



APWLD



# Grassroots Women Rising

Addressing Loss and Damage  
On a Burning Planet

**Title**

Grassroots Women Rising: Addressing Loss and Damage on a Burning Planet

**Author**

Haley Pedersen

**Editors**

Patricia Wattimena, Ting Guo, Wardarina, Misun Woo

**Designers**

Iqbal Mubarak Ahmad & Ayu Maulani

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development  
October 2022  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Copyright © 2022 Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development

Reproduction of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorised and encouraged, provided the source is fully acknowledged.

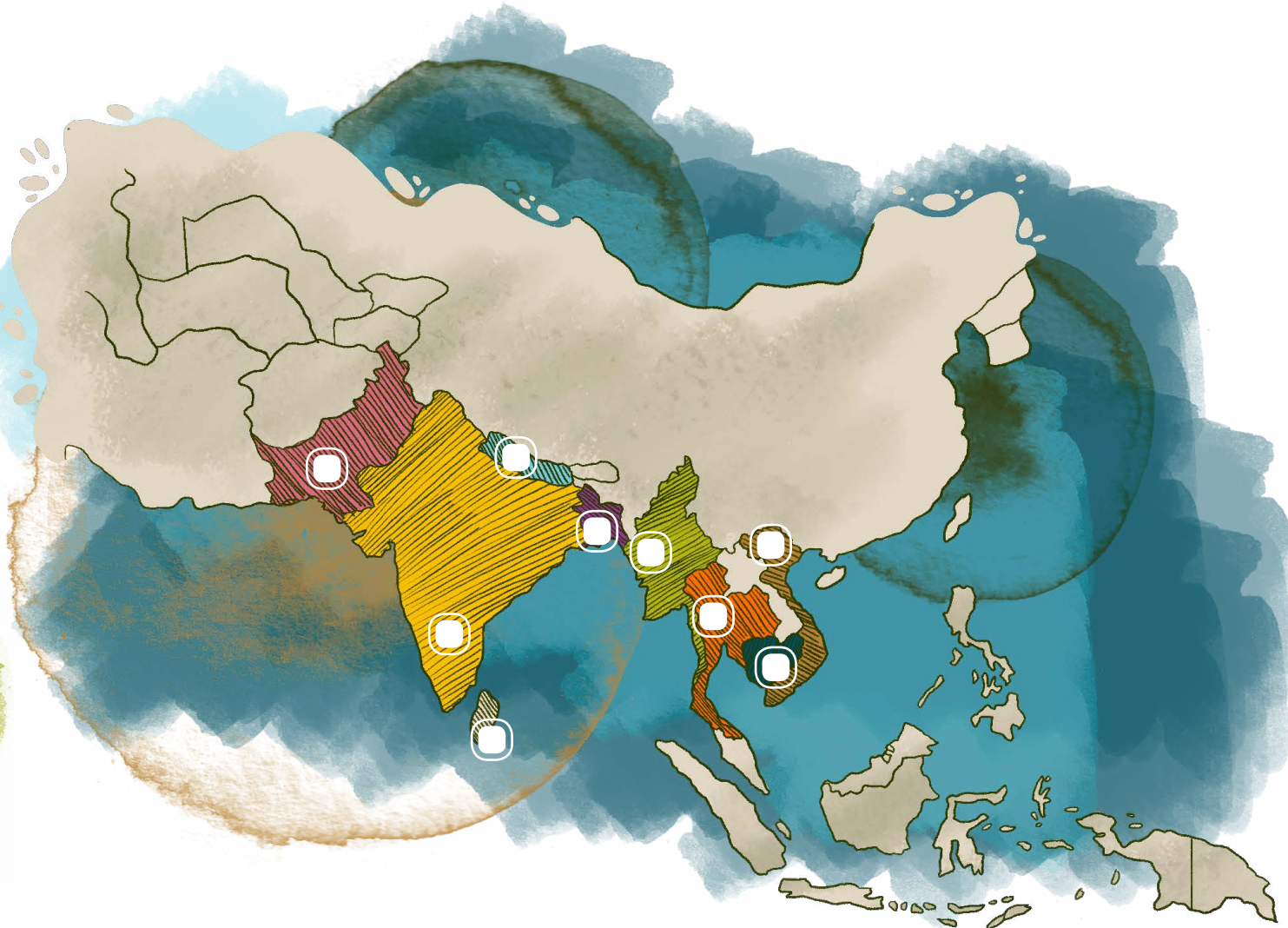
**Climate Justice FPAR Journey:***Our Driving Force*

*B*etween 2017 and 2019, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) led nine women's rights organisations in this region participated in the Climate Justice Feminist Participatory Action Research Programme (CJ-FPAR). CJ-FPAR supports young women researchers to undertake participatory research within their communities about gendered issues of climate injustice, generating knowledge that informs collective advocacy and action for climate justice and women's human rights. The CJ-FPAR theme for the 2017-2019 cycle was 'Climate-Induced Displacement', providing support to organisations focusing on communities displaced or facing displacement as a result of climate change, including those caused by natural disasters, slow onset impacts and climate change policies.

Supported by



## We acknowledge and honour the contributions of the following women and organisations:



Krajai Chowdhury, Cho Khan, Uchacha-A Chak and Prantik Dewan of the Maleya Foundation (Maleya), Bangladesh. Maleya aims to protect and strengthen indigenous knowledge and value towards the environment and culture, to advocate for just policies related to climate change, to increase gender equality within indigenous communities, and to promote peaceful conflict resolution within indigenous communities.

Mong Vichet, Sotheara, Yem Channy and Ek Yothin of the Highlanders Association (HA), Cambodia. HA prioritises indigenous communities in order to ensure their ability to exercise rights to their land, natural resources, distinct identity and rights to education.

Banamallika Choudhury and Jollymoni Saikia of the North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), India. NEADS is a grassroots volunteer group that works to strengthen coping mechanisms of disaster prone communities, empower women, establish and promote community based institutions, and increase livelihood opportunities for farmers. Their FPAR, which is led by a group of women who have organised to address concerns regarding agricultural sustainability and women's livelihood and rights, focuses on the issue of displacement caused by climate disaster (flood and erosion), slow onslaught impact (siltation and sand formation) and the implementation of two controversial mega hydropower projects in Xadiya, Assam.

Flora Bawi Nei Mawi, Rose Par Bawi Zi, Pansy Dwe and Zar Zar Tun, Mawi Sung Biak and Vang Fam of the Chin Committee for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR), Burma/Myanmar. CCERR was formed in response to the 2015 Cyclone Komen, and has since worked to bring a voice to locally affected populations concerning the level and type of governmental, donor and NGO aid in response to natural disasters and climate displacement.

Tara Khanal, Ranjana Giri, Buddha Kumari Rai and Aruna Chaudhari of the Chetana Mahila Samuha (CMS), Nepal. CMS campaigns to increase and ensure women's access to and control over natural resources (land, forests, herbal plants) and focuses on the conservation of forests and indigenous knowledge of local resources, which are threatened by natural disasters arising due to climate change. The organisation will focus on organising women around the impacts of climate change on agriculture, displacement and health during FPAR.

Rabia Waseem, Shaheen Mahar and Samina Parveen of the Roshni Tarqiyati Tanzeem (Roshni), Pakistan. Roshni is committed to promoting socio-economic justice to disadvantaged groups, including women. Through the FPAR, Roshni will work with rural peasant women from the Ghotiki district severely affected by a range of climate change impacts, to address diminishing land labour opportunities, the lack of decent wages, decreasing food security and increased landlessness. Women in this region make up the majority of labour, and have thus faced higher levels of marginalisation as a result of these climate change impacts.

Geetha Lakmini Fernando, Sandunika Hansindu and Sathyavel Sathyabama, Prabuddhika of the We Women Lanka (WWL), Sri Lanka. We Women Lanka (WWL) is a grassroots, non-profit organisation working to address human rights violations and all forms of gender based discriminations based in Sri Lanka.

Kanlaya Chularattakorn and Noraeri Thungmueangthong of the Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT), Thailand. IWNT works to provide a gender perspective to development activities affecting Indigenous Peoples in Thailand. In an attempt to mitigate climate change, the Thai government began implementing stricter laws regarding deforestation. However, local and indigenous populations depend on subsistence agriculture, and find themselves facing increased challenges as a result of these new laws. IWNT will focus on the impact of climate change based policies on indigenous women whose livelihood depends on the surrounding forests.

Nguyen Thi Thao and Ha Thi Hoa of the Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region (ADC), Vietnam. ADC provides research and technology transfers for the sustainable development of ethnic minorities in northern mountainous areas of Vietnam. ADC will work on the resilience of indigenous women in response to climate change, particularly for the development of alternative livelihoods and adaptation to lost local knowledge.

# *At a Glance*

## Women Addressing Loss and Damage

Powerful actors around the globe continue to fail to take urgent and adequate action to tackle the consequences of a warming planet. As a result, millions of grassroots women in Asia and the Pacific are already seeing their lives and livelihoods destroyed by the crisis.

It is the poorest communities in the poorest countries, and primarily women in the Global South, that bear the overwhelming majority of the human, economic and environmental costs of climate change. Many parts of Asia and the Pacific have already suffered irreversible damage. We are facing dire poverty, water shortages and food insecurity as a result of the calamitous impacts of the climate crisis, now compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Asia and the Pacific region, women face displacement from their homes and the land they rely on for their survival due to increasingly extreme, unpredictable climatic events and changing weather patterns. Meanwhile, rising sea levels, increasing salinity, desertification, deforestation and the onset of new diseases threaten humans, animals and crops alike.

It is far too late to rely purely on mitigation and adaptation-focused climate solutions. It is undeniable that the path to a sustainable future requires wealthy nations and corporations be held to account for their accumulated historical emissions while developing their economies through exploiting resources and labour from the Global South. Those nations and corporate entities most responsible for the climate crisis must provide climate finance to support climate resilience and adaptation, including providing redress and reparation for climate-induced loss and damage.

The climate crisis is fuelled by the same unsustainable extraction, market driven production and consumption patterns inextricably linked to the racist, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist system that relies on the labour of marginalised women and peoples of colour for profit. Poor and vulnerable women of this region are no longer expected only to sacrifice their labour for the global capitalist system, but now must also bear the most immediate and devastating impacts of the climate crisis that it has created.

However, women of the Global South are integral and powerful agents of climate resilience, adaptation and action. Traditional gender roles assigned to women often involve caretaking of households and communities; tending to seeds, soils, livestock and small fisheries; maintaining, protecting, and sharing traditional and indigenous skills and knowledge to manage natural resources. These roles, therefore, create opportunities for just and equitable solutions that balance social, economic and ecological needs based on the diverse and critical knowledge women bring to tackle climate crises. It is in this spirit that we embarked on working with grassroots women and their communities throughout Asia and the Pacific region, using participatory research to mobilise feminist climate justice movements in their countries.

**This report outlines the stories and findings of nine grassroots organisations in Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam who participated in the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) Climate Justice Feminist Participatory Action Research (CJ-FPAR) between 2017 and 2019 to build grassroots feminist climate movements and amplify their voices from local to global levels.**

The focus of this cycle of CJ-FPAR is on 'Climate-Induced Displacement', and highlights the impacts experienced by communities either voluntarily or forcibly displaced or facing displacement as a result of climate emergency.

Through stories and findings gathered by our partner organisations, this report seeks to highlight the urgency with which the international community must accelerate and enhance work on loss and damage, taking into account the needs of the women disproportionately affected - climate migrants and refugees - whose demands must meaningfully shape climate policy and action at all governance levels. This report further argues that the onus of mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis is on the wealthiest, most powerful (and most culpable) countries to take appropriate mitigation efforts; provide compensation for loss and damage; and provide finance, resources and technology as committed in the Paris Agreement. The report outlines how women are continually denied access to relevant information, processes and resources; while demonstrating that women have the power to dismantle these oppressive structures and claim their human rights. Finally, this report offers recommendations for women-led feminist climate solutions to address displacement and loss and damage that build resilience, protect and advance women's human rights.

CJ-FPAR is a testament to grassroots women's struggles, resilience and represents a collective effort of some of the most impacted

communities to hold governments and carbon polluters accountable for their actions. Climate catastrophe necessitates a fundamental reorientation of our economies and political systems to address the underlying injustices that frame globalised capitalism. The immediacy and urgency of the climate crisis necessitates that the voices of grassroots women remain at the centre of a radical transformative change to dismantle these systems of power and profit.

This research was compiled before the onset of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which will undoubtedly exacerbate all of the issues facing women that are explored in this report. However, we feel it is important to highlight that the climate crisis and the global pandemic both expose the failings of the predominant neoliberal capitalist system. These inter-linking crises amplify existing inequalities, and lay bare the truth that the current system fails to uphold peoples' fundamental human rights while placing the heaviest of its burdens on the poorest and most marginalised communities, primarily grassroots women of the Global South. Yet, this moment offers a remarkable opportunity for a global-level collective action and a coordinated response to overturn the current dominant rules. We must develop solutions centred on human rights, historical and ongoing responsibility, accountability, international cooperation and solidarity. Feminist and peoples' movements must drive all efforts to address these intersecting crises.

# What's Inside

Women Behind the  
Climate Justice FPAR

## Section 1 A Planet in Crisis

- 1.1 Pathways to the Point of no Turning Back
- 1.2 Neglecting Polluters Accountability: Placing the Burden of Climate Change on Least Culpable Countries



## Section 2 Where We Are Now

- 2.1 Loss and Damage: Context and History
- 2.2 Who Pays? Polluters Must Pay!
- 2.3 Accountability for Loss and Damage: Where is the Money?



## Section 3 "From Birth to Death": Gendered Dimensions of Climate-Induced Loss and Damage

- 3.1 Climate Induced Displacement and Women's Human Rights
- 3.2 Destabilising Women's Traditional Ways of Living
- 3.3 Impacts on Women's Health and Wellbeing
- 3.4 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
- 3.5 Women's Access to Land and Natural Resources
- 3.6 Threats to Livelihoods and Food Sovereignty
- 3.7 Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders



## Section 4 Feminist Actions and Resistance

- 4.1 Increased Political Power and Leadership
- 4.2 Igniting Movements for Climate Justice
- 4.3 Stronger Capacity and Knowledge on Feminist Climate Justice



## Section 5 Feminist Demands for Climate Justice

- 5.1 Accountability and Transparency
- 5.2 Climate Financing
- 5.3 Women's Human Rights
- 5.4 Indigenous Communities and Traditional Knowledge
- 5.5 A Transformative Vision Toward 'Just and Equitable Transitions' and 'Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future'



# Women Behind the Climate Justice FPAR



## *Vietnam* **The Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region (ADC)**

provides research and technology transfers for the sustainable development of rural and marginalised communities in northern mountainous areas of Vietnam. ADC did FPAR with women in Thanh Van in the Cho Moi district of BacKan province, a remote region where a majority of the population identify as indigenous Tay peoples. The Tay women depend on small-scale agriculture to support their livelihoods. Extreme weather events such as flooding in recent years have decimated their crop production and ability to care for their livestock as well as interrupted women's traditional agricultural calendar and practices. Through FPAR, the women took a stronger role in local climate adaptation strategies and formed a community collective for organic farming that they plan to use as a model to motivate other communities to shift away from using industrialised farming techniques, including pesticides. They continue to seek to revive their traditional practices to foster climate change resilience and contribute this knowledge to national climate policies.



## *Thailand* **Indigenous Women's Network of Thailand (IWNT)**

works to provide a gender perspective to development activities affecting Indigenous Peoples in northern Thailand. IWNT shared FPAR with indigenous Karen women in Ban Mai Mor Wa Khee, a village in Chiang Mai province, to research the impact of increasing heat on communities whose livelihoods depend on the surrounding forests. These women are facing dire water shortages, new and increasing health issues, and deepening poverty as a result of the increasing heat destroying their livelihoods. Further, new national climate change policies have taken away their land and forests as part of national efforts to restore forest cover, thus threatening displacement of these communities. The FPAR programme mobilised women to engage in local decision-making spaces and advocate for policies that address their needs and use indigenous knowledge to plan sustainable solutions while remaining in their communities. The FPAR helped indigenous women to build leadership skills, identify strategies and foster allies. They continue to engage with the local government to address their needs and use indigenous knowledge to plan long-term and sustainable climate solutions in coordination and consultation with the community.



