countries feared it sounded like liability or reparations. But the moral argument grew stronger as impacts intensified and were increasingly linked to climate change.

For perspective, The G20 countries are the biggest economies have emitted about 75% of global greenhouse gases, yet vulnerable developing countries suffer the most from climate catastrophes. For example, Pakistan's monstrous floods in 2022, a climate-intensified monsoon and glacial melt disaster killed over 1,700 people, affected 33 million, and caused an estimated $30 billion in economic losses. Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global emissions. That $30B damage is an enormous burden on a developing country like Pakistan budget. It's a textbook case of loss and damage, and it fueled the demand, 'Who will pay for this?'

Another example, the Philippines is struck by powerful typhoons regularly. In 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), one of the strongest storms ever recorded

which killed over 6,300 people and left 4 million homeless. The damage exceeded $13 billion. No amount of 'adapting' could have fully prevented such destruction. Filipino climate advocates became leading voices on L&D, memorably assertion at COP19 in 2013 for the world to take responsibility. In 2022, the Philippines Commission on Human Rights even issued a report linking carbon major companies to human rights harms from climate change, a step toward holding polluters accountable.

The New Loss & Damage Fund: A breakthrough came at COP27 in 2022 in Egypt. After intense pressure from developing countries and activists, countries agreed to establish a Loss and Damage Fund, a dedicated fund to assist vulnerable nations in recovering from climate disasters. This was hailed as a victory for climate justice advocates who had fought for it for decades. However, the battle then moved to making it real and deciding who manages the fund, who pays in, who can draw from it, and for what. A transitional committee of 24 countries worked through 2023 on these details.

Key points under debate:

Who pays?

Traditionally climate finance is expected from developed nations. But some argue major emerging economies like China should also contribute, and even that big oil companies or airlines could be taxed to feed the fund. Activists have called for 'Polluter Pays' principles, e.g. windfall tax on fossil fuel profits to go into L&D support.

Who benefits?

The fund is 'Particularly for nations most Vulnerable', meaning least developed countries, small islands, maybe others with high climate risk. There is debate if middle-income countries hit by disasters like Pakistan can also access it. Developing countries want it inclusive of all vulnerable, not too narrow list.

What for?

Loss and damage can include rebuilding infrastructure after a cyclone, but also non-economic losses like culture though those are harder to compensate. At minimum, it will likely fund disaster response and recovery and possibly support communities facing permanent losses like relocations. There is even talk of slow onset events support, for example helping a community eventually evacuate a key island that becomes uninhabitable.

New money?

A critical demand is that L&D fund money should be new and additional, not just relabeled existing aid. It is about compensation, not charity. Right now, there is worry the fund might start empty or rely on voluntary contributions. As of 2025 in COP30, we expect the funds to be operational or nearly there. Some countries have already pledged initial contributions but much more is needed.

Why It Matters Locally?

If you live in a climate-vulnerable area, the concept of loss and damage is unfortunately familiar to you. Your community may have experienced a disaster that you suspect was made worse by climate change, for example, record-breaking rains, super typhoons, unprecedented wildfire, their recovery is often long and hard for the affected community. International L&D funding could mean more relief and reconstruction aid, faster and more fairly distributed. It could help rebuild homes, schools, clinics, or provide livelihood support in cash grants, new fishing boats, seeds etc., after such events.

For slow, creeping crises, like your village is slowly being claimed by the sea. Adapting things like building seawalls or elevating homes might work for a while, but eventually, retreat might be the only option. L&D funds could one day help resettlement programs or preserve cultural heritage in such cases. Importantly, loss & damage is also about the intangible losses of life, a way of life, loss of biodiversity. Money can't truly compensate for these but acknowledging them is part of healing and justice. For example, when a Pacific Islander loses their ancestral land to the ocean, no amount of cash replaces it, but financial support for a dignified relocation plus global efforts to halt further warming are part of climate justice.

Asia-Pacific Frontlines:

- Low-lying **Bangladesh** faces both rapid and slow disasters, in 2022, catastrophic flash floods in Sylhet region affected over 7.2 million people and displaced approximately 482,000 from their homes, claiming at least 55 lives. The country also deals with salinity creeping into rice fields as seas rise, with about 30% of cultivable land in coastal areas now affected by salinity intrusion. Bangladesh has pioneering adaptation programs, including salt-tolerant rice varieties and innovative farming techniques, but when extreme floods hit, they still cause massive loss of crops, homes, and incomes

that plunge people into poverty. As a prominent leader in global climate advocacy, Bangladesh has chaired both the Climate Vulnerable Forum and the Vulnerable 20 (V20) finance ministers' group, consistently reminding the world that climate-vulnerable countries bear crushing costs in lives and livelihoods for emissions they did not create.

- The **Pacific Islands** where the phrase 'Existential Threat' is not exaggeration. Sea level is projected to rise at least 15 cm (6 inches) in the next 30 years in places like Tuvalu, Kiribati. That may sound small, but in flat islands it means shoreline retreat, freshwater contamination, and eventually uninhabitability. Pacific leaders have been raising 'our very survival is at stake'. They argue that loss and damage is about the right to continue to exist as peoples and nations.
- In the **Himalayan region,** melting glaciers and erratic rainfall driven by climate change are causing frequent flash floods and glacial lake outbursts, striking villages with little warning. The 2013 Uttarakhand disaster killed nearly 6,000 people, and in 2025, floods across Uttarkashi, Nepal's Rasuwa, and Pakistan's northern valleys displaced over a million and killed hundreds. Scientists warn that such glacier-origin floods, once rare, now occur several times each year due to rapid warming. Unregulated development on fragile slopes and floodplains has magnified their impact, turning natural events into catastrophes. As these mountain communities contribute negligibly to global emissions, growing calls frame reconstruction funds and fair compensation as a matter of climate justice, not mere disaster relief.

Negotiating 'how to deliver on loss & damage' is complex, but the bottom line for grassroots movements, 'No one should be left to fend for themselves after climate disasters that they didn't cause'. International solidarity through funds, technology, and knowledge exchange is a must.

Post-Disaster 'Loss & Damage' Action Checklist (After a climate-related disaster, communities can use these steps to seek the support and justice they deserve.)

›› **Document the Impact:**

Gather evidence of what was lost due to the event, deaths, injuries, number of homes destroyed, hectares of crops lost, etc. Personal stories and photos, videos can strengthen the case that 'this is degree of climate loss and damage.'

- **Identify Assistance Gaps:**

What needs are not met by current relief? Food? Shelter? Funds to rebuild? Note whether government or aid agencies haven't covered certain losses like no compensation for ruined fishing gear or lost livestock etc.

- **Demand Support:**

Approach your government representatives to tap any climate or disaster funds. Many countries have domestic climate adaptation funds or disaster contingency funds. Use the term "loss and damage" to frame it, e.g. 'We need support for loss & damage from the flood; this is climate justice.' If your country is getting climate finance, ask that some be directed to your community's recovery.

- **Connect with Networks:** Link up with national or regional networks focused on climate justice. They can amplify your call, put you in touch with media, or advise on appealing to international donors. For example, the Loss and Damage Youth Coalition has chapters in several countries and can help voice youth demands.
- **International Solidarity:** If the losses are huge (e.g. an island community needing relocation), consider reaching out to international channels: write an open letter to donor countries' embassies, speak at COP via NGO delegations, or use social media with hashtags like #LossAndDamage to get global attention. The more visible your plight, the more likely funds can be mobilized.
- **Legal Avenues:** In some cases, communities explore legal action – either suing governments for inadequate climate action or even companies for climate harm. This is complex but be aware it's happening e.g. a Peruvian farmer suing a German coal company for glacier melt damage. Documenting losses carefully can be the first step if such opportunities arise with legal support.
- **Take Care of Each Other:** Loss & damage isn't only about money, it's about people and culture. Organize community gatherings to mourn what's lost and discuss how to preserve traditions and support each other emotionally. A united community is better equipped to assert its rights and decide its future, whether rebuilding or relocating.

This checklist can't magically get the L&D Fund to write a cheque, but it helps ground the concept of climate justice in practical advocacy after a disaster.

Remember: you are not alone, and the principle of loss and damage means the world owes assistance to communities like yours. Keep pushing that moral claim.

Adaptation, Building Resilience to the Changing Climate

No matter how much we cut emissions, climate change is here and it's hitting hard. Adaptation is how we adjust our lives, livelihoods, and landscapes to withstand the impacts of climate change. It's about reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience. In everyday terms, it's preparing for heavier storms by improving drainage, planting drought-tolerant crops as rain becomes erratic, raising homes on columns in flood-prone areas, or setting up early warning systems for cyclones and heatwaves.

Adaptation can be the difference between life and death, between recovery and ruin for communities on the frontline, Asia-Pacific, with its dense populations and climate-exposed geographies, deltas, small islands, vast coastlines, arid plains, has a huge stake in effective adaptation.

Key Adaptation Actions, takes many forms depending on the context:

- **Infrastructure:** e.g. building flood embankments, sea walls, cyclone shelters, elevating roads and bridges, improving urban drainage to prevent waterlogging, designing buildings that stay cooler in heat, cool roofs, better ventilation.
- **Agriculture:** shifting planting calendars, switching to resilient crop varieties, improving irrigation or water storage for droughts, diversifying crops to spread risk, using traditional seeds that can survive floods. Also, protecting livestock with better shelters or fodder storage for lean times.
- **Ecosystem-based Adaptation:** leveraging nature's own defenses, like restoring mangrove forests along coasts, planting trees on slopes to prevent landslides, rejuvenating wetlands to absorb floodwaters.
- **Community Preparedness:** developing early warning systems and evacuation plans for disasters. For instance, training community volunteers who can warn neighbors when a cyclone is coming with flags, megaphones, WhatsApp alerts etc., identifying safe high ground or shelters. Also, public health measures like cooling centers during heatwaves or mosquito control as disease patterns shift.

- **Policy & Planning:** governments integrating climate risks into everything like city planning for prohibiting any build on future floodplains, building codes to ensure structures can withstand stronger winds, water management plan for lower glacier melt or rainfall changes, etc. Locally led adaptation plans where communities map their risks and propose solutions are increasingly promoted.

Why Adaptation is Vital for the Global South?

Many developing countries are already facing severe impacts even at increase of 1°C of warming. They can't wait for the world to mitigate; they must adapt now to survive. Yet, adaptation has historically gotten less focus and less funding than mitigation. For a long time, big emitters talked more about cutting carbon as mitigation focus and treated adaptation as a local issue. That's changing, especially post-Paris Agreement, which put adaptation on more equal footing. International adaptation finance flows are 5–10 times below estimated needs. The UN says developing countries might need over $300 billion per year by 2030 for adaptation, but current support is far short. This means communities often face climate threats with insufficient resources.

