



WORLD VISION POLICY POSITION

# Climate Action



# 1 INTRODUCTION



*'The people around the world have to start reducing greenhouse air pollution. World leaders have to work together to help save our environment.'*

Child participant, Malmal Primary School, Papua New Guinea

World Vision is a global Christian humanitarian, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. As stewards of God's creation, we care for the earth and act in ways that will restore and protect the environment to help ensure children can have the opportunity to enjoy life in all its fullness.

World Vision has worked towards ending poverty and improving the well-being of the world's most vulnerable children for nearly 75 years, but climate change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is changing the world we live in. We are witness to the unprecedented impact of climate change and environmental degradation – extreme heatwaves, droughts, flooding, cyclones, and more – on children, families and vulnerable communities around the world. One billion children, almost half of all the children globally, are now living in countries at extremely high risk of climate change.<sup>1</sup> Children are asking us to act now in the face of the climate crisis.

This paper outlines World Vision's policy position on climate action, our response as a global Christian child-focused humanitarian, development and advocacy agency, and our recommendations for increased global action to respond to climate change and support the world's most vulnerable children, families and communities.



***'Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.'***

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris Agreement, 2015

World Vision believes that responding to climate change is a justice issue. Climate justice represents the interdependence of human rights, development and climate action, as climate change is deeply rooted in pre-existing social inequalities. We see climate justice as an approach that places children at the centre of the climate crisis and brings about solutions that are good for the planet and good for people by upholding their rights and addressing social inequalities. Our Christian faith leads us to believe every person is created in God's image and deserves life in all its fullness.

We seek to protect the rights of the most vulnerable children and ensure that climate change decision-making processes are participatory, transparent and accountable, including for children and youth.

We believe that climate action must target the most vulnerable communities, including in urban and fragile contexts; be child-centred, inclusive and support women's economic and social empowerment; and must protect and restore environmental assets that support the livelihoods and food security of vulnerable communities and mitigate climate change.

We believe that we must support communities to build their resilience; to adapt to climate change; and to prepare, mitigate, cope with and recover from the immediate impacts of climate-related disasters.

World Vision believes that every child has the right to both a healthy and safe environment today and a sustainable future where they can thrive.

## Key international policy instruments underpinning World Vision's position

A number of key international climate change and development frameworks, policy instruments, and strategies are inextricably linked and fundamental to tackling the climate crisis and ensuring children's rights to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment and future.

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### United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



General Comment 26 recognises that children have a right to a healthy environment in the context of climate change, which is undermining the full and effective enjoyment of their rights, as outlined in this convention.

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### UN Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement on Climate Change



United Nations  
Framework Convention on  
Climate Change

The Paris Agreement, an agreement of the UNFCCC, covers climate change mitigation, adaptation and finance aimed at strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2°C and as close to 1.5°C as possible above pre-industrial levels.

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### UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



Action to combat climate change is a specific priority in the SDGs, including SDG13: Climate action and SDG15: Restoring degraded land, and is intrinsically linked to the achievement of all 17 goals.

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### UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction



The Sendai Framework provides a roadmap to make communities safer and more resilient to disaster with the aim of reducing disaster risks and loss of lives, livelihoods and health.

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### UN Convention of Biodiversity



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

The UN Convention of Biodiversity supports the achievement of the SDGs and sets out an ambitious pathway to live in harmony with nature by 2050.

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### UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)



United Nations  
Convention to Combat  
Desertification

The UNCCD aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

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### UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030



A strategy to accelerate existing global restoration goals, such as the Bonn Challenge, which aims to restore 350 million hectares of degraded ecosystems by 2030.

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# 3 CLIMATE CHANGE IS CREATING A CRISIS FOR CHILDREN



*'Climate change is affecting the agricultural productivity that is declining too much in our community. We see more insect pest infestation on grains and cereals. Another problem is the long drought and very high windstorms at the onset of the rainy season. When the annual flooding starts, it destroys our houses and livelihood.'*

Child participant, World Vision focus group discussion in Ghana

World Vision is witness to the unprecedented impact climate change is having on children, families and vulnerable communities around the world. The impact of this unfolding crisis disproportionately burdens the world's most vulnerable people – in particular children and those living in urban, fragile and developing contexts – despite being the least responsible for it. This is the injustice of climate change.

## Climate change threatens children's rights

Climate change is a key driver of extreme poverty, inequality and child vulnerability, and it impedes the realisation of children's rights as enshrined in the UNCRC.