## *Pakistan* **Roshni Tarqiyati Tanzeem (Roshni)**

is an organisation committed to promoting socio-economic justice for the nation's most disadvantaged groups. Roshni shared FPAR with rural and peasant women from five villages in the Ghotki district in the province of Sindh, Pakistan, which has been severely impacted by increasing heat caused by global warming. These villages are surrounded by oil and gas companies, sugar and rice mills, and fertiliser and cotton factories that not only rely on fossil fuels to operate, but also degrade the environment and have caused air and water pollution to dramatically increase in recent years. These conditions are worsened by the area suffering from severe deforestation, floods and erosion. Entrenched patriarchy, religious fundamentalism, tribal laws, feudalism and corruption deprive women and girls in these highly conservative communities of access to basic education, health care, public and community spaces, and participation in decision-making, both at home and in governance processes. Through FPAR, the women sought to address diminishing labour opportunities, a lack of decent wages, decreasing food security, pollution and increased landlessness. The CJ-FPAR mobilised the women groups to take collective action to restore their forest, promote sustainable agriculture and engage in community discussions with village leaders on gender discrimination, climate resilience and holding polluting industries accountable.



## Nepal

### Chetana Mahila Samuha (CMS)

campaigns to increase and ensure women's access to and control over natural resources and focuses on the conservation of forests and indigenous knowledge. The organisation shared FPAR with rural women in Jogidaha village, one of Nepal's most climate vulnerable areas. The community faces recurring floods and devastating land erosion, resulting in the loss of productive farmland and grazing areas for their livestock. Through FPAR, women created local education campaigns showcasing the localised impacts of climate change, and coordinated with other women's community groups and local government to plant 1,000 varieties of flora on the local river embankments to counter erosion. This led to the formation of the 'Greenery Defenders' Group', a collective aimed at raising women's voices on climate change issues with local ward authorities, leading restoration of riverbanks, and ensuring participation of women in local climate action and policy spaces. The women engage with the national government to influence climate policies to build climate resilient livelihoods and secure funding for local adaptation strategies.



## Burma Myanmar

### Chin Committee for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR)

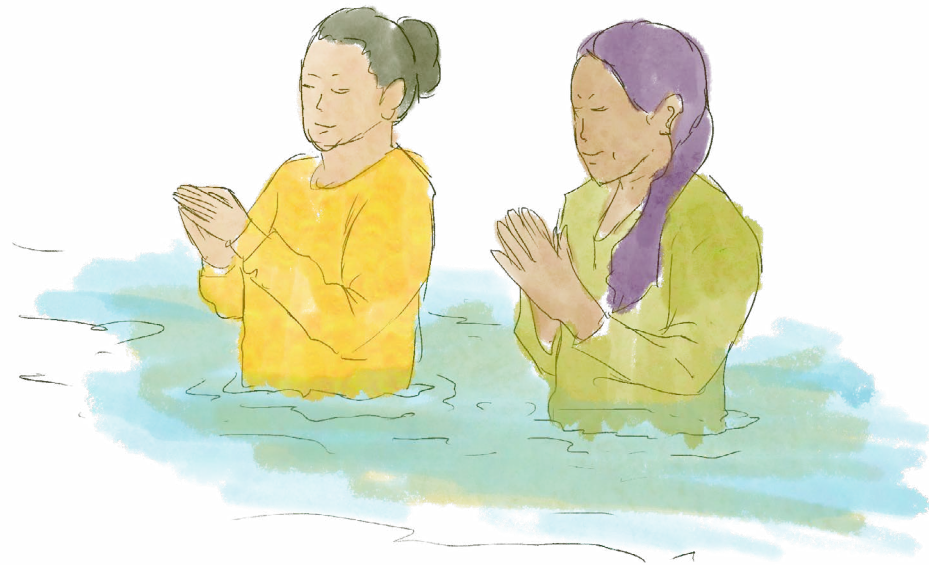
was formed in the aftermath of the 2015 Cyclone Komen and subsequent landslides which displaced and affected many indigenous communities. CCERR shared FPAR with the displaced indigenous women 'Hakha Tha Nu Bu' from the affected areas now relocated to settlements outside metropolitan Chin State. The resettled community lacks basic infrastructures such as proper housing, roads, water supplies, medical facilities or other vital necessities. The resettled community as a whole lacks reliable sources of income, and women must work harder to meet basic food and water needs and find new and unfamiliar livelihoods. Without proper waste management, non-agricultural wastes, such as tyres, tubes, plastic bags, bottles, toys and cement bags are burnt causing toxic air pollution. Through FPAR the women formed Hakha Thar Bu Nu - a community-based women's organisation with more than 400 members. They also collaborated with other marginalised indigenous and minority groups in Chin state for solidarity and movement building. Together the women are demanding basic facilities in the resettlement including finding their own solutions. They have strategically used media and theatre to engage with local and state authorities on climate policies, effectively securing a state-funded block of land to build their own office and develop plans to rebuild forests in the resettled areas.



## India

### North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)

is a grassroots volunteers group that works to strengthen the coping mechanisms of disaster prone communities, empower women, establish and promote community based institutions, and increase livelihood opportunities for farmers. They shared FPAR with women living in 12 villages in Sadiya sub-division at the north eastern remote corner of Assam, India. Their FPAR programme focused on the issue of increased burdens on women after men were forced to migrate to towns and cities to look for work since the climate crisis has drastically affected their agricultural lands, crop yields and sources of income. Women are also losing their livelihoods and food security due to climate change. Women report facing difficulties in managing agricultural work with increasing domestic work burden; financial distress and deepening poverty; health issues and increasing domestic violence and lack of safety and security. The women organised to address concerns regarding agricultural sustainability, violence against women, and women's rights. They also began mobilising to participate in local governance processes and advocate for the inclusion of rural and indigenous women in village development plans at the sub-divisional level of government.



### *Cambodia* **Highlanders Association (HA)**

works with indigenous communities to ensure their full and equal access to and enjoyment of their rights to their lands, natural resources, distinct identity and education. HA shared FPAR with indigenous 'Punong' women from Kbal Romeas village who have spent years resisting forced displacement caused by the Lower Se San II dam development project in the Mekong river. Their FPAR looked at the socio-economic impacts on indigenous women in the resisting community including the resettled community. FPAR mobilised indigenous 'Punong' women to continue resisting forced displacement resulting from the dam project. The women also demanded justice for the indigenous community to be meaningfully consulted to acquire their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in the future, and sought the restoration of basic facilities and essential services for resettled and other threatened communities.



### *Bangladesh* **Maleya Foundation (Maleya)**

aims to protect and strengthen indigenous knowledge and value towards the environment and culture, to advocate for just policies related to climate change, and to increase gender equality and promote peaceful conflict resolution within indigenous communities. Maleya shared FPAR with grassroots women from 13 villages home to the Rhakine indigenous community in the coastal area of Taltali, an administrative region of the Barguna District in the division of Barisal, Bangladesh. Women in these communities face frequent extreme weather events, increasing salinity destroying their farmlands and fish stocks, the loss of land due to land grabbing and deforestation, and devastating food insecurity as a result of the climate crisis. Their FPAR focused on women's decreased access to land and productive forest resources as a result of deforestation and the development of an ecotourism resort. FPAR increased women's political participation and amplified the struggles of coastal living indigenous communities in Bangladesh. Through FPAR, the women started attending community meetings and government programmes, where they challenged their exclusion and demanded recognition of their needs and demands. They remain determined to influence the government to reformulate gender-responsive, inclusive and non-discriminatory measures that support sustainable livelihood alternatives and opportunities to survive.



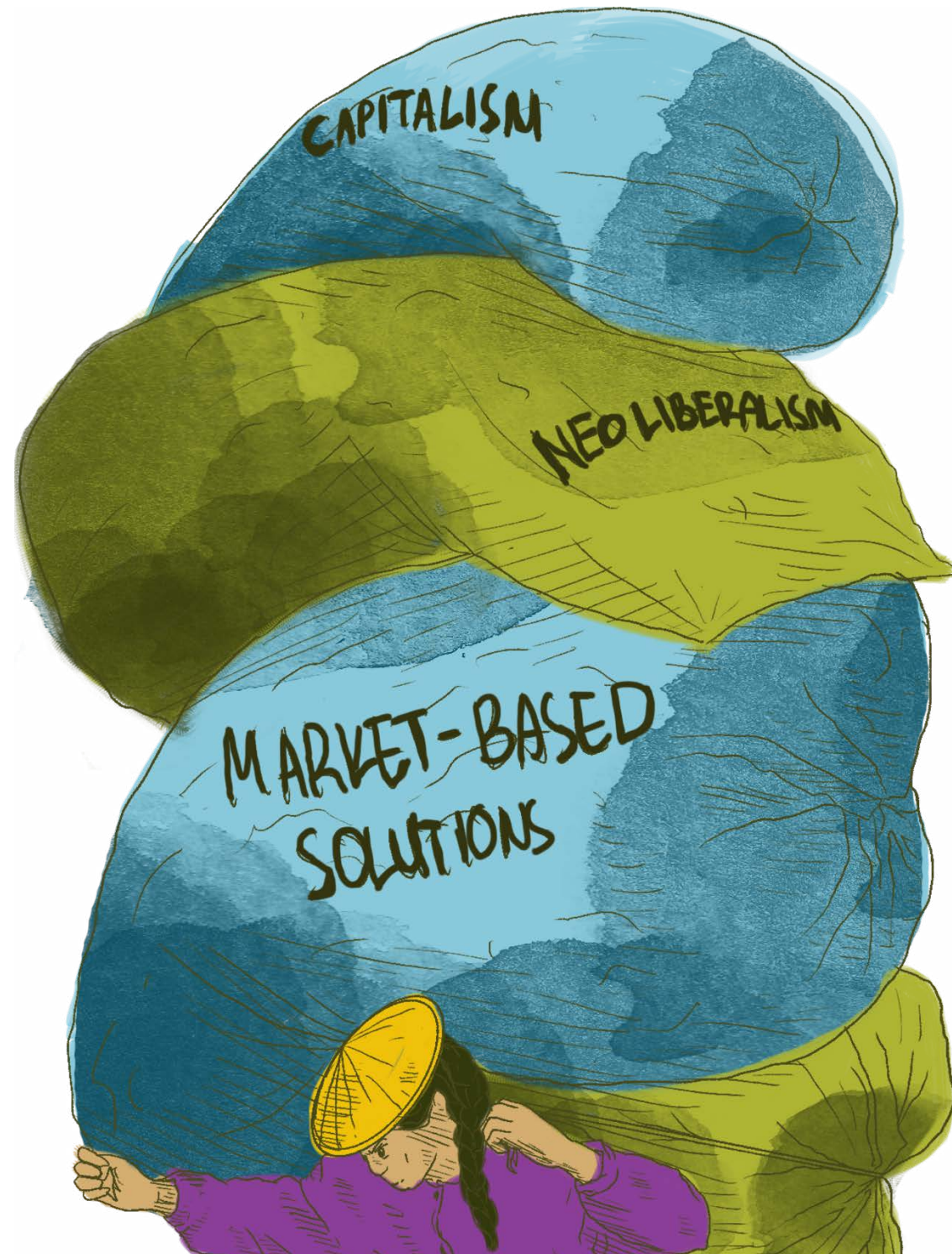
### *Sri Lanka* **We Women Lanka**

works to address human rights violations and all forms of gender-based discrimination. We Women Lanka shared FPAR with grassroots women in the resettled area of Meeriya Badhdha in the Poonagala State who were displaced by a landslide in 2014. The resettled people were given land and houses, but the community lacks basic amenities such as clean drinking water, toilets, a waste disposal system, or any public infrastructure including health centres or schools. Since resettlement, the women and girls have faced increased risks of violence when they head out to collect water and bathe. The women do not feel safe in their new homes and hesitate to leave the children at home to go to work. Through FPAR, WWL mobilised the women to form an advocacy group with women leaders who participate in local meetings to raise their concerns and demand actions to improve the living conditions and reduce gender-based violence in their communities. They are now organising to ensure women's equal rights to land ownership and livelihood opportunities; to have women's needs and demands recognised in district development plans; and to call for the provision of basic amenities such as adequate water supply to reduce women's burden and vulnerability.



# Section 1

## A Planet in Crisis



“

**Climate change will have devastating consequences for people in poverty. Even under the best-case scenario, hundreds of millions will face food insecurity, forced migration, disease and death. Climate change threatens the future of human rights...**

”

**–UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, 2019.<sup>1</sup>**

### 1.1 Pathways to the Point of no Turning Back

The science is bleak and the growing body of evidence shows the immediate and alarming impacts of the climate crisis even more so. The central aim of the Paris Agreement adopted by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015 is to strengthen the global response to the climate threat, with the specific goal of keeping the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius (below pre-industrial levels) while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Yet only five years after the landmark climate agreement, 2020 proved to be the hottest year ever recorded, with global surface temperatures averaging 2.25 degrees Fahrenheit above historical averages, or 1.2 degrees Celsius. This catastrophic new record comes even as the COVID-19 pandemic slowed the worldwide pace of emissions in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

In a 2018 special report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) painted a grim picture of the evolving climate crisis. The report stated that even the lower target of 2 degrees

Celsius global warming above pre-industrial levels agreed upon in the Paris Agreement would lead to devastating impacts such as more heat-related deaths, smaller crop yields, worse extreme weather events, rising sea levels, catastrophic loss of biodiversity, mass displacement, slower economic growth, more people in poverty and water stress faced by up to 50 per cent more people compared to a 1.5 degrees Celsius world.<sup>3</sup> They also highlighted that, without strong commitments to transition away from a fossil fuel based economic system, we are on track to burn through the rest of the 1.5 degrees Celsius carbon budget by 2030 and put the world on track for a catastrophic 3 degrees Celsius or more of global warming.

In order to stay well below 1.5 degrees Celsius, the world must embark on a massive, radical global effort to stop extracting and burning fossil fuels and move to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030 to decarbonise the world. Sadly, greenhouse gas emissions have risen at a rate of 1.5 per cent per year in the last 10 years, emissions from energy use and industry reached their highest levels in 2018,<sup>4</sup> and the five hottest years on record occurred in the second half of the last decade.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>United Nations Human Rights Council. Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. (2019). Climate Change and Poverty. Retrieved from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39>

<sup>2</sup>NASA. 2020 Tied for Warmest Year on Record, NASA Analysis Shows. (2021). Published January 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/2020-tied-for-warmest-year-on-record-nasa-analysis-shows>

<sup>3</sup>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2018). Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

<sup>4</sup>United Nations Environment Programme. Emissions Gap Report 2019. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

<sup>5</sup>Fountain, H and Schwartz, J. New York Times. Scientists Predict Scorching Temperatures to Last Through Summer. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/climate/summer-weather-prediction.html>

The unrestrained nature of the climate crisis holds dire consequences for our region. Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster-prone region in the world,<sup>6</sup> and an average of 43,000 people are killed in this region from disasters per year. A majority of the countries proven to be most vulnerable to the effects of climate change are Asian nations including some of those where we conducted FPAR -- Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.<sup>7</sup>

Asia and the Pacific region is home to almost half of the world's poor, with an estimated 900 million living in poverty, out of which 400 million people, mostly women and girls, are living in extreme poverty and earning under USD 1.90 per day.<sup>8</sup> The impending economic recession from the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to thrust hundreds of millions more people into poverty, placing the burden of both intersecting crises on the backs of the world's most poor and vulnerable, and especially women.

