



Put it out **ISLAMIC RELIEF'S**
Climate Policy 2025

Put It Out

Islamic Relief's Climate Policy 2025

The Prophet Muhammad (God's peace and blessings be upon him), who – Declared and protected the rights of all living beings, guided his companions to conserve water even in washing for prayer, forbade the felling of trees in the desert, ordered a man who had taken some nestlings from their nest to return them to their mother, and when he came upon a man who had lit a fire on an anthill, commanded, **“Put it out, put it out!”**

From *the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change*

A WORLD RESHAPED

‘The climate crisis is fundamentally and irreparably reshaping our world, with grave implications for the rights of current and future generations. The threat posed by climate change to people and their rights globally is not theoretical; it is real, and it is urgent.

‘The impacts of climate change are already here, and local actors whose livelihoods largely rely on climate-induced natural hazards are the most vulnerable, often being the first and hardest hit.’

Scaling-up Inclusive Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Communities through Locally Led Adaptation (ICRA)

Quoted in *Scaling-up Inclusive Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Communities through Locally Led Adaptation (ICRA)* Islamic Relief Bangladesh

On the brink of disaster

‘We are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster. This is a global emergency beyond any doubt. Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperilled. We are stepping into a critical and unpredictable new phase of the climate crisis. Only through decisive action can we safeguard the natural world, avert profound human suffering and ensure that future generations inherit the liveable world they deserve. The future of humanity hangs in the balance.’

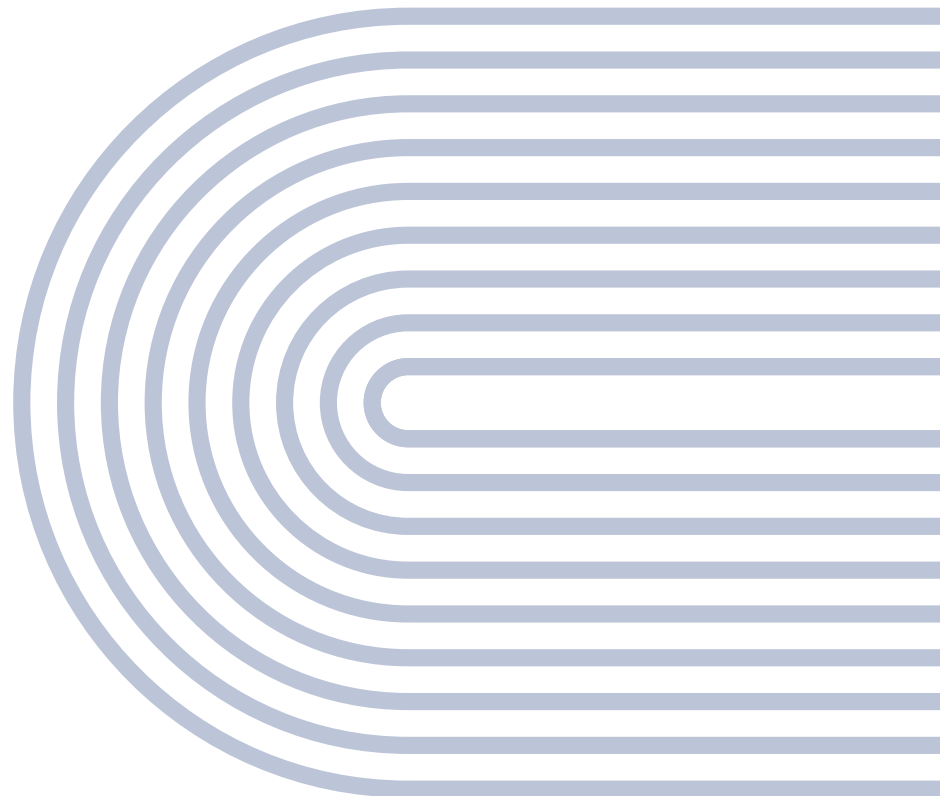
2024 state of the climate report: Perilous times on planet earth¹

Cover Image: Islamic Relief Bangladesh

¹ Ripple, W., Wolfe, C., et al. ‘The 2024 state of the climate report: perilous times on planet earth’, BioScience 74:12, December 2024, <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/74/12/812/7808595?login=false>

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INTRODUCTION

This Climate Policy sets out again Islamic Relief's long-held positions regarding the climate emergency. We reiterate the core positions we set out in the Climate Policy Brief published in 2022:

We support every ethical action designed to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. These include ending exploration, production and use of coal, oil and gas, and replacing them with renewable sources of energy.

We demand that the necessary transformations to society and economy are just and equitable and respect human rights and dignity.

We require that the means, capacity and technical support to adapt to climate breakdown is made available to all.

We expect proper provision to be made to address Loss and Damage due to climate breakdown.

We recognise the overwhelming ethical and moral responsibility of those who have benefitted from the activities that have led to climate breakdown to provide for adaptation and, where this is not possible, compensation for Loss and Damage incurred.

We hold that climate action is both compatible and necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In reaffirming these points of principle, this new Climate Policy 2025 updates aspects of the scientific background for the positions we have taken, especially in the light of the scientific findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Assessment Report of 2022-23.

This document also highlights the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on countries' obligations concerning climate breakdown, the objectives that the United Nations' Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) identified in 2023, and points of intersection with Islamic Relief's 2023-33 Global Strategy.

Our policy concludes with two extensive further sections of new material. One captures 'Voices from the frontline', based on a survey of Islamic Relief's 24 country offices aimed at gauging their perspective and priorities through the lens of the lived experience and challenges faced by the grassroots communities they serve.

The other focuses on the importance of locally led adaptation (LLA) – an approach that Islamic Relief believes should be at the heart of climate action if we are to ensure that it is inclusive, effective and socially equitable for the communities most profoundly affected by the climate emergency.



Training and mentoring for farmers to improve their skills in managing cattle and goat farms efficiently and sustainably.

Image: Islamic Relief Indonesia

Purpose

This climate policy has three purposes:

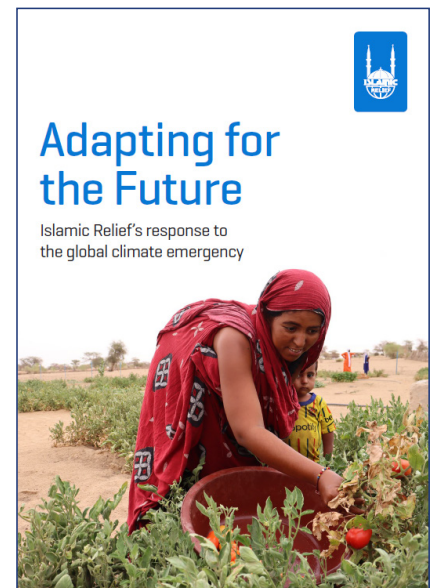
- to position Islamic Relief on the policies and legislation needed to facilitate the goals set out in the Islamic Relief Global Strategy
- to outline Islamic Relief's positions on matters related to the climate emergency which affect the activities of the organisation and the lives of the people and communities we serve
- to set out Islamic Relief's positions on what can be done by individuals, families, communities, wider society, nations, regions and the global community to limit global heating and adapt to its effects.

Background

This document builds on evidence shared in previous publications.

[Adapting for the Future: Islamic Relief's response to the global climate emergency](#)

Reflecting the increasing pace of the climate emergency and its expansion further into the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable, Adapting for the Future provides a comprehensive report on Islamic Relief's extensive work in climate adaptation and community resilience building, which had reached 23 countries and a combined budget of nearly £150 million at the time of publication.



ISLAMIC RELIEF CLIMATE POLICY (2023)

This previous policy document navigated the complex and interrelated issues surrounding humanity's response to the climate crisis. It invoked the scientific and ethical imperative for action and explored solutions and priorities through the lens of Islamic Relief's strategy for addressing the global drivers and local outcomes of poverty, vulnerability, inequality and injustice. It provides important context and detail for this updated Climate Policy.



Islamic Relief's core climate policy positions

Our 2023 policy position document set out a series of policy positions that remain important today, covering the overall context and policy areas such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, and climate finance

CONTEXT

Climate breakdown must be integrated into the design and implementation of all humanitarian and development projects.

Climate policies must align with protecting the rights of all people to have a say in and contribute to climate responses.

To achieve the SDGs, climate actions need to be supported and funded. This needs to be the top priority for all sectors.

A people-centred approach is essential to achieving the Paris Agreement objectives (as well as the SDGs).

The full participation of women must be ensured in climate policy and decision-making.

MITIGATION

Limiting warming to no more than 1.5°C is an essential prerequisite to achieving the SDGs.

A change in generating and using energy is imperative.

There should be a just transition from fossil to sustainable energy that ensures equitable distribution of benefits to the people and communities who are most vulnerable socially, economically and in terms of the impact of climate change.

Governments must urgently set measurable and legally binding renewable energy targets to address rising energy insecurity and to meet climate goals.

Urgent action and investment to limit global heating will save and enhance lives through clean air, healthy diets, active lifestyles and more resilient health systems.

It is better to transform the systems and behaviours that lead to climate change and its effects than to threaten peace and security and increase inequalities through geoengineering.

ADAPTATION

It is essential that people and systems adapt to climate change.

In considering humanitarian and development interventions, there needs to be a thorough assessment of current and future vulnerabilities to climate breakdown and the capacity of individuals and communities to adapt.

Climate action needs to address the root causes of vulnerabilities, including gender discrimination and other sociopolitical and economic disparities.

Removing entrenched inequalities must be at the centre of adaptation efforts.

To be successful, adaptation must be driven by, and connect with, local priorities and the knowledge of local people.



Strengthening the resilience of vulnerable farmers to the impacts of climate change through increased access to livelihood assets, knowledge related to climate-resilient agricultural practice, promotion of income-generating activities, diversified sources of income, and increasing capacity for risk identification and its mitigation.

Image: Islamic Relief Nepal

Vulnerable and marginalised people must meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.

Effective climate action must be aligned with disaster risk reduction and sustainable development to build community resilience.

Conflict-sensitive adaptation planning and programming can tackle climate/conflict dynamics, address climate vulnerabilities, and promote peace.