### Climate change is a threat multiplier

Climate change amplifies existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, including those based on age, gender, class, ethnicity, ability and land-rights. Climate-related shocks and stresses exacerbate inequalities between children in terms of health, education and long-term development outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Girls and boys living in urban slums and informal settlements often have much greater exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events due to the location of their settlements on unsafe and marginal lands, lack of infrastructure and basic services, poor quality housing, and overcrowding within the settlements.<sup>3</sup> Poor and vulnerable communities living on low-lying, marginal or degraded land are highly exposed to climate change impacts, yet they often lack the access to information, resources and decision-making to adapt or protect themselves.<sup>4</sup> Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to pre-existing gender inequalities and social norms. For example, globally, climatic disasters such as droughts, floods and storms kill more women than men and tend to kill women at a younger age.<sup>5</sup> Threatened livelihoods and competition for resources have proven to put women and girls at increased risk of sexual violence.<sup>6</sup>

## Climate change impacts on children's well-being



### HEALTH

Children's unique metabolism and development needs mean they are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts.<sup>7</sup> Children face greater risk of vector-borne diseases, undernutrition, diarrheal diseases and heat stress than adults.<sup>8</sup>



### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Almost half of the 345 million people facing acute hunger in 2022 were estimated to be children,<sup>9</sup> due in part to climate change affecting weather patterns and causing droughts and heavy rainfall. Without urgent climate action, by 2050, the risk of hunger and malnutrition could rise by 20%.<sup>10</sup>



### EDUCATION

Climate-induced extreme weather events significantly impact children's access to education.<sup>11</sup> More than 400 million students have been affected by climate-related school closures since 2022.<sup>12</sup> The longer children, in particular girls, are out of school, the less likely they are to return.<sup>13</sup>



### MENTAL HEALTH

Extreme heat is associated with an increase in mental health problems.<sup>14</sup> Children are also disproportionately impacted by climate-related displacement and migration, especially if they have experienced a traumatic extreme event, become separated from their family, or disconnected from their ancestral homes.<sup>15</sup>

*'I'm sad and also afraid because we will no longer have coconuts available for the future, both for consumption and for producing crops to earn money.'* —A child from Solomon Islands



### CONFLICTS AND DISPLACEMENT

Compound impacts of climate change – disrupted livelihoods, food insecurity, and diminished natural resources – increase competition for resources and contribute to conflict and displacement.<sup>16</sup> By 2050, 216 million people across Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, North Africa, South Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe & Central Asia, could be internally displaced as a result of slow-onset impacts of climate change including water stress, crop failure and sea-level rise.<sup>17</sup>



### CHILD PROTECTION

Severe droughts and extreme weather also affect families' livelihoods, contributing to an increased risk of violence against children, including child labour and child marriage.<sup>18</sup>





## Climate change is having severe humanitarian consequences today that will only increase in future

Where conflict and climate change-induced disasters converge, humanitarian impacts are particularly devastating. In 2024, 8 of the 25 countries considered most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change had humanitarian response plans which are linked to both conflicts and climate shocks.<sup>19</sup>

More frequent and severe natural hazards are amplifying already high levels of humanitarian need globally, through the destruction of livelihoods, reduced access to essential public services and displacement.



## Environmental degradation is affecting children's right to a healthy and sustainable environment

Deforestation, climate change, and unsustainable agricultural and development practices are degrading natural ecosystems<sup>20</sup> and threatening children's right to a healthy environment. Environmental degradation reduces local biodiversity, decreases land productivity and accelerates desertification.<sup>21</sup> Prolonged drought is one of the most dangerous environmental determinants of premature mortality, affecting hygiene and sanitation, reducing crop yields, and increasing food insecurity and malnutrition.<sup>22</sup> Without action on climate change, droughts will continue to intensify, land degradation and desertification will continue to accelerate, there will be less food security, and up to 100 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030.<sup>23</sup>

The agri-food system contributes around a third of total greenhouse gas emissions,<sup>24</sup> but improved agricultural practices and landscape restoration offer significant climate change adaptation and mitigation opportunities. Nature-based solutions, including reforestation, landscape restoration, Indigenous land management practices, and rehabilitation of coastal ecosystems can stabilise the local environment, improve water availability and land productivity, and reduce disaster risks.<sup>25</sup> Developing countries need greater support to protect and restore environmental assets that improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities, reduce land degradation, increase food security, and mitigate climate change.