Examples of Adaptation:

- **Bangladesh's Cyclone Preparedness,** Bangladesh is often cited as an adaptation success story. They faced horrific cyclone casualties in the 1970s where hundreds of thousands died. Through investments in early warning, coastal shelters, and community drills, they slashed death tolls dramatically. As noted, cyclone-related deaths have reduced 100-fold since 1970. Cyclone Sidr in 2007, similar in strength to a 1970 cyclone, killed around 3,500 people, tragic but far less than the 300,000 in 1970. This shows adaptation saves lives. Bangladesh continues raising embankments, building resilient homes, and has a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan since 2009. The country also pioneered community-based adaptation, like floating vegetable gardens in flood-prone areas.
- **India's Heat Action Plans,** with worsening heatwaves, cities in India like Ahmedabad have introduced Heat Action Plans, early warnings when extreme heat is forecast, setting up cooling centers, training health workers to prevent heatstroke, and simple measures like painting roofs white to reflect heat. These plans have been credited with reducing heatwave deaths in some places. Still, 2022's heatwave showed gaps, it made almost 90% of Indians more vulnerable to health issues and food and water shortages. So,

scaling up adaptation for heat like more green spaces in cities, improved access to water and power during heatwaves is crucial. As one study noted, Delhi's poor are especially at risk, people in slums often can't afford AC or even fans, so their bodies bear the brunt. Adaptation for heat could mean cool roof programs, reliable electricity for fans, and community outreach to check on the elderly.

- **Pacific Islands Community Adaptation:** Many islands are doing things like planting mangroves for coastal protection, improving rainwater harvesting, and reviving traditional farming techniques that are resilient like multi-crop agroforestry that can handle cyclones better than monocultures. In Fiji, some villages have had to do the last resort adaptation, relocation inland due to sea-level rise and coastal erosion. It's deeply emotional but with community consent and planning, a few relocations have happened with government support. Pacific cultures also stress preserving livelihoods, e.g. maintaining fisheries as coral reefs suffer by creating marine protected areas to let fish stocks recover, or shifting to crops that can tolerate brackish soil.
- **Vietnam's Mekong Delta,** facing rising seas and erratic river flows, Vietnam is investing in adaptive delta management. For instance, shifting from triple-cropping rice which is not sustainable under water stress to rotating rice with shrimp farming where saltwater intrusion makes rice hard. And building houses on stilts or flood-resilient designs. Communities are learning to elevate fishponds and protect freshwater. It's about living with water rather than fighting it always.
- **Drought-prone areas e.g. parts of India, Pakistan, Pacific,** adaptation could be as simple as reviving traditional water storage, Rajasthan in India villages restoring stepwells and ponds, or Pacific atolls using coconut husk mulch to retain moisture in gardens. In Mongolia, herders are diversifying herds and hay storage to adapt to harsh winter after drought. These local knowledge-driven adaptations are often low-cost and effective.

Global Initiatives on Adaptation. Internationally, there is now a push for a Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), basically a way to measure and drive adaptation progress worldwide. The Paris Agreement requires all countries to submit National Adaptation Plans or communications. There are also efforts like the Adaptation Fund to finance small projects and Locally Led Adaptation principles championed by NGOs and some donors ensuring local communities and organizations get direct funding to lead adaptation, not just top-down projects.

Adaptation is often the area where community knowledge is invaluable. Indigenous and local practices, from how to build flood-hardy houses, to how to read natural signs of weather, to how to sustainably manage resources, are crucial for adaptation. However, communities also need external support and technology, like climate information, forecasts, or new drought-resistant seed varieties. Adaptation should be participatory, for e.g., women in a village might identify different needs, like securing drinking water in drought than men do, both perspectives must shape the adaptation plans.

Adaptation is also closely tied to development. If you improve healthcare, education, and diversify livelihoods, you generally boost adaptive capacity. Conversely, poverty and inequality make people much more vulnerable to climate shocks. So, fighting for climate adaptation is also fighting for broader sustainable development and social justice.

We can't stop all climate impacts, but we can reduce the harm. Adaptation is about empowerment – equipping communities to face what comes. It doesn't mean accepting climate change passively. It means proactively protecting our people and places. And it's a justice issue because those who did least to cause climate change, now need the most help to adapt to it.

Resilience Plan Checklist, Create Your Community Adaptation Plan (This is a simplified template to brainstorm a local resilience plan. Gather community members and fill it out together)

1. **Climate Threats We Face:**

List the main climate-related hazards in your area. Are they floods? Droughts? Heatwaves? Cyclones? Sea-level rise? e.g. 'Increasing floods every monsoon, and occasionally severe cyclones.'

2. **Vulnerable People and their Assets:**

Identify who or what is most vulnerable when those hazards hit. e.g. 'Low-lying houses by the river, the old and disabled who can't evacuate easily, our rice crops in drought.'

3. **Current Coping Strategies:**

What do you already do to deal with these problems? Traditional methods count too. e.g. 'We move to the school on high ground during floods. We have a

community grain bank for drought. We know how to build wind-resistant huts.' Discuss what's worked and what hasn't.

4. Ideas to Boost Resilience:

Now think of additional actions or improvements. Aim for a mix of infrastructure, nature-based, and social measures. For example, 'Raise the embankment along the river by 1m'. 'Plant mangroves along the coast'. 'Set up a phone tree or siren for early warning when floods approach'. 'Rainwater harvesting tanks for each household'. 'Train youth in first aid and rescue'. 'Switch to a flood-resistant rice variety or fish farming in flood season' 'Create a community emergency fund.' Be creative and draw on everyone's knowledge!

5. Resources & Allies Needed:

For each idea, note what resources are required, money, materials, technical know-how, and who could help. For example, 'Need cement and engineering advice for embankment, ask local government or NGO'. 'Mangrove saplings needed, forestry department can supply'. 'Training on flood warning, reach out to Red Cross or any expert organization'. 'Funds for water tanks, maybe apply to Adaptation Fund.' Also identify any policies to advocate for example, lobbying authorities to incorporate your village plan into district plans.

Use this Resilience Plan as a living document. Revisit it regularly, especially after any climate event, what worked, what didn't, what new challenges emerged? Adaptation is an ongoing process, not one-time. By having a plan you created, you also have a tool to show to donors or authorities to seek support.

Empowering, right? Adaptation isn't just government projects, it's neighbors coming together to shape their future in a changing climate. And your community experience can inspire others. We're all in this together, learning how to live in a warmer world with justice and dignity.

Fossil Fuels and Just Transition, Phasing Out Coal, Oil, and Gas Fairly

For stopping climate change, the science is crystal clear, the world must phase out fossil fuels coal, oil, and gas and transition to renewable energy. Burning these fuels for energy is the number one driver of climate change. So, mitigation largely means reducing our addiction to fossil fuels. However, fossil fuels are

deeply embedded in economies and in many people's livelihoods. This is where the concept of a 'Just Transition' comes in. It asks: How do we shift to clean energy in a way that is fair to workers and communities dependent on fossil fuel industries, and ensure energy access for all?

The Need to Phase Out Fossil Fuels:

The Paris Agreement's goals (1.5°C) basically imply reaching net-zero CO_2 emissions around mid-century. That's impossible without virtually eliminating unabated fossil fuel use by 2050. Coal is the dirtiest fuel and is targeted first, many call for coal power to be gone by the 2030s in developed countries, 2040s elsewhere. Oil and gas need to follow. Yet, some countries and companies still plan new coal mines, new oil wells, and new gas power plants. There is a growing movement to 'Keep it in the ground,' urging no new fossil fuel development and a managed decline of existing production.

At COPs, surprisingly, the words 'fossil fuels' only recently started getting attention in the official text. COP26 in Glasgow 2021 was the first to mention 'coal phase-down', due to a last-minute watering from "phase-out" to "phase-down" under pressure from China and India. At COP28 in Dubai 2023, countries for the first time recognized the need to transition away from fossil fuels and boost renewables. However, making that a concrete commitment has been challenging, partly because major oil and gas exporters resist it.

What is Just Transition?

This concept was born from the trade union movement, recognizing that workers in polluting industries shouldn't be simply thrown aside in the name of climate action. A just transition means 'Protect workers' rights and livelihoods as mines or factories close'. For example, provide retraining programs to help a coal miner become a solar panel technician, or offer early retirement and compensation.

- Develop alternative industries in regions that rely on fossil fuels. If a town's economy is built around a coal mine, plan new investments, maybe renewable energy manufacturing, or other industries so the community doesn't collapse.
- Inclusive decision-making involves workers, unions, and local communities in planning the transition. It shouldn't be top-down.
- Energy justice to ensure the benefits of clean energy like solar, wind is shared, and that the transition doesn't leave some people energy-poor. For instance,

if electricity prices change, protect low-income consumers. Expand energy access as many rural areas in developing countries still lack reliable power.

- Social protection: possibly provide healthcare, education, and housing support in transitioning communities. Thinking of it as a holistic approach, climate policies should also reduce inequality, not worsen it.

Why it Matters in Asia-Pacific?

Our region is a paradox, it's extremely vulnerable to climate impacts and heavily reliant on fossil fuels for development and jobs. For example:

- **Coal in Asia:** Asia consumes 3/4 of the world's coal. Countries like China and India are the biggest coal users. Indonesia is a top coal exporter, and countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh have plans for new coal plants to meet energy needs. Hundreds of thousands of people work in coal mining and power plants in Asia, global estimate around 7 million coal workers, many in China, India, Indonesia. Simply shutting all coal mines overnight would cause massive social dislocation. Yet, coal also causes deadly air pollution and water problems. So, phasing it out is vital for climate and health. However this phase out cannot be seen in isolation.
- **Oil and Gas:** Some Asia-Pacific countries are major oil and gas producers or have big workforces in those sectors. Also, many countries subsidize fossil fuels to make energy affordable, removing those subsidies can spark public anger if alternatives and social safety nets aren't in place.
- **Economic dependence:** Some governments fear losing revenue or royalties from coal mining or oil export income. Worker's fear losing jobs, Communities fear becoming ghost towns.

Ultimately, a just transition aligns climate goals with social justice. It dispels the myth that it's 'environment vs jobs', rather, it says we can protect both the planet and workers if we plan deliberately. Without justice, backlash can derail climate action. With justice, climate action can improve equality and well-being.