Resources must be redirected to measures, including adequate social protection, that build resilience and uphold the rights of women and marginalised communities.

Adaptation must be locally led and people centred.

Women and girls must be protected from the heightened risk of harm due to the effects of climate breakdown.

LOSS AND DAMAGE

There needs to be sufficient Loss and Damage finance in line with the 'polluter pays' principle.

Climate-induced migration responses must be included in climate change planning, response and financing.

FINANCE

Climate finance should be public, new, and additional to current development and humanitarian funding. It should be responsive to gender equality, and be disbursed without creating unsustainable debt for the communities and countries receiving it.

At least 50 per cent of climate finance should support adaptation, in order to ensure that the practical needs of the most vulnerable communities and countries are prioritised rather than sidelined.

Islamic Relief believes that governments must set ambitious and transformational targets to:

- eliminate greenhouse gas emissions
- phase out fossil fuels
- invest in renewable energy
- decarbonise industry
- incentivise green building
- achieve zero-carbon transport
- conserve ecosystems, protecting and restoring natural ecologies
- improve food systems
- challenge and change carbon-intensive lifestyles and behaviours
- remove carbon through natural solutions
- support countries and communities to adapt to changing climate and recover from Loss and Damage
- enhance protections for land and oceans
- make social equity and environmental protection priorities in all economic decisions.

DELIVERING THE CLIMATE DIMENSION OF ISLAMIC RELIEF'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

This Climate Policy sets out the systemic and structural global changes needed to mitigate the climate emergency, and to realise Islamic Relief's Global Strategy to address the worst consequences. Our Global Strategy Framework 2023-33² has already articulated what is needed to deal with the consequences as 'helping communities build resilience at community level through adaptation, sustainable livelihoods and peacebuilding'.



Creating sustainable livelihoods strengthens the resilience of communities facing extreme poverty and climate breakdown

Image: Islamic Relief Mali

TAKING ACTION LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

'Tackling the existential crisis of climate change requires action from everyone, from local to global levels, but in the immediate term, it is the poorest communities which are suffering the most from its effects'

Islamic Relief Global Strategy Framework 2023-33

Our Global Strategy says:

'Our aim is that the most disadvantaged families and their communities are empowered to overcome poverty and vulnerability. We recognise that it takes many years for them to build resilience, adapt to climate change, increase food security and build secure livelihoods. We work alongside and enable them to claim their own power. We enable communities in the Global North and Global South to stand together to develop a stronger voice for positive change, to raise funds and fulfil social obligations.' (page 14).

'Our work on longer-term resilience building with communities, partners and other actors will include ... integrating community, partner and government climate change adaptation in our programming.' (page 18).

'We will increase our work on engaging supporters to raise their voice in solidarity with the poorest and most marginalised... In the countries where we raise the most of our resources, younger people are increasingly taking action around the issues we tackle, especially climate change and a fair economy. Younger generations also see the interconnectedness of social and environmental justice issues more clearly,' (page 23).

To facilitate the change needed, our Global Strategy Framework emphasises:

- Islamic Relief will advocate for local leadership of adaptation action in its operating countries (and this new policy document contains an extensive new section on the principles and potential of LLA)
- internationally, Islamic Relief will support calls to enact the agreements and fulfil the obligations of rich countries to provide sufficient support – technically, in capacity building and financially – for developing countries to fulfil their adaptation plans.

PRIORITISING POVERTY REDUCTION

'Reducing poverty and protecting livelihoods is fundamental for enabling resilience and adaptation across sectors'

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)³

² Islamic Relief, 'Global Strategy Framework 2023-33: Changing Lives, Empowering Communities', 2023, <https://islamic-relief.org/publications/islamic-relief-global-strategy-framework-2023-2033/>

³ UNFCCC, 'Experts' final technical report, including information on methodologies, UAE-Belém work programme on indicators', September 2025, <https://unfccc.int/documents/649630>

THE LATEST SCIENCE

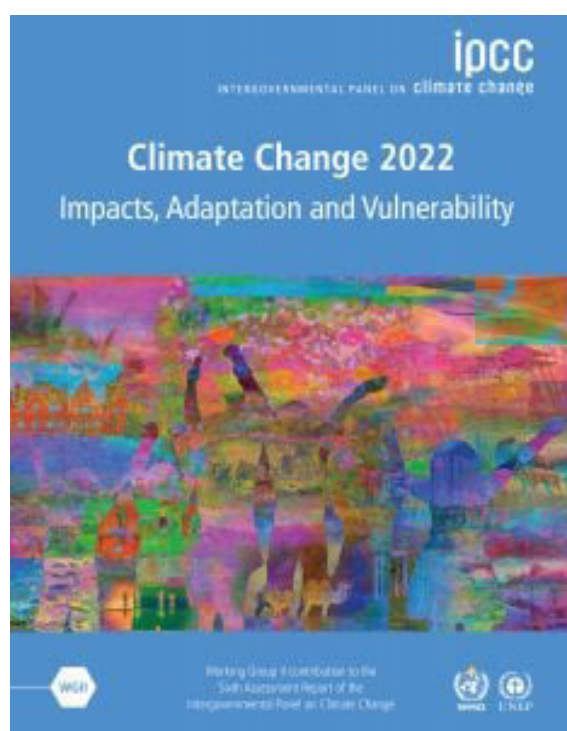
The job of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is to gather experts from various fields to study the thousands of scientific papers on climate science published each year and summarise them into comprehensive reports.

The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report says:

1. climate change is severely impacting people and the ecosystems we depend on
2. extreme weather is causing unprecedented damage
3. impacts are getting worse, hitting marginalised people the hardest
4. adaptation is vital, but far more is needed
5. the costs of inaction far exceed those of mitigation and adaptation.

The report advances the view that climate-resilient development 'is facilitated... by developing partnerships with traditionally marginalised groups, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities and ethnic minorities'.

It adds that 'vulnerabilities and climate risks are often reduced through carefully designed and implemented laws, policies, processes, and interventions that address context-specific inequities such as those based on gender, ethnicity, disability, age, location and income'.



Women's self-help groups consider actions to reinstate livelihoods through alternative income generating activities.

Image: Islamic Relief Bangladesh

Further insights contained in the report that Islamic Relief regards as particularly important include:

- 'Structural vulnerabilities to climate change can be reduced through carefully designed and implemented legal, policy, and process interventions from the local to global that address inequities based on gender, ethnicity, disability, age, location and income.'
- 'The intersection of gender with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, indigenous identity, age, disability, income, migrant status and geographical location often compounds vulnerability to climate change impacts, exacerbates inequity and creates further injustice.'
- 'There is evidence that present adaptation strategies do not sufficiently include poverty reduction and the underlying social determinants of human vulnerability such as gender, ethnicity and governance.'
- 'The severity of climate change impacts will depend strongly on vulnerability, which is also dynamic and includes the sensitivity and adaptive capacity of affected human and ecological systems.'
- 'Risks vary at fine scale across communities and societies and also among people within societies, depending, for example, on intersecting inequalities and context-specific factors such as culture, gender, religion, ability and disability, or ethnicity.'

- 'Differences in vulnerability established by social and economic processes are further differentiated by household and individual variability and intersectionality – differences in wealth and capacity; gender and non-binary gender; education, health, political power and social capital; age, including young and elderly, low physical fitness, pre-existing disability, length of residence and social and ethnic marginalisation.'
- 'Climate change has differential impacts, and even within a household there may be important differences in relation to age, gender, health and disability; these factors may intersect with one another.'
- 'Climate risks are...strongly related to other inequalities, often but not always intersecting with poverty. Differences in vulnerability and exposure arise from multi-dimensional inequalities, often produced by uneven development processes. These inequalities relate to geographic location, as well as economic, political and socio-cultural aspects, such as wealth, education, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, age, class/caste, disability and health status.'



Donated canoe eases children's access to school

Image: Islamic Relief Niger

- 'Poor people more often live in exposed areas such as wastelands or riverbanks, lose more of their total wealth to climatic hazards, receive less post-shock support from their often-times equally poor social networks, and are often not covered by social protection schemes. Countries with high inequality tend to have above-average levels of exposure and vulnerability to climate hazards. Analysis of 92 countries found that relative income losses and other climate change impacts were disproportionately high among the poorest.'

NEW LEGAL DIRECTION FROM THE ICJ⁴

In July 2025, the ICJ delivered its unanimous opinion on the legal obligations of countries to address climate change. Its advisory opinion states that, alongside the climate legal framework, the obligations of countries to tackle climate change are also framed by human rights law, environmental law and customary international law. It says that such obligations apply to all UN member states.

The ICJ declares that climate change constitutes an 'urgent and existential threat' requiring robust legal responses, and affirms that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a fundamental human right. Stating that 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation temperatures is the legally binding ceiling and target for limiting global average temperature, the court notes that every increment of global heating escalates climate risks.

Under this court ruling, states bear legal obligations to limit greenhouse gas emissions, regulate private actors under their jurisdiction, and protect present and future generations – especially vulnerable groups. The court emphasises that failing to meet these duties – including through inaction or weak regulation – constitutes an internationally wrongful act. It spells out that legal obligations mean it is the duty of member states to cease harmful conduct, guarantee non-repetition, and provide full reparation via restitution and compensation.

⁴ Schaugg, L., Jones, N. and Qi, J., International Institute for Sustainable Development, 'Historic International Court of Justice opinion confirms states' climate obligations', July 2025, <https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/icj-advisory-opinion-climate-change>

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION



Farmers restore their livelihoods, improve food security, and rebuild resilience

Image: Islamic Relief Sudan

Climate adaptation is what people do to alter their lives to deal with the changing climate. In more technical terms, adaptation is 'the process of adjusting to the actual or expected climate and its effects... to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.'⁵

Recognising that adaptation is a globally relevant issue, the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was established under the Paris Agreement to enhance work on adaptation with the aim of building adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change. Coming up with a practical interpretation of what the goal should mean in terms of action, and how progress should be measured, is a challenge on which Islamic Relief has been working for several years.

