

# Funding Climate Resilience: Investing in Loss and Damage Solutions.

A discussion paper summarizing the main themes and key policy recommendations from the side-event titled *"Funding Climate Resilience: Investing in Loss and Damage Solutions"* at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

---

## INTRODUCTION

On September 11th, 2023, the Brussels International Center (BIC) hosted a high-level side event at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva. This event convened distinguished speakers and experts, including UN Special Envoy for Human Rights and Climate Change Dr. Ian Fry, Dr. Elise Buckle, Co-Founder and Co-Director of SHE Changes Climate, and Ms. Lien Vandamme, Senior Campaigner at the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). The primary objective of this event was to facilitate open discussions, exchange of ideas, and exploration of innovative approaches to address the adverse impacts of climate change, with a particular focus on the issue of loss and damage.

### *Key Themes and Highlights*

The event delved into several key themes and generated important highlights:

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY: SHAPING A FORWARD-LOOKING APPROACH**

At the side event, participants engaged in a profound discussion regarding accountability and transparency in the context of climate-induced loss and damage. The theme of accountability emerged as a pivotal element in the discourse surrounding climate change, especially concerning historical greenhouse gas emitters and their role in exacerbating loss and damage.

A central challenge that reverberated throughout the discussion was the responsibility of historical greenhouse gas emitters, which predominantly comprise developed nations. These countries have played a substantial role in emitting greenhouse gases that have led to global warming and its ensuing consequences. Yet, the brunt of these consequences is disproportionately borne by developing and vulnerable nations.

In his two reports to the UN General Assembly last year, UN Special Envoy for Human Rights and Climate Change Dr. Ian Fry, highlighted a significant absence of engagement from historically prominent greenhouse gas emitters, making it explicit that certain nations, including the United States, were impeding progress in the realms of learning and development. He underscored that this predicament transcends national boundaries; it is an institutional responsibility. His resounding message was that those responsible for pollution must bear the cost, whether through voluntary means or in response to climate change-related litigation. He emphatically stated, *'We cannot rely solely on government contributions, as they will invariably fall short.'* Ultimately, he called for the mobilization of substantial funding

sources to mitigate the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable segments of our global community.

Establishing a direct causal link between specific emissions and particular climate events or damages remains a formidable scientific challenge. While it is evident that emissions contribute to climate change, the intricate web of causality often obscures direct attribution. Another complex dimension is the legal liability and financial compensation for loss and damage. Historical emitters often resist accepting direct legal responsibility for climate-induced loss and damage, leading to prolonged negotiations and lack of tangible action.

#### *Challenges in Implementing Accountability Measures:*

Despite the consensus on the importance of accountability, participants also underscored challenges in putting these measures into action:

1. **Political Resistance:** Historical emitters may resist adopting accountability measures, apprehensive of potential economic implications and legal liabilities.
2. **Data Gaps:** The accurate quantification of historical emissions and their specific impacts remains a formidable challenge. This challenge contributes to ongoing debates over responsibility.
3. **Global Cooperation:** Attaining consensus on accountability measures at the international level proves challenging, given the diverse interests and priorities of nations.

## FUNDING FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Dr. Ian Fry further emphasized the urgent need for substantial funding sources commensurate with the devastating effects of climate change on the most

vulnerable communities. He underlined the importance of prioritizing those who bear the brunt of climate consequences, especially in low-income countries with limited resources and resilience.

By highlighting the imperative of prioritizing these communities, Ian Fry sheds light on the moral and ethical obligations of the international community. It is a call for equitable climate justice, recognizing that historical greenhouse gas emitters must shoulder a significant responsibility in alleviating the suffering and assisting in the adaptation efforts of the most vulnerable. In this context, funding becomes not only a necessity but a moral imperative, ensuring that those most in need are not left to face the consequences of climate change alone.

Expanding upon Ian Fry's remarks, Ms. Lien Vandamme emphasized a significant gap in the ongoing discussions regarding loss and damage negotiations. She noted that these deliberations have not yet thoroughly tackled the issue from a human rights perspective. In particular, discussions have yet to comprehensively address the plight of vulnerable communities, which are frequently situated in low-income countries and are disproportionately impacted by the severe consequences of climate change.