## Children and vulnerable communities have limited access to resources to help them adapt

Current levels of adaptation funding are inadequate to ensure developing countries, in particular the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), are able to respond to climate change at the scale needed. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the current adaptation financing gap is estimated at US\$194–366 billion per year,<sup>26</sup> and adaptation planning and implementation are plateauing. Moreover, between 2006 and 2023, only 2.4% of international multilateral climate finance was responsive to children's needs.<sup>27</sup> This failure to provide adequate and child-responsive mitigation and adaptation financing has massive implications for the most vulnerable people and more so for children.



# 4 OUR RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS



*'I have come to realise that safeguarding our environment isn't just a responsibility for specific age groups or nations; it's a collective effort uniting people of all ages and backgrounds for the betterment of our planet.'*

Edward, aged 13, Tanzania

We recognise that to effectively address the climate crisis, we must take concurrent actions to end global poverty and inequality, support at-risk communities to strengthen resilience, and reduce global climate and environmental impact to create a climate-safe future. Responding to children's urgent call for climate justice, World Vision developed the [Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action \(ESCA\) Strategic Roadmap](#) for 2024–27. The core of the ESCA Strategic Roadmap includes ecosystem restoration through nature-based solutions such as [Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration \(FMNR\)](#), building sustainable agri-food systems for food security and nutrition, and strengthening community resilience to climate-related disaster risks.

Through the ESCA Strategic Roadmap, our aim is to reach 20 million people (10 million children) by 2030, so that children and their caregivers can live in a thriving environment with improved resilience against environmental and climate shocks.

Our response to the climate crisis focuses on:

- advocating for climate justice for children, more ambitious climate action and increased climate financing for adaptation in the most vulnerable countries
- delivering our programming through the ESCA roadmap to address the climate crisis
- reducing our own environmental and climate impact.



## Advocating for climate justice for children



*'Children's voices matter in advocating for change. It is therefore going to be my top priority in creating awareness in primary schools and my community at large to ensure that we put a stop to activities that destroy nature.'*

Selestina, aged 16, Malawi

### **Supporting the voice and agency of children**

Children are key stakeholders for climate action and should be part of strategies to make a change in their communities. World Vision believes that creating spaces for children's activism has a transformative impact on their lives and has the power to change society for the better as social structures and institutions become more inclusive and responsive to children's rights. Therefore, World Vision is committed to Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) – a concept adopted through Article 6 of the UNFCCC – which aims to empower all members of society to engage in climate action through education, training, awareness-raising, participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.<sup>28</sup> Through ACE, World Vision will ensure children's voices are heard and taken into consideration for climate action decision-making at the local, national and global levels.

### **Supporting the voices of children and youth for social accountability**

The eastern coastal region of Tanga in Tanzania has been experiencing increased deforestation due to poor control and planning, and degradation of coastal habitats. World Vision partnered with youth from the coastal region to address climate change and its impact on their community through the SAUTI Youth Project, co-funded by the European Union.

In this project, World Vision supported girls and boys to use their voices to improve community welfare for various issues related to climate change through our local-level advocacy model, Citizen Voice and Action. The project created young leaders who would not only spearhead proper utilisation of resources for conservation of the environment but who would also raise their voices to strengthen more youth inclusion in community development committees. In addition to increasing youth engagement at the local level, World Vision advocates for the creation of mechanisms to consult with children and youth at all levels, supporting them to protect themselves from climate-related risks and to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.

SAUTI project, funded under AU EU Youth Hub, <https://www.worldvision.ie/news/SAUTIAnnouncement>, <https://www.aueuyouthhub.org/>

### **Advocating for greater global action**

As a global partnership that spans nearly 100 countries, World Vision will continue to work with our partners at the local, national and global levels, and through global coalitions and campaigns for greater climate action to meet these targets. Our advocacy goals, as outlined in Section 5, will additionally focus on ensuring those most affected by the climate crisis, including girls and boys, have greater access to and influence on decision-making processes; that climate action is child-centred, inclusive and supports women's empowerment; and that the necessary financing and resources flow to the most vulnerable communities, leaving no one behind.

Partnerships with humanitarian and development peers, children and youth, church and faith networks, and other like-minded actors will be crucial to leverage our work for greater global impact. Many such partnerships already exist, including the Children in a Changing Climate Coalition, the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration, the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR-100), the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, UNEP Faith for Earth Coalition, and the UN Global Compact Network, among others. World Vision has also signed on to [the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations](#). These existing partnerships and the creation of new ones will further increase our reach, build our programming expertise and amplify our voice on critical climate change policy issues.

World Vision is also promoting agri-food systems transformation through the [ENOUGH campaign](#), an organisation-wide initiative dedicated to combating child hunger and malnutrition. With a focused effort on addressing these critical issues, the ENOUGH campaign uniquely positions World Vision to confront the adverse effects of the climate crisis on child hunger and malnutrition around the world.