While rural and poor women in Asia and the Pacific have low or even negative emissions, they are already experiencing the devastating consequences of the climate crisis. Women experience systemic discrimination that severely limits their adaptive capacity in the face of a boiling planet, including the gendered division of labour, sexist systems of land and productive asset ownership, and decision-making processes which exclude their voices.

Many women, and the families and communities they care for, face dire food insecurity as the small-scale and subsistence based farming they depend on for their livelihoods and food grows increasingly unreliable. Women suffer a growing number of health issues such as malnutrition due to food scarcity, as women are often the first to forego food in times of food shortages in order to prioritise leaving food for their families. They also face new vector-borne illnesses, pollution-induced ailments, and added mental and physical stress resulting from the amplified burden of care placed on women as they are forced to work harder and longer to provide basic necessities for their families. Extreme weather events further limit women's access to sexual and reproductive health services in a region with already precarious health infrastructure.

Furthermore, in instances of displacement, resettled communities often lack any availability or access to sexual and reproductive health services. The crisis also increases sexual and gender-based violence as deepening poverty exposes women and girls to early and forced marriages as a solution for family economic stress, and women are left more vulnerable to abuse and harassment in resettlement communities or emergency centres. As climate change amplifies these multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and threats to women human rights defenders that organise to defend their ecosystems and rights are often met with assassination, criminalisation, sexual violence, intimidation and assault.<sup>9</sup> In 2019, there was a 30 per cent increase in land and environment defenders being killed worldwide, with the Philippines listed as one of the deadliest countries for activists.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>6</sup>UNDP, Climate change in Asia and the Pacific. What's at stake? (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/presscenter/articles/2019/climate-change-in-asia-and-the-pacific.html>

<sup>7</sup>Germanwatch. Global Climate Risk Index 2019. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.germanwatch.org/en/16046>

<sup>8</sup>UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Economic Situation and Prospects: October 2019 Briefing, No. 131*. (2019) Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-october-2019-briefing-no-131/#footnote-001>

<sup>9</sup>For a comprehensive outline of climate change impacts on women refer to: United Nations Human Rights Council. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women. Retrieved from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/26>

<sup>10</sup>Ramirez, Rachel. 2019: The deadliest year yet for environmental activists. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://grist.org/justice/2019-the-deadliest-year-yet-for-environmental-activists/>

## 1.2 Neglecting Polluters Accountability: Placing the Burden of Climate Change on Least Culpable Countries

Responsibility for and capacity to act on mitigation, adaptation, and addressing loss and damage varies tremendously across nations and among classes. It must be stressed that the peoples who are already paying the highest human, financial and environmental costs of climate inaction are those least responsible for the crisis.

It is increasingly clear that today's mitigation commitments are insufficient to prevent climate change, and that no adaptation measures can meet the severity of unavoidable, unmanageable and unpredictable climate impacts already resulting in major loss and damages for women and grassroots communities in Asia and the Pacific. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), in its 2019 Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, presented the current status of risk in the region, including slow-onset risks (alongside sudden-onset/extreme event risks).<sup>11</sup> They determined the extent of potential disaster and climate-related economic losses in the region will average an estimated USD 675 billion annually, with climate risks accounting for around 85 per cent of these losses.<sup>12</sup>

The global community, and particularly high-emitting countries and corporations, collectively responsible for climate change, must stop placing the heaviest burden of the crisis on the backs of indigenous, rural, migrant and marginalised women in Asia and the Pacific on whose labour the global capitalist economy runs.

Article 3 of the Paris Agreement reads:

***“The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”***

This squarely places the onus on wealthy and developed nations, recognising the historical responsibility of the North for the climate crisis, and calls for equitably transferring the resources at their disposal to developing countries to combat climate change and the adverse effects thereof.

Yet, high-emitting and polluting countries, and their extractive industry behemoths, maintain powerful corporate influence over the global political economy, and neglect their commitments to redress historical and ongoing emissions.

Under the Paris Agreement, the world's nations have thus far proposed emissions reduction targets, called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), that are not even close to meeting the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal and instead put us on track for approximately 4 degrees Celsius of warming. To counter this, nations would need to dramatically raise the ambition of their current NDC pledges, up to five times over, and triple their emissions reduction pledges in order to meet the secondary 2 degrees Celsius goal.<sup>13</sup>

The NDCs are also altogether out of proportion to national capacity and responsibility, with developing countries generally proposing to do their fair share, and wealthy countries proposing far too little. And, to date, only approximately a quarter of NDCs even include loss and damage.<sup>14</sup> The G20 Member States, those countries with the largest economies globally that account for 85 per cent of the world's GDP, are responsible for 78 per cent of global emissions.<sup>15</sup> Over the years, G20 members have failed to take on urgent transformative climate commitments at the necessary breadth and scale to meet their Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) as established under the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.<sup>16</sup> For example, the United States of America alone emits 13 per cent of global GHG emissions, but, rather than cutting those emissions, saw them spike in 2018.<sup>17</sup> The US is just one of several G20 members projected to fail to meet their emissions reduction targets.

COP 25, held in Madrid in 2019, was intended to address the gap between where we are and where we need to go to keep global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius by urging countries to submit revised NDCs in the Global Stocktake 2020 that were more ambitious.<sup>18</sup> As it stands, however, only 79 countries indicated that they intend to enhance their NDCs, and a majority of them were small and vulnerable countries whose emissions cover only 10.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The CSO Equity Review Coalition conducted a CSO Equity Review on Loss and Damage and found that many developing country pledges meet or exceed their fair share of responsibility based on their historical contributions to the crisis.<sup>19</sup> On the contrary, most developed countries have fair shares that are already too large to fulfil exclusively within their borders, even with extremely ambitious domestic actions.

<sup>11</sup>United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.unescap.org/publications/asia-pacific-disaster-report-2019>

<sup>12</sup>Stockholm Environment Institute. 2019 Asia-Pacific Disaster Report shows a region at risk and running out of time. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.sei.org/perspectives/2019-asia-pacific-disaster-report-shows-a-region-at-risk-and-running-out-of-time/>

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Women and Gender Constituency. WGC Feminist Demands at COP25. (2019). Retrieved from: <http://womengenderclimate.org/wgc-feminist-demands-at-cop25/>

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) is a well recognised principle of international environmental law establishing that all states are responsible for addressing global environmental destruction yet not equally responsible. This principle is explicitly recognised in Article 4 of the UNFCCC

<sup>17</sup>United States Environmental Protection Agency. Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Retrieved from: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

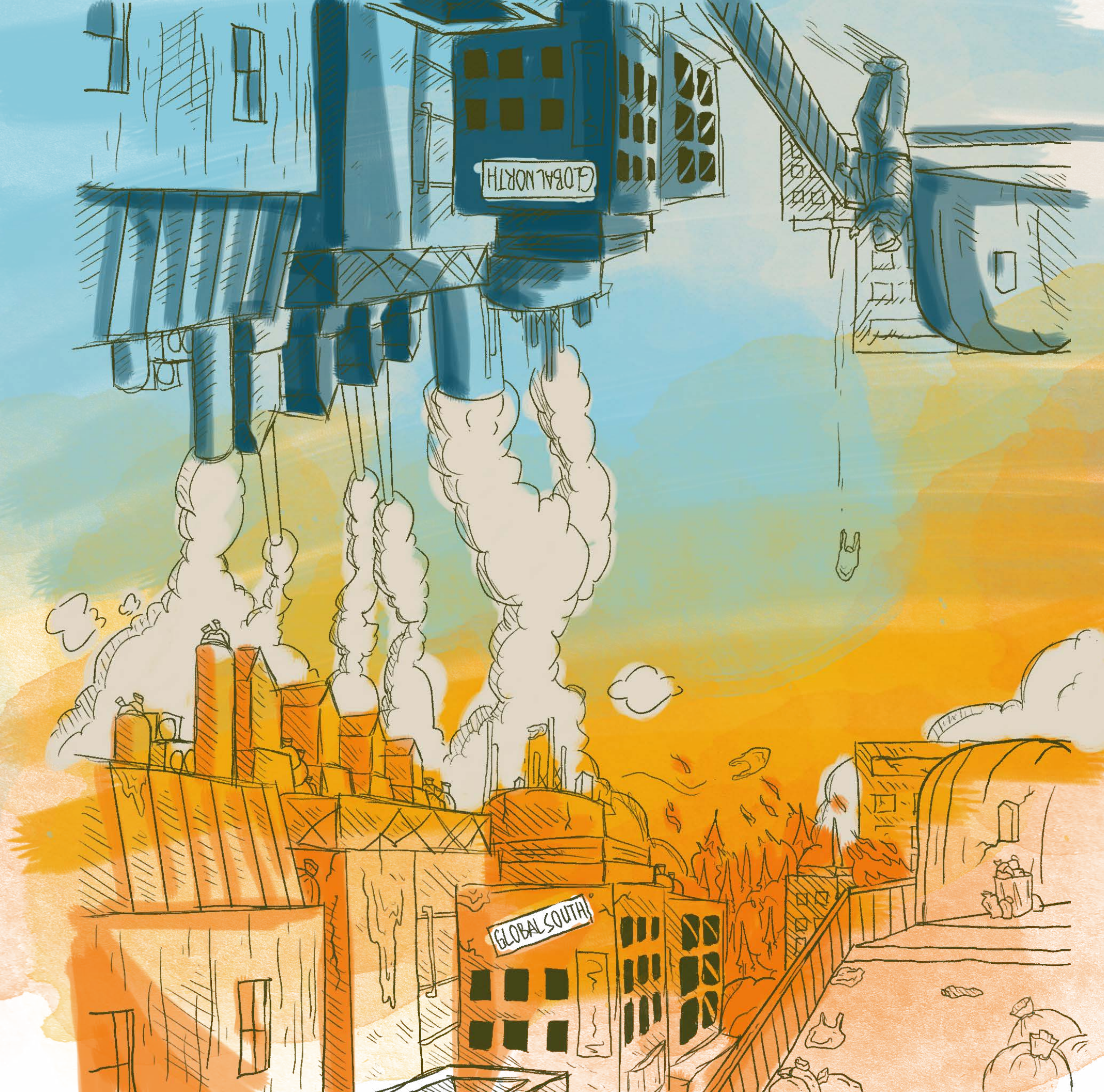
<sup>18</sup>World Resources Institute. Cop 25: What we Needed, What we Got, What's Next. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2019/12/cop25-what-we-needed-what-we-got-whats-next>

<sup>19</sup>CSO Equity Review. Can Climate Change Fueled Loss and Damage Ever be Fair? (2019). Manila, London, Cape Town, Washington, et al.: CSO Equity Review Coalition.

For instance, their findings show that the EU would be responsible for a 24 per cent reduction in global emissions by 2030 in order to make up for its accumulated historical emissions. In order to achieve this, the EU would have to reduce its emissions by approximately 160 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030 if it were to meet its fair share entirely through domestic reductions. This would be impossible, so the EU should instead achieve its fair share by funding mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage in developing countries, rather than forcing developing nations to compensate for its failure to achieve its true share of emissions reductions responsibilities.



*Section 2*  
Where We Are Now



## 2.1 Loss and Damage: Context and History

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acknowledged that they should – when taking action to address climate change – respect, promote and consider their respective obligations with regard to human rights. The UNFCCC protects the right to development, gender equality, as well as the empowerment of women and intergenerational equity. Therefore, climate change resulting in losses and damages and displacement represents the violation of the human rights of the world's most vulnerable people, especially the rights of indigenous peoples, women, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations. Climate-induced loss and damage affects human security and the social fabric of communities through loss of livelihoods, land and access to vital resources; as well as causes the loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and the spread of infectious diseases.<sup>20</sup>

Loss and damage (I&d) are assessed through the lens of both economic and non-economic losses. Economic loss and damage are easily quantified as loss of income or property damage. Many forms of loss and damage can be calculated in terms of monetary loss. However, the loss experienced most severely by women can often not be quantified as easily. Non-economic loss and damage is harder to put a number on, such as those impacts that can't easily be measured like the loss of traditional ways of living; impacts on birth rates; women's health and psycho-social well-being; and the loss of indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage and biodiversity that sustained livelihoods. Non-economic losses that result from the climate crisis can have extremely detrimental and long-lasting impacts for marginalised women. These specific gendered losses, both economic and non-economic, must serve as the foundation for global efforts to address loss and damage.

In recognition of the rising I&d facing the Global South, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have long led the call for a mechanism to compensate countries most impacted by sea level rise.<sup>21</sup> Over time, as more vulnerable and low-contributing countries recognised that they face threats from climate change that are beyond their capacity to respond, support grew for the notion of a mechanism that would help in addressing I&d resulting from the climate crisis.

A loss and damage work programme was first initiated in 2010 at COP16 in Cancun. This led to the establishment in 2013, at COP19, of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) to 'address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to

the adverse effects of climate change'.<sup>22</sup> The WIM framework is intended for wealthy and developed nations to provide finance, technology and capacity building to enable developing nations to respond to and recover from both the immediate impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events, as well as slower-onset disasters such as sea-level rise.<sup>23</sup>

In 2019, the Warsaw International Mechanism was up for review after decades of failing to reach an agreement on financing.<sup>24</sup> The review ultimately served to show that the current flagship mechanism from the UNFCCC on loss and damage has not yet been fully operationalised and is far from effective in adequately addressing existing and expected loss and damage. While the WIM review opened up a key opportunity to facilitate a discussion about linking climate financing to L&D, the United States-led group of developed nations opposed the establishment of a financial instrument, fearing the repercussions of a mechanism that could deliver true accountability for climate change responsibility. Developing countries continue to argue that the lack of a dedicated funding mechanism associated with loss and damage results in toothless climate action that fails to hold those most responsible for the crisis accountable while shifting the burden of loss to vulnerable nations.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.2 Who Pays? Polluters Must Pay!

Articles 4.3 and 4.4 of the UNFCCC require *“the developed country Parties and other developed Parties included in Annex II shall provide new and additional financial resources to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties in complying with their obligations under Article 12, paragraph 1. They shall also provide such financial resources, including for the transfer of technology, needed by the developing country Parties to meet the agreed full incremental costs of implementing measures that are covered by paragraph 1 of this Article and that are agreed between a developing country Party and the international entity or entities referred to in Article 11, in accordance with that Article. The implementation of these commitments shall take into account the need for adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds and the importance of appropriate burden sharing among the developed country Parties. The developed country Parties and other developed Parties included in Annex II shall also assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting costs of adaptation to those adverse effects.”*

The UN has established a number of funds to finance a green energy transition, climate mitigation and adaptation. But rich

<sup>20</sup>See: United Nations. Documents- to Loss and Damage for an overview of the UNFCCC's work pertaining to L&D. Accessed here: <https://unfccc.int/topics/resilience/resources/documents-on-loss-and-damage>

<sup>21</sup>Climate Analytics. Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC process. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://climateanalytics.org/briefings/loss-and-damage/>

<sup>22</sup>UNFCCC. Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM). Retrieved from: <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/loss-and-damage/warsaw-international-mechanism>

<sup>23</sup>Climate Home News. Loss and damage: Who pays for the impacts of the heated Earth? (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/12/03/loss-damage-pays-impacts-heated-earth/>

<sup>24</sup>Basu, Jayanta. Climate Emergency CoP 25: Loss and damage 'fighting out' in Madrid. Down to Earth. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/climate-emergency-cop-25-loss-and-damage-fighting-out-in-madrid-68416>

<sup>25</sup>Ibid



countries flouting historical responsibility have dragged their feet on providing new finance to cover losses, preferring instead to encourage the creation of insurance schemes. They have also sought to avoid any liability and compensation claims for their historical responsibility in causing climate change, with the US a consistent opponent across multiple administrations.

