



Briefing paper

CLIMATE JUSTICE IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

A perspective for the private sector

October 2021



PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL

ARTICLE ONE

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FOREWORD FROM PMI

Philip Morris International (PMI)'s purpose is to lead a transformation in the tobacco industry and create a smoke-free future by phasing out cigarettes.



Anna Kleitsidou
Head of Social Impact,
Philip Morris International



Jens Rupp
Head of Environmental Sustainability,
Philip Morris International

Philip Morris International (PMI)'s purpose is to lead a transformation in the tobacco industry and create a smoke-free future by phasing out cigarettes. Sustainability stands at the core of PMI's transformation and helps address some of the challenges resulting from this transition. Guided by a sustainability materiality assessment, we integrate sustainability within our business as an opportunity for innovation, growth, and long-term value creation, as well as a means to maximize operational efficiency and resource allocation while minimizing negative externalities.

At PMI, doing our part to address the climate crisis and respecting human rights are two key priorities of our sustainability strategy. As PMI transforms to achieve its purpose of delivering a smoke-free future, we are also cognizant of the environmental and social impacts our business operations create. More concretely, we put in place ambitious energy usage and carbon neutrality targets, while recognizing that these transitions need to be just and equitable and protect people's livelihoods. Our efforts to combat climate change are not limited to working toward carbon neutrality in our operations and across our entire value chain. We also work to adapt to the impact of climate change and increase the resilience of our business and the communities where we operate

Sustainability challenges do not exist in a vacuum. They are often linked to one another, and their interdependencies—including the direction of causality and magnitude—must be considered as we craft appropriate solutions. These solutions can be mutually reinforcing. For example, sustainable supply chain management can be a catalyst for progress on climate protection or fair working conditions. As another example, forest protection is key to climate stability and biodiversity conservation and is instrumental to the socioeconomic well-being of rural tobacco-farming communities.

We recognize that climate change is not only about impact on the environment but also on people's livelihoods. Building on our 10-year experience of implementing programs especially in our agriculture supply chain, we have witnessed how climate change has exacerbated human rights issues and, in particular, affected the most vulnerable people around the world. The climate crisis concretely impacts human population movement, access to water, global health, agriculture productivity, and food security—and increases social inequalities

In designing our strategies and programs, it is vital that we accurately comprehend, analyze, and account for situations of forced compromise. We strive to minimize trade-offs, guided by our sustainability materiality assessment. If appropriately addressed, some trade-offs can also be a source of innovation, as such compromises press us to develop plans for tackling the tensions created. Embedding an integrated approach to sustainability within our business allows us to monitor and tackle multiple issues simultaneously, identifying effective solutions that leverage on interdependencies to make progress.