For community activists, important angles include:

- Keeping an eye on powerful companies, coal mining firms or oil multinationals, to ensure they don't just abandon workers without compensation or leave behind environmental wreckage. They should contribute to transition funds, many of them are massively profitable, especially after recent oil price spikes.

- National energy plans, demand your country's energy plan is aligned with climate goals and has just transition measures. E.g. if your government says, 'we'll add 5000 MW of solar and shut 2000 MW of coal by 2030,' ask 'what's the plan for the workers from those coal plants? Can local communities operate some of the new solar farms?'.
- Community-led renewable energy: advocate for models like cooperatives or community-owned solar and wind projects. This way, as we transition, local people gain direct benefits rather than just big companies, like cheaper electricity, income from selling power.
- Ensure no one is left behind: Watch out that as we move to electric vehicles or smart grids, poor communities aren't last in line. For example, if public transport electrified, ensure fares stay affordable. If gas is phased out in cities for electric stoves, ensure subsidies or support so low-income households can switch without extra burden.

Carbon Markets, Trading Emissions and Why Communities Should Care

Imagine if countries or companies could trade 'permits to pollute' or 'credits for reducing emissions' among themselves, that's what carbon markets are about. It's like climate currency. One ton of CO_2 reduced or removed in one place can be sold to offset emissions elsewhere. Sounds a bit abstract, but carbon markets are a major part of international climate strategies, and they can have real impacts on communities.

Basics of Carbon Markets:

Under the Paris Agreement's Article 6, countries agreed they can cooperate to achieve their NDCs, including through 'internationally transferred mitigation outcomes', fancy phrase for carbon trading. There are generally two types:

1. **Cap-and-Trade systems:** Typically used within a country or region. For example, the EU Emissions Trading System caps emissions from power plants and factories, companies get or buy a limited number of permits and can trade them. Those who cut emissions cheaply sell permits to those who find it expensive to cut. It creates a carbon price and an incentive to reduce. Some other countries have or plan such systems. This mostly affects big emitters directly, not much a grassroots issue unless you work in those industries.

2. Carb**on Offset projects:** This is more relevant to communities. Here, a project like reforestation, renewable energy farm, or improved cookstoves distribution that reduces or avoids emissions compared to a baseline can generate carbon credits. These credits each equal e.g. to 1 ton CO_2 reduced can be sold to those who want to offset their emissions. For instance, an airline might buy credits from a tree-planting project in Kenya to 'offset' the emissions of its flights.

Under the UNFCCC before, we had 'Clean Development Mechanism' CDM in Kyoto days, projects in developing countries that reduced emissions could earn Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) sold to developed countries to meet targets. There were thousands of CDM projects like wind farms in India, hydropower in China, etc. Some brought benefits, some had issues like a few hydro projects displaced people, or some credits were dubious, etc.

Now, with Paris, they are establishing a new mechanism under Article 6.4, sometimes called the Sustainable Development Mechanism, sort of a successor to CDM, but ideally with better rules like 'avoid double counting emission reductions and ensure overall mitigation'. Countries can also directly trade, like one country pays for a solar park in another and gets credit for the emissions saved.

Recent Developments: It took years to agree on the rulebook, but by COP29 in 2024 in Baku, countries reached a deal to really get these markets going. They agreed on setting up the infrastructure for registries, transparency etc. so that carbon credits can be traded internationally. The idea is to 'unleash well-regulated carbon markets to draw private investment into climate action. Proponents say this could channel billions of dollars into new projects worldwide. For example, if a country like Japan finds it costly to cut the last bits of CO_2 at home, it might finance a clean energy project in, say, Vietnam and count those reductions. Or a company aiming for net-zero might offset its residual emissions by buying credits from projects like forest conservation in Indonesia or mangrove restoration in Fiji.

Opportunities and Risks:

Opportunities: Carbon finance could bring money for projects that otherwise wouldn't happen. For instance, if carbon credits make a community biogas project financially viable, that can improve local air and save forests. Some

indigenous communities have gotten funds by protecting their forests and selling carbon credits. Also, nations with vast forests or renewable potential see carbon markets as a way to get international support, for example, Pacific nations like Papua New Guinea, or forest nations like Myanmar might want to participate.

Risks: There are many, especially from climate justice perspective:

- **Environmental Integrity:** Carbon credit must be handled carefully. Otherwise, they might be worthless because the claimed reductions aren't real or have been double counted. For example, if a project was going to happen anyway, giving credits is fake. Or two countries both count the same reduction (double counting).
- **Delay Tactics:** Offsets can allow polluters to keep polluting, by buying credits cheaply elsewhere. This can delay real emissions cuts at source. Activists argue we need to phase out fossil fuels, not just offset them. Some offsets might be good short-term, but we can't offset our way out of climate change entirely.
- **Land and Rights Issues:** Possibly the biggest worry for communities. Many carbon-offset projects involve land use like forests and agriculture. There have been cases where in the name of creating a carbon sink, local people's land rights were ignored, or they were restricted from using the forest as they traditionally did. Think of a scenario where a company sponsors a forest conservation project for carbon credits. If that project is badly managed, it might prevent indigenous or local people from their livelihoods to ensure the forest is 'untouched,' yet those communities have been stewards of that land for ages. There's a risk of a 'carbon grab' analogous to land grabs, where suddenly forests are all about carbon value to outsiders, not about the people living there.
- **Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) and Benefit Sharing:** Does the project obtain 'Free, Prior, Informed Consent' from indigenous communities? Does it share the revenue with local people fairly? If a project sells credits for millions, but the community gets peanuts and some promises of a school or clinic that never materialize, that's unjust.
- **Permanence:** If credits are from forests, what if the forest later burns down or is cut off illegally? Reversal of carbon storage is a concern. Some mechanisms use buffers or insurance for that.

Given these issues, Climate Justice Activists and key civil society organizations are watching carbon markets closely. They want strong social and environmental

safeguards in Article 6 projects. Encouragingly, the new Article 6.4 mechanism includes a grievance process and a requirement to contribute a share of proceeds to adaptation, meaning some cut of credit sales goes to an Adaptation Fund, a win for justice, so that even markets help the most vulnerable indirectly.

What to Watch for Locally by activists: If you hear that your area could host a carbon project like a REDD+ project, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation which generates credits by avoiding deforestation:

- Ensure community consultation from the start. Don't let developers rush in with contracts without explaining. You have a right to say no or negotiate terms.
- Clarify land tenure. One common problem is unclear landownership leading to conflict over who can sign a project deal. Secure your community's land rights, it gives leverage and protection.
- Looking at the project design, does it allow sustainable use of forest by locals or is it fortress conservation? Ideally, projects should enhance local livelihoods, like paying communities to patrol forests they own, or combining forestry with agroforestry that provides income.
- Income flows, if companies profit from your forests' carbon, demand a fair share. There are community forestry models where carbon credit revenue is shared to build schools or clinics, etc. Insist on transparency in finances.
- Accountability, who verifies that the carbon savings are real? Usually, independent auditors and UN, if voluntary with local vigilance helps ensure trees aren't secretly being cut or project promises are kept. If something goes wrong, e.g. rights violated or promises broken, know that under Article 6.4 there will be a grievance mechanism where communities can raise complaints.
- Beyond Offsets, Carbon markets also include domestic trading or crediting. For example, if your country sets up a scheme where industries trade credits, maybe some local clean energy businesses can earn by selling credits. This is less directly affecting communities except in how it shapes industry behavior, like a factory might buy credits instead of installing cleaner tech, which might mean local air stays dirty longer.
- Corporate voluntary offsetting, many companies now pledge zero by 2030' and plan to offset a lot. They will be hunting credits globally. This voluntary market is booming but unregulated. Watch out for 'greenwashing'. Companies

using low-quality offsets claim to be green without real action. There is pressure to create standards and ensure transparency.

One positive example, in Nepal, some community forest user groups have engaged in forest carbon projects where they got payments for keeping forests healthy, and they used that money for local development and all while maintaining rights. This shows it can be done if the community drives it.

Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) Checklist, For Communities in Carbon and Forest Projects (Use this checklist when an NGO, company, or government approaches your community about a forest conservation or carbon offset project.)

- **Free:** Were you approached without force or manipulation? Check if there is any coercion, bribery threat 'sign this or you get nothing', or 'if military or police presence is used to pressure consent'. Decision must be made in a free atmosphere.
- **Prior:** Did the consultation happen well before the project starts or did any irreversible steps? A must check is if outsiders show up saying 'we already have a contract to use your land next month.' Consent should be sought early, giving the community time to discuss internally.
- **Informed:** Do you fully understand the project's aims, methods, duration, and impacts? Information should be given in your local language and in a way that's clear and not in technical jargon. Check if vague answers like 'don't worry, it will benefit you', hiding key documents, or not disclosing that the project is for carbon credits to be sold. Insist on clarity. 'How will it affect land use, what restrictions, what benefits, and what happens if you refuse?'
- **Consent:** Does the process respect your community's decision-making structures, like council of elders, village assembly, etc.? A check on bypassing these, like obtaining signature from one individual who isn't authorized, or divide-and-rule tactics, getting a few people on board and ignoring others. Genuine consent often requires several meetings, maybe even a trial period. If you say no, that decision must be respected. If they are trying to get you to consent without option to decline, that is not FPIC.
- **Benefit-Sharing Agreement:** Do you have a written agreement that spells out benefits like jobs, revenue share, community projects and responsibilities? Check if everything is only verbal promises. Also ensure it specifies conflict resolution methods and the community's right to withdraw if terms are violated.

- **Grievance Mechanism:** Did they explain how you can raise complaints if issues arise, and that you can halt activities until resolved? If not, Check, every serious project should have a way for community to voice concerns and get remedy.
- **Independent Advice:** Were you given the chance to seek independent legal or technical advice about the project? If outsiders discourage you from consulting an NGO, lawyer, or doing your own research, that's a need check. It's your right to get a second opinion.
- **Respect for Land Rights:** Is your land tenure recognized in the project? If your land is not formally titled, a project should help secure it, not exploit that. Check the project documents refer to your territory as 'empty' or 'state-owned' when you have ancestral and customary rights. Make sure any carbon deal doesn't sign away your land or cede control permanently.
- **Ongoing Consent:** FPIC is not one-and-done. If conditions change, you should re-consent. Check if once you sign, you are locked in for 30 years with no say. Ask for monitoring points where community can evaluate every 5 years.