Islamic Relief recognises and supports all the following targets of the GGA:

- Cut climate-driven water scarcity, strengthen resilience to floods and droughts, and ensure safe, affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.
- Build climate-resilient, sustainable farming and food supply, and secure fair access to nutritious food.
- Reduce climate-related illness and deaths by improving health systems, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Protect ecosystems and biodiversity through nature-based solutions, restoration, and conservation of land, water, and marine areas.
- Make infrastructure and settlements resilient, so that essential services continue despite climate impacts.
- Lessen climate damage to livelihoods and poverty reduction through adaptive social protection.
- Safeguard cultural heritage and practices with climate-smart preservation, resilient infrastructure, and indigenous and local knowledge.



Farmers improve food security and resilience through flood-tolerant rice planting and organic farming practices.

Image: Islamic Relief Philippines

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change definition (2014)

VOICES FROM THE CLIMATE FRONTLINE

In 2025, Islamic Relief completed an extensive consultation around its climate change policy and advocacy involving all 24 of the organisation's country offices in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.⁶

Islamic Relief always seeks to ensure that its policy and advocacy work is critically guided and informed by the lived experience, perspectives and priorities of the communities it serves in the fight against poverty, inequality and injustice. Our 24 country offices play a vital role in this area. They are operating in the frontline of the climate emergency, which makes their input and insight crucial in understanding the reality communities face, in being accountable to those communities when providing support and working for change, and in shaping sound policy and relevant advocacy action.

The survey set out 31 statements about the climate emergency that encapsulate views and policy positions on climate action that Islamic Relief has developed over many years, inviting country offices to give their perspectives. These country offices have been an important part of getting us to this point, and the aim of the survey was to revert to them in some detail, checking in on what they think about where we have got to and seeking their affirmation and further guidance.

The findings of the survey regarding all 31 statements are published here for the first time in Islamic Relief's updated Climate Policy because the feedback from country offices adds important points of insight, nuance, authority and emphasis grounded in their grassroots perspective.

The detail that follows includes consolidated responses – summary text in italics that distils the collective feedback received for each statement – alongside verbatim quotes from the responses of named individual country offices.

THE SCIENCE, THE 1.5°C THRESHOLD AND THE IMPERATIVE TO ACT

1. THE FINDINGS OF THE IPCC'S SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT (IPCC AR6) SHOULD GUIDE GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CLIMATE POLICIES.

The IPCC AR6 is the most authoritative, credible and comprehensive scientific source on climate change. The report's findings should be central to national and global climate policies, particularly in guiding mitigation and adaptation. Islamic Relief country offices warn that ignoring its findings will worsen climate impacts, increase costs and undermine sustainable development.

While calling for greater attention to climate justice and Global South perspectives, they also emphasise the need to translate science into actionable policy, the urgency of action to protect vulnerable communities from exceeding the 1.5°C threshold, and the importance of improving public communication of the findings of the AR6.

⁶ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza), Türkiye, Yemen.

2. EXCEEDING 1.5°C GLOBAL WARMING REPRESENTS AN URGENT CRISIS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE POLICY SHIFTS.

THE PERILS OF EXCEEDING 1.5°C

‘Exceeding 1.5°C will trigger more intense and frequent extreme weather events – heatwaves, floods, droughts and cyclones. Coral reefs, Arctic ice and some ecosystems may not recover, even if temperatures later decrease.’

Islamic Relief Bangladesh

Exceeding 1.5°C of global heating represents an urgent crisis that requires immediate and bold policy shifts at both global and national levels. The need for urgent and accelerated emission reductions, strengthened adaptation and climate justice is clear to Islamic Relief country offices, with countries urging immediate national determined contributions preventing the irreversible and catastrophic impacts of exceeding the 1.5°C threshold.



Flood and landslide destruction in Zlate village in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in October 2024.

Image: Islamic Relief Bosnia and Herzegovina

PAYING THE PRICE OF VULNERABILITY

‘The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events underscore the urgent need for stronger mitigation and adaptation strategies. These climate-related disasters threaten lives, disrupt livelihoods, and strain economies, particularly in vulnerable regions like the Philippines.’

Islamic Relief Philippines

FUELLING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

‘Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns increasingly limit how much food we can grow, making hunger and malnutrition worse especially in places where people are already struggling.’

Islamic Relief Niger



Farmers briefed on essential practices in modern irrigation, climate-smart agriculture, good agricultural practices, and climate change adaptation

Image: Islamic Relief Iraq

3. Escalating extreme weather events demand stronger mitigation and adaptation strategies.

To respond effectively to ever-increasing threats from extreme weather, drought, flooding and sea-level rise, urgent and strengthened mitigation and adaptation strategies are needed at global, national and community levels.

NOBODY IS IMMUNE TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

‘Without having strong mitigation and adaptation strategies, climate change will have a devastating effect on lives and livelihoods around the globe. In fact, nobody is immune to the impact of climate change. We are all affected, though the level of impact differs from country to country, person to person, household to household, and community to community – depending on our capacity and level of vulnerability to climate change.’

Islamic Relief Ethiopia

Local collaboration among governments, international organisations and communities is vital, alongside the integration of climate action into humanitarian and development work, as climate disasters worsen poverty, displacement and food insecurity. Stronger, more coordinated and justice-oriented climate action is urgently needed to protect lives, livelihoods and ecosystems in the face of escalating extreme weather.

Islamic Relief’s mission and faith perspective

4. Islamic Relief should prioritise climate action as part of its humanitarian and development mission.

Prioritising climate action is not only a practical and operational necessity but also a moral and ethical responsibility, essential to protecting lives, promoting justice and ensuring long-term sustainable development for the most vulnerable communities. Islamic Relief should prioritise climate action as an integral part of its humanitarian and development mission, given the direct and growing link between climate change and humanitarian crises.

Climate impacts such as floods, droughts, typhoons and unseasonal rains are worsening poverty and food insecurity, causing displacement and increasing health risks, particularly in vulnerable regions. Without addressing climate change, humanitarian and development work cannot be sustainable as livelihoods – especially those reliant on agriculture and livestock – remain highly exposed to climate variability.



Livestock production and management through breed improvement and fodder cultivation increases animal productivity, resilience, and market value

Image: Islamic Relief Kenya

Country offices call for Islamic Relief to integrate climate action systematically into programmes, combining mitigation, adaptation and poverty reduction with advocacy and resource mobilisation. This offers opportunities for innovation, including Islamic models of climate finance and Loss and Damage funding, while aligning climate action with Islamic values of compassion, justice and stewardship.

VULNERABILITY AND CAPACITY ANALYSIS

As climate change accelerates, humanitarian crises are becoming more complex, frequent, and severe. Communities around the world are increasingly exposed to the dual pressures of acute humanitarian emergencies – such as conflict, displacement and food insecurity – and long-term climate-related hazards, which include droughts, floods, storms and heatwaves.

Islamic Relief Worldwide has developed a Humanitarian Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (H-CVCA) to meet the urgent need for integrating climate risk analysis into humanitarian programming, along with awareness and advocacy campaigns and community-level planning and action.

5. The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change aligns with Islamic Relief's Maqasid Approach to protecting people and the planet.

Both the declaration and the Maqasid approach emphasise the protection of people and the planet through principles rooted in the Qur'an and hadith. They highlight shared values of justice (adl), stewardship (khilafah), compassion (rahma), solidarity (ummah), resilience (sabr) and the sanctity of life, all of which underpin Islamic ethical responsibility toward the environment and vulnerable communities.

Both frameworks stress the moral and theological duty to safeguard human dignity, ensure equitable recovery, and promote sustainable use of resources. This alignment strengthens Islamic Relief's mandate to integrate climate action into its humanitarian and development work, providing not only a policy framework but also a powerful tool for community education, mobilisation and advocacy. By grounding climate action in Islamic teachings, Islamic Relief can foster widespread support and ensure that its efforts to combat climate change remain both ethically guided and socially effective.

Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change

The stars, the sun and moon, and this earth in all the diversity, richness and vitality of its communities of living beings, reflect and manifest the boundless glory and mercy of their Creator. All by nature serve and glorify their Maker, all how to their Lord's will. We humans are created to serve the Lord of all beings, to work the greatest good we can for all the species, individuals, and generations of God's creatures.

WE AFFIRM

ALLAH IS THE LORD AND SUSTAINER (RABB) OF ALL BEINGS

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّهِمُ الْغَالِبِينَ
Praise be to Allah, Lord and Sustainer of all beings (Qur'an 1:1)
هُوَ اللَّهُ الْغَالِي الْبَارِي الْمُسَوِّدُ
He is Allah – the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form (Qur'an 59:24)
الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ
Who has perfected every thing He has created (Qur'an 32:7)

NOTHING THAT HE CREATES IS WITHOUT VALUE

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَآيِبِينَ مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
And We did not create the heavens and earth and all that is between them in jest.
وَلَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَظَنَّ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُبِينًا
All that is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. Allah encompasses all things (Qur'an 4:126)
وَالنَّسَاءَ رَفَعًا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ وَأَوْقَعُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَحْسُرُوا الْمِيزَانَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَعَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
He raised the heaven and established the balance so that you would not transgress the balance.
GIVE JUST WEIGHT – DO NOT SKIMP IN THE BALANCE. HE LAID OUT THE EARTH FOR ALL LIVING CREATURES (Qur'an 55:7-9)

THE NATURAL STATE (FITRAH) OF ALLAH'S CREATION

فَاجْهَ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِطَلْقِ اللَّهِ
ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيُّمُ وَلَئِنْ الْبَشَرِ لَآ أَغْنَاهُمْ
So set your face firmly to the faith in pure devotion, the natural pattern on which Allah made humankind.
There shall be no changing Allah's creation. That is the true Way, but most people do not know (Qur'an 30:30)

WE RECOGNISE

الْفَسَادُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِمَا نَحْنُ بِهَا نَسُوءُ الْبَشَرِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ وَعَذَابَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا
Corruption has appeared on land and sea by what people's own hands have wrought,
that He may let them taste some consequences of their deeds, so that they may turn back (Qur'an 30:41)
Disruption of the global climate is a consequence of our corruption in the earth. We are but one of the multitude of living beings with whom we share the earth, and a minuscule part of the divine order, yet we have exceptional power, and bear the responsibility to establish good and avert evil in every way we can.
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَالْأَنْهَارَ وَالنَّجْمَ وَالشَّجَرِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالنَّبِيَّاتِ وَالنَّبِيَّاتِ وَالنَّبِيَّاتِ وَالنَّبِيَّاتِ
The creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of humankind, but most people do not know (Qur'an 40:57)
وَمَا مِنْ خَائِفَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أَمَمٌ أَهْلًا لَكُمْ
There is no animal on the earth, nor any bird that wings its flight, but is a community like you (Qur'an 6:38)
We have no right to abuse the creation or impair it. Our faith commands us to treat all things with care and awe (taqwa) of their Creator, compassion (rahmah) and utmost good (ihsan).