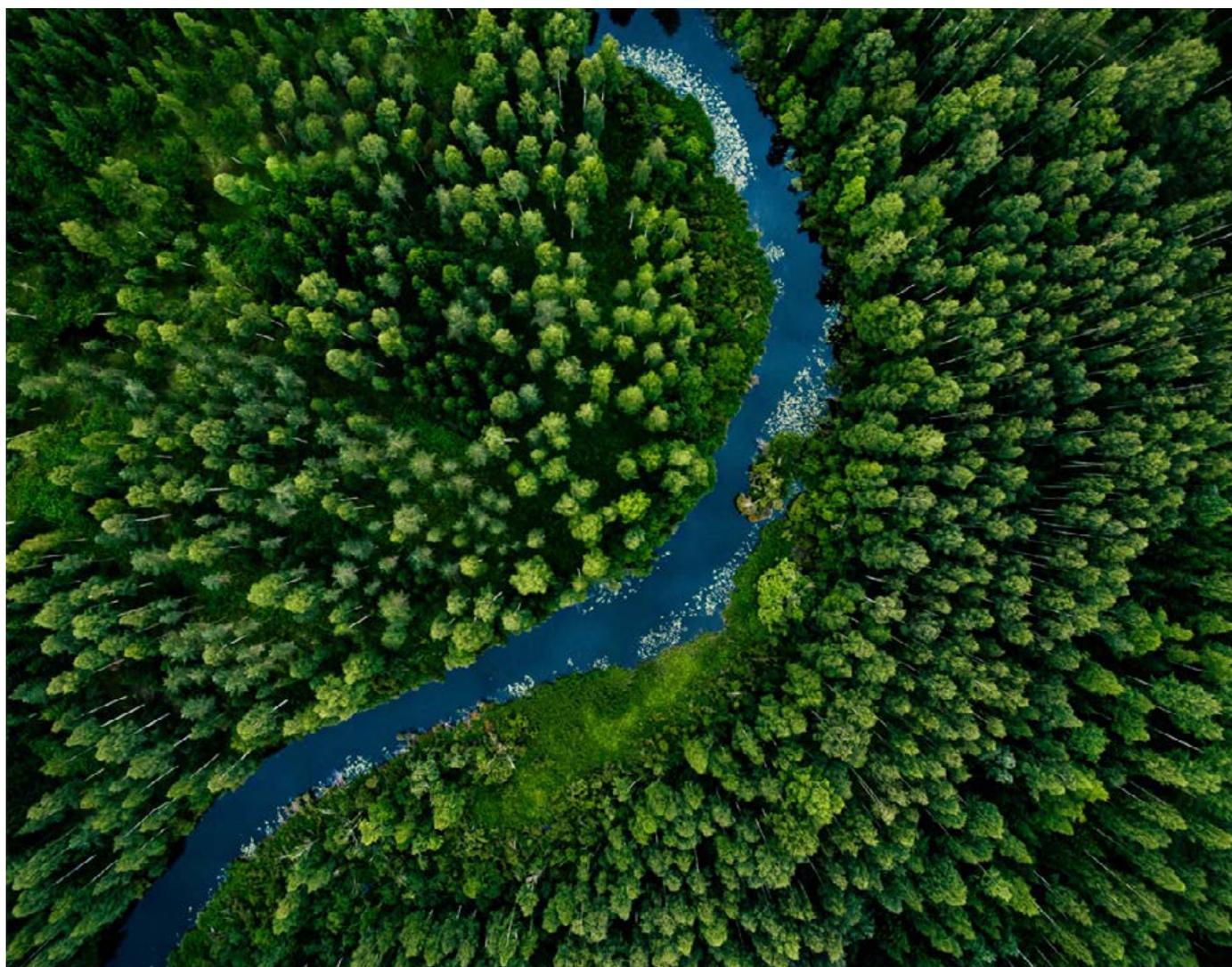
Based on our experience, we recognize the importance of identifying synergies and integrating efforts to mitigate climate change and human rights impacts throughout our business activities. To do so, we tasked Article One, our human rights advisers, with preparing this briefing paper to understand better where and how these key issues intersect. This understanding of the impact of climate change on human rights and the intersections are an essential step in developing coherent and inclusive strategies.

“Doing our part to address the climate crisis and respecting human rights are two key priorities of our sustainability strategy.”

We recognize that everyone has a role to play and that we should mitigate our impacts on the planet and people, especially those who are vulnerable and facing heightened human rights risks due to climate change. We also know that we cannot create change alone. We hope that this briefing paper can—in addition to informing PMI's approach to climate justice—also be of use to businesses around the world who face similar challenges. We believe in the power of collective action, and we will work to respond to this emerging issue.

We hope this paper can spark dialogue about an issue that is so pressing and help elevate the discussion, putting human rights on par with climate change in terms of awareness, attention, and investment. As we continue to transform our company, we welcome feedback on this paper as well as on our actions toward addressing our environmental and social impacts and advancing climate justice in our supply chain.

Anna Kletsidou & Jens Rupp



FOREWORD FROM ARTICLE ONE

Climate change is an existential threat to humanity and among our most pressing human rights challenges.

ARTICLE ONE



Faris Natour
Principal, Article One

Dear reader,

Climate change is an existential threat and one of humanity's most pressing human rights challenges. Whether we are successful in avoiding the worst climate change impacts will depend in large part on the extent to which the international community takes a human rights-based approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. The idea behind climate justice is that climate change has disproportionate impacts on vulnerable and underprivileged populations. Climate justice seeks to address the injustice that those who are least responsible for causing the problem of climate change are also those most likely to suffer from it.

We believe that it is essential for business to play a crucial role in supporting efforts to advance climate justice. Under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), while states have the duty to protect human rights, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights by avoiding causing, contributing or being linked to adverse human rights impacts, remediating impacts that have occurred, and engaging with potentially affected stakeholders. This includes human rights impacts that their carbon emissions contribute to as well as impacts related to mitigation and adaptation measures. Finally, companies in all sectors can lead by example in integrating human rights into their approach to climate change. We believe they should advocate for human rights-based climate policies and regulations at the national and international level.