World Vision also supports a ‘just transition’, concept adapted by UNFCCC. As economies across the world transition to renewable energy, industries, jobs and livelihoods are affected. New jobs and opportunities will arise in burgeoning industries and as old ways of working transition, so too must the workforce. It is therefore essential that children’s rights, as set out in the UNCRC, are upheld in workforce transitions, especially to prevent children being engaged in the worst forms of child labour as new materials are sourced that are needed for renewable energy technology. Education and youth training need to focus on developing the skills necessary for a growing [green economy](#) so that the transition to renewable energy can provide good jobs across all countries and not create further gaps, leaving vulnerable children behind. ‘Just transition’ means different things for the industrialised countries and low-income countries. For industrialised countries, this means transition to new greener technologies. This is part of ambitious climate action – greater mitigation. For many of the lower-income countries in which World Vision works, the challenge is even greater: governments need to deliver on the right to development of their citizens in a way that is environmentally sustainable. This means following a new greener and more sustainable development pathway. This is not an easy task but one we believe is achievable. It is possible to eradicate poverty and reach net zero emissions at the same time<sup>29</sup> – the two are not mutually exclusive. To do this, these nations require fair financing, technology and capacity sharing.

## Delivering our programming

World Vision will continue to deliver sustainable development outcomes for children, families and communities through our programme approaches that adapt to and mitigate climate change as outlined in the ESCA Strategic Roadmap. Our four core focus areas include:



### **Focus area 1: FMNR scale-up: Restoration of ecosystem services for children and communities**

World Vision will collaborate with communities to actively conserve and restore their land- and seascape to ensure a more climate-resilient and sustainable natural resource base for children and future generations to come. This will be achieved through nature-based solutions such as the FMNR practice and the [Regreening Communities](#) project model.

### **1-billion-hectare restoration goal through FMNR scale-up**

As a global partnership, World Vision will lead a bold vision to contribute to the 1-billion-hectare restoration of degraded land by scaling FMNR for the benefit of children and future generations to come. Four scaling pathways – (1) Direct programming, (2) Partner-led spread, (3) Organic spread and (4) Enabling environment – will unlock the potential of FMNR in a range of contexts to take roots in the hearts and minds of individual farmers and communities.



### **Focus area 2: Building sustainable agri-food systems for food and nutrition security**

Climate change is having a devastating effect on the agri-food systems,<sup>30</sup> leading to decreased food safety, quality, diversity and nutrient density. World Vision will work with smallholder farmers and their communities to make agri-food systems more resilient through investing in sustainable agri-food system approaches such as climate-smart nutrition-sensitive agriculture and agroecology. Integrated water resource management, wastewater reuse and water saving irrigation technologies are also critical, as water scarcity is already affecting vulnerable communities.



### **Focus area 3: Strengthening community resilience to climate-related disaster risks**

To enhance community resilience to climate-related risks, we will integrate disaster risk management as a foundational component of our field programmes. This will be driven by our Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) project model, which supports children, their families and communities to understand and reduce the disaster risks they face, thereby bolstering their resilience when disasters occur. World Vision will also contribute to strengthening public services essential for resilience in the face of climate-related disasters.



### **Focus area 4: Integrating environmental stewardship and climate action across our operations and programmes**

Integrating environmental stewardship and climate action across all World Vision's operations, facilities and programmes is critical to ensure we make systemic change across the whole of the organisation. World Vision's environmental stewardship work is guided by the 'do no harm' principles, that is, to manage the environmental and climate risks in all projects, programmes and disaster responses – as well as our operations – to ensure that no harm is caused to the environment and also to create opportunities for a positive environmental outcome. World Vision is also committed to reducing the carbon footprint of its operations and facilities across the organisation and will implement a target of 20% reduction in greenhouse gas operating emissions by 2030, working towards net zero emissions by 2050.

## **Gender transformative climate action**

To ensure we are addressing the social inequities of climate change, all our projects and programmes are, at a minimum, required to be Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) sensitive, and we seek to have an increasing portfolio of GESI-responsive and transformative projects and programmes. Through our GESI approach and framework, World Vision and partners challenge and shift discriminating gender and social norms, unequal power relations and gender roles, and inequitable formal and informal systems. This enables populations that are marginalised due to gender, disability or other social status to increase their access services and resources, as well as increase their participation and decision-making.