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ALL OUR ACTIONS

مَنْ يَفْعَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ
Then whoever has done an atom's weight of good, shall see it,
and whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it (Qur'an 99:7-9)

OUR CALL

We call on all Muslims, wherever they may be, to tackle the root causes of climate change, environmental degradation, and the loss of biodiversity, following the example of The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who was, in the words of the Qur'an, "a mercy to all beings."

We bear in mind the words of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)
The world is sweet and verdant, and verily Allah has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.
(Hadith as narrated by Muslim from Abu Sa'ad al-Muhajir)

A STRONG ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

'The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change reflects the principles of justice, stewardship and compassion, which are core to the Maqasid al-Shariah. This alignment provides a strong ethical and theological foundation for Islamic Relief to prioritise climate action as part of its mandate.'

Islamic Relief Türkiye

Global drivers and local outcomes

6. Climate changes exacerbates poverty, vulnerability and injustice globally.

The breakdown of a stable and reliable climate is not only an environmental crisis but also a profound driver of poverty, vulnerability and injustice worldwide. Extreme weather events and the changing climate destroy homes, farmland and livelihoods, pushing poor and marginalised communities deeper into poverty while also displacing populations and threatening food security and health.

These impacts disproportionately affect low-income, marginalised and disaster-prone communities, thereby amplifying existing inequalities between and within nations. This climate injustice reflects both global inequities, as wealthy nations can better adapt while poorer nations bear the brunt of the damage, and intergenerational inequities, as future generations will inherit escalating risks.

Islamic Relief country offices highlight the need for robust, equity-focused climate actions that combine mitigation, adaptation and addressing Loss and Damage – all under the umbrella of effective international cooperation. Climate change is framed as a threat multiplier that deepens structural inequalities. Urgent, just and inclusive climate action is a moral and practical imperative.



Addressing the place and role of women in society, protection and gender-based violence and participation of women in decision-making processes, Islamic Relief's Fakara project has fenced four gardens for women of the four villages to undertake market gardening activities. It has also built water systems powered by solar energy for drinking and watering the gardens

Image: Islamic Relief Niger

7. Policies must focus on people-centred, climate-sensitive, risk-informed development to achieve long-term sustainability.

Policies must prioritise the needs and perspectives of vulnerable communities, ensuring inclusivity, equity and resilience in the face of the climate crisis. A people-centred approach is needed to ensure that policies address real needs through consultation and participation, empowering communities to shape their own futures.

Climate sensitivity is important because it increases the likelihood that development strategies will successfully incorporate and integrate scientific data, risk assessment and the realities of a changing environment. Risk-informed planning makes policies proactive rather than reactive, reducing harm while safeguarding lives, livelihoods and ecosystems. Together, these three pillars create a holistic framework that not only strengthens resilience to climate shocks but also supports just, inclusive and sustainable development, especially for the most vulnerable.

ENSURING LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

'Integrating climate considerations into development policies ensures that interventions are sustainable and resilient to climate risks, benefiting communities in the long term.'

Islamic Relief Kosova



Beekeeping provides a source of income to help build long-term, sustainable livelihoods

Image: Islamic Relief Bosnia and Herzegovina

EXACERBATING EXISTING INEQUALITIES

'Poor and vulnerable people face greater exposure to climate risk with limited access to resource to cope with climate change impact. Therefore, climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly those living in poverty, facing marginalisation, or residing in already disadvantaged/remote/hilly areas, exacerbating existing inequalities, poverty and vulnerability.'

Islamic Relief Nepal

Social and economic justice

8. Addressing inequality is essential for climate resilience and sustainable development.

The climate crisis disproportionately impacts marginalised and vulnerable populations who have the least resources to cope. Inequality amplifies vulnerability by limiting access to technology, finance and adaptation opportunities. Without tackling inequality, climate action will remain incomplete and unsustainable. Treating unequal groups as equal risks leaving behind those who need support the most.

Reducing inequality enhances adaptive capacity, strengthens social cohesion, and fosters inclusive participation in climate and development programmes. It also aligns with the SDGs' principle of leaving no one behind, recognising that social, economic and environmental goals are interconnected.

A VISION OF INCLUSION AND EQUITY

'Addressing inequality creates more inclusive and equitable societies, which are more likely to thrive in the face of climate challenges'

Islamic Relief Albania

9. Climate policies should ensure justice for the most vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Examples like Afghanistan illustrate how countries and populations with minimal emissions face extreme vulnerability, highlighting the need for climate finance, compensation and targeted support through mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility and Green Climate Fund. Justice involves addressing historical inequalities, supporting adaptation and resilience, and ensuring equitable access to resources, insurance and development opportunities.

Vulnerable populations include not only low-income communities but also indigenous peoples, women, children, the elderly, migrants, and those with pre-existing health conditions or disabilities. Policies guided by climate justice principles, such as the Just Green Transition in Indonesia, can empower affected communities, protect their rights, and enable them to adapt and thrive.

THE POWER OF JUST TRANSITION

'Just transitions can address historic injustices. This can include historic power relations between countries, such as providing climate finance to the most climate-vulnerable countries without saddling them with further debt. And just transitions can and should improve the wellbeing of people living in poverty, as well as those who have been disadvantaged on grounds of gender, age, indigeneity, ethnicity, and other identities.'

Overseas Development Institute⁷

⁷ Dupar, M., 'Just transition: can 2025 bring renewed global focus?', Overseas Development Institute blog, December 2024, <https://odi.org/en/insights/just-transition-in-2025/>

10. Inclusive climate policies are needed to support women, children, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups.

Inclusive climate policies are essential to support marginalised groups, who are disproportionately affected by climate change due to limited resources, reduced adaptive capacity, and exclusion from decision-making. Examples illustrate how women and children face heightened risks during floods, drought and other disasters, while smallholder farmers and low-income individuals are vulnerable to losing livelihoods and economic stability.

Inclusive policies must be needs- and human rights-based, gender-sensitive, and include people with disabilities, ensuring all sections of the population are actively involved in planning, decision-making and resource allocation. By addressing people's specific vulnerabilities and promoting participation, inclusive climate policies enhance equity, resilience and the effectiveness of climate action, ensuring that climate interventions are both just and sustainable.

INCLUSIVITY ENSURES EFFECTIVENESS

'These populations are disproportionately affected by climate change. They often face higher risks, have fewer resources, and are excluded from decision-making processes that impact their lives. Without inclusivity, climate action will not be effective or sustainable.'

Islamic Relief Philippines

THE DISABILITY DIMENSION

'Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by direct and indirect impacts of climate change. Access of persons with disabilities to food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, health-care services and medicines, education and training, adequate housing and access to decent work are all impacted. In more severe cases, displacement and increased loss of life can occur.'

'Women with disabilities are at highest risk of climate change including due to intersection of gender and disability as well as enhanced risk of gender-based violence. It is therefore crucial that climate action strategies recognise the disproportionate impacts, and that current and future policies address the situation, ensuring that all of society fully benefits from disability and gender inclusive implementation.'

International Disability Alliance⁸



Bahga is a 26-year-old farmer from Blue Nile state using improved seeds. She says, "The project has supplied me with essential seeds that have helped me in farming and enabled me to meet my family's basic needs."

Image: Islamic Relief Sudan

⁸ International Disability Alliance and International Disability and Development Consortium, 'Persons with Disabilities and Climate Action', briefing for COP 28, 2023, https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/cop_28_-_final_version_-_nov_16th_-_02.pdf

Climate and human rights

11. Climate change adaptation and mitigation should be recognised as a human rights issue requiring urgent international action.

Urgent, coordinated and rights-based international action is necessary to safeguard human dignity and achieve climate justice. Climate impacts threaten fundamental human rights, including the right to life, health, food, water, shelter and a safe environment.

Country offices provide numerous examples of vulnerable populations losing livelihoods, access to basic services, or even lives due to climate-related disasters. They emphasise that global cooperation, resource sharing and accountability are essential to protect those disproportionately affected, particularly in the Global South. Framing climate action as a human rights imperative strengthens international solidarity, justice and equity, ensuring that policies prioritise the protection of the most vulnerable.

NEGLECTED AND MARGINALISED

‘There are communities along or within the Marsh Lands in Mindanao who are neglected and simply don’t have access to safe water sources, health and basic hygiene.’

Islamic Relief Philippines

12. Climate action must integrate principles of gender equity, inclusion and child protection.

Women, children, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by climate change. They face higher risks, increased caregiving burdens, and threats to their rights, including health, education, food and water, and protection from gender-based violence. Taking these issues seriously, which means properly upholding the principles of gender equity, inclusion and child protection, ensures that vulnerable groups are actively included in policy design, decision-making and access to climate services, empowering them and enhancing resilience.

There is a need to mainstream these considerations across all stages of climate programming, while emphasising the dual role of marginalised groups as both vulnerable populations and agents of sustainable solutions.

WOMEN AND GIRLS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

‘Climate change has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who are more likely to be injured, bear increased responsibility for caring for family members, and face increased risk of gender-based violence – including early marriage and sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, as climate change impact threatens the rights of children, such as the right to health, life, food, water and sanitation, education, housing, culture and development (among others), [climate action] should be integrated with the principles of child protection.’