In an open letter to COP 25 President and Chile's Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt, more than 150 civil society groups have called for the creation of a specific financing facility and debt relief to help vulnerable countries recover from loss and damage impacts. They argued for regular contributions from wealthy countries and global taxes on financial transactions, international air travel and fossil fuels to finance the fund.<sup>26</sup> The letter follows a report by a coalition of climate and environmental organisations that estimated rich countries should provide an additional USD 50 billion per year by 2022 and USD 300 billion annually by 2030 to address loss and damage.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>See: Action Aid. More than 150 NGOs sign open letter calling for loss and damage fund with debt relief. Retrieved from: <https://actionaid.org/news/2019/more-150-ngos-sign-open-letter-calling-loss-and-damage-fund-debt-relief>

<sup>27</sup>CSO Equity Review. Can Climate Change Fuelled Loss and Damage Ever be Fair? (2019). Manila, London, Cape Town, Washington, et al.: CSO Equity Review Coalition. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/620ef5326bbf2d7627553dbf/t/6228279dd8fe531b12db0aac/1646798760873/CSO.Equity.Review--2019--Can.Climate.Fuelled.Loss.and.Damage.Ever.Be.Fair.pdf>

Linking climate financing to I&d remains a key discussion item in international negotiations. Discussions on WIM are ongoing and fractured as developed countries strongly resist providing any new and additional finances on loss and damage or supporting the creation of a financial instrument for WIM. Their position is that 'overseas development aid' should be used to finance I&d - a move that absolves them of taking full responsibility for making reparations for their colonial legacies and their role in fuelling the climate crisis. For developing countries to dig into development aid for climate adaptation and resilience, it would remove much needed funds from the development of essential public services such as schools, hospitals, roads, infrastructure and more.

Progress on the advancement of women's human rights and gender equality would be significantly impacted if development aid were to be stretched between development needs and I&d.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is currently the primary global fund to address climate change, and has a mandate to help developing countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate shifts. Loss and damage is not specified as a part of its mission. In practice, accessing money from the GCF is a lengthy and convoluted process. Relying on existing climate funding sources to support loss and damage projects, without establishing new and additional sources of funding specifically for that purpose, risks placing more pressure on already inadequate international funding.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the absence of a dedicated funding mechanism associated with loss and damage continues, and the gap between the amount of money needed to address the climate crisis and the amount of money available for such purposes widens.

The review of the Warsaw International Mechanism concluded by calling for an expert group to be set up in 2020; the establishment of a 'Santiago network' to catalyse technical support; for developed countries to scale up finance; and for the Green Climate Fund to provide financial support. While the conclusion of the review marks marginal progress, COP 25 discussions on finance for loss and damage primarily revolved around existing climate finance rather than generating new finance, a major problem considering existing finance is already inadequate in meeting mitigation and adaptation costs which don't even account for loss and damage.

<sup>28</sup>Rowling, Megan. *Green Climate Fund stepping up on loss and damage, head says*. Information taken from interview with Harjeet Singh, global climate change lead for the charity ActionAid International. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climate-change-accord-damage-intervie-idUSKBN1YG2I6>

## 2.3 Accountability for Loss and Damage: Where is the Money?

It is estimated that raising the funds required for rights-based reparation of climate change harms will equate to at least USD 300 billion of financing requirements within the next decade, potentially reaching approximately USD 1.2 trillion per year by 2060.<sup>29</sup> This is likely to be under-estimated but provides a helpful reference point with which to evaluate proposed market, state and innovative financing mechanisms for raising the funds required to repair climate change harms.

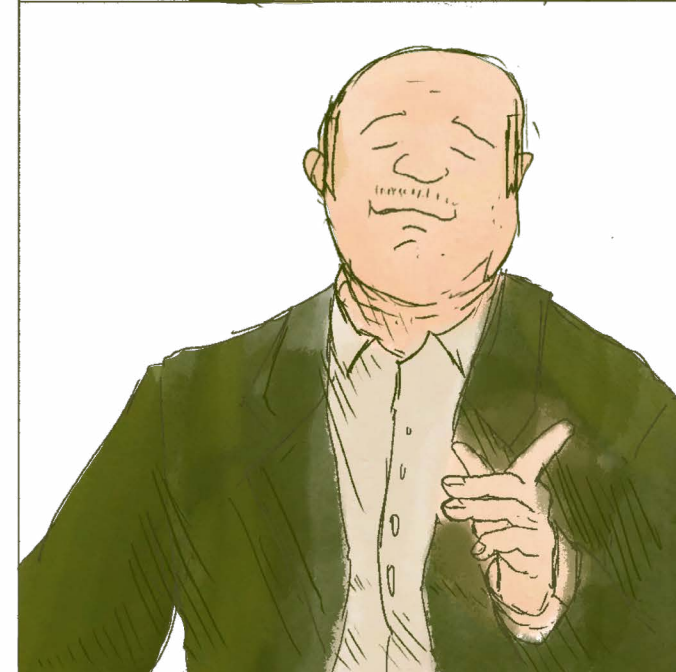
A comprehensive human rights analysis of the market and state mechanisms to address loss and damage concluded the failure of those mechanisms to protect the rights of communities already suffering the worst impacts of the climate crisis. The FPAR women found that none of the market mechanisms reviewed are compliant with a rights-centred approach, and that most market solutions shift the financial burden away from developed nations and back to developing countries. These mechanisms also fail against transparency and accountability measures and do not involve the people most at risk in decision-making to protect their human rights.<sup>30</sup>

Negotiations around climate finance in recent years have centred strongly around private sector engagement, focusing on insurance and credit schemes which prioritise profits and investments over protecting and fulfilling the human rights of the world's most climate vulnerable people. Such mechanisms have proven to require climate vulnerable states to pay for premiums, spread the risk of catastrophic events in a for-profit market place, and rely on existing finances rather than offer transparent means of producing and creating new climate finance. In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Tacloban region of the Philippines and led to an estimated 7,354 deaths, caused damage or destruction to one million homes, and four million people were displaced. Of the approximately USD 10 billion of damages caused, only a small fraction was covered by insurance (between USD 300-700 million).

It is extremely concerning to see a strong pushback on the demands for the rich nations to be accountable and pay for their historical responsibility. The current climate finance schemes are designed for the emitters to facilitate their business as usual and for profit-making amid the climate emergency. The insurance scheme to address loss and damage clearly commodifies the environment along with peoples' lives, cultures and survival. It is a manifestation of yet another false solution that will deteriorate

the current climate crisis instead of advancing women's human rights and enabling communities to shape climate actions with Development Justice and the transformational shifts at the centre of the discussion.

A truly rights-based approach to climate finance should deliver climate financing, not in the form of insurance, credit schemes, bonds, loans or any other debt-creating instrument, but should instead be provided in the form of grants and untied aid. Developing countries are already being exploited under the rubric of 'tied development aid' with neoliberal conditionalities and further crippled by shrinking policy spaces and regulatory framework imposed through an unjust international trade and investment regime where resources, labour and wealth are diverted from the Global South to the Global North. Climate finance mechanisms must not replicate neoliberal market based approaches that allow for developed nations to make profits off the back of developing nations while simultaneously avoiding historical responsibility.



LIABILITY AND  
COMPEASATION CLAIMS  
FOR HISTORICAL  
RESPONSIBILITY

CAUSING  
CLIMATE  
CRISIS

<sup>29</sup>ActionAid. Market solutions to help climate victims fail human rights test. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/Loss%20and%20Damage%20Finance%20and%20Hum....pdf>

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.



*Section 3*  
"From Birth to Death":  
Gendered Dimensions of  
Climate-Induced Loss and  
Damage



“

***From birth to death women are not allowed to make decisions or make choices about their lives. Even for very small things, such as saving money, wearing the clothes of their choice, going to relatives' homes without the permission of the male head of the house...***

”

**– Roshni Tarquyati Tanzeem, Pakistan**

CJ-FPAR findings highlight a resounding and undeniable reality -- the global community is failing women living in rural and remote areas, particularly indigenous women, in Asia and the Pacific. These women live under constant threat of starvation, loss, violence and displacement in the face of the climate crisis, yet hardly contributed anything to its creation. The existing inequalities women face have only multiplied with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.1 Climate Induced Displacement and Women's Human Rights

One clear impact of climate change that must remain at the forefront of climate action is the increased displacement and migration; both within and between countries. The CJ-FPAR journey documented numerous communities forcibly displaced by extreme weather events. For women in Asia and the Pacific region, the issue is more than just displacement – it is the loss of identity, of culture, and of generational heritage. The loss of matrilineal land can decrease perceived community value and increase women's risk to gendered vulnerabilities. Women endure losing independence, traditions and culture, and often face a life of uncertainty in the relocation sites.

Climate change is the primary driver of internal displacement, and the decade between 2009 and 2019 saw over 20 million people a year internally displaced by climate-fueled disasters.<sup>31</sup> People in low and lower middle-income countries are four times more likely to be displaced by extreme weather disasters than people in high-income countries. During the same ten-year period, low- and lower middle-income countries saw over 11 times more people displaced by extreme weather than in high-income countries. The vast majority – around 80

displaced live in Asia.<sup>32</sup> In 2019, out of the 24.9 million new internal displacements across 140 countries and territories, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific accounted for more than 17 million -- three times the number displaced by conflict and violence.<sup>33</sup> Extreme weather events are expected to continue to grow in frequency and intensity, driving millions more from their homes, and in some cases across borders.<sup>34</sup>

Women face many challenges when forced to move to relocation sites. The remote and inconvenient locations of the sites limit their access to job opportunities and their traditional forms of livelihoods, and often cut off their children's access to schools. Relocation sites frequently lack sufficient infrastructure, including waste management systems, traditional places of worship, or health services. For instance, in Burma/Myanmar, Cyclone Komen flooded 12 of Myanmar's 14 states and forced 1.6 million people to leave their homes in 2015. Ethnic Hakha Thar women were made to relocate to a resettlement community in the capital city of Chin State that now lacks basic infrastructure including proper housing, roads, clean drinking water, medical clinics and other necessary services. There is little opportunity for meaningful engagement with the agencies and institutions working on relief and rehabilitation for those impacted by Cyclone Komen, which leads to major gaps in aid since the community's needs are often different from what is assumed or perceived by the humanitarian and development agencies.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Migration Data Portal: Environmental Migration. (2020). Retrieved from: [https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental\\_migration\\_and\\_statistics](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental_migration_and_statistics)



<sup>31</sup>OXFAM. Forced from home: Climate-fueled displacement. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620914/mb-climate-displacement-cop25-021219-en.pdf>

“

*Women are more likely to experience the adverse effects of climate change than men, because women constitute most of the world's poor and are often directly dependent on threatened natural resources as their primary source of food and income. Although some individual women may be less vulnerable to climate change than some men, the global perpetuation of discrimination, inequality, patriarchal structures and systemic barriers, as well as the different views, experiences and needs of men and women, contribute to an overall higher risk of women experiencing harmful effects of climate change. In this way, climate change perpetuates gender inequality. Gender inequality and the violation of women's rights, in turn, hinder women's participation in climate action. Addressing climate change, including its gendered impacts, is therefore essential to protecting the human rights of women.*

”

-Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019.<sup>35</sup>

34

<sup>35</sup>United Nations Human Rights Council. Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Analytical study on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/26> Retrieved from: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/26>

### **Case Study: Resettlement Community in Meeriya Badhdha in Poonagala State, Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, women living in a resettlement community in the Poonagala State lack access to basic amenities such as clean drinking water, toilets and waste management systems, as well as any basic social services such as maternity services or a health centre. The community lacks garbage disposal services and has no reliable access to clean water. Women here report increasing rates of health issues for themselves and their children due to lack of access to clean water to enable proper sanitation and hygiene, such as urinary tract infections, kidney stones and skin diseases. They also face rising health problems as a result of their increasing work burdens. Women in the resettlement area have extremely limited access to employment opportunities, and most of them work doing hard manual day labour in nearby tea estates. This labour intensive work causes and exacerbates women's health issues, as it involves carrying heavy bundles of tea leaves on their heads. The women also report that their employers fail to provide them with any sanitation facilities or rest areas, and the women must work without access to restrooms even when they are menstruating.

In the Sri Lanka FPAR community, women and girls have faced increased risks of violence when they head out to collect water and bathe since resettlement. One community leader outlined the dangers:

*“We stayed 13 months in [an] old tea factory before getting houses. The factory hall was not big enough to accommodate 300 persons and there were only two toilets with limited water facilities. My two daughters are young, 17 and 20 years old -- can you believe how we manage with our menstruation? One day my elder daughter had an incident at the bathing place 4 km [away] from the temporary hall in the evening. When she came after her bath through the forest area, a team of boys stopped her and tried to assault her. Luckily my father came suddenly and saved my daughter.”*

- Meeriya Badhdha Woman, Sri Lanka

35

Large-scale migrations prompted by the climate crisis may also increase the risk of hostility and conflict in host communities as tensions and competition over land and resettlement areas arise.<sup>36</sup> Instances of climate-related disasters lead to outbreaks of violence, especially in areas where ethnic tensions, poor governance and social inequalities persist. The destabilising effect of climate change acts as a threat multiplier, and climatic shocks act as risk multipliers that aggravate often fragile inter-ethnic relations and already-dire social and political tensions.<sup>37</sup> This exposes women not only to the dangers of long migrations such as hunger, dehydration and extreme weather, but also to sexual and gender-based violence.

**Case Study:  
Displacement of Rakhain indigenous women,  
Taltoli, Bangladesh**

In Taltoli, Bangladesh, where Rakhain indigenous women displaced from their lands from natural disasters, land-grabbing and the loss of their forests also now face increasing anti-indigenous sentiments that prevent them from accessing available resources. The Rakhain women report facing widespread discrimination by the Bengali community, who form the majority population in Taltoli. Rakhains often encounter social and institutional discrimination that limits their adaptive capacity and undermines their participation in decision-making spaces. For instance, Rakhain women feel unsafe and unwelcome at emergency cyclone centres, and in the event of natural disasters, they instead take shelter at schools. The fear of facing harassment and ridicule prevents them from accessing available resources required for their safety and further exacerbates their vulnerability in the face of the climate crisis.

Communities living in poverty are also more vulnerable to slow-onset disasters, and it is estimated that by 2050 over 143 million people will be at risk of being internally displaced due to slow-onset impacts.<sup>38</sup> These phenomena are prompting some countries to plan for the relocation of the climate vulnerable communities as an adaptation strategy to minimise harm. As people move within and across borders, their human rights must be fundamentally protected. However, as it stands, the current human rights frameworks and individual nations already dealing with climate displacement fail to deliver comprehensive rights-based approaches to climate-induced human mobility.

<sup>36</sup> Background information on this topic can be found here: Bandur, Marcel. Climate Justice in the Rohingya Crisis. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.tecsea.info/post/climate-justice-in-the-rohingya-crisis>

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>UNOHCHR. Call for inputs: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. (2020). Retrieved from: [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/CallforInputs\\_IDPs\\_climate\\_change.aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/CallforInputs_IDPs_climate_change.aspx)

## 3.2 Destabilising Women's Traditional Ways of Living

Women in Asia and the Pacific are exposed to increased climate risks because of their primary role in care work and agricultural production, and carry the burden of long-term impacts of loss of land, livelihood and food security as a result of climate change. Many women in the region rely on natural resources for basic sustenance and income. CJ-FPAR findings show that prolonged dry seasons, rising temperatures, increased salinity, rainy seasons, flash floods, landslides, unpredictable weather patterns and siltation are all identified as climate-related factors destabilising women's traditional farming practices and threatening the already-precarious access to the land and productive resources they rely on for food and income.

**Case Study:  
Failing Agriculture in Jogidaha Village,  
Eastern Nepal**

In Jogidaha village, one of the most climate vulnerable areas in Eastern Nepal and an FPAR community, floods and droughts are the most frequent extreme climate events. Most of the women are farmers who depend on rain-fed agriculture. Women researchers identified that the quality of the soil in the region has gone down due to flooding, droughts, pests and new crop diseases which have reduced agricultural production. Every year members of the community now face issues due to land and crops being damaged by floods. Seasonal rivers are becoming unpredictable due to erratic rainfall and erosion of embankments. Narrow and deep rivers are becoming shallow and wider, converting hundreds of hectares of agricultural land into unusable fields.