This FPIC Check list will help you assert your rights. Remember, you are the rightful steward of your land. A carbon project should treat you as a partner, not an obstacle. If too many check points pop up negatively, it's better to pause or refuse the project than to risk your community's well-being on a dubious promise. If all goes well, a carbon or forest conservation project done with full respect can strengthen land rights, bring income, and preserve your environment. But always go in with eyes open and unity in the community. Don't be divided and conquered. Stand for your rights, climate solutions must uplift people, not marginalize them.

Food, Forests, Agriculture, Land, and the Fight for Climate Justice

Food and forests are at the heart of climate justice because they connect livelihoods, culture, and the environment. In the Global South, especially Asia-Pacific, millions of people depend on small-scale farming, fishing, and forests for their income and food security. Climate change is making this harder, unpredictable rains, extreme heat, floods, and pests threaten crops and fisheries. At the same time, how we use land for farming and logging is a big part of this problem, creating a large amount of emissions. But this also means that protecting forests and farming in better ways can be a powerful solution, helping to cut emissions and even absorb carbon from the air.

This topic is broad, but we will look into key points:

Climate Change and Food Security:

Across the Asia-Pacific, climate extremes are already hitting food security hard, and it's the small-scale producers who feed the regions that are suffering most. The impacts are devastatingly clear:

- **Farmers** face disaster on multiple fronts. The 2022 heatwave in India and Pakistan, for example, dried-up wheat crops, with some regions losing over a third of their yield, which also tightened global grain supplies. In the Philippines and Vietnam, stronger typhoons regularly wipe out rice and coconut farms, destroying a family's livelihood in a single storm. In low-lying coastal areas like Bangladesh and the Mekong Delta, rising seas and storm surges push saltwater onto fields, making it impossible to grow rice. This has forced many to switch to shrimp farming, which might bring in export money but takes away a local staple food.
- **Fishers** are struggling as oceans warm and turn more acidic. This bleaches the coral reefs that act as nurseries for coastal fish, causing catches to plummet. Key fish stocks, like tuna in the Pacific, are also moving to cooler waters, threatening the entire economies of island nations that depend on them.
- **Herders** are losing their animals. In Mongolia, climate change is fuelling worse brutal winters after a dry summer that cause mass livestock die-offs. Similarly, droughts across Central and South Asia are killing the cattle and goats that pastoral communities rely on.

All these people face the same result which is nothing but, a growing risk of hunger and debt, often forcing them to leave their homes and migrate to cities just to find work.

Mitigation in Agriculture:

Our food system is a major driver of climate change, responsible for a massive chunk of global emissions, roughly 22% when you include land use and deforestation. The main culprits are:

- Methane from flooded rice paddies and livestock mostly cow burps.
- Nitrous oxide from the heavy use of chemical fertilizers.
- Deforestation to clear land for big plantations like palm oil, soy, or for cattle ranching.

- Draining and burning carbon-rich peatlands, often for plantations.
- Food waste, which rots in landfills and releases more methane.

This means we have to fix our food system to tackle the climate crisis. The real challenge is doing this while still feeding a growing population and protecting the livelihoods of farmers.

Forests and Climate:

Forests are essential allies in the climate fight, acting as massive carbon sinks that soak up CO_2. Protecting them is one of the cheapest and most effective ways to fight climate change, while also saving biodiversity and Indigenous homelands. Deforestation is a devastating, we don't just lose the forest's ability to absorb carbon, we also release all the carbon it stored when the trees are burned or rot. This is not a theoretical problem it's happening right now:

- In Indonesia, massive peatland fires for palm oil and pulpwood plantations historically made the country a top global emitter. While they've worked to slow this, the threat remains.
- In Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, foreign logging operations have destroyed huge forest areas, often with little to no benefit for the local communities who live there.
- The Amazon, which will be a focus of COP30 in Brazil, is a critical global climate stabilizer. If it hits a 'tipping point' and degrades into a savanna, it would release a 'carbon bomb' and radically disrupt global rainfall.

Indigenous Peoples are the most effective forest guardians. Their lands hold 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity and have far lower deforestation rates than other areas. This makes supporting Indigenous land rights not just a matter of justice, but one of the most powerful and proven climate strategies we have.

Land Rights are Climate Justice:

Recognizing and empowering local communities and Indigenous Peoples as guardians of their forests can significantly reduce deforestation. They often use and manage forests sustainably like rotational farming or harvesting non-timber forest products. Where their land rights are weak, forests get grabbed by corporations or governments for mines, plantations, etc. Secure land tenure is associated with better forest outcomes.

There is an ongoing push for nature-based solutions (NbS) like planting trees, restoring mangroves. These can be great, but some caution required to avoid monoculture tree plantations that are bad for soil and locals. For example, planting invasive species or single-species timber plantations and calling it reforestation, it might store carbon but not provide the same ecosystem services or community use as natural forests. True nature-based solutions NbS involve local communities, use native species, and have co-benefits.

Food System Justice:

When we talk about food, we have to talk about justice, because the climate crisis isn't hitting everyone equally. The small-scale farmers grow a huge portion of the world's food, yet they are often the poorest and have the fewest resources to adapt to climate change. Real solutions must put them at the centre and not just big agribusiness. This also means we must value traditional, time-tested farming methods that have worked for centuries.

- Practices like terraced farming in the hills of Nepal stop soil erosion, while traditional 'food forests' on Pacific islands mix crops in a way that can withstand cyclones.
- These methods are naturally climate-resilient, unlike many industrial monoculture farms that can be very vulnerable and degrade the land over time.

We also have to see this through a gender lens. Climate change makes existing inequalities worse, when resources get scarce, women are often the ones who have to walk farther for water or may even eat last. Any climate solution must ensure women farmers get equal access to training, finance, and land. This fight for justice even reaches the cities, where climate-fuelled heatwaves and crop failures can cause food prices to spike, hitting the urban poor the hardest.

In short, **food and forests are where climate justice meets daily life.** It is about what you eat, how you earn, and the land you cherish. Solutions must be people-centered, help farmers adapt, give them tools to emit less, reward those protecting forests, and ensure everyone can eat despite climate shocks.

Community Food and Forest Resilience Checklist (Use this to assess how prepared and supported your local food and forest systems are in the face of climate change and identify gaps to advocate for.)

- **Diverse and Resilient Crops:** Does your community rely on one staple crop or have diversity? It is good if farmers grow multiple crops or varieties, some drought-tolerant, some flood-friendly. Monoculture crops are a risky sign, push for seed banks and training in climate-resilient crops.
- **Local Knowledge Use:** Are traditional farming and forestry practices recognized and utilized in local climate plans? If elders have methods to predict weather or cultivate sustainably, those should be documented and shared. If external 'experts' ignore local knowledge, that is a big gap, insist on participatory planning.
- **Support Services:** Do farmers and fishers have access to weather forecasts, agricultural extension services, or veterinary support? Like SMS weather alerts, or advice on pest outbreaks which are shifting with climate. If not, advocate for these services.
- **Market and Finance Access:** After climate shock like crop failure, etc., can people access credit, or crop insurance, or government relief to bounce back? If insurance is nonexistent or too expensive, that is something to lobby for, perhaps a mutual crop insurance scheme or disaster fund needed. Also, fair prices for produce help resilience – check if climate impacts elsewhere cause price swings that hurt local people, and whether safety nets exist for food distribution, price support etc.
- **Forest Protection & Rights:** Does the community have secure rights to nearby forests or commons? If yes and deforestation is low, that is positive. If forests are being cleared by outside entities, loggers, plantations without consent, that's a serious issue, mobilize for a moratorium or community forestry initiative. It is good if community actively participates in forest management, patrolling, replanting with external support.
- **Women's Role:** Are women farmers, fishers, forest-users given equal voice and resources in climate adaptation efforts? Do they get access to land, credit, and are they in meetings? If women are sidelined, resilience is lower because you are missing half the knowledge and capacity. Work to form women's groups or include them in committees.
- **Food Storage and Reserves:** In case of a bad season, are there local grain reserves, seed banks, or other community buffers? If not, consider starting one, even simple silos or communal seed exchange can help post-disaster.
- **Ecosystem Health:** Observe the trends, are soils getting degraded, eroded, loss of nutrients? Are water sources drying or polluted? Are fish catches way down due to coral damage or overfishing? These are climate-

exacerbated issues. A resilient community invests in soil conservation, water management, and sustainable fishing practices.

- **Allies and Network:** Does your community link with wider networks like farmers' unions, forest user associations, fisherfolk unions, to share knowledge and advocate for policies? Solidarity can amplify your voice for things like land rights or subsidy reform. If isolated, try to connect regionally.

This checklist can help you pinpoint where to direct your efforts. Food and forests sustain us. By making them resilient and just, we sustain not only ourselves but also our culture and future generations in the face of climate change.

Health and Heat, Climate Change's Human Toll and Protecting Our Well-Being

Climate change is not just charts and economics, it's also about our bodies and health. From killer heatwaves to the spread of diseases, the health impacts of climate change are direct and personal. Marginalized groups often suffer the most, the elderly, children, outdoor workers, people in slums with poor sanitation, etc. Let's break down key issues:

Rising Heat and Human Health:

Heatwaves are becoming hotter, longer, more frequent. High heat and humidity can cause heat exhaustion or deadly heatstroke, especially if you can't keep cool. Cities experience 'urban heat island' effect, concrete and lack of trees make nights too hot, etc.

- In India and Pakistan 2015, a heatwave killed over 2,500 people in India and 1200 in Pakistan, many of them laborers, homeless, or elderly without AC. After that shock, some cities made plans for heat action.
- Europe's 2022 heatwave caused 60,000 deaths, showing even richer regions are vulnerable.
- But the difference is preparedness: e.g. Ahmedabad in India started a Heat Action Plan after a bad 2010 heatwave. By 2016 when another record heat hit, they had early warnings and public cooling centers, reportedly reducing deaths.

Heat impacts:

- **Outdoor workers** like farmers, construction, street vendors and others many more often can't avoid heat. Studies estimate India loses many worker-hours

due to heat. Without adaptation, heat could cost some countries huge GDP losses as labor productivity drops.

- **Health issues** of dehydration, kidney problems seen in sugarcane workers in Central America in heat, aggravated heart and lung conditions. Also, mental health can suffer high night temps ruin sleep.