It is our hope that this paper sparks learning, dialogue, and exchange of best practices among companies supporting efforts toward climate justice. And we hope the paper stimulates discussion and collaboration between business, states, and civil society on how companies can and should support human rights-based climate approaches.

Many readers may wonder why we partnered with PMI, a tobacco company, to write this paper on the topic of climate justice. We have been working with PMI since 2018 to help guide the company's human rights strategy and due diligence program. Partnering with a tobacco company was not an easy decision for us. We believe that the reduction of tobacco products' health risks and impacts are PMI's most important priority as indicated by the human rights saliency mapping included in PMI's 2020 Integrated Report¹. Implementing PMI's commitment and progress toward transitioning to a smoke-free future, to phase out cigarettes, and to move beyond nicotine products are essential first steps in addressing these risks, and this commitment was essential for our decision to work with PMI.

We remain conscious of the need to end smoking and eliminate cigarettes, and we know how much work remains to be done to achieve PMI's vision. We also believe that PMI's work to address its other salient risks, such as those associated with its climate impacts, is also a worthwhile and meaningful pursuit.

Working to advance climate justice will not address or make up for the impacts of PMI's products. But we aim for this paper to help raise awareness, strengthen commitments, and drive meaningful progress in business taking a human rights-based approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly in the agricultural sector. And if it does, it will represent a critical step forward for both human rights and climate change.

Faris Natour

¹ Human Rights Saliency Mapping, *Integrated report 2020—Philip Morris International*, p. 72

INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper was funded by PMI and authored by Article One, a specialized strategy and management consultancy with expertise in human rights, responsible innovation, and social impact.

The paper explores how the climate crisis and human rights relate to each other, and the role a company can play in addressing the interconnected challenges they present. The paper also identifies opportunities to bring the business and human rights lens to climate impact mitigation efforts and to leverage existing frameworks, with the ambition of creating improved synergies between the environmental and social sustainability frameworks. To do so, the principal sections of the paper are as follows:

- A look at the climate crisis and a working definition of climate justice for the private sector context;
- An exploration of the human rights impacts of climate change for the private sector context, including vulnerable groups and a deep-dive on the tobacco value chain; and
- Opportunities for private sector action to advance climate justice.

This paper draws on the research and reporting of a number of leading intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academic institutions, think tanks, media publications, and climate activists. We at Article One would like to express our gratitude to these organizations for their important work, as well as those striving to advance climate justice and mitigate the effects of climate change around the world.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change is a global, existential threat. Since the industrial revolution, human activity—largely, the combustion of fossil fuels—has led to dramatic increases in atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Higher emissions of GHGs have led to rising global temperatures. Global warming is increasing the frequency and severity of natural disasters, causing extreme weather, fueling food and water insecurity, collapsing ecosystem biodiversity, driving rising sea levels, and leading to the prospect of economic and social collapse. However, people across the world do not experience the impacts of climate change equally or equitably.

Climate justice is a term pioneered by activists in the global south that acknowledges that climate change has differing and inequitable impacts on vulnerable, underprivileged population groups. It seeks to address the injustice that those who are least responsible for causing the problem of climate change are also those most likely to suffer from its impacts. Systemic disparities persisting in society today—including, but not limited to those associated with wealth, race, ethnicity, gender, class, and generational gaps—influence the relationship people have with the environment and can compound climate risks.



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes that the primary asymmetries of climate change that climate justice seeks to address include the following:

- **Differential contributions to climate change:** High-income countries are responsible for the vast majority of historical GHG emissions and current emissions. While these countries have benefited economically and socially from these emissions, the negative impacts of climate change caused by these emissions are disproportionately experienced by low-income countries.
- **Differential impacts of climate change:** The most severe impacts of climate change tend to fall on those least responsible for causing it. The global south is disproportionately burdened by climate change impacts, despite contributing less GHG emissions than the global north.
- **Differential capacity to shape climate action solutions:** The worst impacted and most vulnerable states, groups, and individuals are underrepresented in international climate negotiations and are often excluded from decision-making processes regarding climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **Differential future response capacity:** Climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts may burden the development of low- and middle-income countries and vulnerable communities. The transition from carbon-intensive to less carbon-intensive production and consumption could exacerbate inequities as people could lose jobs or be forced to migrate, compounding already complex situations of conflict, poverty, and persecution.