Unreliable agricultural production has caused most of the male villagers to migrate to find work elsewhere. Women are left to face the realities of climate change alone, and see their workload grow to unmanageable levels as they have to tend to farming, finding water, food and fuel for cooking, tending to livestock, and caring for family members.

Villager Sikalwoti Sadha describes, “...We are facing more difficulties. Whole day we do hard labour in the sun and rain. We go back to shelter at night, we have no electricity. So it is very difficult to cook and feed our children. We are very tired and need proper sleep, but during the monsoon we can't sleep due to flood risk and our shelter is also improper. Rainwater drops onto our bed, our clothes get wet. Being a Dalit, we don't [get help] even during emergencies.”

Women's livelihoods are heavily dependent on agricultural yields, which they rely on to generate cash income and take care of their families. On average, women make up about 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries<sup>39</sup> -- and up to 70 per cent in South Asia<sup>40</sup> -- a sector which is increasingly threatened and compromised by the unpredictability of climate change and its impacts on the environment and natural resources.<sup>41</sup> Climate change is also expected to reduce agricultural production between 2-15 per cent and decrease the nutritional value of crops as CO2 emissions reduce the nutrient content of the soil, with both major economic and non-economic implications for women.

Extreme poverty intensified by climate chaos also forces many men to migrate in order to find work elsewhere, resulting in an immense increase in women's burden in agricultural work, providing food, water, feeding livestock and all domestic responsibilities of care.

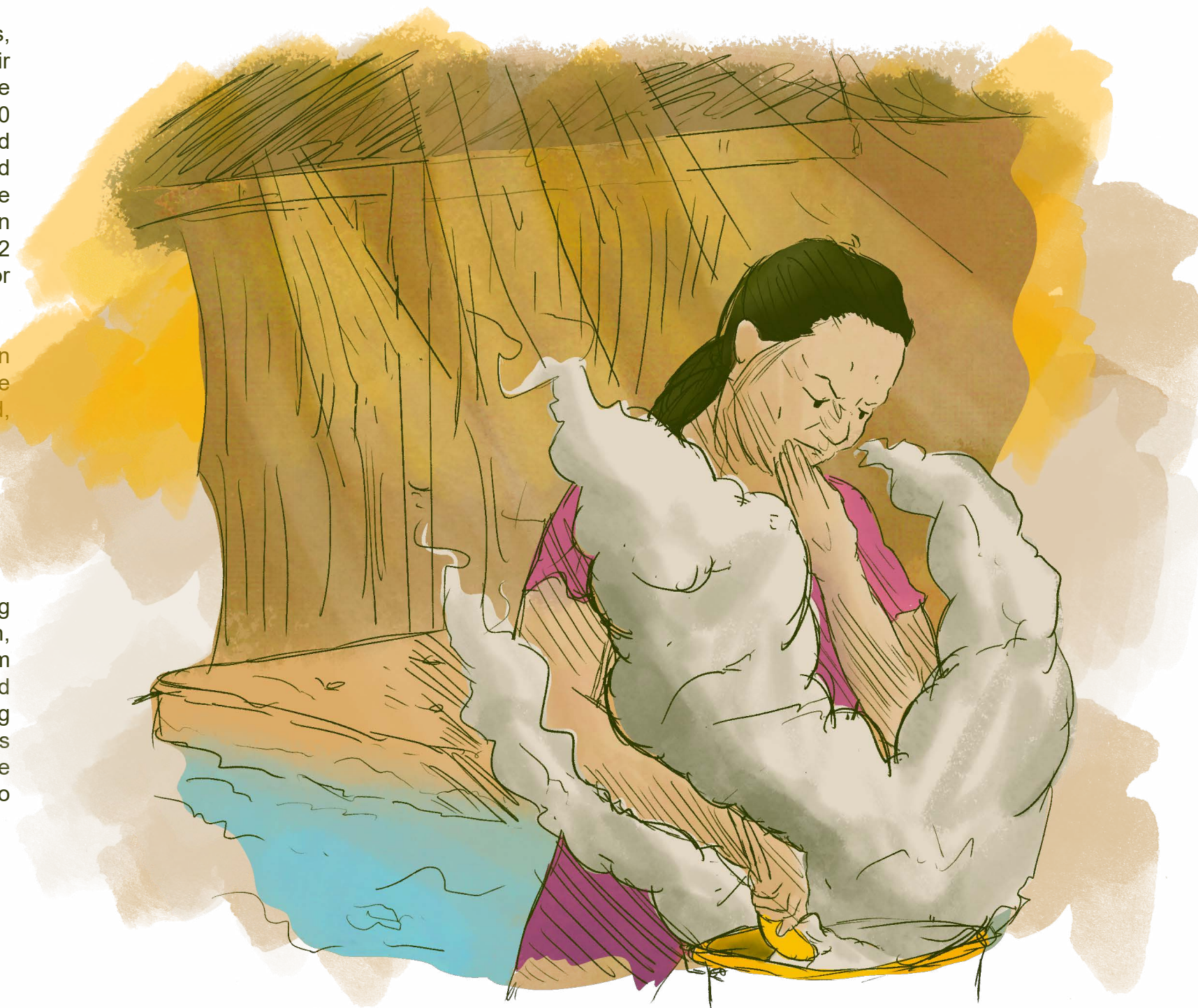
### 3.3 Impacts on Women's Health and Wellbeing

CJ-FPAR findings show that women in this region are suffering chronic health issues such as precarious pregnancies, malnutrition, dehydration, fatigue, hunger, skin and bowel infections from extreme heat and the impact of the climate crisis on their food and water security. The burden of domestic and income-generating duties placed on women continues to grow, and their health is suffering as a direct result of the increased stress. As climate change increases women's overall workload, they have little to no time for rest or basic personal hygiene.

<sup>39</sup>Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP). IWD 2020: Asia Rural Women Call for Food Sovereignty and Gender Justice. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://panap.net/2020/03/iwd-2020-asian-rural-women-call-for-food-sovereignty-and-gender-justice/>

<sup>40</sup>FAO. FAO's gender work in Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/programmes-and-projects/gender/en/>

<sup>41</sup>UN Women. Report of the Expert Group Meeting on the CSW 62 Priority Theme: Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls. (2017)



### Case Study:

#### Dire Water Shortages in Ban Mai Mor Wa Khee, Chiang Mai, Thailand

In the village of Ban Mai Mor Wa Khee, a Karen (indigenous community) village in Mae Wang district of Chiang Mai province in Thailand, women have suffered dire water shortages due to deforestation and intensifying hot seasons over the last 10 years. The villagers used to be able to collect enough water for drinking during summer, but in the past few years the wells have dried out and there's not enough water for both humans and livestock. Water is a vital part of women's lives and ability to fulfill their traditional domestic roles including cooking, dish washing, laundry, feeding babies and tending to animals. Women struggle to find the water they need. Women in the village say that no governmental organisation/agency pays attention to their struggle to overcome and cope with climate change impacts. It was only in years when the drought became critical that villagers were able to get help in obtaining drinking water from the regional government.

Women are experiencing a major increase in health issues connected to prolonged and worsening hot seasons. They're reporting new and increasing issues such as headaches, dehydration, fainting, high blood pressure, asthma, various skin diseases and mental health issues. Worse yet, women have extremely limited access to healthcare. The village is in a dense, remote area with no paved roads, and the nearest health centre is a two hour trip away.

The village committees took action to address severe water shortages by installing three water tanks in the village. However, the three tanks often remained unfilled, and, even when they are filled, they cannot meet the needs of all of the villagers, especially during the dry and hot seasons. Placement of the tanks also caused in-fighting amongst the villagers as they worried about who would have the most access to them. Women continue to try their best to solve the water shortage problem by trying to fetch water two times a day: morning and evening. However, since there is not enough water in the wells and the women have to travel ever-increasing distances to get water, those who arrive late get less water and sometimes not even a single drop.

Women's increased caretaking duties, combined with depleting forest resources like firewood and water, mean women have to spend much more time and energy to find and collect them than ever before. The continuous back-breaking work that the women take on under these worsening circumstances has taken a toll on their well-being and that of their families. The reduction in food production and loss of varieties of vegetables and plants has reduced the nutritional intake of the communities, and women suffer the worst as feeding their dependents is often prioritised over their own needs. Women are experiencing increased body aches, stomach pains, menstrual pain and irregularities, eye problems and other health issues as a result. The lack of access to adequate health care facilities in many of the FPAR communities adds to their suffering.

### 3.4

#### Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

The climate crisis increases the risk of disproportionate gendered hazards and increases women's vulnerability to abuse and violence.<sup>42</sup> Violence against women, in its varied and wide-ranging contexts including the violence of inequality, exploitation and dispossession, is exacerbated by climate change and stands as a major impediment to women's human rights.

Domestic violence is the most widespread form of violence facing women in disaster zones<sup>43</sup>, as the combination of loss, financial hardship and instability aggravates existing oppressive gender imbalances. CJ-FPAR women researchers, such as those in Bangladesh, highlighted that as many men are thrown out of traditional livelihoods without other sustainable livelihood skills or options, some turn to alcohol to drown their stress -- which in turn leads to even higher rates of violence against women.

In India, as climate change aggravates existing problems and pushes families further into poverty and food insecurity, domestic violence increases. Women in FPAR communities reported increasing anger within their families due to the economic stress and changing roles within their families when men migrate to find work. The hard work and worries about the future often lead to fights amongst family members -- between husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, and between in-laws. Due to existing patriarchal norms, women report that when their husbands or sons leave to find work elsewhere, other male members of their families feel they gain more authority over the women.

Displacement exacerbates these issues, as it results in weakened, poorly implemented, or non-existent law enforcement and justice mechanisms for victims and survivors. When women are housed

<sup>42</sup>APWLD. Submission on the on "General Discussion on Gender Related Dimensions of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change (DRRCC)" by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (2017).

<sup>43</sup>Ratcliffe, R.. Civil rights 'under serious attack' across the globe. (2018). The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/nov/27/civil-rights-under-serious-attack-across-the-globe?fbclid=IwAR1gSH2zEZWHVBOrBU3WEBVQTbHIC1JTmlmdqrBT67KFVTC2sYi7JfCZx0>.

in temporary shelters, such as tents or in crowded buildings in urban shelters, they are vulnerable to sexual and physical assault by strangers. Women can no longer rely on the collective security of their communities when they are forced into new areas where they don't know anyone, surrounded by strangers who are in equally desperate situations, in settings that often have inadequate lighting, and shared washing and toilet facilities.

Violence against women is sustained and manifested in fundamentalist patriarchal societies throughout the region wherein power is exercised through the regulation of women's bodies and freedoms; in discriminatory structures that restrict women's access to education, opportunities and resources; in institutionalised sexism which denies women access to justice; and in models of consumption and production that rely on and exploit women's overrepresentation in informal work. Policy prescriptions often fail to address these underlying causes or to appreciate the multidimensional nature of gender-based violence. Further, women remain less likely to have access to state services that provide support to survivors of violence, are less likely to have access to justice through courts and police, and are less likely to be able to leave violent relationships due to societal pressures and lack of independent financial resources.<sup>44</sup>

For many women, even to engage in CJ FPAR meant putting themselves at risk. Due to patriarchal cultural norms, religious fundamentalism, and antiquated family and tribal customs, educating girls is considered taboo and a matter of shame within a few FPAR communities. Some young women researchers received threats for doing their CJ-FPAR in the communities and consequently they had to hide their identities in order to conduct their work.

### 3.5 Women's Access to Land and Natural Resources

The climate crisis worsens and magnifies the pervasively gendered systems of land rights and economic rights perpetuated by local policies and patriarchal cultural norms. CJ-FPAR shows that the climate crisis is exacerbating women's lack of access to and ownership over land and productive resources in Asia and the Pacific region. The findings, for example, from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Cambodia show that land, forest resources and water are becoming more inaccessible as they are claimed for commercial purposes, and consequently communities face displacement from their ancestral lands and forests due to land grabbing by development projects and the creation of protected forests.

<sup>44</sup>APWLD (2014). To End Violence Against Women, Address the Exploitation at its Core. Retrieved from: <https://apwld.org/to-end-violence-against-women-address-the-exploitation-at-its-core/>



## Case Study: Rural Women and Deforestation in Ghotki, Pakistan

The riverside belt of the district of Ghotki, Pakistan has seen massive deforestation projects carried out by the government in the name of operations against dacoits (groups of armed thieves), who supposedly used these forests as their hideouts. Thousands of hectares of forest land have also been leased to companies for agricultural purposes, leading to more deforestation. The destruction of the forests is causing the erosion of the soil and flora on the banks of the rivers which had previously hindered flooding. Worse yet, the companies and wealthy landowners using this land for agribusiness build large dykes inside the river which protect their private land from flooding while diverting the river water to the nearby villages. In recent years, floods have devastated the land and displaced approximately 500 households throughout the local villages. Entire villages have been destroyed, diminishing employment opportunities and livelihoods for local communities. The situation is made worse by massive air and water pollution from nearby sugar mill factories.

The lives and livelihoods of women from these rural communities largely depended on the forests. Deforestation has made it challenging for them to collect wood for cooking and has diminished the pastures they previously used for grazing livestock. Women from the FPAR communities have lost the forests they relied on for their survival and income-generating activities such as collecting straws and wooden materials to build their homes, and collecting forest resources to create handmade crafts such as Chikh (a type of curtain), chairs, tables and baskets to sell for income.

Ghulam Fatima, a resident of Abdullah Mirani village, tells the story of trees:

*"Floods in the river are routine now; our business is also connected with boats and the boats are made from wood we get from trees. We are left with no trees, [so] how can we continue our business? What should we do? Things do not favour us today, it is difficult to make ends meet. How can we imagine buying wood for making boats? It's not possible. The wood is too costly for us. What we do, during the floods we carry people to dry and safe places, they give us corn, wheat, etc. in return. It is our livelihood. We also settle on the river banks, where we face the scorching sun. Young and old suffer alike there. With trees we were rich and fulfilled our needs. Without trees we are jobless and feel insecure. Everything has finished -- our livelihoods, our safety, our peace of mind, everything. The sun and heat are adding diseases to our lives. We used to reap the crops. I myself took part in reaping, but now we are unable to reap because we can't bear the scorching sun and immense heat, and we [quickly] fall ill. We have to choose between hunger and disease -- we are helpless. Another [form] of work [we rely on] is fishing. When there is water in the river and lake, there are fish. But now the river and the lake both are dry. The river water now gets too [hot]. Once there were a lot of fishes but now the fish die away in the water. Perhaps it is due to the increase in heat. God knows! Why has the climate changed? There should be trees. With trees there would be less heat. We've appealed for the government to plant trees on the banks of the river and the lake. The government should do something for our relief. We demand the planting of trees."*





The extent to which women have secure access to and decision-making in control over land and natural resources is a significant determinant of the level to which they can enjoy their full human rights in the face of climate change. Access to and control over land is vital to women's sustained livelihoods, health, security, and cultural and community rights.

**Case Study:  
Indigenous Displacement in Stung Treng  
Province, Cambodia**

Indigenous women in Kbal Romeas village, Stung Treng Province, Cambodia are seeing their lives and land ruined by local hydropower development projects on indigenous lands in the area. At Kbal Romeas, villagers have long been resisting forceful displacement by a mega-dam development project -- that of the construction of the Lower Se San II dam.

For years, local community members were manipulated into leaving their homes to make way for the newest mega dam on a Mekong River tributary. Although some of the villagers resisted displacement from their ancestral land and remained in place to fight for their right to the land, nearly 80 per cent of the local community were coerced to move elsewhere. Additionally, health centres were closed, state teachers were fired and monks were ordered to relocate, leaving those that stayed and resisted the development projects with basically no access to vital services and religious spaces.

The construction of the Lower Se San II Dam blocks the two major rivers, Sre Pok and Se San, and is posing serious environmental and social threats to the community. At the time of the FPAR, 58 households that were still refusing to relocate were blocked by the reservoir and stranded without any road connections or basic facilities. Women were not included in any of the discussions regarding the construction of the dam or relocation of the communities.