Disease Spread:

Climate change is also creating a serious health crisis by helping spread dangerous diseases. As the world gets warmer and wetter, pests like mosquitoes and ticks can thrive in new regions, bringing illnesses right along with them. We are already seeing the devastating results:

- **Mosquito-borne** diseases like dengue, malaria, and Zika are on the move. Dengue is a huge concern; one study warned that cases in Asia and the Americas could jump by 76% by 2050. This isn't just a future threat, places like Nepal and the highlands of Kenya, which were always consider safe for these diseases, are now reporting their first-ever outbreaks of dengue and malaria.
- **Water-borne diseases** are also surging. When climate change fuels more intense floods, the water gets contaminated with sewage and waste. This directly leads to outbreaks of deadly illnesses like cholera and severe diarrhea, especially in areas where sanitation is already a challenge.

Air Pollution:

Air pollution and climate change are two sides of the same coin. The fossil fuels we burn like coal and petrol, don't just warm the planet, they also choke our cities with smog. This is a massive, immediate health crisis, killing an estimated 8.1 million people globally every year and driving illnesses like asthma, lung cancer, and heart disease. Many Asian cities, from Delhi to Beijing, know this all too well, often living under hazardous air. The good news is that this link means climate action is public health action. Every step we take away from fossil fuels is a 'win-win':

- When we shift to clean energy and transport, we clean our air right now.
- It's a direct health measure. For example, studies show that when a coal plant shuts down, local emergency room visits for children's asthma and respiratory problems drop almost immediately.

Nutrition:

Climate change is a direct threat to our nutrition, not just our food supply. It hits on two fronts, firstly higher CO_2 in the air is actually making our basic foods less healthy. Experiments show that staple crops like rice and wheat are losing protein and other vital nutrients as carbon levels rise. Secondly, climate disasters like droughts and floods wipe out harvests. This creates food shortages and makes prices spike, which leads straight to malnutrition, hitting children the hardest.

Mental Health:

We often overlook the heavy mental toll of the climate crisis, but the anxiety and trauma are very real. This stress and grief show up in different ways for different people:

- **Eco-anxiety,** many young people, in particular, feel a deep sense of despair and hopelessness about the future.
- **Disaster Trauma,** Survivors of major floods, fires, or typhoons can be left with long-lasting PTSD.
- **Chronic Stress:** Farmers who repeatedly lose their crops or herders who lose their livestock face a high risk of falling into depression.

Addressing this requires more than just rebuilding homes, it also means healing minds. Providing on-the-ground psychosocial support after disasters is crucial. We also know that community solidarity, neighbours coming together to rebuild and emotionally support one another is a powerful source of resilience. For many, turning anxiety into action is the best antidote, joining climate action groups can channel that despair into a sense of purpose.

Overall, protecting health in climate change requires both reducing emissions to avoid unmanageable scenarios and adapting the health sector. It's also a great entry point for public engagement because everyone cares about health.

Beat the Heat, Community Checklist for Hot Days (This is a simple list to distribute in communities prone to heatwaves. It can save lives with basic actions.)

- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink water frequently, even if you're not thirsty. Aim for at least 2-3 liters a day in extreme heat.

- **Cool the Body:** If you don't have a fan or AC, use other ways like place wet cloths on skin, take cool showers, baths, soak feet in cool water. In a pinch, fanning yourself with a damp shirt can help. Young children or the elderly might need help to do this.
- **Avoid Peak Heat Hours:** Try not to do strenuous work or outdoor activities between 11am to 4pm when the sun is hottest. If you must work, take regular breaks in the shade for e.g. 10-15 min each hour. Workers look out for each other for signs of heat illness like dizziness, confusion, excessive sweating or no sweat.
- **Create a Cooler Space:** During the day, close curtains or blinds to keep sun out. In the evening or early morning when it's cooler outside, open windows to let air flow. If you have a fan, put a bowl of ice or cold water in front of it for DIY cooling. Encourage community centers or temples with better cooling to open doors for people.
- **Check on Vulnerable Neighbors:** Each day, ensure someone visits or calls older adults living alone, sick or bedridden people, pregnant women, etc. Make sure they have water and are okay. This community watch can catch heatstroke cases early. Children should not be left in hot rooms, arrange for them to stay in breezier spots.
- **Know the Warning Signs:** Educate everyone on heat illness symptoms like 'Heat exhaustion' or 'Heat stroke'.

Your community can reduce the risk of heat-related illness and death by following these steps. It's basic knowledge but in extreme heat it can literally save lives. You can ask local health centers to help distribute such info too. Community leaders might even set up a 'cooling center' e.g. a hall with fans and mats where those in flimsy hot homes can rest at midday. And remember, never underestimate heat, it's a 'silent killer'. Treat heatwaves like other disasters: respond together.

With that, we have covered the major topics: from finance to health, each a puzzle piece in the climate justice picture. Next, let's look specifically at COP30. What's on its agenda and why it matters for our movements.

Chapter 3

COP30

COP30 in Belém, Brazil in November 2025 is expected to be a milestone conference. Not only is it set in the Amazon region and bringing focus to forests and indigenous peoples, but it comes at a critical juncture in the climate process, right after the first Global Stocktake and the deadline for some major goals. In this part, we break down the key agenda items likely to dominate COP30. For each, we will explain what it is, recent progress, what happened at COP28, COP29, and why grassroots voices should care.

The COP30 topic we will cover:

1. **NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions)** Pushing stronger country pledges.
2. **NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance)** The new finance target and the Baku-to-Belém finance roadmap.
3. **Loss & Damage Fund,** Getting the new L&D fund up and running with money.
4. **GGA (Global Goal on Adaptation)** Measuring global progress on resilience.
5. **Article 6** (Carbon markets) Implementing the new carbon trading mechanisms.
6. **Just Transition,** Ensuring a fair shift away from fossil fuels, including the COP work programme on this.

Let's take them one by one.

NDCs: Raising National Climate Ambition (Towards 2035)

What are NDCs?

NDCs are each country's climate action plan under the Paris Agreement, mainly emissions targets and often adaptation goals that countries commit to. 'Nationally Determined' means each country sets its own pledge, considering its

circumstances, but there is peer pressure to be ambitious. Collectively, NDCs should add up to meeting global temperature limits but right now they don't, hence the push for stronger NDCs.

Why COP30?

The Paris Agreement has a strict mechanism by which every five years or so, countries are supposed to submit updated NDCs with higher ambition than before. The first round was initial NDCs by 2015. Next update was by 2020 which many did around 2021 in time for COP26 due to delays. Now, by 2025, countries are expected to submit new or updated NDCs for the post-2030 period. Some might give targets up to 2035, climate plans aligned with 1.5°C'.

Also, the Global Stocktake (GST) finishing in 2023 in COP28 basically tells us the world is off-track for 1.5°C, likely it will say we need to at least double emissions cuts by 2030 compared to current plans, among other things. COP30 is where countries should respond to the GST by announcing beefed-up commitments.

So, COP30 could be like a 'pledging' moment, some call it the 'Ambition COP'. Countries might come with announcements:

- Short term: e.g. 'We will cut emissions 50% by 2030 instead of 40%.'
- Longer term: 'Our NDC now includes a target for 2035 of X% cut'.
- Bringing forward net-zero dates like some might go from 2050 to 2045.
- New sectoral goals, e.g. phasing out coal by 2030, banning gasoline car sales by 2035, etc., can be put in NDCs.
- Peaking emissions, countries who haven't peaked yet might set a peak year this decade in their NDC.

Developed vs Developing dynamics:

Rich countries are under pressure to do even more, since many are not yet on track for their promises and they have historical responsibility. Developing countries often condition deeper cuts on support, like "We will aim for 30% renewables by 2030 on our own, 50% if we get $X finance'. If the new finance goal of NCQG and L&D fund etc. give hope of support, developing countries might be willing to up their ambition too.

What's happened recently:

Recent climate talks have really cranked up the pressure, setting the stage for a critical 2025 deadline when all countries must submit their new, stronger climate plans (known as NDCs). The first-ever "Global Stocktake" at COP28 in 2023 was a major wake-up call, officially confirming that the world is way off track in meeting its climate goals. With science clearly showing that emissions and temperatures are still rising, the pressure is on for the upcoming COP29 to sort out the money to fix it. Everyone is now watching to see what the major economies will actually promise to do after 2030.

- While the EU's 2030 target remains at 55%, it proposed a 90% reduction by 2040 and announced a 2035 target range of 66.25-72.5% in its upcoming NDC submission.
- All eyes are on China, the world's top emitter, to see if it will finally peak its emissions before its 2030 deadline.
- India updated its plan in 2022 (aiming for a 45% emissions intensity cut), but its real test is moving away from coal, which will likely depend on getting more climate finance.
- Meanwhile, many Small Island Nations have very ambitious goals, like aiming for 100% renewable energy, but they've made it clear they can't get there without serious financial support.

Relevance to Grassroots:

National climate targets (NDCs) matter because they translate into the actual energy projects, forest policies, and adaptation programs that affect people's lives. That's why civil society needs to be involved before these plans are finalized, whether that's unions, social movements and NGOs pushing for strong worker protections during the transition, like what happened in South Africa with COSATU's Just Transition Blueprint, or Indigenous groups demanding recognition of their forest rights. Countries will unveil their updated NDCs at COP30 in Brazil this November, but the real work starts after the announcements. Once governments make their pledges, activists and communities need to:

- **Track what's been promised:** If renewable energy targets are announced, people can monitor whether the laws and budgets are actually there to deliver them.

- **Demand what was included:** If the NDC mentions adaptation measures like crop insurance or early warning systems, communities have every right to ask where they are and when they will arrive.

The problem is separating real action from PR. A flashy announcement about planting a billion trees means nothing if it's just corporate monoculture plantations that push people off their land instead of community-led agroforestry that supports local families. Same goes for coal phase-out pledges, they will only work if there is a concrete plan for retraining workers and creating new jobs. What matters is making sure these national plans actually reflect what communities need, not just what sounds good in a press release.

Overall ambition gap:

Right now, we are nowhere near where we need to be. Even with all the climate plans countries have submitted, we are heading toward around 2.7°C of warming by 2100 under current policies and if you only count what's been promised in NDCs without full implementation, that is still about 2.6°C. Some recent estimates put it slightly better at 2.4°C if countries meet certain pledges, but either way, we are miles away from the 1.5°C target. The 2025 NDC round is asking countries to dramatically raise their targets for 2030 and 2035. There's hope for a political push similar to what happened at COP21 in Paris or COP26 in Glasgow, maybe through something like a 'highest possible ambition' declaration at COP30.

What Might Come Out of COP30?