Climate change is intrinsically linked to human rights. In addition to the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment—recently recognized by the UN Human Rights Council—climate change can negatively impact multiple human rights. These impacts will be felt acutely by those who earn a living in agricultural, forestry, and fishing industries, particularly in the global south. Examples of some of the corresponding human rights impacts of climate change include the following:

- **Rising global temperatures** increase heat-related illnesses and deaths, increase the spread of disease, reduce crop yields and nutritional value, and increase the likelihood of disaster-related mental health impacts. This threatens the right to property, health, water, an adequate standard of living, and life.
- **Rising sea levels** negatively impact water quality, soil salinization, and agricultural production, potentially leading to the displacement of millions of people. This threatens the right to property, health, water, and an adequate standard of living.
- **Ocean acidification** can lead to job loss and damage coastline economies, foster food insecurity, and jeopardize cultural identities. This threatens the right to work, to maintain an adequate standard of living, and to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Climate change impacts will be most acutely felt by the world's most vulnerable populations. A central pillar of climate justice is to ensure that climate change decision-making is participatory, transparent, and accountable. While the environmental movement has been historically criticized for excluding underprivileged voices, climate justice seeks to empower and uplift vulnerable and underprivileged voices. Specific communities that are

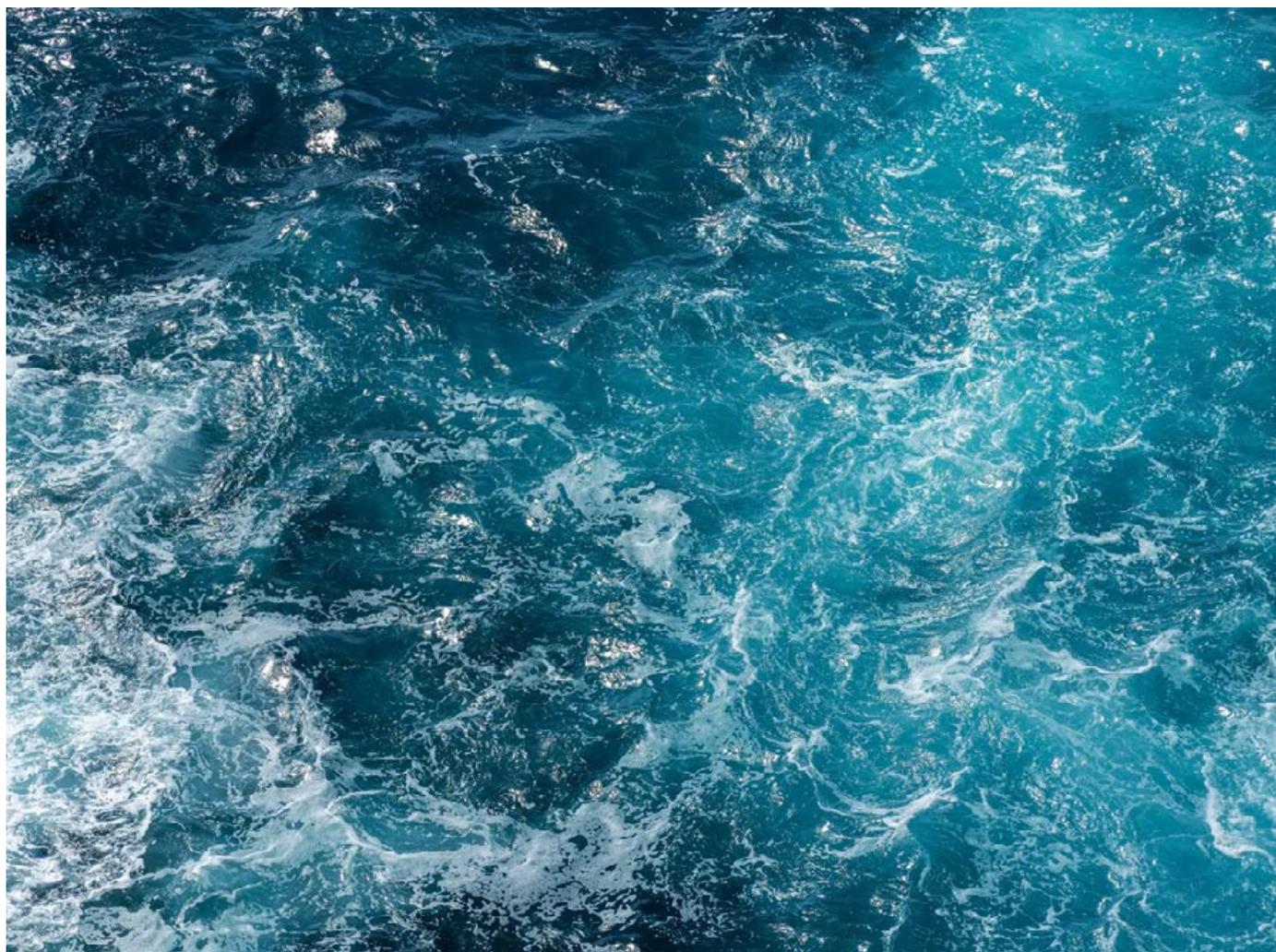
vulnerable to climate change and climate injustice include low-income and poor communities, women, children, and Black, indigenous and first nations peoples, and people of color.

