

Climate Justice: Loss and Damage Finance for Children
Transmission to Transitional Committee
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Children, particularly young children, experience distinct and heightened risks due to the climate crisis, linked to their unique physical and physiological vulnerabilities, behaviors and activity patterns. The world's children most impacted by inequality, discrimination and marginalization are often found in lower-income countries that are on the frontline of the climate crisis. These children are already suffering the consequences of climate-induced loss and damage, including, death, displacement, increased child poverty, loss of education, malnutrition, and the destruction of cultural identity and traditional ways of life. At the same time, they are less likely to have the necessary capacity, resources, tools, and access to information and decision-making spaces to address climate-related loss and damage.

Some climate impacts on children are already beyond the scope of climate action, making losses and damages for children inevitable. The disruptive and harmful impacts of the climate crisis are becoming more severe and widespread and current emissions trends and greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere will make some [significant climate impacts unavoidable](#). Mounting climate-related loss and damage could in turn undermine gains in child development and places the future of children at risk, calling for urgent and targeted action on loss and damage.

Loss and damage, such as the loss of land, life, livelihoods or cultural heritage, caused by the climate crisis is one of the greatest intergenerational injustices that children face today. It threatens the rights of current and future generations of children as enshrined in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), including their right to life, survival, and development (Art 6), the right to protection (Art 19), a safe and adequate home and standard of living (Art 27), a healthy environment, food and health services (Art 24), and the right to learning (Art 28). The children of today and tomorrow will face the worst impacts of the climate crisis, including loss and damage, of any generation to date, despite being the least responsible for its cause. Yet, children and their rights are largely absent from policy discussions and [climate finance allocations](#) - only 2.4% of climate finance from key multilateral climate funds were found to support projects incorporating child-responsive activities. Where they are considered, they are treated as vulnerable victims rather than potential agents of climate action.

A Loss and Damage Fund and funding arrangements that recognize that those who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are the most affected, is a matter of climate justice. The momentous decision to establish funding arrangements to address loss and damage, including a Loss and Damage Fund at the 2022 UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP27), is therefore a critical step towards addressing loss and damage and a long-awaited breakthrough in climate negotiations. The Loss and Damage Fund and loss and damage finance arrangements present an opportunity to learn from past experiences of financing climate action and to integrate children as key actors by default.

This brief explores losses and damages that relate directly to children's rights and well-being and highlights opportunities for the Loss and Damage Fund, and other loss and damage funding arrangements, to address the negative impacts of loss and damage on present and future generations of children.

Economic and non-economic loss and damage infringe on the enjoyment of multiple children's rights and have adverse impacts on children's well-being:

Right to survive and thrive - The climate crisis impacts the physical, mental, and emotional development of children and risks undermining [sustainable development](#). Health issues acquired during early childhood can have long-term implications, and health shocks experienced by children [have been linked to poor educational and labor market outcomes](#) in later life. The climate crisis also increases child poverty, while poverty exacerbates children's vulnerability to climate shocks. Children and families living in poverty are less able to respond to climate shocks. Children are also [more susceptible to injury and death](#) during and in the aftermath of predictable extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, tropical cyclones and landslides, which are exacerbated by the climate crisis.

Right to protection - Slow- and sudden onset climate events are increasingly impacting children's safety and security and are widening the gap between protection needs and provisions. Sudden onset events such as tropical cyclones or floods can rapidly displace vast numbers, often without recourse to adequate protection. Chaos in the immediate aftermath of climate-related disasters, including losing protection and social networks, as well as the loss of livelihoods and negative coping strategies associated with climate impacts place children at heightened risk of gender-based violence, sexual [exploitation and trafficking](#). Girls are especially at risk of gender-based violence such as child, early and forced marriage and unions. During evacuation or displacement following a disaster event, children often become separated from their families, amplifying their exposure to such risks.

Right to clean water and food - The climate crisis is already affecting water availability and access with severe consequences for children in lower-income communities. Its impacts also threaten agricultural productivity, long-term food security and nutrition, leading to economic and non-economic loss and damage among children. The climate crisis has slowed the productivity gains of world agriculture [over the past 50 years](#). The intersection of conflict and climate shocks in fragile contexts further exacerbates negative effects on nutrition, at the detriment of children's growth, development and survival. Efforts to manage climate impacts on reduced crop yields, threatened food systems and increased hunger will result in an [estimated cost of \\$1.4 trillion](#) from 2020 to 2040. While in some contexts, climate impacts on food systems are already beyond adaptation with dire consequences for meeting children's nutritional needs.