Islamic Relief Niger



Promoting environmental awareness, responsibility, and climate-conscious behaviour through play and activities

Image: Islamic Relief Lebanon

CHILDREN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Islamic Relief’s [policy paper on children and climate change](#) sets out our position towards harnessing children and young people’s energy at the international and local level. It recognises that children are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but also how they can be effective agents of action and contribute to efforts to mitigate and adapt.

Climate, biodiversity and sustainable development

13. Climate change threatens biodiversity, oceans and land and must be addressed through integrated conservation efforts.

Climate breakdown threatens habitat loss, species migration and extinction, deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, ocean warming, acidification and coastal degradation. Addressing these interconnected crises requires integrated, ecosystem-based conservation efforts involving communities and other key stakeholders, along with multi-level coordination.

Climate action and conservation must be aligned, combining ecosystem restoration, sustainable land and ocean management, and climate-smart practices to protect natural resources, enhance resilience and support human wellbeing. Integrated conservation is framed as essential not only for preserving biodiversity and ecosystem services but also for strengthening climate resilience, supporting sustainable development and safeguarding the planet for future generations.

BIODIVERSITY UNDER THREAT

‘Climate change poses a significant threat to biodiversity by causing habitat loss, species migration and eventual extinction. In Afghanistan, it has severely impacted biodiversity, threatening biodiversity in mountainous areas like Badakhshan and a decline in forest cover in regions such as the Paghman mountains.’

Islamic Relief Afghanistan

DIVERSITY IS STRENGTH

‘There are strong practical arguments against biodiversity loss. Variation, from individual genes to species, gives ecosystems resilience to change. Ecosystems, in turn, hold the planet steady and provide services essential to human welfare: forests and wetlands prevent pollutants entering our water supplies, mangroves offer coastal defence by reducing storm surges, and green spaces in urban areas lower rates of mental illness in the people who live there.

‘A continued loss of biodiversity will disrupt these services even further. The climate crisis, biodiversity loss, land degradation and the health of the oceans must be tackled together.’

Islamic Relief Biodiversity Policy Briefing

PRESERVING OUR FUTURE ENVIRONMENT

‘Rising temperatures and extreme weather damage habitats, oceans and land, which are crucial for life on Earth. By working together to protect forests, restore ecosystems and use sustainable practices, we can help preserve the environment for the future.’

Islamic Relief Nepal

14. Desertification and land degradation are critical climate-related challenges.

Tackling land degradation and desertification is an urgent priority for climate adaptation, mitigation and long-term environmental sustainability. Effective protection against degradation can have far-reaching impacts on food security, livelihoods, biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Islamic Relief country offices report severe local effects from degradation and desertification, including reduced vegetation, declining agricultural productivity and increased poverty. Rising temperatures, droughts, heatwaves, wildfires, deforestation and unsustainable land use exacerbate these challenges. Change can be slow-moving, but the effects are profound and cumulative, gradually reducing soil fertility, ecosystem resilience and human wellbeing. Addressing them requires integrated strategies, including sustainable land management, soil and water conservation, reforestation and community engagement.

IMPROVE LAND MANAGEMENT, RESTORE FERTILITY

'This is the big threat to our farmers and agricultural land. Provide support for land improvement management and restoration of the land fertility.'

Islamic Relief Philippines



Image: Islamic Relief Niger

A CONVENTION TO UNITE BEHIND

'The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) unites governments on the critical role of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services for climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction and pledges to integrate biodiversity considerations into all relevant national policies, programmes and plans in response to climate change, taking into account the maintenance and restoration of the resilience of ecosystems which are essential for sustaining the delivery of their goods and services.'

Convention on Biological Diversity

15. Achieving the SDGs requires ambitious climate mitigation policies. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires ambitious climate mitigation policies.

The climate crisis directly threatens progress on multiple SDGs, SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). There are also significant indirect impacts on the goals related to poverty, health, education and gender equality. Islamic Relief country offices in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Niger and the Philippines highlight how extreme weather events, resource scarcity, and environmental degradation can undermine development gains, making robust mitigation essential.

A number of country offices stress that integrating climate action into development strategies – through reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy, sustainable land and water management, and comprehensive planning – is critical for building resilience, ensuring equity, and safeguarding both current and future generations. Ambitious and coordinated climate policies are framed as indispensable for sustainable, inclusive, and long-term achievement of the SDGs.

CLIMATE CHANGE VERSUS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

‘Climate change is one of the most significant challenges to achieving the SDGs, as its impacts are far-reaching, affecting nearly every aspect of development.’

Islamic Relief Niger

‘Links between existing nationally determined contributions (NDCs (governments' formal climate plans) and the SDGs are often found in the areas of water, food and energy. The social goals, in particular health, education and gender equality (SDGs 3, 4 and 5 respectively) tend to be highly under-represented in NDC commitments, compared to the environmental and economic goals.

‘Policy and decision makers need to harness the natural synergy between climate action and sustainable development. NDCs need to make a clear link to the SDGs, while the implementation of all SDGs must be aligned with 1.5°C compatible pathways.’

Islamic Relief Climate Policy (2022)



Promoting gender equality and resilient livelihoods among climate vulnerable communities

Image: Islamic Relief South Sudan

⁹ Lenton, T., Xu, C., et al, ‘Quantifying the human cost of global warming’, Nature Sustainability, 2023, 6(10), 1237-1247.

Mitigation and adaptation

16. Reducing carbon emissions should be the top priority for climate action.



Image: Islamic Relief Iraq

FRACTIONAL INCREASES AFFECT HUGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE

‘Each 0.1°C of global warming places an extra 100 million people (or more) into unprecedented hot average temperatures.’

Quantifying the cost of global warming³²

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are the primary drivers of global warming, trapping heat in the atmosphere and triggering extreme weather, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss and ecosystem disruption. Urgent emission reductions are critical to slow the pace of climate change, protect vulnerable populations and ecosystems, and make adaptation measures more effective and manageable.

While low-emission development strategies must also consider socioeconomic impacts, a balanced approach that combines mitigation with community-sensitive planning ensures both environmental sustainability and social justice. Globally, prioritising carbon reduction is fundamental for reducing the need for adaptation, minimising loss and damage and safeguarding development gains.

ACT NOW OR PAY LATER

‘Without urgent action to reduce emissions, the world risks exceeding critical climate thresholds, making adaptation efforts increasingly difficult and costly.’

Islamic Relief Philippines

17. Carbon removal through natural solutions (e.g. reforestation, soil restoration) is a key part of climate mitigation.

Natural approaches effectively sequester carbon, restore ecosystems, enhance biodiversity and improve soil health, while also supporting sustainable agriculture and local livelihoods. They provide multiple and linked benefits, including food security, water availability, and increased community resilience to climate impacts.

Compared to engineered solutions, natural solutions are cost-effective, sustainable, and synergistic with broader environmental and development goals. For maximum impact, they must be integrated with sustainable land management practices, technological innovations and respect for local land rights. The chance of success in this area depends upon urgent, coordinated action at local, national and international levels.

THE VALUE OF NATURAL SOLUTIONS

‘Natural solutions for carbon removal do not only impact that pursuit but also provide solutions for other climate issues.’

Islamic Relief Albania

18. Geoengineering poses risks that outweigh its potential benefits.

Concerns include disruption of weather patterns, ecosystem collapse, biodiversity loss, and negative impacts on food systems, water availability and livelihoods. Ethical, governance and geopolitical issues are also highlighted by Islamic Relief country offices, particularly the unequal distribution of effects and the risk of reduced urgency to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

While some countries, like Indonesia, use localised weather modification techniques to manage hydrometeorological risks, many emphasise that large-scale geoengineering remains unproven, unpredictable and potentially irreversible. Overall, respondents advocate prioritising proven, sustainable mitigation and adaptation strategies over reliance on geoengineering.

NEGLECTING ROOT CAUSES INCREASES RISKS

‘Geoengineering approaches fail to address the root causes of climate change, including fossil fuel production, consumption patterns, deforestation and unsustainable agriculture, thereby allowing those underlying drivers to persist while introducing significant new risks.’

Debunking Dangerous Distractions¹⁰

THE PERILS OF PLAYING GOD

As governments and corporations are increasingly relying on technical fixes for countering global heating, Islamic Relief’s Climate Action Policy sets out the organisation’s position on geoengineering, carbon capture and storage, carbon dioxide removal and other technologies. It summarises where Islamic Relief stands and warns of the perils of ‘playing God’.

¹⁰ Climate Action Network, ‘Solar radiation manipulation/modification (SRM) – dangerous distraction’, CAN information sheet, climatenetwork.org/resource/solar-radiation-manipulation-modification-srm-dangerous-distraction/

19. Local led, people-centred adaptation is essential for building community resilience.

Local communities possess deep knowledge of their environment, risks and social dynamics, enabling tailored, context-specific solutions that are more relevant, effective and sustainable. Such approaches empower communities, foster ownership and strengthen capacity to cope with climate impacts while reducing reliance on external aid. They also promote inclusivity by involving marginalised groups, enhancing social cohesion and respecting cultural practices. Examples include Indonesia's PROKLIM programme, which registers locally led climate actions, demonstrating how structured support can scale community-driven adaptation efforts.