Under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), while states have a duty to protect human rights through legislation and the enforcement of standards, businesses have the responsibility to respect human rights and comply with legislation. A commitment to the UNGPs requires businesses to identify and address or mitigate their salient human rights impacts, including those related to climate change, in their operations and supply chains. Businesses have contributed to the unequitable distribution of climate-related human rights impacts experienced today—through a variety of avenues, including emitting GHGs, depleting the earth's resources, making political donations, and engaging in lobbying efforts against climate policy. Climate impacts can also be influenced by business practices that rely on low wages and poor working conditions.

Like much of the agricultural industry, the tobacco sector has several salient climate-related human rights risks. As 90% of all tobacco cultivation is concentrated in the global south, the environmental impacts associated with tobacco farming—such

as deforestation and water consumption—are predominantly burdened by less developed regions. As supply chains shift to account for the warming planet and transition to sustainable practices, it is often low-income workers, farmers, and communities most at risk of job losses and livelihood impacts.

The private sector should play an important role in advancing climate justice by realigning business incentives with international climate commitments, such as the Paris Agreement. Businesses are increasingly committing to energy transitions, GHG emission reductions, and deforestation targets. Many are also increasing transparency and reporting surrounding their progress, committing to lead in the fight against climate change, and helping to influence government action on climate and human rights impacts. Through due diligence efforts, businesses can better understand how climate change and sustainability measures impact the people associated with their business. In accordance with the UNGPs, businesses must "know and show" their impacts on the climate. Further application of the UNGPs provide a framework for businesses to mitigate their impacts, enact just transitions, and provide access to remedy for human rights impacts.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY continued

Here we identify several opportunities for the private sector to advance climate justice through an integrated approach to sustainability and human rights, in accordance with the UNGPs.

**Identify**

- Recognize interconnectivity between climate change and human rights.
- Expand human rights due diligence to include climate-related human rights impacts.
- Ensure that due diligence includes a targeted focus on vulnerable groups.
- Undertake detailed mapping exercises to assess specific vulnerabilities to climate change and associated transitions among disaggregated stakeholder groups.
- Review external spending, such as marketing efforts, through a climate justice lens.

Address

- Develop a set of climate justice principles or commit to an existing public framework.
- Work with suppliers and business partners to address value chain contributions to climate change.
- Support the efforts of frontline communities and impacted stakeholders to adapt and develop climate resilience.
- Commit to living incomes throughout the supply chain.
- Facilitate access to remedy for climate-related human rights impacts.

Engage

- Ensure the voices of stakeholders, especially those under-represented, are reflected in the company's approach to sustainability, resilience, and adaptation.
- Advance climate justice awareness with stakeholder groups.
- Uplift and support frontline climate change solutions.
- Seek opportunities to partner with the public sector and advocate for accountable governance, as well as transformative climate change and just transition policy.
- Pursue opportunities to collaborate on climate justice through multi-stakeholder initiatives and forums.

Report

- Commit to collecting data and reporting transparently on the company's GHG emissions, including historic emissions.
- Set transformative science-based climate targets, disclose strategies on how to achieve them, and report on progress.
- Share progress, including learnings and materials, on implementing a strategic approach to climate justice and integrating principles into operations.