# OUR CALLS TO ACTION



*'Why is it so difficult to engage children in climate action decision making processes?'*

Shania, aged 15, from Tanzania at UNFCCC 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties in Sharm El Sheikh

World Vision understands that effective action to address the climate crisis requires meaningful, long-term international cooperation. While we all must do our part to respond to the climate crisis, we also must support and strengthen the global frameworks and cooperation that can deliver decisive and meaningful action. Our advocacy goals are framed as follows:



**Ambitious climate action:** Keep global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees by accelerating mitigation efforts and greenhouse gas reduction.



**Children's and young people's participation as agents of change:** Prioritise child-centred approaches and ensure children and young people's meaningful participation – with special emphasis on the most vulnerable children, women and Indigenous community members.



**Enhanced resilience and climate change adaptation:** Ensure sustainable and climate resilient agrifood systems.



**Accessible and adequate climate finance:** Ensure climate finance is adequate, accessible, inclusive and transparent, including [technology transfer and capacity building](#).



**Equitable access to loss and damage financing:** Ensure timely, adequate and direct access of funding from the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage for affected communities and children facing climate-induced natural hazards.

To ensure children's rights to a healthy, safe and sustainable future, World Vision calls on governments, corporations and the international community to support the full realisation of the UNCRC, the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), and the goals of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030). **In particular, we call on governments, corporations and the international community to:**



### **Keep the 1.5 degrees ambition alive by accelerating mitigation efforts, reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring a 'just transition'**

- Have more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for children and future generations.
- Develop NDCs with children's participation through Action for Climate Empowerment and other workstreams.
- Bring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2030, in line with the Bonn Challenge.



### **Ensure meaningful participation of children and young people as agents for change**

- Ensure NDCs, climate finance contributions, and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are child centred.
- Embed children's rights to environmental education and access to information in decisions under the Action for Climate Empowerment of the UNFCCC dialogue and associated decisions in accordance with the UNCRC.
- Request the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to produce a special report on climate change and children, where children's right to a safe climate is considered fully.
- Enhance children's participation in the UNFCCC process. Parties should mandate the UNFCCC Secretariat to produce accessible, child-friendly explainers of all key decisions.
- Ensure the participation of children with disabilities and Indigenous peoples in climate action at all levels and invest in training and capacity building to enable the meaningful participation of those most vulnerable.



### **Enhance resilience through sustainable and climate resilient agri-food systems for healthy diet and better nutrition**

- Promote nature-based solutions such as Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for enhancing sustainable and climate resilient agri-food systems.
- Enact policies which enable and foster sustainable community management of natural resources, in particular in LDCs, SIDS and fragile contexts.
- Conduct greater research into low-cost scalable landscape restoration approaches, including Indigenous land management practices.
- Expand support for child-centred, community-led climate change adaptation programmes in LDCs, SIDS, urban and fragile contexts.
- Enhance international cooperation with developing countries through adequate and sustainable support for their national actions to implement the Sendai Framework by 2030.
- Build the capacity of governments (at all levels), cities and communities in LDCs, SIDS, and fragile contexts for effective climate change adaptation planning and management, with a focus on the most vulnerable children, youth, women, and marginalised communities.



### **Scale-up climate finance for the most vulnerable**

- For Parties responsible for delivering finance under the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG): provide and mobilise funding that reflects their fair share of the US\$300 billion per annum goal as soon as possible and no later than 2035; and support the provision of US\$1.3 trillion in total finance flows to developing countries by 2035.
- Ensure at least 50% of climate finance is allocated to climate change adaptation.
- Prioritise climate financing flows to LDCs, SIDS and fragile contexts, in support of vulnerable children and communities, with a minimum of 20% of adaptation funding provided to fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- Mobilise additional public finance, prioritising grant-based and non-debt-inducing instruments, particularly for adaptation.
- Uphold principle of additionality, so that climate finance is provided in addition to official development assistance and avoiding double-counting of NDCs.
- Ensure funding is accessible and supportive of children's needs, gender equality and human rights.
- Improve accessibility, transparency and accountability of climate finance.
- Scale up investment in programmes for nature-based solutions such as FMNR for enhancing sustainable and climate resilient agri-food systems.
- Increase support for multi-year, community-focused programmes that boost resilience to climate change and reduce needs, vulnerability and risks over the long term.



### **Equitable access to loss and damage for children**

- Ensure that the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage is child-responsive, addressing children's rights and intergenerational inequity.
- Ensure loss and damage funding is directly accessible to local communities so that children, their families, and local organisations can access funds to address their specific needs in an inclusive and equitable manner.
- Ensure loss and damage funding includes disaster responses and slow-onset disasters.
- Ensure funding is additional and grant-or highly concessional loan-based.

## ENDNOTES

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