We could see countries agree to a political statement along these lines, all nations commit to review and strengthen their 2035 targets by 2027 to actually align with 1.5°C, with developed countries pledging absolute emission cuts of a specific percentage by 2035. That kind of commitment would be significant.

Fair Shares, It's Not Just About the Numbers

From a justice perspective, ambition is not only about headline percentages, but also about who does what based on what's fair. There is a framework called 'Fair Shares' that calculates each country's responsibility using two key factors: capacity i.e. economic ability to act and responsibility i.e. historical contribution to emissions. Under this approach, wealthy countries with high historical emissions often end up with fair shares that exceed 100% of their own domestic emissions. In other words, they need to:

- Cut emissions at home, and
- Finance emissions reductions in developing countries

This is why activists push back when rich countries announce targets that sound impressive but fall short of what is actually fair when we account for their history and wealth.

The New Climate Finance Goal (NCQG) and the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap

We discussed climate finance in chapter 2, here we focus on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on finance, which is a central agenda item concluding around now.

Background:

Rich countries promised back in 2009 to mobilize $100 billion per year by 2020 to help developing nations tackle climate change. That promise was finally met in 2022, two years late but most agree it was never going to be enough anyway. The Paris Agreement said countries would set a new, bigger goal by 2025, something 'significantly beyond' $100 billion that actually matches what developing countries need.

After years of negotiations, COP29 in Baku in November 2024 delivered a deal, though it left plenty of people frustrated:

- $300 billion per year by 2035 from developed countries.
- A broader target of $1.3 trillion per year by 2035 when you add in private sector money
- The so-called Baku-to-Belém Roadmap to figure out how to actually get there Problem?

Many developing countries, especially India, said $300 billion is way too little and comes way too late. They wanted something closer to $1 trillion by 2030, not 2035. India outright rejected the deal at the closing session, calling it 'an optical illusion' and criticizing how it got rushed through. Other countries like Bolivia, Nigeria, and Malawi backed them up. There is also tension over who should contribute, should wealthy developing countries like China or oil-rich Gulf states

pitch in? Developed nations want a broader donor base, but India and others see that as rich countries dodging their responsibilities. Broadening the donor base is acceptable only if it does not sidestep historic liability and the framework of reparations.

COP30 Focus:

So now the focus shifts to COP30 in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, where the real work begins, turning promises into action. That means sorting out who pays what, how to track the money properly, how to pull in private investment, and making sure funds actually reach the places that need them most. There is talk of improving access to the Green Climate Fund, right now it is notoriously hard for poorer countries to navigate the paperwork. They are also pushing for a better split between mitigation and adaptation funding, historically only about 25% goes to adaptation, though the Green Climate Fund has committed to a 50-50 balance. And there is interest in 'innovative finance', things like taxes on financial transactions, levies on aviation and shipping emissions, or redirecting fossil fuel subsidies. Multilateral development banks like the World Bank are being asked to ramp up their climate lending too, they hit a record $137 billion in 2024 and are targeting $120 billion annually for low and middle-income countries by 2030.

Why Grassroots Communities Should Pay Attention to Climate Finance:

Big numbers like $300 billion or $1.3 trillion don't mean much if the money never reaches the people who actually need it.

Here's what we need to watch closely:

Grants vs. Loans:

This Matters, developing countries, especially the poorest ones and small island states, are pushing hard for more grants instead of loans. Right now, about 70% of climate finance comes as loans, which just pushes vulnerable countries deeper into debt. Many least developed countries already spend twice as much servicing their debts as they receive in climate finance. Activists are calling for at least 70% of climate finance to LDCs and small island states to be grants, not loans. At COP29 in Baku in November 2024, countries agreed to triple climate finance to $300 billion annually by 2035, but the final text doesn't clearly specify how much must be grants versus loans.

Tracking the Money:

The new goal called the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) targets $300 billion per year by 2035 from developed countries, with a broader ambition of $1.3 trillion from all sources. There is something called the 'Baku-to-Belém Roadmap' that is supposed to lay out how we get from where we are now to that $1.3 trillion by 2035. But without clear milestones, like hitting $150 billion by 2028 or $200 billion by 2030, it's just another promise. We need a public, detailed timeline that civil society can use to hold governments accountable year by year.

Who Gets the Money?

Small island states and the poorest countries face the toughest time actually accessing climate funds. The application processes are complicated, the requirements are strict, and many of these nations lack the technical capacity to even put together funding proposals. Meanwhile, big chunks of climate finance end up going to large consulting firms and international contractors instead of local communities. The Green Climate Fund has something called 'direct access' that lets national and local institutions get funding without going through international middlemen, but only 62 developing country institutions have been accredited so far, and 42 of them still haven't received any actual funding.

Balancing Adaptation, Mitigation, and Loss & Damage:

Vulnerable countries want guarantees that adaptation finance won't be forgotten. Historically, mitigation projects like solar farms get more funding than adaptation, like flood defences or early warning systems, even though adaptation is literally life or death for many communities. Look for COP30 language about 'achieving balance' or 'significant increases in adaptation finance'.

The Private Sector Question:

The $1.3 trillion target counts both public and private money. Private investors are expected to provide a big chunk, but they won't put money into things like rural adaptation or crop insurance schemes without incentives, these just aren't profitable enough. That is where 'blended finance' comes in, using public funds as guarantees or first-loss buffers to reduce risk and attract private investment. We need to make sure these arrangements actually serve communities, not just pad investor profits. Public money should go toward public goods, not just making climate projects more attractive for private companies to extract returns from vulnerable communities.

Trump's Shadow Over Climate Finance

Donald Trump won the 2024 election on November 5, just days before COP29 kicked off in Baku, Azerbaijan. His victory and what came next, sent shockwaves through climate negotiations. True to his word, Trump signed an executive order on January 20, 2025, his first day back in office, to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement for the second time. Under the Paris Agreement's rules, the withdrawal becomes official one year after notification, so sometime in January 2026. Trump also immediately cancelled the $4 billion U.S. pledge to the Green Climate Fund and cut off all climate finance to developing countries. Here is what this means on the ground, if the federal government walks away, others will need to step up. That's where grassroots movements matter most, especially in the U.S.

Brazil and the Amazon at COP30:

Brazil is hosting COP30 in Belém in November 2025, right in the Amazon. President Lula's government has been pushing hard on forest finance, including revitalizing the Amazon Fund with support from Norway and Germany. Brazil is also championing something called the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF), a $125 billion fund to pay countries for protecting tropical forests, with 20% reserved for Indigenous peoples. This could be a big deal at COP30, linking forest conservation directly to the Baku-to-Belém finance roadmap.

What This Means on the Ground. If this money actually flows the way it should, local communities could see real grants for climate projects, a women's cooperative getting funding to build rainwater harvesting systems, a village accessing support for early warning systems, farmers receiving crop insurance that actually works. That is why it's so important to connect global finance commitments to local priorities and make sure communities have a say in how money gets spent.

At COP29, countries set these finance targets. At COP30, we need to see the detailed roadmap for how we get there. Money on paper doesn't cut emissions or protect communities from floods, only money in action does. The hard work of holding governments accountable is just beginning.

Loss and Damage Fund, From Decision to Delivery

By COP30, the Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund should be moving from an agreed concept to something operational. Here's where we stand and what COP30 must tackle:

Background:

At COP27 in 2022, countries made a breakthrough decision to create a Loss and Damage Fund, the first international mechanism dedicated to help vulnerable nations recover from climate-driven disasters they can't adapt to. Throughout 2023, a Transitional Committee worked through five intense meetings to design how the fund would work, finally reaching agreement just before COP28. The fund was officially operationalized on day one of COP28 in December 2023, with initial pledges reaching around $700 million, though as of mid-2025, only about half has been paid in. After heated debate, countries agreed the World Bank would host the fund as an interim trustee for four years, controversial because developing nations worried about bureaucracy and conditions, though others argued it would speed up operations. The final text 'urges' developed countries to contribute but 'encourages' others voluntarily, carefully worded to avoid legal obligation. The US pushed hard against mandatory contributions and wanted countries like China and Gulf states included as donors, though these countries argue they are still 'developing' under UN classifications and point to historic emissions of industrialized nations as the real responsibility. All developing countries that are 'particularly vulnerable' to climate change are eligible, but there is still debate about what that means. Small island states and least developed countries get priority, though middle-income countries hit by disasters should also qualify, covering both extreme weather events like cyclones and floods plus slow-onset impacts like sea level rise and desertification. The fund launched a startup phase in 2025-2026 with $250 million available offering $5-20 million per project, with developing countries pushing for 'direct access' options including direct budget support so money reaches communities affected quickly without bureaucratic layers, but disagreements continue over World Bank fiduciary requirements that could exclude many countries from rapid disbursement. Current pledges fall drastically short of what's needed estimates suggest developing countries will face $395-580 billion in loss and damage costs annually by 2030.

Loss and Damage Fund at COP30:

- What's Happening: The Fund is moving from planning to action. Countries need to finalize the governance board and set up how money flows to vulnerable communities. The Board now has 24 members with developing countries holding the majority.
- Getting funds in: Only $788 million pledged so far, much below what's needed. The EU, Japan, and Canada may announce contributions at COP30, the US won't contribute under Trump. Innovative funding ideas like shipping fuel levies or fossil fuel taxes are being explored but remain politically difficult.
- Making it work: The Fund launched its first call for proposals in October. $250 million will be allocated in 2025-2026, with half going to least developed and small island nations. Different funding windows are being set up, rapid response for emergencies and slower support for long-term impacts like sea-level rise. Automatic payouts based on disaster thresholds are being tested.
- Partnerships: The Fund works with the Santiago Network for technical support and climate insurance initiatives like InsuResilience. Community-led pilot projects in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Malawi are testing how to support relocation and livelihood restoration, showing how grassroots groups can shape where money goes.
- Key distinction: Loss and Damage funding must be separate and additional to the $300 billion climate finance goal, not just reshuffled adaptation money.

Why Grassroots Voices Matter for the Loss and Damage Fund

The Loss and Damage Fund was operationalized at COP28 in 2023. Countries have pledged around $788 million, with about $250 million planned for 2025-2026, mostly as grants to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. It's far less than the estimated $400 billion annually needed, but it's a historic first step—establishing that rich countries must pay for climate harm they caused.

Civil Society and Social Movements pressure is essential on several fronts:

- **Equity:** Push for money to reach vulnerable communities directly, not just government projects. At least 50% must go to the poorest countries.
- **Accountability:** Civil society has formal 'active observer' seats on the

fund's board. Use them to demand transparency and real influence, not just symbolic presence.