Women's rights to access, use, control and manage land are often ignored and frequently contingent on their relationships with male family members. Even in the case that a woman owns land, there remains a general reluctance to recognise women's authority over the management of energy, land and other factors of production. It is difficult for women to be recognised as farmers and allowed to make decisions that could have the potential to address climate-induced loss and damage in a manner responsive to women's specific needs.<sup>45</sup>

**Case Study:  
Loss and Land-grabbing in Assam, Eastern  
India**

Until 2017, Sadiya, a town in the eastern most corner of India in the state of Assam, remained without road connectivity to the rest of India. Most families in the area rely on rice cultivation for their livelihoods. In 2017, the construction of India's longest bridge ended Sadiya's geographical, commercial and political isolation. This change opened the land up to large scale development projects, including a proposed hydropower dam. Under the guise of development in the region, business investors have begun swarming in and exploiting the most poor and marginalised communities.

FPAR women found that those who don't lose their land to floods and erosion easily fall victim to land-grabbing. Private sector entities behind the proposed development projects exploit the chronic poverty in the area, and many families are manipulated to sell their land for paltry sums. Land mafias have flocked to the area offering people money for their land. People who are facing livelihood crises due to climate change think this is a way to escape poverty. State policies often promote investment and industrialisation as the way to a brighter future, and communities are not equipped to deal with the sudden onslaught of capitalist forces.

**3.6  
Threats to Livelihoods and Food Sovereignty**

Women in climate vulnerable communities throughout Asia and the Pacific are experiencing devastating I&D impacts affecting their food security and sovereignty. Despite their invaluable role in food production as innovators and bearers of traditional knowledge, women's right to produce food and their capacity to determine their own food systems is continuously undermined by patriarchal norms and neoliberal policies that facilitate corporate control over agriculture, which further exacerbates the climate crisis.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Kelkar, G and Kumar Jha, S. Women's Agential Power in the Political Economy of Agricultural Land. (2016).

<sup>46</sup>Ibid, PANAP.

Displacement and climate events disrupt women's connection to the land their families have depended on for generations for food supply. Absent any reparations to address the losses, women are left to fight off starvation through any means they can find, even if they have to risk their safety or commit a 'crime' just to try to grow food.

48



### Case Study: Story of Pi Ki lang in Hakha Thar Resettlement Community, Burma/ Myanmar

Sixty-year-old Pi Ki lang, an indigenous woman who now lives in the Hakha Thar resettlement community, is responsible for caring for her three sisters and three children. She provides care for the entire family, including her son and elderly sister who have disabilities. As Pi Ki lang is now in her sixties and dealing with chronic health problems, she is not as healthy and strong as in the past. Her main income-generating skills have always been growing seasonal crops and raising goats, pigs and chickens. Just before the landslide hit in 2015 in Khua Hlun, where she is originally from, she raised goats and sold goat milk and fertiliser to earn a meagre daily income. Hers was a sustainable, subsistence-based community operation, as her neighbours would give her their extra cabbage and beetroot leaves to feed the goats. Even with her health constraints, she was able to make her livelihood from raising livestock and collecting local leaves called Khaihlaing from roadside bushes.

Resettling in Hakha Thar, everything is new to her. Like everyone else in the resettlement community, she does not have a backyard to plant vegetables or raise goats or pigs. She struggles to find daily meals for her sister and son with disabilities. Finding enough food for the family is challenging, and oftentimes impossible. Most residents are quite mixed in terms of origins, but she is part of a majority of residents who relied on farming and agriculture for their livelihoods before moving to Hakha Thar. She reassures herself she is not alone.

As everyone must find their own ways to survive, she decided to pick up rusted ploughing materials, and sneaked back to her old home to grow some vegetables. She knows that she takes the risk of working on land forbidden for use by the government, but to her, feeding her family is more important than the risks that come with breaking the law or working in a landslide-prone area. She is now relying on a meagre income of MMK 10,000-15,000 (USD 7-11) per week from her seasonal plantation of coriander, onion and garlic to provide for her entire family.

49

Asia and the Pacific region is home to nearly half-a-billion undernourished people – more than half of the world's total.<sup>47</sup> In 2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a Special Report on Climate and Land that stated that, in the Asia-Pacific region, food security will be increasingly affected by climate change through yield declines, increased food prices, reduced nutrient quality and supply chain disruptions.<sup>48</sup>

As climate change undermines communities' traditional farming calendars and leads to decreased crop yields, CJ-FPAR participants report that many communities turn to polluting industrial farming products and practices out of desperation for increased crop yields and sustainable food supplies. This further leads to the undermining of their indigenous knowledge and traditional farming techniques. Agribusiness monopolisation of input markets continues to threaten communities' food sovereignty, even though agroecological methods are known to outperform the use of chemical fertilisers in boosting food production in areas with the highest populations of hungry people.<sup>49</sup> Agroecology delivers

<sup>47</sup> FAO. UN partners warn of disproportionate impacts from climate change on land use and food security in Asia-Pacific (2019). Retrieved from: <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/news/detail-events/en/c/1241960/>

<sup>48</sup> IPCC Special Report: Climate Change and Land. Chapter 5: Food Security. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srcccl/chapter/chapter-5/>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

multiple co-benefits, from retaining biodiversity and limiting the utilisation of chemicals fertilisers to enabling food sovereignty, increasing the capacity of soils to sequester carbon and improving food quality and health benefits. Women are more likely to use agroecological methods, and many women in the region see their traditional agricultural jobs displaced by the adoption of industrial or mechanised farming practices. Even when women are able to find roles in agro-business, they tend to be very poorly paid.<sup>50</sup>

Intensive neoliberal economic trade and investment policies that facilitate techno-corporate control over agriculture continue to lead to the eradication of traditional and sustainable farming practices.<sup>51</sup> Many modern neoliberal trade agreements include restrictive intellectual property rights provisions that have resulted in stringent corporate-friendly seed laws, flooding traditional farming sectors with hybrid and genetically-engineered seeds and causing the cost of agricultural production to sky-rocket. Farmers stand no chance of competing in a market driven by these large scale commercial ventures.

### **Case Study: Tay Indigenous Women Preserving Traditional Knowledge and Practices, Vietnam**

Indigenous Tay women living in Thanh Van Village in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam, home to about 6.5 million people, are living in a rapidly changing environment. The area is seeing new temperature extremes, unpredictable flood seasons and an overall increase in rainfall. Thanh Van is a poor commune in Cho Moi district, Bac Kan province. A vast majority of people living in the commune are indigenous peoples, and most of them are from the Tay community. In recent years, the commune has faced sudden heavy rainfalls, extreme temperatures, droughts and landslides, drastically increasing the women's vulnerability to climate change.

People in the commune rely on agricultural production and natural resources for their livelihoods. Tay women have been using their traditional knowledge and experiences to cope with the changing environment, but extreme and changing weather patterns are undermining their traditional knowledge and expertise. As climate change makes indigenous practices less reliable, many of the women have been pushed into using pesticides and chemicals out of desperation to increase agricultural production. Also, recent years have shown that traditional farmers cannot compete with private sector agricultural production and are either forced to sell out or convert their practices to conform to agribusiness culture. The women want to reprioritise traditional indigenous knowledge and find ways to combine it with new and sustainable farming techniques in order to adapt to the climate crisis.

As part of the CJ-FPAR, ADC conducted a survey of local Tay women, and found that 63.3 per cent of Tay women surveyed formerly used traditional farming techniques, but had to stop using them and instead adopt industrialised farming techniques. Now only 36.7 per cent of women say they still use traditional farming practices. All of the women interviewed are now using some amount of chemicals and pesticides in their agricultural production, though many say they believe indigenous knowledge could play an important role in climate change adaptation.

*“Some of us are still using indigenous knowledge and practices in agricultural production like planting local varieties, using our own knowledge in forecasting the weather. However, the climate [keeps] changing, so that the number of people using indigenous knowledge is decreasing, and the number of people using chemical products in farming is increasing, because they want to get higher yields. However, after participating in the [FPAR] training on climate change, many women now know more about the impacts of using chemicals in production processes. They shared the information with other people in the community. Many people are now supporting the idea of using indigenous knowledge in farming.” - Lan, Tay indigenous woman*

Many women throughout the region also report seeing the rise in new diseases in their crops and livestock, which may be connected to an increase in prolonged heat in the region. Extreme heat, loss of biodiversity and changing environmental patterns lead to greater pests, vector-borne diseases and infections that affect livestock health by causing metabolic disruptions, oxidative stress and immune suppression causing infections and death.<sup>52</sup> This results in poor crop yields and increased diseases in livestock which lowers their market value severely impacting women's incomes and food supply.

Women in rural Pakistan have been deeply impacted by the “Green Revolution,” which resulted in the increased use of pesticides, fertilisers and mechanised farming practices that replace the need for women's agricultural labour and diminish their work opportunities while simultaneously displacing their traditional farming practices. Meanwhile, they report a considerable rise in disease in both humans and livestock.

<sup>50</sup> APWLD. Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future Briefer. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://apwld.org/apwld-briefer-feminist-fossil-fuel-free-future-5fs-2/>

<sup>51</sup>See UN Human Rights Council. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter. (2020). Available at: [www.undocs.org/A/HRC/16/49](http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/16/49)

<sup>52</sup> Lacetera, Nicola. Impact of climate change on animal health and welfare. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://academic.oup.com/af/article/9/1/26/5168813>

“

**Not only we human beings suffer, but our livestock also suffer from different diseases, and put economic burdens on our communities**

”

**–Woman agricultural worker, Pakistan**

In Sadiya, the village in eastern India, changing seasons and warmer soil temperatures in recent years have resulted in delays in rice paddy cultivation and failed crops. Now, as the paddy season gets pushed later and later in the year, and some years see no successful cultivation at all, their winter crops have also begun failing. People have also noticed previously unseen phenomena in their fields and produce.

“

**I have never seen this in my life. When we went to harvest, I was asking everybody, doesn't the paddy feel lighter this time? These people did not take me seriously. But when we got home and started husking the paddy, what did we see? There was no rice inside. It was only husk. All our hard work gave us nothing.” This reduction and lack of reliability in agricultural production have resulted in most local men migrating to work as daily wage labourers elsewhere. As a result, women have seen a major increase in their domestic and agricultural duties**

”

**– Sonowal, Sadiya Villager, India**

Policies pushed by neoliberal institutions that call for large-scale agricultural investment by the private sector have served as a strong impetus in enabling large scale acquisition or grabbing of land, water and resources by foreign investors and corporations in the region. Currently, land grabs facilitated by multinational agrochemical companies and enabled by increasing privately-funded and state-sponsored militarisation, are widespread. As a result, large swathes of populations are displaced to make way for development projects. There remains a complete lack of meaningful consultation and respect for the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the peoples for whom these invasive projects hold the greatest impacts.<sup>53</sup> Women are not informed, consulted nor permitted to participate where discussions are held with communities on development projects.

### **Case Study: Rakhine Indigenous Women and the Impacts of Climate Induced Disasters and Land Grabbing, Bangladesh**

Rakhine indigenous women living across 13 villages in the coastal area of Taltoli, Barguna and Barishal are facing increasing and strengthening natural disasters, as well as displacement from their ancestral lands and forests due to land grabbing and the creation of protected forests. Land, forests and water resources are becoming more inaccessible by the day as they continue to be claimed for commercial purposes. Many households lost access to the Tengragiri forest after much of it was claimed to build an eco-park to promote ecotourism in the area. Of the 13 villages in the FPAR area, community members living in eight villages have lost access to plants and animals from the forest -- a devastating change as these were their traditional sources of food and income. Residents of the other five villages still depend on resources from areas of the Tengragiri forest. However, over-extraction by loggers has caused deforestation to such an extent that the forests are no longer reliable for hunting, and many forest animals they rely on for their food and livelihoods now face extinction. Additionally, overfishing by commercial entities has left local fish stocks scarce. While rice remains the community's staple, women report that their traditional sources of protein and other minerals have decreased drastically with deforestation and the conversion of the Tengragiri forest into a tourist destination, restricting their entry.

The FPAR area is also extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. According to the women of these villages, 10-15 years ago, natural disasters mainly hit during two months of the year. Now, natural disasters are commonplace throughout the year. Many Rakhine families are forced to migrate to Burma/Myanmar after displacement or after disasters destroy their homes and their livelihood opportunities. The families that do remain live in fear of having their lands taken from them by private industry or by decision makers that fail to consider their ties to the land. They are in the deadlock situation as if their land isn't taken by landgrabbers, there's a high chance they could lose it to the rising sea.

The climate crisis, and the systems that perpetuate it, continue to deprive indigenous communities and other marginalised groups of their right to define their own strategies for sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and land. The frenzied capitalist consumerism of the Global North is pushing out sustainable farming in Asia and the Pacific, leading to greater hunger and systematised poverty. Furthermore, monoculture agribusiness destroys natural biodiversity and forests, and perpetuates the exploitation of both labour and resources.

<sup>53</sup>Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). Indigenous Peoples in the Asia-Pacific region. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/asiapacific/news/detail-events/en/c/1241960/>

### 3.7

#### Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders

**FPAR women in Cambodia experienced difficulties conducting the research, as heavy militarisation protecting local hydro-dam projects has made Kbal Romeas inaccessible to the outside world including NGOs. The women group intended to conduct FPAR in three villages, including Kbal Romeas, but were prevented from doing so when police and military surrounded two of the three villages and refused to let outsiders, such as the FPAR facilitators, enter.**

Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders (WEHRDs) including those engaging in rights-based research and advocacy in countries with poor human rights records are facing increasing security concerns. Safety concerns all around serve as an impediment to women's organising and mobilising in the region. Attacks on human rights defenders including WEHRDs globally have risen 34 per cent in recent years.<sup>54</sup> This alarming trend is evident in Asia and the Pacific, as a growing number of communities affected by large-scale mining and agribusiness projects have become targets of military operations and have seen increasing numbers of arbitrary arrests, false charges, persecution, intimidation, threats, assaults, harassments, disappearances, detention and, in some cases, the disappearance and murder of women activists. State forces, in collusion with the military and militarised protective forces paid for by private companies, often occupy communities to clear the way for "development projects" and violently suppress any resistance from the residents, in most cases the indigenous peoples of this region.

No meaningful progress in tackling the climate crisis or addressing loss and damage can be made when companies and governments act with impunity to prioritise 'development' projects that violate human rights and continue to harm, arrest and kill the rural and indigenous women and their communities that organise to oppose the perpetrators. It is extremely concerning that these corporations are allowed to influence and capture space in international climate negotiations peddling false climate fixes intended to benefit them. The States and corporations turn a blind eye to the lack of redress, compensation and respect for women environmental human rights defenders who have been harmed and killed in protecting their lands and forests.



<sup>54</sup>The Guardian. "Attacks and Killings": Human Rights Activists at Growing Risk Attacks and Killings, Study Claims. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/globaldevelopment/2018/mar/09/human-rights-activists-growing-risk-attacks-and-killings-study-claims>



## *Section 4* Feminist Actions and Resistance<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup>Much of this section is derived from the following source: Godden, N and MacNish, P. Climate Justice Feminist Participatory Action Research Programme 2017-2019: Final Evaluation Report. Edith Cowan University. Published April 2020 by APWLD and Edith Cowan University.

## Resistance is the only way to survive

”

–Maleya Foundation, Bangladesh

Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) offers a powerful resistance to the racist, colonial, patriarchal neoliberal power at the root of the climate crisis. FPAR acknowledges that structural change is necessary to break systems of oppression, including patriarchy, globalisation, fundamentalisms and militarism. The FPAR offers a democratic model of producing, owning and using knowledge, and ensures that women are not only objects of research but rather the true authors and owners of their own experiences and knowledge. By amplifying the lived experiences of grassroots women, cultivating feminist movements, strengthening women's voices in decision-making and ensuring bottom-up approaches to climate action, FPAR embodies the redistribution of power required to transform the systems responsible for the crisis. Women's participation in decision-making, planning and implementation of climate action is a political advocacy tool that enables the advancement of human rights, and centres grassroots women's leadership in socio-economic and political structures.