According to Lien Vandamme, by adopting a human rights perspective in these negotiations, the international community can better recognize and uphold the fundamental rights and dignity of these vulnerable individuals and communities. This approach places an emphasis on justice, fairness, and accountability in dealing with the impacts of climate change, ultimately working toward a more equitable and humane response to the challenges posed by a warming world.

### *Challenges in Implementing a Funding for Vulnerable Communities:*

Participants highlighted a few challenges in implementing funding mechanisms for vulnerable communities:

1. **Resource Allocation:** One of the primary challenges is determining how funds should be allocated among different vulnerable communities. There is often competition for limited resources, and deciding which communities should receive funding and how much can be a contentious issue.
2. **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensuring that funds reach their intended beneficiaries and are used effectively requires robust mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Corruption and mismanagement can divert funds away from vulnerable communities.
3. **Access to Funding:** Many vulnerable communities lack the capacity and resources to access climate finance. Complex application procedures and eligibility criteria can act as barriers, leaving these communities without the financial support they need.
4. **Lack of Human Rights Perspective:** Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable communities, often leading to violations of their human rights. However, funding mechanisms may not always prioritize or adequately consider these human rights aspects. This can result in inadequate attention to issues such as displacement, access to clean water, food security, and healthcare—all of which are essential components of human rights.

### **CATALYSING CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, AND GENDER EQUALITY**

To effectively combat climate change, it is essential to embrace inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality as core principles in our climate action strategies.

Dr. Elise Buckle's insights underscored the transformative potential of embracing inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality in climate action. According to Elisa Buckle, inclusivity in climate action means engaging individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. This diversity of perspectives can lead to a broader range of ideas, innovations, and approaches to tackling climate change. It ensures that the unique challenges faced by different communities are considered, fostering more comprehensive and effective solutions.

In addition, as discussed during the event, gender equality is not just a matter of social justice; it's also crucial for addressing climate change. Women often play central roles in natural resource management and are particularly affected by climate impacts. Empowering women in decision-making processes, providing access to education and resources, and recognizing their contributions can lead to more sustainable and equitable climate solutions.

*'Women's participation in climate initiatives ensures that their specific knowledge and concerns are integrated into policies and projects, making them more effective and responsive to local needs.'* said Dr. Buckle.

Participants also discussed how inclusive policies that consider the interests of all stakeholders, including women and marginalized groups, are more likely to gain widespread support and be effectively implemented. Such policies are informed by a range of perspectives and experiences, ensuring that they are practical and responsive to real-world conditions. Inclusive policies also promote social cohesion and solidarity, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among all stakeholders. This broad-based support can drive positive change at the local, national, and international levels, accelerating progress toward climate goals.

Finally, Elise Buckle emphasized that the inclusion of both a female and a male co-president at the Conferences of the Parties (COP) serves to tackle two crucial dimensions of representation: achieving gender balance and ensuring geographical diversity.

By having one female and one male co-president, with one representing the global North and the other from the global South, this approach seeks to enhance inclusivity and equity within the decision-making processes of international climate negotiations.

*Challenges in Fully Integrating the Inclusion, Diversity and Gender Equality in Climate Actions:*

Participants underscored several challenges in the process of integrating inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality into climate actions.

1. **Resistance to Change:** One significant challenge in implementing policies for inclusivity, diversity, and gender equality in climate action is the resistance to change within existing systems and structures. Many traditional institutions may be reluctant to embrace new, more inclusive approaches, as they often require a departure from established norms and power dynamics.
2. **Lack of Data and Research:** Another challenge lies in the availability and quality of data and research on gender and diversity issues in the context of climate change. Without comprehensive data and research, it can be challenging to identify the specific needs and experiences of different groups and tailor policies accordingly.
3. **Insufficient Representation:** Achieving true inclusivity and diversity often requires equitable representation of underrepresented groups in decision-

making processes. However, many institutions and initiatives still struggle to ensure adequate representation of women, minorities, and other marginalized communities in leadership roles and policy discussions.