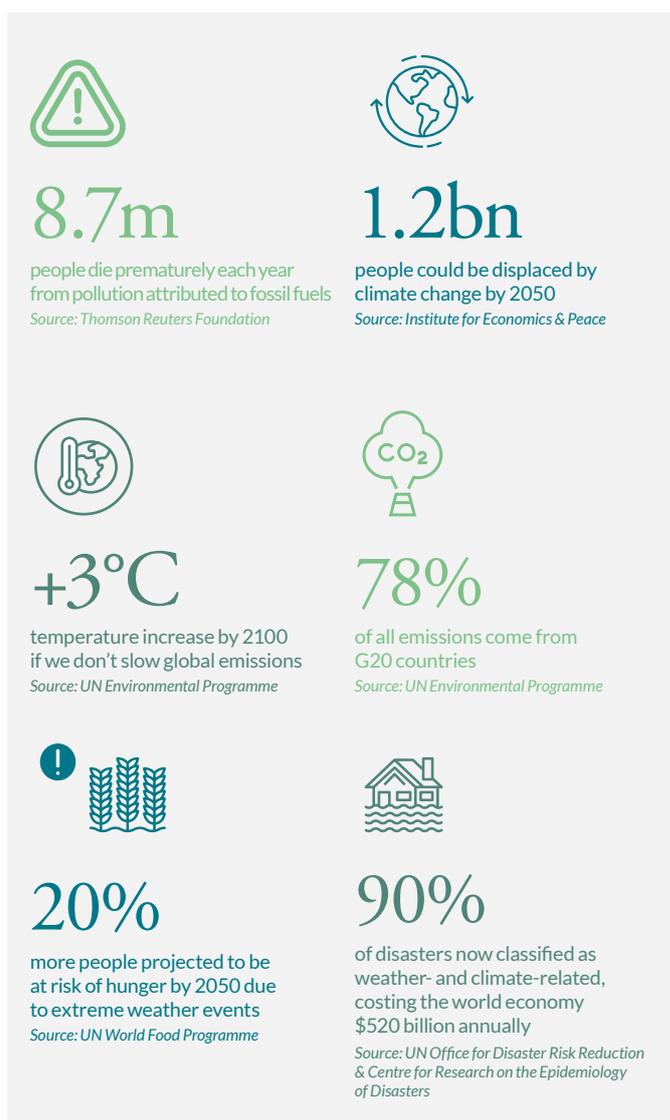
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate change is a global emergency.² Scientists' warnings of the need for transformative and coordinated action to avoid the tipping points in the climate system that would lead to severe biodiversity loss and the risk of social and ecological collapse have become steadily more dire.³

Along with increasing temperatures, we've seen devastating wildfires in Australia, New Zealand, and North America,⁴ hurricanes and tropical storms in the Atlantic basin,⁵ and long-term droughts followed by destructive flooding in East Africa and Central America.⁶ The growing visibility of the immediate and catastrophic impacts of climate change on people around the world is empowering a global and intersectional community to come to the table to develop solutions. As the United Nations noted, the consequences of our failure to win this race are far-reaching and irreversible:

"No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning. It is clear that business as usual is not good enough."⁷

A primary cause of climate change is a 47% increase in atmospheric CO₂ concentration since 1784 and advent of the Industrial Revolution when humans began burning fossil fuels at scale. In 2020, the global temperature was on average 1.1°Celsius above pre-industrial levels. While the increase might seem small, the impacts of this increase are already being felt around the world and will become extreme if global temperatures increase beyond 1.5°C.



2 National Geographic, "[Resource Library | Climate Change](#)" 2020

3 Bioscience, "[World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency](#)" (Volume 70, Issue 1, January 2020)

4 The New Yorker, "[It's a Worldwide Problem!': How North American and Australian Firefighters Work Together](#)" 2020

5 Forbes, "[5 Tropical Cyclones In The Atlantic Basin Simultaneously—Is This A Record?](#)" (2020)

6 Nature, "[Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya face devastating drought](#)" (2020), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Drought-Stricken Communities Hit by Destructive Floods in the Horn of Africa" (2018) and The New York Times Magazine, "[The Great Climate Migration](#)" (2020)

7 United Nations, "[The Climate Crisis—A Race We Can Win](#)" (2020)

WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE?

1

A safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is a fundamental human right, recently recognized by the UN Human Rights Council.⁸ Climate change has, and is going to continue to, impact all of us, on a global scale; however, not all of us will experience the impacts of climate change equally or equitably.