Due to a multitude of social, political, security and economic pressures as outlined throughout this report, grassroots women face incredible difficulties in engaging in research and having their findings and documentation considered credible. It's often argued that grassroots women lack the technical knowledge or formal education to conduct climate change research. In a capitalist system that prioritises the English language, 'formal education' and 'qualifications', the CJ-FPAR model is a political education tool that challenges the very ideals of 'training' in English or using 'programmatic methodology'. Instead, the entire FPAR is shaped, organised and undertaken by the young women researchers and mentors in a manner that honours their own identities and communities. Grassroots women hold vital knowledge to support socially, economically and ecologically sustainable climate

solutions. FPAR recognises the power of tying their knowledge into research advocacy, in order to amplify the experiences and injustices faced by local communities as well as to advance women and community-led just and sustainable solutions to climate-related issues.

Through CJ-FPAR, grassroots women are given the opportunity to author their own expertise by developing their own stories, analysis and engaging in organising and advocacy. Centering the expertise and power of collective action of grassroots women from the frontline in decision-making processes is critical to ensure that their lived experiences remain centred in climate responses.

Amid the global crises and the increasing women's oppression exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to strengthen climate justice movements led by grassroots women and their lived reality. Women have been relentless in showing the evidence of climate change impacts, including the impacts of loss and damage that go far beyond economic and other quantifiable aspects of human life. CJ-FPAR offers a space to amplify women's voices calling for urgent climate action that ensures a rights-based and peoples-centred global framework that works towards a just and equitable transition for all. Stories, actions and climate solutions emerging through the FPAR stand as a testament to the collective power of women organising and mobilising to overcome oppressive power structures and reclaim their human rights.

### 4.1 Increased Political Power and Leadership

Prior to the CJ-FPAR, most women groups had some understanding of community politics and policies, although, generally, women in communities were not encouraged and sometimes actively discouraged from participating in local decision-making. Over the three-year journey of FPAR, women gained a more comprehensive understanding of political systems, laws, policies and human rights. This emboldened them to take steps to actively engage in local decision-making processes to assert their voices, needs and power as holders of traditional and indigenous knowledge vital to creating sustainable and equitable climate solutions, protecting their natural resources and building resilience while also demanding climate justice and gender equality. Local government was often the best platform for grassroots women to undertake advocacy. CJ-FPAR groups engaged in varied forms of local advocacy, including meetings with decision-makers; encouraging women to participate in decision-making; monitoring; campaigning; lobbying; writing

memorandums, letters and petitions; community organising; holding workshops, training and events to influence policies and laws.

The number of women in political and leadership roles has increased in nearly every country involved in CJ-FPAR with grassroots women forming new groups, networks and formal committees to continue raising awareness and building the capacity of other women in climate justice activism. The groups are led by women, and their work includes advocacy at grassroots, local and national levels to demand gender-just climate action. Powerful and dedicated advocacy by CJ-FPAR researchers and the women in their communities resulted in some shifts and concrete results, showing the power of women's collective action in exacting women's inclusion in decision-making processes.

Many of the CJ-FPAR women are now actively participating in decision-making in their communities through advocacy. In Vietnam, Burma/Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Thailand and India, women are contributing to community discussions about climate justice and challenging current community practices by working



together to plan and implement successful climate resilient livelihood alternatives. In Burma/Myanmar and Nepal, women advocated for the formation of special women-led governmental environment committees, which were set up and provided with a budget from local authorities. Through these committees, women advocate for gender inclusive policies and practices to manage the impacts of climate change. There are now 48 women involved in local government decision-making in Nepal.

However, lobbying still presents its own set of challenges, as some male decision makers refuse to speak with women and require persistent pressure in order to be swayed to engage with women. In highly patriarchal conservative communities, women have faced security and safety risks in engaging with FPAR. However, with their collective power, adequate measures were taken to ensure that the women were protected from harm. The women were able to engaged in innovative ways to mobilise while ensuring their safety and protection from harm. without scrutiny.

In Bangladesh, two formal dialogues were held between the women's group and representatives of local government and relevant government offices, and some group members now participate in monthly community meetings with the local government. As a result of community meetings with local government officials, women were able to negotiate groundbreaking government social safety net coverage dedicated to helping ultra-poor women that is to last for two years.

Burma/Myanmar CJ-FPAR formed an indigenous women's group that advocated in the community for recognition of women's specific issues. They met with the Chin State Parliament Chairperson and Transportation Minister, and organised a collaborative press conference. The sharing of their FPAR country report attracted wide public attention on issues of rehabilitation, climate and management of the forest and resources. The women were also encouraged and supported to elect women candidates for the next election. Through their efforts, they secured rights to a plot of land designated by the local government as a safe space for women's activities.

In Cambodia, FPAR encouraged many villagers to continue to refuse to relocate, despite relocation being forced upon them. They also report that villages previously isolated are now free to participate in local markets. They also elected an FPAR participant as the first woman community leader.

“

**After we launched the FPAR within the community, villagers decided not to relocate. They want to live very close to their old village, because they know the floods cannot come to the uplands. They decided to relocate where they want, where they live, where they collect ideas from different members. We don't know in the future if the companies will come to evict. But we build the fundamentals of living as indigenous peoples on our land. Community members are protecting forests and climate change, and it is important to them to [continue to do so]. If we didn't have FPAR as a tool to bring them in, maybe all of them would decide to take the compensation money to leave**

”

**–Highlanders Association (HA), Cambodia**

“  
**[There is] a lot of respect from the community. They were able to challenge the community, and challenge the patriarchal structure of the religion. Women are driving the activities.**

”

**–Chin Committee for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR),  
Burma/Myanmar**

In Pakistan, the CJ-FPAR group hosted for the very first time, an International Women's Day celebration. They also held a banner signature campaign and printed it with the title of 'Women Demand Environment Justice'. They also held a signature-gather campaign and had over 1,000 people sign their petition calling for climate justice. The campaign banner became a powerful symbol, and was displayed during all sessions and dialogues at community, local authority, district and regional levels. The 1,000 signature banner campaign gathered immense support to restore forests, and hold polluting industries and local landowners accountable. The petition is to be submitted to the Director General's Office. They also advocated for the implementation of laws and policies to address environmental protection, deforestation and pollution by industries and oil and gas fields. As a direct result of their advocacy, the group gained an audience with two elected representatives, a provincial member

and the federal Minister of Climate Change, who met with the women, listened to their findings and recommendations, and showed commitment to and interest in policies to address the gendered impacts of climate change.

In Vietnam, the FPAR group also led a campaign to plant banana trees to support using organic, banana compost that they learned to make as part of an effort to stop the use of pesticides in the area. Additionally, 63 women are now involved in the Village Savings Loan Association decision-making body, 13 women are now involved in the agricultural cooperative, and a CJ-FPAR participant was elected as the Deputy Director of a new cooperative established in the commune. FPAR women increased their confidence in voicing their rights at community meetings and with local authorities, due to being more informed about climate change and the community impacts.



“

**By actively participating in CJ-FPAR activities such as meetings, training and workshops, [local women] are equipped with necessary skills and a large amount of knowledge on climate change and climate justice, thus, they become more confident. A noteworthy observation of their confidence is that they are now ready to present in public and share what they have learnt and express their views confidently in meetings... They could naturally have conversations to share with any other or even the Chairman of the community about climate justice and the empowerment of women to support the development of the community... People in the community recently changed their thoughts about women's ability and considered their role in the development of the commune. [Indigenous] women are invited and encouraged to participate in the village and commune meetings and events more often**

”

– The Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region (ADC), Vietnam

In Thailand, women organised to address severe water shortages and neglect of existing water tanks in the area. They engaged in planning, designing and implementation of new climate adaptation solutions. One of their first advocacy campaigns centred around contacting the sub-district administration officer to demand the rebuilding, cleaning and restoration of wells in the village to address the acute water shortages. As a result, village leaders now recognise the importance of women's voices and participation in decision-making, and have promised to engage women in designing climate projects in the future. The women continue to engage in collective action to demand their inclusion in the planning and implementation of development and adaptation plans.

The Nepal researchers organised two ward-level conferences to bring together local ward officials and community members to discuss climate change policies at the local level. Additionally, they led a community replanting effort to fortify river embankments against flooding. They planted over 1,000 plant varieties in the Kang Khola area.

In Vietnam, the FPAR participants hosted a two-day workshop on integrating the use of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production to adapt to climate change into the socio-economic development plan (SEDP) of Thanh Van commune. Decision-makers from the Commune People's Committee attended, listened to the findings and

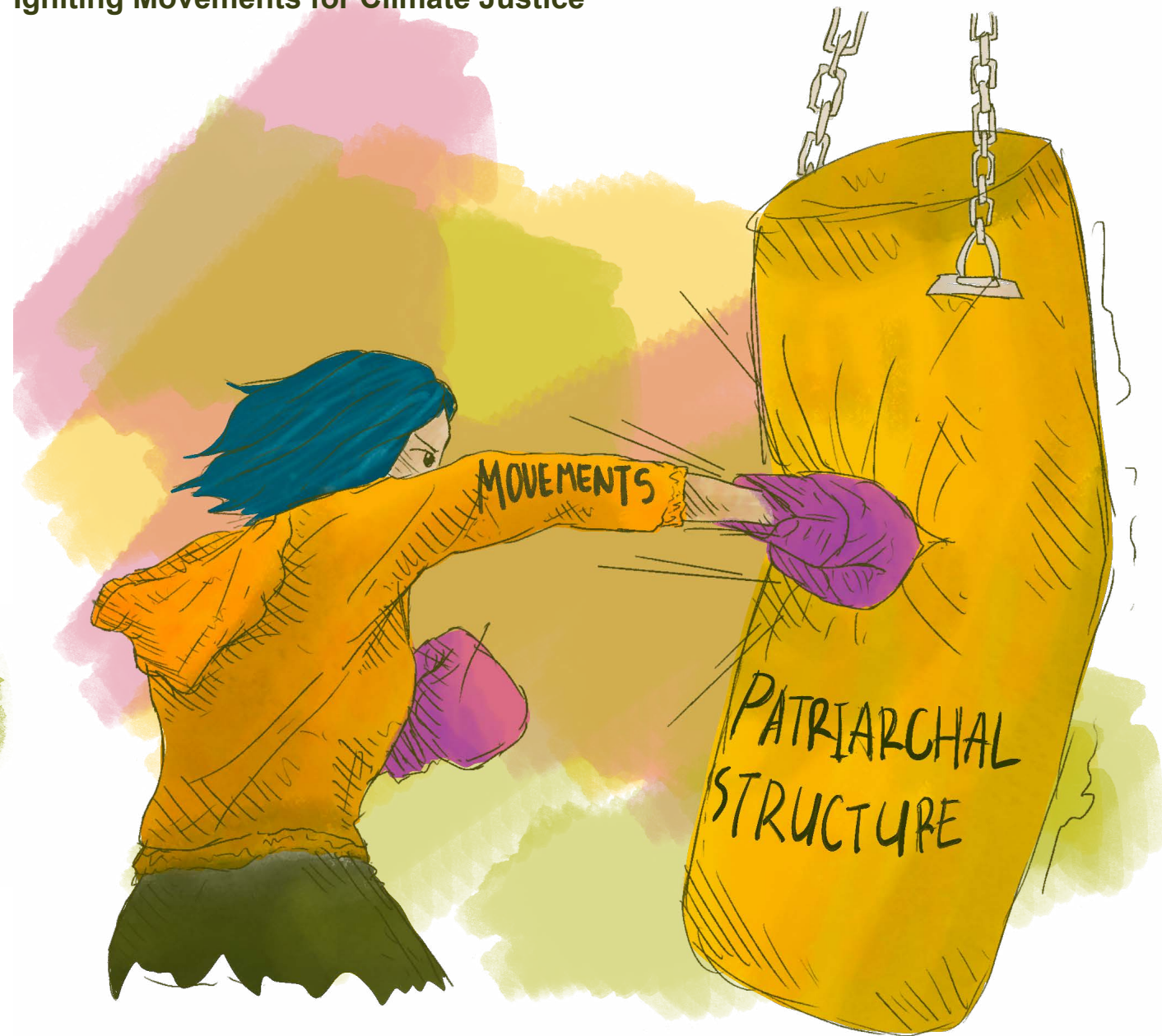
integrated some of the group's recommendations into a revised draft of the SEDP and the women are now permanently involved in local adaptation and resilience plans.

CJ-FPAR also led to many women in the villages of Sadiya initially learning about local government decision-making processes, then taking action to join those processes. This led to women lobbying for resources and support for alternative income opportunities. They met with local government entities to demand that women be provided with silkworms and training on rearing silkworms, as well as designing and spinning techniques for weaving silk. Their advocacy successfully led to women being given resources for weaving. On the back of this initial organising success, 12 women now participate and speak weekly in public meetings hosted by the local Panchayat government.

In Sri Lanka, CJ FPAR partner and the women from Meereya Badhdha continue to build the capacities of women in their community to participate in meetings, and push for women's inclusion in development plans for the area. After ongoing petitions for public awareness on climate impacts in the area and dialogues with the Divisional Secretary, three women leaders were asked to be involved in the formal district development process. Women are now expecting more space to participate in the decision-making process related to climate refugees.

63

## 4.2 Igniting Movements for Climate Justice



Women's movements are vital to creating equitable, gender-just climate policies. In this region especially, unified collective action is crucial in overcoming women's economic, political and social oppression. There is true strength in numbers, and CJ-FPAR journey demonstrates that organised women make tremendous headway in challenging the racist, colonial, patriarchal norms and systems that adversely impact women's human rights and undermine women's political participation and leadership.

At the start, many women were afraid of participating in CJ-FPAR, for fear that they may be judged by others for not being fluent in English or for their lack of formal education. Many also expressed concern

over how the men in their communities would react to the work. However, by joining women across the region and connecting through shared experiences and demands, CJ-FPAR galvanised regional solidarity and collective action around climate justice.

In every participating country, women formed local networks and engaged in community organising for climate justice. As women gained awareness on the role of globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism and patriarchy in fuelling the climate crisis and influencing their lived experiences, they were prepared to move from knowledge into action.

“

**We discussed and agreed that in order to achieve our impact objectives, we need to work and act together. Thus, we could build more powerful movements and collective actions of [Indigenous] women. [Indigenous] women were bounding together, acting together, sharing stories and knowledge and forming a group of women to become the researchers of their own community.**

”

**– The Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region (ADC), Vietnam**

“

**The influence of patriarchy is high. But from this FPAR project, women can raise their voice, become united and demand what they need**

”

**– Chin Committee for Emergency Response and Rehabilitation (CCERR), Burma/Myanmar**

In Nepal, six new women's groups were formed with women from indigenous, Dalit and marginalised communities, increasing the organisation's network to 21 women's groups that are directly connected and working together in CJ-FPAR. Two women's networks were also formed, including a Women's Human Rights Defenders Network, and a Greenery Defenders Network to advocate for green growth (plantations, stopping open grazing and growing grass on the embankment and river bank) at the ward level, with sub-groups at the community levels.

In Cambodia, FPAR led to the formation of a women's group in the village. The women also banded together to form three collective farms. Additionally, two indigenous women's networks were established, one at the local level and one at the national level. The collective has been mobilising women to resist the dam project and to demand justice for indigenous peoples. The women are also meeting with various stakeholders, including the local government in Stung Treng to demand the freedom to continue living in their village without facing forced relocation.

In India, CJ-FPAR led to the formation of 12 weaving groups in the community. The new weaving groups of indigenous women are working with a district women's organisation to lobby for indigenous and women's rights at a state level. Furthermore, a Women's Federation was formed at the State level, with 13 district level groups to discuss women's rights and needs. Nearly 130 women participated in the general meeting, and 26 women are in the executive committee.