Image: Islamic Relief Somalia

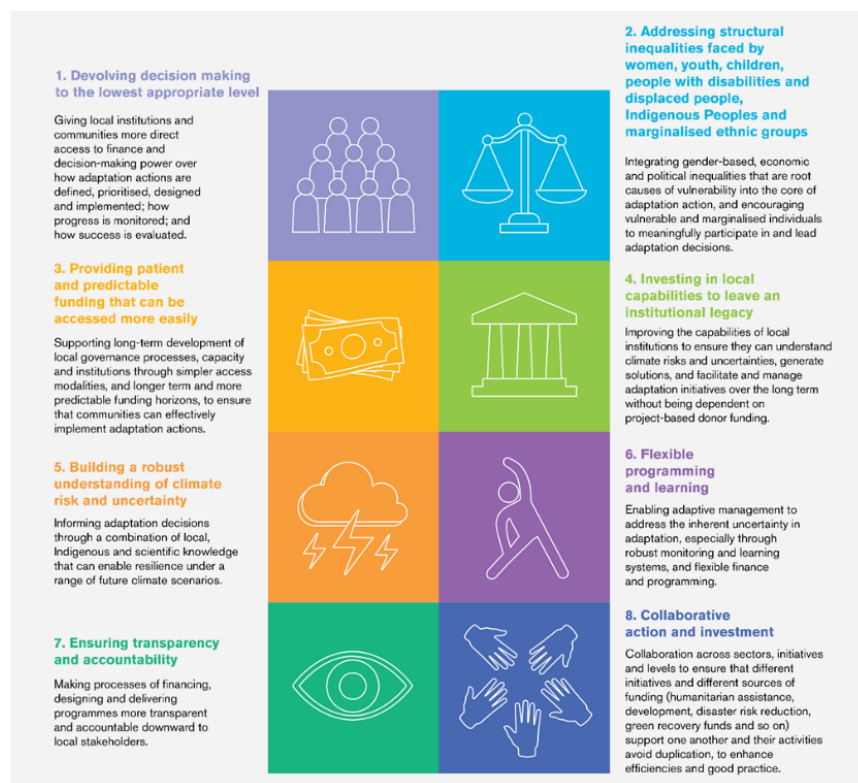
Locally led adaptation (LLA) is becoming a central defining principle for Islamic Relief countries in the forefront of climate action in the Global South, and this policy document concludes with an in-depth examination of why LLA is important and how it should be framed and implemented to optimise its positive impact.

'Locally led adaptation ensures solutions are relevant, sustainable and tailored to each community's needs. It empowers communities to take ownership of their climate resilience while ensuring resources are used effectively for long-term impact.'

Islamic Relief Nepal

20. Principles for LLA should guide all adaptation funding, design and programmes.

These principles ensure that climate resilience efforts are effective, inclusive, and sustainable by centring local knowledge, skills, and capacities. Empowering communities to take ownership over decisions and resources aligns adaptation strategies with the specific needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities of each community, promoting long-term impact and sustainability. Adherence to LLA principles also addresses structural inequalities, enhances cultural sensitivity, and fosters community ownership, ensuring interventions are equitable and contextually relevant. Ultimately, embedding these principles from funding through design and execution not only strengthens climate adaptation outcomes but also empowers communities to shape their own resilient futures in the face of increasing climate risk.



21. Transformational and transformative adaptation is necessary to respond to escalating climate threats.

These approaches go beyond incremental, short-term measures by fundamentally reshaping systems, policies, behaviours and governance structures to build long-term resilience and sustainability. They tackle the root causes of vulnerability, enabling communities and ecosystems to withstand increasingly severe climate impacts.

Transformational adaptation focuses on systemic changes at multiple levels, from local communities to national governments, while transformative adaptation drives deep, structural shifts that create equitable, climate-resilient futures. By embedding these strategies, adaptation efforts become proactive, inclusive and capable of fostering sustainable development despite the intensifying challenges of climate change.

Fundamental change through adaptation

‘Transformational adaptation involves fundamentally changing systems, policies and practices to build resilience, while transformative adaptation focuses on deep, long-term shifts in how societies and communities function. These approaches are essential to reduce vulnerability, ensure sustainability and create solutions that can withstand the increasing severity of climate impacts.’

Islamic Relief Nepal

Fossil fuels and energy security

22. Ending fossil fuel dependence is necessary for energy security and conflict prevention.

Heavy reliance on fossil fuels exposes countries to price fluctuations, supply disruptions and geopolitical tensions, often triggering conflict and instability. Some Islamic Relief country offices highlight direct vulnerabilities due to dependence on imports, while others stress that fossil fuel-driven power struggles and pollution have global consequences.

Transitioning to renewable energy – such as solar, wind and hydropower – not only diversifies energy sources and reduces geopolitical risks but also creates jobs, supports sustainable development and mitigates climate change. Several countries emphasise the need for equitable transition strategies to avoid worsening socioeconomic inequalities.

Unleashing the power of just transition

‘In the race to decarbonise, the ongoing energy shift risks replicating old cycles of exploitation, where vulnerable communities are left to shoulder the burdens while wealth and power concentrate at the top. From the extraction of critical minerals to escalating debt and persistent energy access gaps, the current course echoes the same inequities that have long been embedded in colonial systems.’

‘A genuinely just transition must follow another route – one that redistributes resources and decision-making power, reduces excessive consumption, and places human dignity and rights at its core. This report presents tangible strategies for building an energy future grounded in equity, care and shared wellbeing – where energy is designed to serve communities rather than corporate profit.’

[Oxfam](#)

23. Fossil fuels and resource conflicts exacerbate instability in vulnerable regions.

Competition over oil, gas, coal and minerals often fuels violence, political unrest and corruption, while extraction drives environmental degradation, displacement and economic inequality. Examples from Islamic Relief country offices in the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan show how resource struggles worsen human suffering and undermine development. Reliance on fossil fuels creates dependency and heightens geopolitical tensions, trapping communities in cycles of poverty and conflict.

In contrast, transitioning to renewable energy and promoting sustainable resource management can reduce these risks, foster peace and strengthen resilience. By addressing both the environmental and sociopolitical dimensions of fossil fuel reliance, a shift toward clean energy offers a pathway to greater stability and security in fragile regions.

‘Climate breakdown has and continues to cause immense pressure on populations and, inevitably, is inextricably linked to conflict. It contributes to heightened competition over resources, economic collapse, mass displacements, and opportunities for exploitation – factors that weave into the plethora of conflict drivers.

‘At the same time, conflict results in environmental degradation in seemingly limitless ways from the destruction of dams to attacks on oil pipelines and agricultural land that sustains rural communities. This self-perpetuating cycle of climate breakdown and conflict – alongside the apathy of world leaders to address the climate crisis in any meaningful way – poses the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced.’

Developing Islamic Relief’s Social Cohesion Impact



24. Energy insecurity is becoming a critical global issue linked to climate change.

Higher demand for cooling and heating increases pressure on already fragile systems, particularly in vulnerable regions. Dependence on fossil fuels deepens these risks by fuelling geopolitical tensions and conflicts over resource access. Extreme weather events, rising temperatures and shifting weather patterns disrupt energy production, damage infrastructure and strain supply chains.

While the shift to renewable energy is essential for long-term resilience, it may also pose short-term challenges if not managed equitably. Energy insecurity directly threatens economic stability, governance, food systems and human wellbeing, making climate-resilient and diversified energy systems a global priority.

Making renewables accessible

‘Policies should focus on making renewable energy technologies accessible and affordable. Preventing energy poverty and ensuring that all communities, especially marginalised populations, have access to energy is vital for social equity and economic development.’

Islamic Relief Niger

Adut is a 34-year-old woman living in a conflict zone and climate affected area where there is limited access to clean water, exposing her and her children to waterborne diseases and unsanitary conditions. Water, sanitation and health, protection and nutrition interventions in Adut’s village has greatly reduced the risks and improved overall wellbeing.

Image: Islamic Relief South Sudan

25. Energy security should balance renewables with equitable access to affordable energy.

While solar, wind and other clean sources reduce reliance on fossil fuels and strengthen long-term resilience, the transition must not leave vulnerable communities behind. Equitable policies should ensure affordability, accessibility and reliability, particularly for marginalised populations at risk of energy poverty. Investments in renewable infrastructure need to be paired with social and economic support to avoid deepening inequalities or creating job losses during the transition. By putting inclusion and fairness at the centre of their approaches, countries can achieve sustainable energy systems that promote climate resilience, economic stability and social wellbeing.

Renewables and energy poverty

'Ensuring equitable access to affordable renewable energy supports sustainable development and reduces energy poverty.'

Islamic Relief Kosovo

Climate change and health

26. Climate change is a major public health crisis, increasing disease, malnutrition and displacement.

Climate change is increasingly recognised as a major public health crisis, driving the spread of infectious and climate-sensitive diseases, worsening malnutrition through disrupted food systems, and forcing displacement due to floods, droughts and rising seas. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events and degraded ecosystems directly impact human health, leading to heat-related illnesses, respiratory and cardiovascular problems, and mental health challenges.

Vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and communities with limited healthcare access are disproportionately affected. Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a strengthening of healthcare systems, action to ensure food and water security, integration of health into climate policies, and investment in adaptation strategies that protect livelihoods and resilience.

Drought and disease

'In our recent humanitarian climate vulnerability and capacity analysis (H-CVCA) in the Camp-e-Sakhi area of Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh province, we discovered through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and participatory workshops that consecutive droughts and annual floods have significantly increased the prevalence of diseases such as diarrhoea and other water-borne illnesses. Additionally, malnutrition levels were high due to decreased crop productivity among local farmers caused by prolonged droughts.'

Islamic Relief Afghanistan

27. Climate policy must integrate health adaptation to protect communities from rising risks.

By embedding health adaptation into climate policies, we can strengthen healthcare systems, promote climate-resilient infrastructure, establish early warning systems and ensure equitable access to medical services. This approach not only addresses immediate health threats, such as heat stress, vector-borne diseases, and malnutrition, but also builds long-term community resilience, safeguarding livelihoods and wellbeing in the face of ongoing and future climate impacts.

Climate change exacerbates health vulnerabilities

'Rising temperatures, extreme weather events and changing disease patterns can exacerbate existing health vulnerabilities, especially in low-income and vulnerable populations. For instance, heatwaves increase the risk of heat stress, while floods and droughts can lead to waterborne diseases and food insecurity.'

Islamic Relief Bangladesh

Making health systems a priority

'Strengthening health systems to withstand climate shocks must be a priority. This includes climate-proof health infrastructure, early warning systems, and climate-informed health policies.'

Islamic Relief Türkiye

Loss and Damage, migration and conflict

28. Wealthy nations should provide increased climate finance to address Loss and Damage in vulnerable countries.

Wealthy nations should provide increased climate finance to address Loss and Damage in vulnerable countries, reflecting both historical responsibility and climate justice. Many of the nations most affected by climate change have contributed least to global emissions and lack the resources to cope with its impacts, including extreme weather, displacement and economic losses. Increased financial support is essential to help these countries build resilience, recover from disasters, implement adaptation measures and promote sustainable development, ensuring a more equitable and effective global response to the climate crisis.