Right to education and health - As the impacts of climate-related [loss and damage increase](#), children face additional barriers to accessing health and education. For example, when educational and healthcare facilities, drug supplies, or critical infrastructure such as roads are damaged. When schools are repurposed as emergency shelters, or when extreme weather events, such as floods, impede children's movement. The climate crisis [also affects](#)

[a child's ability to learn](#) and access safe, quality education. Climate and environmental threats, including disasters and disease outbreaks, [are responsible for disruptions in the education of over 37 million children each year](#). Climate related losses and damages compromise girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) when they cannot access a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services and information. The climate crisis can give rise to climate anxiety among children who are concerned about future climate-related loss and damage.

Right to cultural heritage and Indigenous People's knowledge - Many Indigenous Peoples rely on climate-sensitive ecosystems for livelihoods as well as spiritual and cultural practices, placing them at elevated risk of climate-related loss and damage. They are particularly threatened by the degradation of land, water, and biodiversity, which constrains their ability to practice traditional livelihoods. Many Indigenous children live in impoverished communities and have limited capacity for climate action, increasing their risk of experiencing losses and damages. Climate action that does not consider the right of Indigenous Peoples to their ancestral land and cultural heritage can inflict additional loss and damage.

Key recommendations

Given children's vulnerability to both economic and non-economic loss and damage impacts, the newly mandated Loss and Damage Fund as well as loss and damage financing more broadly must place children at their core. This can be done by:

1. Incorporating child rights as a guiding principle

- To ensure that the Loss and Damage Fund is child-responsive, children's rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Child, including the best interests of children, must inform all financing decisions, recognizing differing age and gendered impacts and taking children's own views and recommendations into consideration.
- Children and their rights must be explicitly referenced in the governing instrument, accountability mechanisms and guidelines of the new Loss and Damage Fund.

2. Meaningfully engaging children in the process - including design, monitoring and implementation

- Children need to be included in processes related to the design, implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), and the overall governance of the Loss and Damage Fund as experts in their own right, for example through the creation of a child advisory committee.
- Children, locally led organizations and other affected persons should be recognized as active participants in decision-making on loss and damage, including children as agents and rights-holders in decision-making processes on loss and damage.

- Children should have access to age-, gender- and ability- appropriate information on loss and damage to support their informed and full participation in decisions about action on loss and damage.

3. Taking account of children's particular needs and unique vulnerabilities

- Loss and damage needs assessments must consider existing and intersecting vulnerabilities - such as poverty and inequality - and capacities specific to different groups of children, including, but not limited to, girls and children discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identities, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), Indigenous children, children with disabilities, displaced, migrant or refugee children, and children affected by conflict.
- Loss and damage response must be informed by existing inequalities and disaggregated data, at a minimum by age, gender, and disability status, in order to capture the specific impact of the climate crisis on different groups of children.
- Remedial mechanisms should take into account the specific needs and rights violations of children to the effects of the climate crisis, and that the harm can be irreversible with lifelong consequences.

4. Ensuring access to funding for children and their families

- Children on the frontlines of the climate crisis, including child- and girl-led organizations, should have timely access to financial support through the Loss and Damage Fund and other loss and damage finance mechanisms, including a dedicated funding window. Technical support to access child-responsive climate finance can be made available through existing regional mechanisms and implementing agencies, including, for example, NGOs or Indigenous Peoples organizations, who are working closely with children, their families and communities.
- Funding for loss and damage should be decentralized and tailored to meet children's context-specific climate vulnerabilities. To facilitate this, policies, guidelines and criteria for loss and damage finance allocations must be issued in national and local languages and culturally appropriate ways through channels easily accessible to target beneficiaries.
- In fragile and conflict-affected contexts specifically, providing accessible funding to local actors needs to be done carefully, in ways that genuinely support local organizations, do not transfer risk, and do not exacerbate the root causes of vulnerability such as inequality and conflict.

5. Investing in children: Rebuilding and recovering children's critical services such as education, health, nutrition, and social protection

- Loss and damage finance must be new, additional, including grant-based, timely, effective, appropriate, readily available via child-responsive procedures, predictable, long-term and contribute to breaking silos between humanitarian and development finance.
- Significant sums of finance for loss and damage should be directed at child-critical social services, including essential services for younger children. These include health, education, food and nutrition, clean energy, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and child and social protection services.
- Loss and damage finance should provide immediate relief following a sudden onset event or disaster as well as build long-term resilience for children, including those affected by slow-onset events. Funding and plans to address the economic and non-economic impacts of loss and damage should be coordinated with redoubled efforts to avert and minimize loss and damage through investing in early-warning and anticipatory action, [adaptive and shock-responsive social protection](#), DRR and broader climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and financing.
- Direct loss and damage funding should be provided for children and communities displaced by climate-related extreme events. When displacement is protracted, financial assistance should be provided for the resettlement or relocation of people who cannot return to their homes, including assistance with diversifying or rebuilding livelihoods in the new place. To meet children's needs these must also be child- and gender responsive.