FPAR gives participants skills to successfully form independent women's groups on the ground, many of which can go on to be formally registered. In Bangladesh, women formed a group with women from all 13 villages involved in CJ-FPAR. The group reported that women found it easier to communicate with officials as representatives of an organised group rather than as individuals. They registered the group as a formal organisation, and seek to use the platform for advocacy and negotiations surrounding rights, skills and opportunities for livelihood support from relevant government and non-government programmes.

In Burma/Myanmar, two flourishing women's networks have been established. One network is titled Hakha Thar Bu Nu, and has more than 400 members, with seven active leaders and 17 other women involved in communication and mobilisation. This network is currently self-funded by the members. The women from Hakha Thar also presented their FPAR findings at the International Conference of Burma/ Myanmar Studies in Mandalay in a major step to share their research and advocacy.

In Sri Lanka, a women's group was established to support women to advocate for environmentally-friendly livelihood opportunities in the resettled areas. The group is continuing the advocacy campaign initiated during CJ-FPAR.

In Pakistan, five women's groups (one for each village involved in the CJ-FPAR) have been formed. Each group comprises 13-15 women aged 18-60, and most women have low levels of education. These groups directly engaged in CJ-FPAR. A district Feminist Forum was also formed with 15-17 women, giving them the power to engage with the government directly on issues they are talking about and engage in industries that are polluting.

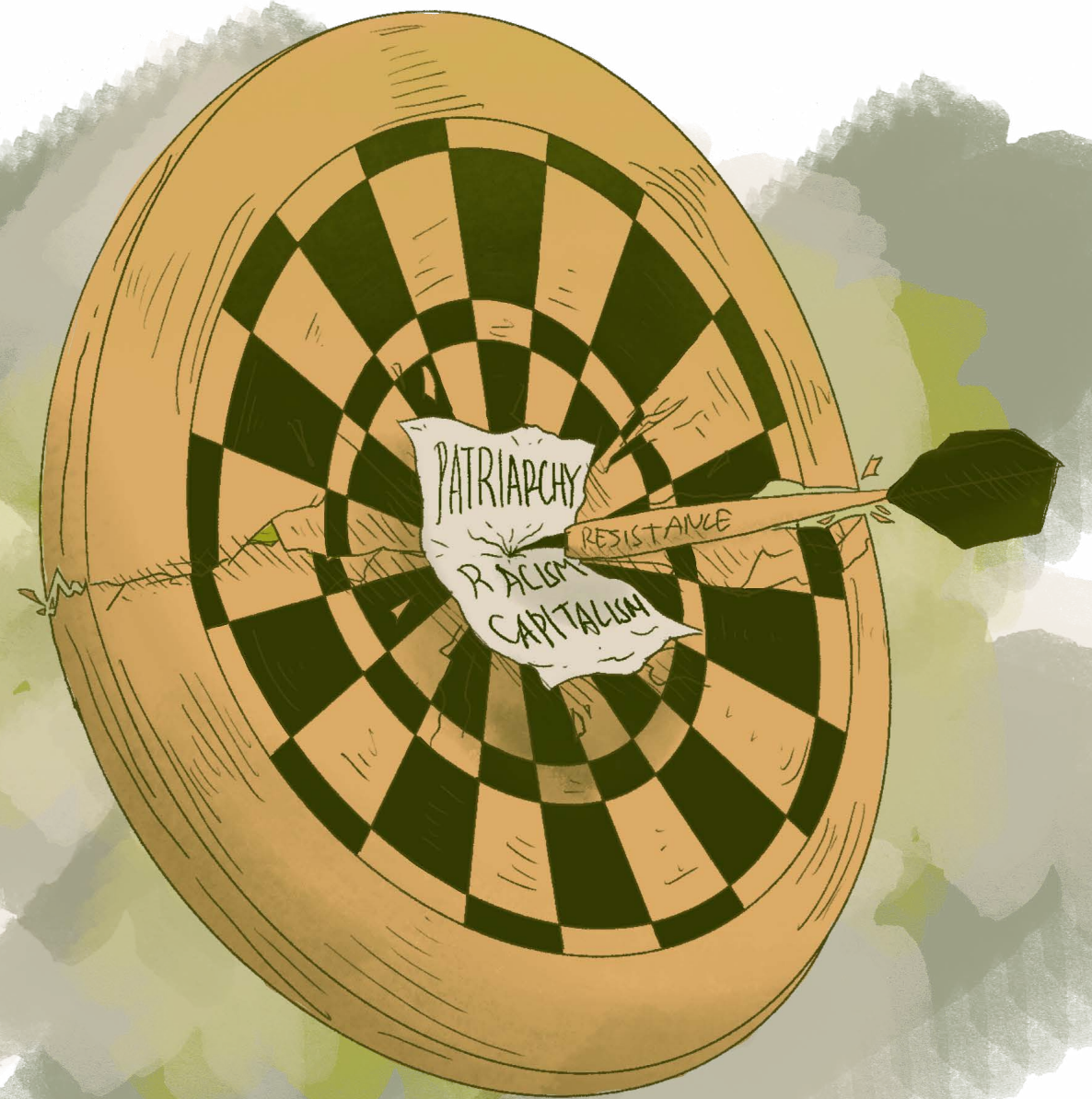
### 4.3 Stronger Capacity and Knowledge on Feminist Climate Justice

By using FPAR as a tool for political activism and movement building, hundreds of women who took part in FPAR gained knowledge of climate justice; Development Justice; ecological justice; women's human rights; and local, regional and international political systems. Women also learned to identify the difference between just climate solutions and market based mechanisms that prioritise profit over peoples and the environment. They gained expertise on the laws and policies that either discriminate, undermine climate ambitions, or do not protect indigenous, social, gender and environmental rights.

This learning occurred through formally organised activities (such as workshops and training), consciousness-raising processes (such as participating in women's groups), and other incredibly creative FPAR tools and processes developed by each individual group. The young women researchers, as members of the communities at the centre of the FPAR, were able to identify existing knowledge gaps and recognise what awareness-building strategies would be most effective in their particular communities. They found innovative ways to share their knowledge through plays, story-telling, billboards, radio, street theatre and art to engage other grassroots women as a means of building solidarity and increasing women's advocacy within their communities.

The CJ-FPAR women in Nepal held a Street Drama and Speaking Competition on International Women's Day 2018 on the topic of Climate Change and Deforestation. Eight women participated and spoke in front of over 200 guests, raising community awareness on the issue and mobilising support to address deforestation. They also hosted a series of moving meetings titled "Ghumti Gosti". This was a series of mobile workshops aimed at raising awareness on gendered climate change impacts and organising efforts of FPAR women to address the climate crisis, and more. The mobile workshops were very well-received by the communities. The group also collaborated with local youth artists to perform climate-themed street theatre. Hundreds of viewers saw the theatre performances and later shared that it helped them understand the links between deforestation and climate change. Additionally, they produced a community Climate Justice radio programme for women to express

their feelings, understand issues and lobby the government. The Nepal CJ-FPAR communities found that creative activities like these helped build networks, fostered solidarity and directly inspired collective work to achieve long-term advocacy objectives and structural change.



“

**The women in the community had no knowledge or information on climate change or its impacts on their livelihoods. After the FPAR [activities], and armed with knowledge of GFMP (globalisation, fundamentalisms, militarism and patriarchy), the women successfully demanded an increased role in decision making positions within the local government authority**

”

– Chetana Mahila Samuha, Nepal

68 Other FPAR partners provided direct educational training and workshops for women in their communities. For instance, the FPAR partner in Vietnam provided training for local women to enhance their knowledge on climate justice as well as to connect with one another -- which became the basis for collective action.

“

**100 per cent of women who participated in previous activities of FPAR had a good understanding of climate change, discussed confidently and wanted to build collective actions for climate justice for women... [They] became more confident to raise their voices and express their views on the climate and gender issues in their community**

”

– The Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region, Vietnam

Other CJ-FPAR partners also organised first-time events to increase consciousness around climate injustice. For instance, the FPAR women from Burma/ Myanmar organised indigenous food activities and a “No Plastic” campaign in partnership with the local government, which included educational billboards in nine townships. The campaign also involved FPAR women engaging in door-to-door advocacy to retail stores and putting up public banners around the community. They also planned and organised their own rubbish collection as a way to get more community engaged and informed about climate change.

In India, CJ-FPAR women created a range of products to share with their community members including the FPAR story translated into local language, informational posters and photos discussing climate change and its local impacts.

“

**Under the FPAR, [we’ve] organised large public meetings on occasions of the fortnightly campaign on violence against women, World Environment Day and International Women’s Day. SNASM invited local academics, intellectuals, media and the public to these meetings and shared their learning about climate change, its impact on women and the impact objectives of the project**

”

– North East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS), India

Women are recognising that they can circumvent systems and structures grounded in patriarchy that fail to deliver adequate education and awareness to women by using the media and other creative outlets to develop their own information-sharing outlets and networks. The creative and innovative educational tools that women created during the CJ-FPAR process helped hundreds of women in the region recognise their rights to information and participation in decision-making while providing women with a safe environment to express their

The team also held a workshop for local children to design posters describing the impacts of climate change on their lives, wherein the children then described the posters to their community. Women are harnessing and increasingly communicating their expertise to the wider community, and using media as an awareness-building and advocacy tool.

The young women researchers are trained to use smartphones as a digital advocacy tool recording interviews, videos and promoting activities on social media. Women’s groups from Cambodia, Burma/ Myanmar and Nepal have increased capacity to engage with the media through community radio stations and press conferences to raise awareness of climate justice. Tools and resources created during the FPAR process (such as theatre performances and videos) have also received media attention.

69

# Section 5

## Feminist Demands for Climate Justice

Support stronger feminist climate movements across Asia and the Pacific region to hold governments accountable for stronger climate ambitions and keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.



### 5.1 Accountability and Transparency:

- Rich countries should be held accountable for their historical and present responsibility in creating a neoliberal, racist, patriarchal and colonial legacy of destroying the environment, biodiversity and peoples in the Global South. All trade, investment and economic systems perpetuating the continuing exploitation of resources and labour from the Global South must end. The onus of greater reduction and climate finance rests squarely on the rich Global North;
- Rich countries must fully commit, scale up and pledge their contributions to the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility and other UN bodies set up to help finance climate resilience and adaptation;
- Centering participatory democracy, Development Justice and women's human rights in just and equitable transition, and redistributing energy and resources and decision-making power to grassroots women and their communities.

### 5.2 Climate Financing:

- Climate financing must reflect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, historical responsibilities and respective capabilities, and be effectively, directly channelled to frontline communities facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis;
- Create new and additional finance dedicated specifically to loss and damage that includes participatory gender budgeting and compensation mechanisms that would take into account the increased climate vulnerabilities of women for both slow and rapid onset of climate changes;
- The global community must accelerate and enhance financing for loss and damage, taking into account the needs of the most affected, including climate refugees and effective participation of women;
- Governments must finalise WIM mechanisms and remove any financial schemes that would push poor and developing nations into further debt;
- Set up a Global Tax Body that can end tax competition and evasion by the wealthy nations, private individuals and corporations most historically responsible for the climate crisis and redirect the taxes as climate finance;
- Develop innovative sources of public finance, such as a global financial transaction tax, the redirection of military budgets, additional taxes on arms trade, extractive and shipping industries, bunkers levy, aviation levy, the elimination of tax havens and tax evasion from transnational corporations and wealthy individuals;
- Block all financing of false climate solutions including nuclear, geo-engineering, BioEnergy with Carbon Capture and Storage, industrial scale monocultures for 'bio-sequestration', 'offset projects' in developing countries, biofuels and any initiatives designed to make profit and pose dangerous risks to biodiversity, food sovereignty and livelihoods.

### 5.3 Women's Human Rights:

- Governments must urgently implement the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and the Lima Work Programme to advance inclusive and gender-responsive climate action. The myriad of government commitments and obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals, international human rights mechanisms such as CEDAW and the Paris Agreement to align and coalesce to improve women's human rights and gender equality in the face of increasing inequality, discrimination and violence triggered from impacts of the climate crisis;
- Displacement must remain an integral part of considerations regarding loss and damage, as displacement compounds and exacerbates both economic and non-economic loss and damage. International climate policies must address climate-induced displacement in order to reduce impacts experienced by displaced communities and to ensure that efforts to address loss and damage uphold and respect women's human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Ensure that women in all their diversity are meaningfully informed, consulted and participating in decision making, political and legal processes and in the development of national plans of action and policies to address climate mitigation, adaptation, technology, finance, capacity building and loss and damage.



### 5.4 Indigenous Communities and Traditional Knowledge:

- Free, Prior and Informed Consent and meaningful participation of local and indigenous communities must be upheld in the planning, implementation and evaluation stage of all climate projects, policies and laws affecting their human rights, livelihoods and well being;
- Preserve and develop indigenous knowledge as the primary basis of how to tackle the climate crisis through fostering connections between networks working on indigenous knowledge; collecting and preserving indigenous genetic resources; supporting research and the publication of materials on indigenous knowledge, particularly those that focus on why people should use indigenous knowledge and practices for sustainable climate solutions; develop policies and programmes supporting the development of indigenous-featured products;
- Prioritise and create an enabling environment for sustainable resource management practices as led by indigenous peoples and local communities, and women in particular, thereby minimising future loss and damage while also addressing the climate crisis. Examples of women-led and community based solutions include:
  - Agroecological farming methods such as -- as proposed by the Vietnam CJ-FPAR group -- the use of micro-organic fertiliser made from banana and manure;
  - Sustainable strategies of resource and land governance such as, as proposed by the Nepal CJ-FPAR women, prohibiting open grazing practices to prevent land erosion combined with promoting planting on embankments and unregulated streambank areas to protect land and residences from flooding and encouraging greenery growth.

### 5.5 A Transformative Vision Toward 'Just and Equitable Transitions' and 'Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future':

- Embrace and realise a Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future<sup>56</sup> through energy and resource democracy, and a just and equitable transition to radically transform our extractive, polluting and fossil fuel dependent economy to a sustainable, regenerative and care-based economy;
- Ensure that a just and equitable transition protects workers to transition away from carbon polluting industries and values of both paid and unpaid care and domestic work, so that women's work is properly recognised and valued;
- Shift power from agribusinesses, hydro businesses, industrial livestock farming, large scale commercial development projects, mining and other extractive industries to investment in commons and agroecology. Promote community-led cooperatives and public industries transparently regulated and not driven by market based approaches, GDP growth and profits;
- Ground traditional and indigenous knowledge on crop-based food systems, crops, seed sharing and heritage varieties; natural resource management and sustainable farming practices to help secure climate resilience and food sovereignty. Women must have equality in securing tenure rights to land;
- Remove all fossil fuel corporations and actors violating human rights from UN spaces to prevent corporate influence and capture debilitating progress on reversing the climate crisis.

<sup>56</sup> APWLD. Feminist Fossil Fuel Free Future Briefer. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://apwld.org/apwld-briefer-feminist-fossil-fuel-free-future-5fs-2/>



### About APWLD

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) is the region's leading network of feminist and women's rights organisations and individual activists. For 35 years, we have been carrying out advocacy, activism and movement-building to advance women's human rights and Development Justice. APWLD worked with and supported seven partner organisations from seven countries to conduct a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) between 2017 and 2019. This FPAR is part of APWLD's Climate Justice Programme.

Email: [apwld@apwld.org](mailto:apwld@apwld.org)  
Website: [www.apwld.org](http://www.apwld.org)



[www.facebook.com/apwld.ngo](https://www.facebook.com/apwld.ngo)



[www.twitter.com/apwld](https://www.twitter.com/apwld)



[www.instagram.com/apwld\\_](https://www.instagram.com/apwld_)



[www.youtube.com/AsiaPacificForumonWomenLawandDevelopment](https://www.youtube.com/AsiaPacificForumonWomenLawandDevelopment)