The importance of international action

'Indonesia is an archipelago country, where vulnerability is very high. Hydrometeorological disasters dominate the country, with more than 3,000 incidents every year on average. Even though various efforts are made, there are still remaining threats of floods, landslide, whirlwind, tidal wave etc. That can claim life and damage infrastructure and assets. This cannot be handled by the country alone. International assistance is necessary.'

Islamic Relief Indonesia

Acknowledging and addressing Loss and Damage

[Islamic Relief's climate policy paper on Loss and Damage](#) describes the impacts of climate change that have not been averted or minimised through adaptation and mitigation. It outlines Islamic Relief's demands for the operation and financing of the UN's Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.



Swat, Pakistan, August 2025: Heavy flash flooding caused severe damage to homes, roads, infrastructure, and claimed precious lives

Image: Media Islamic Relief Pakistan

29. Climate-induced migration and conflict must be addressed through international cooperation.

Migration and conflict are increasingly being driven by climate change, as extreme weather, resource scarcity and environmental degradation force populations to move and compete for limited resources. These challenges transcend national borders and disproportionately affect vulnerable regions, heightening social tensions and security risks. Addressing them effectively requires strong international cooperation, coordinated policies, financial support, and rights-based frameworks to manage migration, prevent conflict, and provide sustainable solutions for affected communities.

Coordination is key

‘Collaborative efforts enable countries to combine resources, expertise and technology for effective solutions. Collaboration also helps manage migration flows, reducing tensions and conflicts in host areas. Coordinated policies and humanitarian aid ensure migrants’ rights and needs are met.’

Islamic Relief Ethiopia

Climate finance

30. Climate finance must be increased to support adaptation, mitigation and resilience-building in developing countries.

Developing countries, which are often the most vulnerable to climate impacts yet contribute least to global emissions, require increased climate finance to effectively implement mitigation measures and enhance communities’ capacity to withstand extreme weather, rising sea levels, and other climate-related threats. Adequate funding can support sustainable development, strengthen infrastructure, and promote low-carbon technologies. Increasing climate finance from wealthy nations, international institutions and corporations is essential to ensure equitable climate action, empower vulnerable populations, and achieve global climate goals.

‘Current levels of climate finance fall significantly short of needs. Prioritisation of grants over loans and transparency in climate finance mechanisms are both critical.’

Islamic Relief Türkiye

31. Climate action must be backed by binding commitments from governments and international institutions.

Islamic Relief country offices consistently emphasise that voluntary pledges are insufficient to address the climate crisis. Their responses to the survey stress the need for binding commitments from governments and international institutions. Enforceable agreements ensure accountability, coordinated global action and fair support for vulnerable nations. Binding commitments are essential for effective multilateral coordination and to guarantee that climate goals are realised.

Legal obligations provide a framework for sustained efforts, foster trust, and drive concrete results. Binding agreements are critical to ensure accountability, resource mobilisation, and long-term implementation, preventing backsliding and enabling meaningful global cooperation in combating climate change.

Multilateral Order

“Despite growing pressure on the Cop system of global environmental governance, it plays a crucial role. The alternative is a free-for-all. And we know what free for all means. Free for all means that there will be a small privileged elite, people and companies that will be able to always protect themselves, even if disasters will spread. Floods will spread, communities will be destroyed, but there will always be a group of rich people and rich companies that will be able to protect themselves as the planet is being progressively destroyed.”

Antonio Guterres, Director General,
United Nations

Additional focus areas

As well as commenting on the 31 statements contained in the survey, country offices made additional points of emphasis and put forward ideas and priorities linked to a wide range of climate-related issues – from economic justice to gender rights, from civic space and democracy to 1.5C-aligned NDCs, from ending extractivism to decolonisation.

The additional focus areas and points of emphasis put forward reinforce Islamic Relief's commitment to broaden climate policy debate and action beyond technical adaptation and mitigation to address justice, equity and governance.

The South Sudan country office suggested introducing an Environmental Health and Safety Policy, while Bangladesh particularly highlighted just energy transition and Loss and Damage. Iraq and the Philippines underscored the climate-conflict nexus and the fundamental importance of investing in peacebuilding, localisation and collaboration – particularly in fragile contexts. Iraq also called for capacity building of local actors and private-sector engagement in green economies.

Somalia emphasised delivering on NDC commitments, with a clear path to net zero by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. Across contexts, there was a strong call for climate-informed peacebuilding, inclusive participation, and systems that empower communities to lead localised, sustainable solutions.

Several contributions stressed that climate action must intersect with broader struggles for justice, democracy and decolonisation. Türkiye, Kosova and Albania in particular highlighted the intersectionality of climate justice with economic and social justice, gender rights, civic space and democracy. They urged policies that align with the 1.5°C target, phase out extractive industries, and dismantle exploitative economic models.

Decolonising climate governance and finance, protecting civic participation, and ensuring equity in resource distribution were all seen as essential to addressing systemic inequalities and building global solidarity. Together, these focus areas advocate for a holistic, inclusive and justice-centred approach that integrates environmental, social and political dimensions into climate policy.



Islamic Relief reached more than 140,000 people with emergency response efforts after floods swept across Pakistan in 2025

Image: Islamic Relief Pakistan

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

Distilling the insights of Islamic Relief country offices into recommendations for humanitarian organisations points to the need to integrate climate action into all aspects of humanitarian work while ensuring accountability, justice and local ownership.

Humanitarian and development organisations should establish clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms for climate adaptation and mitigation, conduct climate audits of programmes to ensure sustainability, and design policies flexible enough to be context specific.

They should also prioritise integrating climate resilience into humanitarian response, including disaster risk reduction, anticipatory adaptation, and climate-resilient infrastructure in health, education and other key sectors. Strong emphasis was placed on empowering communities through education, participatory approaches, and inclusive decision-making, with special attention to women, children, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups.

Humanitarian actors are also called to strengthen their advocacy role, pushing for fair and accessible climate finance, Loss and Damage funding, and stronger global commitments such as 1.5°C-aligned NDCs. This includes advocating for decentralised renewable energy solutions, localisation of climate finance, and collaboration with governments, civil society, the private sector, and faith leaders.

Other key priorities include building internal capacity on climate risk management, linking humanitarian programming to broader climate strategies, and promoting climate justice through equity, gender transformation, and decolonised approaches. By positioning themselves not only as emergency responders but also as proactive agents for resilience and justice, humanitarian organisations can better support vulnerable communities in adapting to climate change and building a brighter and more resilient future.



Inter- and intra-community conflicts have serious political, socio-economic, humanitarian and security consequences which increase the already existing vulnerability of host households. There is a compelling need to develop long-term capacity in resilience building, integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to address the risks that arise in these fragile contexts

Image: Islamic Relief Mali

CONCLUSION

We are in changing times, and the biggest of these is the breakdown of the world's climate and the environmental predictability that humans have enjoyed thousands of years. Today we are facing extreme weather events, drought, sea level rise, soil degradation, food insecurity, proliferating displacement and social breakdown. For years we have been saying that it is imperative to restrict global heating to 1.5° above the levels prior to industrialisation, and deal with the inevitable consequences of the heating that has already occurred. We have established treaties, conventions, agreements, human rights, environmental and customary law, and mechanisms for responding. This policy sets out the pathways to survival with dignity and safety for our descendants. They only need ethical choices and political will to be put into action.



¹¹ AI tools have been used in the preparation of this publication

SPECIAL REPORT

MAKING LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION HAPPEN

Locally led adaptation offers a pathway to climate action that embraces many of the principles and precepts set out in this policy paper. It can reach the most vulnerable, integrate diverse adaptation concerns, build inclusive local financing mechanisms and redirect investment flows toward community-defined priorities.

LLA and localisation are becoming key issues at the level of global platforms where climate action is discussed, reinforcing the urgent need for systemic reforms to embed local leadership at the heart of the global climate adaptation response. This is an approach that Islamic Relief country offices aspire to and support.

While there is growing consensus on the importance of local action, at the UN countries emphasise the need for frameworks that balance local empowerment with transparent oversight and alignment with national adaptation priorities. Issues of institutional capacity, intermediary risk, accountability, governance and the scalability of locally driven projects can be overcome.

Islamic Relief believes that broader tensions around sovereignty, resource allocation and the inertia of existing bureaucratic structures should not stand in the way of LLA becoming the cornerstone of just and effective climate action for the world's most vulnerable populations.

Global instruments

Embedding LLA within global climate policy instruments, backed by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) guidance, strengthens national climate commitments and ensures adaptation is grounded in the realities and priorities of the communities most vulnerable to climate change. This alignment between local action and international frameworks enhances effectiveness, equity and resilience across scales.

A LANDMARK FOR LLA AT COP28

Islamic Relief has been active in promoting LLA in international negotiations on work around the GGA. At the UN's 28th Conference of the Parties climate summit in 2023 (COP28), LLA was cited for the first time in an international instrument: 2/CMA.5, paragraph 14.

The international instrument emphasises that adaptation action should be continuous, iterative and progressive and that it should be based on and guided by the best available science, including use of science-based indicators, metrics and targets. There is also emphasis on appropriate, traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples' knowledge; local knowledge systems; ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions; locally led and community-based adaptation; disaster risk reduction; intersectional approaches; private sector engagement; maladaptation avoidance; recognition of adaptation co-benefits; and sustainable development.

INCREASING THE PART PLAYED BY LLA IN NDCs

Uganda is among the countries that have begun to use the new instrument from COP28 to facilitate embedding community-based adaptation in their approach to climate action and decentralising implementation roles to local governments.

Uganda's EU-supported LLA programme

The Government of Uganda is currently implementing a LLA programme through initiatives that include programmes called LOCAL and LifeAR. Development partners including Belgium, Denmark, the EU and Ireland have committed close to \$40 million annually.

Patricia Roy Akullo, Representative of the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury in Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, explains: "This programme reflects our commitment to ensuring adaptation finance reaches the most vulnerable communities through decentralised and inclusive approaches."