4. **Cultural and Social Norms:** Addressing deeply rooted cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender and diversity inequalities can be a significant hurdle. These norms may affect both the perception of women and minority groups in climate-related roles and their ability to participate fully in climate action initiatives. Changing these norms often requires long-term, multifaceted efforts.

The UNHRC side event organized by the Brussels International Center provided valuable insights and recommendations for advancing the dialogue on climate-induced loss and damage. It emphasized the need for greater accountability, funding, and inclusivity in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change. These discussions serve as a foundation for preparing for COP28, where decisions on these issues will play a pivotal role in shaping our response to the formidable challenges posed by climate change.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS:

In response to these challenges, participants proposed several recommendations and avenues for addressing the issue of accountability, funding for vulnerable communities and inclusivity and gender equality in the context of loss and damage:

### 1. **Accountability and Transparency:**

- Historical emitters should intensify their emission reduction commitments. This entails not only mitigating current emissions but also acknowledging responsibility for historical emissions by actively supporting mitigation and adaptation efforts in vulnerable nations. For instance, they should facilitate the transfer of clean and sustainable technologies to vulnerable nations. This can help these countries transition to low-carbon economies and build resilience to climate change.
- Enhancing transparency is fundamental. Encouraging historical emitters to transparently report their historical emissions and detail their mitigation measures can bolster accountability. This data can serve as a basis for assessing the extent of their contributions to climate change.
- Mobilizing climate finance from historical emitters and redirecting it toward loss and damage projects can constitute a form of accountability. This approach encompasses contributions from both the public and private sectors.

### 2. **Funding for Vulnerable Communities:**

- Create a dedicated Global Climate Resilience Fund that is financed by historical emitters and other developed nations. This fund should prioritize vulnerable communities in low-income countries. The Fund can provide financial support for climate adaptation projects, disaster preparedness, and resilience-building initiatives. It should have clear governance structures and transparency mechanisms to ensure that funds are used effectively.

- Ensure that the funding mechanisms are designed with a human rights perspective. This includes recognizing the right to a healthy environment, the right to life, and the right to development. Funds should be allocated in a way that upholds these rights, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable groups. Human rights assessments should be part of project evaluations to monitor compliance.
- Encourage the active participation of the private sector in funding mechanisms. Create incentives for private companies to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and technologies in vulnerable nations. Public-private partnerships can help mobilize additional resources for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts.

### 3. **Inclusivity and Gender Equality:**

- Implement a Co-presidency system for the Conferences of the Parties (COP) that ensures gender balance and geographical representation, with one female and one male co-president, with one from the global North and one from the global South.
- Develop and implement climate policies and initiatives that are explicitly gender responsive. This involves conducting gender impact assessments to understand how climate actions affect men and women differently. Ensure that women's specific needs, knowledge, and perspectives are integrated into climate planning and decision-making processes.
- Invest in capacity-building programs and education initiatives that empower women and underrepresented groups to actively participate in climate actions. Provide training, mentorship, and resources to enable women to take leadership roles in climate-related projects and organizations.
- Establish robust data collection and monitoring systems that track the gender and diversity dimensions of climate projects. Continuously evaluate the engagement of women and marginalized communities in climate initiatives and actively implement their input and perspectives. Use this data to make evidence-based adjustments to climate policies and projects.



## About the BIC

The BIC is an independent, non-profit, think-and-do tank based in the capital of Europe that is committed to developing solutions to address the cyclical drivers of insecurity, economic fragility, and conflict the Middle East and North Africa. Our goal is to bring added value to the highest levels of political discourse by bringing systemic issues to the forefront of the conversation.

BRUSSELS  
INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER

 @BICBrussels  @bicrhr  BIC

 [www.bic-rhr.com](http://www.bic-rhr.com)  [info@bic-rhr.com](mailto:info@bic-rhr.com)

 Avenue Louise, 89 1050, Brussels, Belgium  Tel: +32 027258466