- **Visibility:** Stories from disaster survivors are powerful. Campaigns like Pacific Climate Warriors' 'We are not drowning, we are fighting' build moral pressure for donor contributions.
- **Grants, not debt:** Ensure the fund provides grants. Any loans would be unjust, vulnerable countries should not repay for damages they didn't cause.
- **Donor pressure:** If you're in a wealthy country, push your government to contribute. If vulnerable, hold your government accountable for using funds well and engaging actively.
- **Permanence:** COP30 will decide the fund's long-term future. Push for permanent status with regular replenishment, not temporary measures that fade away.

The fund's success depends on keeping governments honest and ensuring resources actually reach people on the ground.

Cultural losses matter too:

Climate displacement is destroying Indigenous languages, sacred sites, and heritage that can't be replaced with money. The new Loss and Damage Fund can now finance things like documenting traditions before they're lost, relocating graves or cultural artifacts, and supporting communities through the grief of permanent displacement. Civil society will push to make sure these non-economic losses stay on the fund's priority list as projects start rolling out in 2025-2026.

COP30 should mark the **shift from promise to practice** for the L&D fund. Post-COP30, communities hit by climate disasters should have a new avenue to seek support. It's our job to make sure that avenue is kept open, fair, and effective.

Global Goal on Adaptation, Measuring Progress on Adaptation through the GGA

Adaptation often felt like a poor cousin to mitigation in global talk, hard to quantify, so less attention. The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) is an attempt to elevate adaptation by setting some kind of global target or at least a framework to track if the world is becoming more resilient. It was established in the

Paris Agreement under Article 7 in vague terms 'enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerability'. For years, it was unclear what that means in practice.

Why GGA matters:

If you have a goal, you can mobilize towards it and hold actors accountable. For mitigation we have clear metrics CO_2 ppm, emissions trajectories. For adaptation we did not have any clear goal. GGA is nothing but about creating indicators and goals for adaptation that countries can strive for, and that can aggregate globally.

Progress Before COP30

- At COP26 in 2021, countries launched a two-year work program to develop a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation. By COP28 in Dubai in 2023, they adopted the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, not a single numeric target, but a focus on seven key sectors i.e. water, agriculture, health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods, cultural heritage and tracking four stages which are assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring.
- The real challenge is measurement. COP28 created the UAE-Belém work programme in 2024-2025 to develop indicators. Technical experts narrowed thousands of existing indicators down to around 100, covering things like early warning system access, national adaptation plans, adaptation finance, and progress on climate-resilient systems.
- At COP29 at Baku, November 2024, countries added indicators for tracking finance and support. The framework aligns with the SDGs and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- COP30 in Belém, November 2025 is the deadline to finalize these indicators, creating a global dashboard to track adaptation progress and feed into future Global Stocktakes.

What will COP30 do with GGA:

At COP30 in Belém, countries will adopt the 'Belém Adaptation Framework with up to 100 indicators to track progress on climate adaptation across key sectors like water, food, and infrastructure. Countries will report this progress in their Biennial Transparency Reports, with UN agencies tracking global statistics.

COP30 may integrate the 'Early Warnings for All' goal aiming to protect everyone with early warning systems by 2027 into the adaptation framework. The big challenge is bridging the adaptation finance gap. While COP29's NCQG promises $300 billion annually for climate action by 2035, the actual adaptation finance need is $194-366 billion annually, far exceeding current commitments. COP30 will use the 'Baku to Belém Roadmap' to outline how to mobilize the full $1.3 trillion needed through reforms to development banks, expanded concessional finance, and innovative instruments.

How the Global Goal on Adaptation Helps Communities

- The GGA framework pushes governments to measure real outcomes, are vulnerabilities actually decreasing? rather than just counting projects funded. This shifts adaptation planning toward genuine impact.
- Local organizations now have stronger ground to access funding. With donors increasingly committing resources directly to communities and the Adaptation Fund establishing dedicated LLA windows, communities can lead their own adaptation work instead of waiting for top-down solutions.
- The framework recognizes cultural heritage and livelihoods alongside infrastructure, meaning adaptation protects what communities value, not just infrastructure targets.
- Communities can now hold governments accountable. If a country commits to climate risk assessments and participatory planning under GGA, people can demand: 'Where is our vulnerability assessment? Where's our adaptation plan with our input?' Adaptation becomes a right, not charity.

The 144 countries have started National Adaptation Plans, but only 67 submitted them formally. Ahead of COP30, if countries commit to completing NAPs by 2028 using GGA metrics, civil society must ensure these plans genuinely include community voices, address gender and disability justice, and respect Indigenous knowledge, otherwise they are just documents on a shelf.

What to Watch at COP30: The Adaptation Agenda

Adaptation rarely makes headlines, but it's literally about whether communities become safer from climate impacts. COP30 will finalize the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), around 100 indicators to help countries track progress.

Unlike emissions cuts, adaptation doesn't have one metric. Countries are negotiating 11 dimensional targets across food security, water, health, and resilience, with indicators serving as measurement tools. Some targets will be quantitative, while others track trends rather than hard numbers.

Key things to watch:

- **Sector-specific targets:** Agriculture alone needs over USD 100 billion annually for adaptation.
- **Locally Led Adaptation principles:** Will COP30 endorse the eight-point framework that is gaining NGO and government support? This matters because real adaptation happens at community level, not just in capitals.
- **Finance alignment:** Will climate funders be required to report how their money supports GGA goals? This could redirect funding toward projects that actually address agreed priorities like climate-proofing hospitals or building food security.

The bottom line is, these are technical discussions, but they determine whether adaptation finance gets deployed where it's most needed. For communities facing droughts and floods today, it's not about bureaucracy, it's about whether promises become action. So, grassroots movements should care that their lived reality, like whether their village can now handle floods better is what ultimately counts. Global goals should reflect that reality.

Carbon Markets Article 6, Putting the Paris Trading System into Practice

We went deep into carbon markets earlier, so here we focus on what COP30 will be dealing with under Article 6 of Paris Agreement.

- Article 6.2 is bilateral/multilateral trading, called ITMOs Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes. Countries set up deals and just have to report and apply corresponding adjustments.
- Article 6.4 is UN-run crediting mechanism like CDM 2.0 where an international body approves projects and issues credits.
- Article 6.8: non-market approaches, cooperation that isn't about trading, like aid, or policy collaboration.

Carbon Markets Finally Operational After COP29:

COP26 in Glasgow agreed the rulebook for international carbon trading, how to avoid double counting and split proceeds for adaptation, but the actual machinery didn't exist yet. COP29 in Baku 2024 fixed that. Countries approved methodologies for the UN carbon market Article 6.4, set up the registry infrastructure to track trades, and established transparency requirements. They also made progress on bilateral country-to-country trading Article 6.2, though some registry details still need finalizing at COP30. The hope is this unlocks billions for climate projects, though critics worry weak accountability could enable poor-quality carbon credits

COP30 expectations:

COP30 will likely focus on the technical details needed to make carbon markets fully operational. Article 6.4 Supervisory Body is expected to approve the first methodologies in mid-2025, allowing projects to start applying for carbon credits, some countries that ran pilot projects in anticipation may be ready for approval. Key areas to watch include setting up grievance processes for communities affected by projects, ensuring the registry and reporting systems work properly, and operationalizing the 'overall mitigation in global emissions' (OMGE) requirement, where 2% of Article 6.4 credits are automatically canceled to ensure trading delivers a net climate benefit, plus 5% goes to the adaptation fund. There is also growing pressure to align the voluntary carbon market with Article 6 standards, with COP30 potentially launching a dialogue to bring voluntary credits in line or allow countries to authorize them as Internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs). Most decisions will technically end up as annexes, but they are crucial for determining whether carbon markets deliver real climate action or become loophole-ridden offsets.

What Activists Should Watch at COP30

COP30 offers key openings for pushing stronger safeguards in carbon markets. Activists should focus on getting explicit human rights language into the Article 6 decisions, not just mentioned in preambles but as binding requirements for all carbon trading activities. The Article 6.4 Supervisory Body already agreed mandatory environmental and human rights safeguards in October 2024 using a Sustainable Development Tool that assesses project impacts throughout their lifespan and launched an appeals and grievance process allowing affected communities to file complaints. COP30 could strengthen these further by

requiring robust stakeholder consultation at all project stages and ensuring grievances can be filed without fees and in any language.

Key areas to push:

- **Nature-based credits:** Projects involving forestry, soil carbon, and avoided deforestation are contentious, COP30 may decide whether to treat emissions reductions separately from carbon removals. Activists should demand separate accounting to prevent companies from using temporary nature-based removals to offset ongoing emissions.
- **OMGE for Article 6.2**: Currently only Article 6.4 has mandatory cancellation (2% of credits automatically cancelled, 5% to adaptation fund). Some countries may pledge voluntary cancellation of ITMOs (Internationally transferred mitigation outcomes) traded under Article 6.2 to raise ambition, COP30 could encourage this.
- **Non-market approaches Article 6.8:** This provision supports climate cooperation through policy coordination, capacity building, and joint adaptation without carbon trading. It's overshadowed by market discussions but offers space to promote direct support alternatives that prioritize rights, biodiversity, and community-led action over offsets.

Linking Article 6 to Finance and Ambition

Many developing countries see Article 6 as a way to attract investment, selling carbon credits internationally to fund climate projects at home. But there's a trade-off, selling off cheap emission reductions now could make it harder to meet future climate targets, which is why corresponding adjustments, accounting measures that prevent double-counting are essential. COP30 is expected to emphasize using Article 6 revenues to increase climate ambition rather than simply meeting existing targets at lower cost. Well-regulated carbon markets could channel significant finance to developing countries.

What This Means for Local Communities:

Article 6 could direct money to on-the-ground projects if designed properly. Community reforestation efforts could secure international financing through government-authorized carbon credits, transit projects switching from diesel to electric buses could generate tradable mitigation outcomes, or Indigenous communities protecting forests could access carbon market finance with

mandatory consent requirements now built into Article 6.4. However, many developing countries lack the administrative infrastructure to participate effectively, they need help setting up approval systems, registries, and monitoring frameworks. Without capacity building support, only a handful of countries will benefit while others get left behind. COP30 is expected to address this through technical assistance announcements, building on existing initiatives like the Asian Development Bank's Article 6 Support Facility and World Bank programs that help countries develop their carbon market readiness.