Similarly, Kenya's 2025 NDC explicitly pledges support for LLA initiatives, while [Vietnam](#) has also committed to developing community-based climate change adaptation models. [Bangladesh's NDC 3.0](#) seeks reform of local government towards the inclusion of community-based organisations, women, people with disabilities and young people in the implementation of LLA.

Sri Lanka talks of promoting LLA and enterprise development, especially in rural and underserved regions, in its 2025 NDC. Somalia's 'third generation' NDC highlights adaptation efforts designed to reduce fragility and support stability in displacement-prone areas through 'localised solutions that build community resilience'. Nepal will utilise LLA initiatives to enhance water supplies, according to its 2025 NDC.

Local and community action in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

All 64 National Adaptation Plans submitted by September 2025 mention local and/or community action.¹¹ The UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has been instrumental in promoting LLA through its NAP Technical Guidelines.¹² These guidelines explicitly call for linking adaptation planning at the national and subnational level, as well as collaboration with community-based organisations and local institutions to facilitate meaningful participation and integrate traditional knowledge into the design of adaptation.

The 'vertical integration' approach of the NAP Global Network, which links national and sub-national efforts, systematically supports LLA through multilevel governance.

Biennial Transparency Reports

Parties to the UNFCCC are required to submit a Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) every two years on their national progress in implementing the different aspects of the agreement, including information on climate change impacts and adaptation. The first submission was required by 31 December, 2024 with the next due in 2026.

The areas covered by the guidelines include integrating gender perspectives and tapping into indigenous, traditional and local knowledge. It is suggested that these elements should be mainstreamed across adaptation plans. Indonesia's BTR includes content on local government contributions to adaptation, ensuring local work is reflected at national level, and engaging local and indigenous communities in natural resource management.

It is recommended that all BTRs should include information on stakeholder engagement, ownership and efforts to integrate gender equity and social inclusion. These elements are critical for effective, equitable adaptation and are central to demonstrating meaningful progress.¹³

¹¹ NAP Global Network, 'Trends in key themes: vertical integration', NAP website data section, 2025, <https://trends.napglobalnetwork.org/trend-in-key-themes/vertical-integration>

¹² Least Developed Countries Expert Group, 'NAP Technical Guidelines: Updated technical guidelines for the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans', August 2025, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/250828_UCC_LEG_NAP_NEW_NAP_TG.pdf

¹³ Rosentreter, H., and Beauchamp, E., 'Assessing Adaptation of First Biennial Transparency Reports', NAP Global Network, August 2025, <https://napglobalnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/napgn-en-2025-report-assessing-adaptation-btrs.pdf>

Shaping the global LLA landscape

LLA has gained momentum as a practical and equitable response to the climate crisis, with growing support from governments, multilateral institutions, civil society and donors. This welcome development is driving a shift in power, resources and decision-making toward local actors who are best positioned to identify locally appropriate solutions and build long-term resilience.

Examples from LLA can be embedded in multi-level governance structures, improving accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness in adaptation responses. The current landscape shows encouraging progress in mainstreaming LLA, with governments, donors and institutions testing scalable models that transfer decision-making power and resources to the local level. However, systemic shifts in funding, policy and capacity are still needed to fully operationalise LLA at scale and ensure that adaptation is inclusive, just and effective.



Nurhidayat is secretary of his village Forest Farmer Group and actively involved in many communities' development and empowerment in environment and agriculture sector activity conducted by Islamic Relief Indonesia

Image: Islamic Relief Indonesia

Finance for LLA

Significant finance is critical for effective implementation of LLA. While political will for LLA has grown, financing systems lag behind in delivering funds that are accessible, predictable and empowering for local actors. Despite widespread acknowledgement of the important role local communities can and should play in climate action, less than 17 per cent of global climate adaptation finance is currently directed toward building local resilience, with indigenous peoples receiving only about five per cent of environmental protection funding. Advancing LLA at scale will require not only a significant increase in financial flows but also a transformation in the financial systems that govern them.

[The Asian Development Bank](#) has been in the forefront of testing new approaches to finance that give more control and resources directly to local actors, including by trialling devolved financing initiatives such as the World Bank's Pilot Programmes for Climate Resilience (PPCR) in 28 developing countries. National governments have pioneered dedicated adaptation funds (e.g. Kenya's County Climate Change Fund, India's National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change). The [Green Climate Fund](#) emphasises scaling up direct access and LLA in its 2024-27 Strategic Plan. The [UNFCCC's Adaptation Fund](#), having prioritised the promotion of locally based or locally led adaptation in its 2023-27 Medium Term Strategy, has now drafted indicators for LLA in its results framework.

Further scaling of LLA requires deliberate shifts in finance architecture, governance systems and capacity building. The finance mechanisms must become more flexible and decentralised, with multi-tiered funding channels that enable local actors to receive resources directly or through trusted intermediaries familiar with local contexts. This is a role for which Islamic Relief is uniquely equipped, with operations established in several African contexts alongside world-leading compliance and accountability systems.

It is imperative for climate action funded through intermediaries to build local capacity. Local actors currently lack the financial management and reporting skills needed to handle larger funding flows. Investments in technical assistance and institutional strengthening are essential to address these gaps.

Partnerships and networks have a key role to play in scaling efforts. The African Adaptation Initiative and the South Asian NAP Network are examples of regional platforms and coalitions that help aggregate local initiatives, facilitate knowledge exchange, pool resources, and strengthen advocacy.

LLA and inclusion

To be truly effective, LLA must go beyond decentralising adaptation. It must actively confront and change systemic power imbalances by embedding equity, inclusion and climate justice into every aspect of design and delivery. This is especially true in the realm of climate finance, where historical and structural barriers continue to determine who controls funding, who receives it and under what conditions.

Finance is not neutral. It plays a determining role in who benefits from climate action and who is left behind. In the intersectional debate on climate, it is increasingly evident that financial systems often reproduce inequality instead of dismantling it. Women, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, young people, youth and other historically marginalised groups face systemic barriers to accessing climate finance, whether due to restrictive eligibility criteria, lack of legal recognition, or institutional biases embedded within donor frameworks.

Climate justice remains at the core of LLA, positioning adaptation as a matter of rights, equity and power redistribution. This approach emphasises fair and inclusive decision-making processes that empower vulnerable groups to shape adaptation strategies and access resources. It also involves recognising and protecting the identities, knowledge systems and cultural rights of indigenous peoples and marginalised communities.

LLA seeks to correct the unequal burden of climate impacts by prioritising funding and support for communities most affected by climate change, while also incorporating long-term perspectives that uphold the rights of future generations to survive and thrive.

The role of faith-based actors in LLA

Faith-based actors (FBAs) are uniquely well positioned to bridge policy and grassroots action because of their role in shaping societal values and behaviours. FBAs hold moral authority and social legitimacy, which can be harnessed to influence public opinion, encourage sustainable practices, and advocate for climate justice. Their extensive networks allow them to mobilise communities and influence policy.

Examples of LLA-supportive religious entities that hold massive potential for influence include the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and Laudato Si' Action Platform, the Faith for Earth programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Interfaith Liaison Committee of the UNFCCC.

There is an emerging effort to introduce ethical considerations into the heart of climate negotiations and the implementation of international agreements. The incoming Brazil presidency of COP30 has called for a Global Ethical Stocktake to bring faith actors together with academics and others to consider progress so far and make plans for the future within a morally principled framework. Faith groups can use their faith-based values of social justice and notions of stewardship, coupled with their connection with communities of followers, to promote LLA as a means of increasing resilience, reducing vulnerability and building capacity.



Policies to advance LLA

The future of LLA, and therefore the survival of numerous communities, depends on a collective willingness to reimagine how power, finance and governance are structured in the global response to climate change. What is required is not simply a technical shift but a political and moral one. It requires the international community to confront the legacy of exclusion in climate decision-making and to act with urgency and humility.

By championing local agency, embedding intersectional justice and reforming climate finance systems to be more accessible, equitable, and responsive, LLA can move from the margins to the mainstream. In doing so, it has the potential to transform not only how we adapt to climate impacts, but also how we define resilience, accountability and solidarity in an era of compounding global crises. Now is the time to treat LLA not as an optional innovation, but as a cornerstone of just and effective climate action for the world's most vulnerable populations.

To realise the transformative potential of LLA and address existing barriers, the following recommendations are critical for policymakers, funders, and practitioners:

1. Reform climate finance mechanisms

- Instigate a comprehensive review of funding mechanisms and processes to facilitate the exponential expansion of LLA globally.
- Simplify eligibility and application processes to increase accessibility for informal and grassroots actors.
- Increase flexibility in budget rules to allow local actors to cover overheads and adapt project plans as needed.
- Shift donor risk tolerance to accommodate the realities of community-based adaptation.

2. Enhance direct community access and control

- Support the establishment and strengthening of local financing entities and community-based organisations to directly receive and manage adaptation funds.
- Promote mechanisms that foster transparency and accountability at the local level.
- Identify and facilitate trusted intermediaries to develop capacity and structures that support locally led climate action.

3. Prioritise inclusive participation

- Ensure diverse local voices – including women, young people, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups – have meaningful leadership roles in adaptation planning and implementation.
- Develop context-specific indicators built around local definitions of success, resilience and accountability.

3. Build local capacity and governance systems

- Invest in capacity building that empowers local actors with skills in financial management, project design, monitoring and advocacy.
- Encourage local governance models that recognise and involve credible local institutions and social networks.

4. Promote climate justice in policy and practice

- Frame LLA within a climate justice agenda that recognises adaptation finance as a right owed to vulnerable communities, not a mere investment opportunity.
- Ensure that adaptation initiatives explicitly address power imbalances and promote equitable resource distribution.

5. Strengthen multi-level coordination

- Foster collaborative frameworks that align national policies with local adaptation needs and priorities, while maintaining local autonomy.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between local actors, national governments and international stakeholders to scale lessons without compromising local relevance and suitability.

6. Support research and monitoring innovations

- Develop participatory and locally relevant monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) systems that capture diverse outcomes beyond donor-centric metrics.
- Invest in research that documents the effectiveness and challenges of LLA approaches across contexts.



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