“Climate justice’ is a term, and more than that a movement, that acknowledges climate change can have differing economic, public health, and other adverse impacts on underprivileged populations. Advocates for climate justice are striving to have these inequities addressed head-on through long-term mitigation and adaptation strategies.”⁹

Climate justice describes how the gains and losses of the environment are often unjustly distributed, not only regarding other species or future generations of humans, but also among humans living today.¹⁰ Social inequality between wealthy and poor nations, and within nations between people of different races, ethnicities, classes, genders, and generations, influence our relationships with our shared planet.¹¹

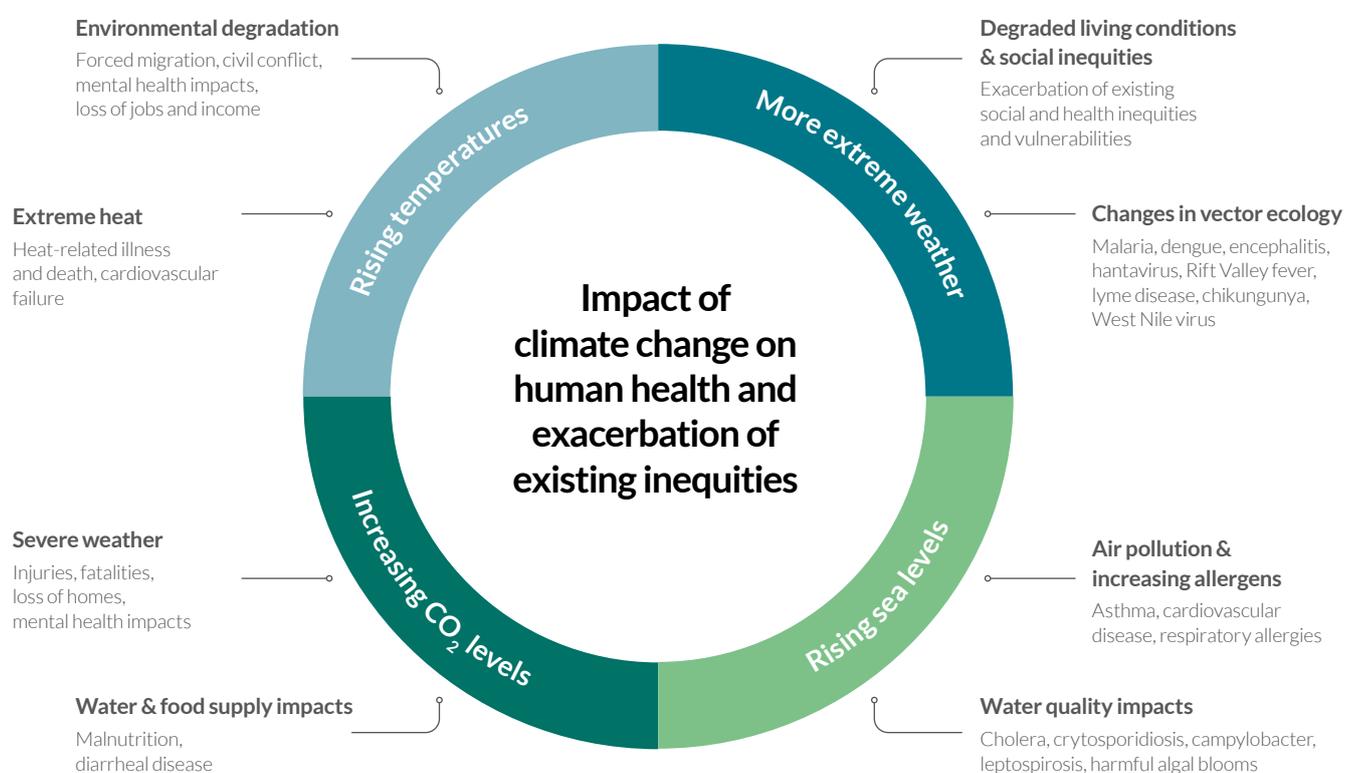
The primary asymmetries of climate change that climate justice seeks to address are:

1. Differential contributions to climate change
2. Impacts of climate change
3. Capacity to shape solutions
4. Future response capacity¹¹

These injustices are described in the following sections.