By COP30, the rule-making is nearly done; it's about implementation, Will the first credits be issued in 2026? Possibly. COP30 might schedule a review for Article 6 in a few years to see if it's delivering real reductions and not abusing the system. Keep pressure that Article 6 is a tool to enhance ambition, not dilute it. If used as a cheat, it undermines Paris goals. If used to channel funds to real extra mitigation in developing world, it can help both global emissions and local development.

Just Transition: Centering Equity in the Shift (Work Programme and Beyond)

We covered the concept of just transition in Chapter 2 in fossil fuels section. Here, we focus on how it appears on the COP30 agenda specifically.

COP28's Just Transition Work Program:

COP28 in Dubai adopted the first-ever Just Transition Work Program (JTWP) in December 2023, a major win for labor unions and developing countries that had pushed for formal attention to the social impacts of climate action. The program was actually established at COP27 in 2022 but operationalized with clear objectives at COP28. It runs through 2026 with a review of its effectiveness at COP31, after which countries will decide whether to continue it. The JTWP includes annual dialogues and high-level ministerial roundtables where countries share best practices on worker retraining, economic diversification in coal-dependent regions, and social protection systems. The COP28 decision text emphasized 'just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities,' alongside social dialogue, labor rights recognition, gender equality, human rights protection, and universal energy access. Progress stalled at COP29 in Baku when countries couldn't agree on next steps, but June 2025 negotiations in Bonn

produced the first consolidated draft decision, signaling renewed momentum heading into COP30.

COP30 Second Year of the Just Transition Work Program:

As the Just Transition Work Programme enters its second year at COP30, Brazil is expected to champion climate action with social justice at its core, aligning with the Lula government's focus on inequality reduction. COP30 will review progress from the first year and set next steps, potentially endorsing recommendations like requiring countries to develop national Just Transition strategies by a specific deadline or calling for stronger integration of just transition principles in NDCs and climate finance proposals. Brazil's COP30 presidency has already emphasized that 'initiatives under the COP30 Action Agenda must be guided by both the ethical and scientific imperatives of just transition and equity,' signalling political will for high-level commitments.

Potential concrete outcomes:

- **Just Transition Finance Platform:** Announcements of international support mechanisms to help countries create plans for coal phase-out regions, potentially scaling up models like South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership to countries like Indonesia, India's coal-dependent states, or Caribbean nations. The World Bank has already provided over $3 billion since 1995 to support coal closure and just transitions.
- **Climate fund integration:** Requiring climate finance proposals like Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, etc. to outline how they incorporate just transition principles, decent work, social inclusion, stakeholder consultation.
- **Broader application:** Extending just transition beyond fossil fuel phase-out to adaptation contexts, like supporting fishers whose livelihoods collapse due to climate impacts or ensuring communities displaced by sea level rise receive adequate support.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** High-level sessions bringing union representatives, Indigenous leaders, and affected communities to address ministers directly, potentially resulting in political declarations committing that 'no one will be left behind.'
- **Challenges ahead:** Not all countries are equally enthusiastic, some view just transition as a domestic issue rather than an international negotiation

topic, while wealthy oil-exporting states may seek support for economic diversification despite having resources to self-fund transitions. Additionally, measuring just transition progress remains difficult since justice is largely qualitative rather than quantitative, likely leading to narrative-sharing rather than binding targets.

Grassroots Mobilization at COP30

Labor unions, coal community representatives, Indigenous groups, and youth activists are expected to have a strong presence at COP30, pushing for explicit language linking fossil fuel phase-out with just transition protections. COP28 made history as the first UN climate agreement to call for 'transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner', the first time all fossil fuels were explicitly mentioned in nearly 30 years of climate talks. However, COP29 disappointed many by failing to build on this momentum, with the final text sidestepping the term 'phase-out' entirely and deferring decisions to COP30. This creates an opening for COP30, with Brazil's progressive presidency potentially more supportive of strengthened language.

The 'Just Transition Rising' campaign has mobilized trade unions, civil society organizations, feminist groups, youth movements, and Indigenous Peoples to demand that climate action centre justice. At COP30, expect side events, press conferences, mobilizations, and potentially high-level interventions where union leaders and affected communities directly address ministers. Indigenous groups are connecting just transition with their territorial rights, demanding that any renewable energy projects or land use transitions respect Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and benefit local communities. Youth activists are championing green jobs as integral to climate action, arguing that ambition without employment opportunities is incomplete.

The just transition work programme's existence means that whenever countries discuss ramping up climate ambition, whether phasing down coal or transitioning away from oil and gas, negotiators must answer: 'What about workers and vulnerable communities?' COP30 could encourage countries to include just transition measures in their NDCs as part of their response to the Global Stocktake, ensuring that raising ambition goes hand-in-hand with social protections at home.

COP30 will keep the momentum, making people central to climate action. A key phrase to listen for is something like "we will accelerate climate action while

creating decent work and quality jobs, ensuring no community is left behind." If COP30 decisions reflect this principle, it's a win for climate justice.

Having delved into each major COP30 topic, we see that this climate summit is not just about technical negotiation, but about solidarity, accountability, and raising our collective ambition with fairness. For grassroots activists, COP30 is both a pressure points to demand these outcomes and a reference point to hold leaders to what they agreed.

Annexure: Glossary of Climate Terms and Acronyms

Terms we haven't explained elsewhere in detail are included here, along with some repeats from Part 1 for convenience.)

The Core Framework & Science

- **UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change):** The 1992 treaty that provides the foundation for international climate negotiations. Its objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations to prevent dangerous interference with the climate system. Almost all countries are parties.
- **COP (Conference of the Parties):** The annual decision-making meeting of countries under the UNFCCC to negotiate and review climate action. COP30 is the 30th such meeting.
- **IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change):** The UN body that provides rigorous scientific assessment reports on climate change, its impacts, and potential solutions. Its findings (e.g., the necessity of halving emissions by 2030) form the scientific basis for negotiations.
- **Paris Agreement:** The landmark 2015 climate accord (adopted at COP21) where all countries committed to take action to limit global warming to well below 2°C (pursuing 1.5°C), strengthen adaptation, and provide finance. It works on a 5-year cycle of increasing commitments (NDCs).
- **Kyoto Protocol:** A 1997 treaty under the UNFCCC that set binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. It has now been superseded by the Paris Agreement, which involves all countries.

Core Goals & Targets

- **1.5°C / 2°C:** These are the target limits for global average temperature rise above pre-industrial levels. 1.5°C is the safer goal to avoid the worst impacts; 2°C is the absolute upper limit under the Paris Agreement.
- **GHGs (Greenhouse Gases):** The gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, causing global warming. The main ones are Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Methane (CH_4), and Nitrous Oxide (N_2O).
- **Net Zero:** A state where any remaining greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by removing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere (e.g., by

forests or technology). This achieves a "zero" overall impact on the climate, a key long-term goal of the Paris Agreement.

The Three Pillars of Action

- **Mitigation:** Actions to reduce or prevent emissions of greenhouse gases. Examples include shifting to renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and stopping deforestation.
- **Adaptation:** Adjusting and building resilience to the climate changes already happening or expected. Examples include building flood walls, planting drought-resistant crops, and developing heat action plans.
- **Resilience:** The ability of a community or system to withstand, recover from, and adapt to climate shocks and stresses.
- **GGA (Global Goal on Adaptation):** A framework under the Paris Agreement to enhance global adaptive capacity and resilience. Countries are working to set metrics to track progress on this goal.
- **Loss and Damage (L&D):** Climate impacts that go beyond what a country or community can adapt to, resulting in irreversible losses (of life, culture, land) or damage (to infrastructure). This also refers to the political debate over compensation and support for these losses.
  - **WIM (Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage):** The primary UNFCCC program, established in 2013, to address Loss and Damage.
  - **Santiago Network:** A mechanism under the WIM that connects vulnerable developing countries with technical assistance, knowledge, and resources to address loss and damage.

Implementation: Plans, Processes & Markets

- **NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution):** Each country's self-defined climate action plan under the Paris Agreement. It includes targets for cutting emissions (mitigation) and often outlines adaptation plans. NDCs are updated every 5 years to be more ambitious.
- **Global Stocktake (GST):** A 5-year cycle under the Paris Agreement to assess the world's collective progress toward its goals (on mitigation, adaptation, and finance). The first GST concluded at COP28 (2023) and is meant to inform the next round of NDCs.

- **Article 6:** The section of the Paris Agreement that sets rules for how countries can voluntarily cooperate to achieve their climate targets, including through carbon markets and non-market approaches.
- **REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation):** A framework to incentivize developing countries to protect, conserve, and sustainably manage their forests, often through payments or credits for the measured carbon savings.

Finance, Equity & Key Stakeholders

- **Climate Finance:** Money provided to help developing countries cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. It typically refers to funds flowing from wealthy, historically high-emitting countries to developing countries, as pledged under the UNFCCC.
- **NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal):** The new global climate finance target that is being negotiated to replace the previous (and unmet) $100 billion-per-year goal, set to begin post-2025.
- **Green Climate Fund (GCF):** A major global fund established under the UNFCCC to channel climate finance from developed to developing countries for both mitigation and adaptation projects.
- **CBDR-RC (Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities):** A foundational principle of the UNFCCC asserting that while all states are responsible for addressing climate change, developed countries have a greater obligation due to their historical contribution to the problem and greater capacity to act.
- **Just Transition:** A principle ensuring that the shift to a low-carbon economy is fair, equitable, and inclusive. This means protecting and supporting workers and communities currently dependent on fossil fuel industries (e.g., through job training and social support) and ensuring clean energy benefits are shared.
- **JETP (Just Energy Transition Partnership):** Agreements where wealthy countries provide financing to specific developing countries (e.g., South Africa, Indonesia) to help them transition from fossil fuels to clean energy in a just and equitable way.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Ethnic groups native to a particular land, often with distinct cultures and a deep relationship with nature. They are recognized in

climate forums for their vital role in stewarding ecosystems and the need to respect their rights.

- **FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent):** A specific right of Indigenous Peoples (under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) that any project or policy affecting their lands or territories must have their consent, given freely, with full information, and before the project begins.
- **LDCs (Least Developed Countries):** A formal UN category of 46 nations with low incomes and high vulnerability. They negotiate as a unified bloc in climate talks, pushing for ambitious action and support.
- **Vulnerable Countries:** A broad term for nations most at risk from climate impacts, often including LDCs and SIDS (Small Island Developing States), who negotiate through groups like the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF).

(These are just key terms; climate jargon is vast. When in doubt, ask or look it up – and remember to demand plain language in discussions!)

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