“Climate justice’ is a term, and more than that a movement, that acknowledges climate change can have differing economic, public health, and other adverse impacts on underprivileged populations. Advocates for climate justice are striving to have these inequities addressed head-on through long-term mitigation and adaptation strategies.”

Indirect impacts of climate change¹³



8 UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment” (2018)

9 Yale Climate Connections, “What is climate justice?” (2020)

10 The Journal of Peasant Studies “Is there a global environmental justice movement?” (2016)

11 Environmental Justice Vol.2, “The International Dimension of Climate Justice and the Need for International Adaptation Funding” (2009)

12 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Special Report: Global Warming on 1.5°C”, (2018)

13 CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities”, (2015)

WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE? continued

Differential contributions to climate change

High-income countries are responsible for the vast majority of historical GHG emissions and have benefited in terms of economic and social development as a result.¹⁴ Research by Oxfam and the Stockholm Environment Institute shows the unequal cumulative emissions of different global income groups during the period from 1990 to 2015.¹⁵

While the impacts of climate change are disproportionately felt in low-income countries in the global south¹⁶ the G20, the world's 20 largest economies, continue to contribute some 78% of all GHG emissions.¹⁷ In contrast, for example, African nations contribute less than 4% of global GHG emissions.¹⁸ Only five G20 countries have committed to a long-term zero emissions target.¹⁹ Among the G7 group of countries, none is close to reducing GHG emissions to a level necessary to prevent excessive warming. There remains a great deal of work to be done by the G7 governments and industry working together to develop and abide by emissions regulations.²⁰

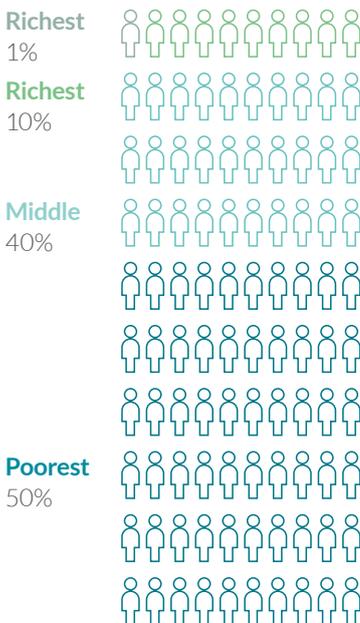
The Paris Agreement



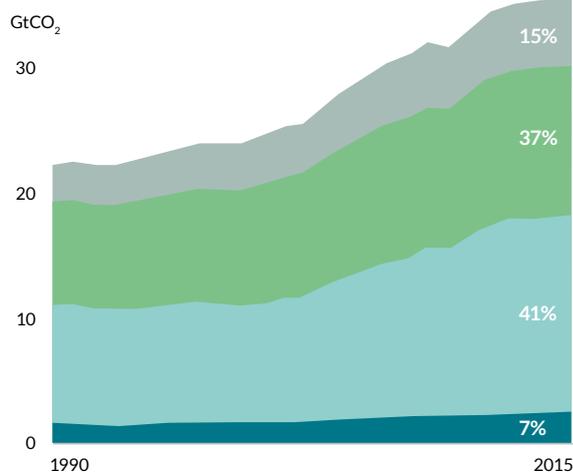
A landmark of recent climate action, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was ratified in 2016 and commits the 188 signatories to keep the increase in global average temperature to below 2°Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°Celsius, recognizing that this would substantially reduce the risks of climate change. In acknowledgment of the collective effort and transparency of action required, the Paris Agreement also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change and robustly report on progress.

Unequal cumulative emissions by income group¹⁵

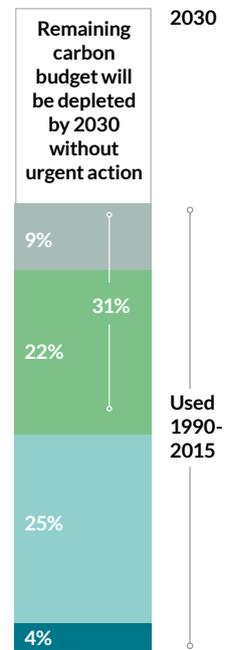
Share of global population



Share of cumulative emissions 1990-2015



Share of global carbon budget for 1.5°C



¹⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change "Special Report: Global Warming on 1.5°C" (2018)
¹⁵ Oxfam Media Briefing, "Confronting carbon inequality: Putting climate justice at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery" (2020)
¹⁶ A term which refers to lower income countries predominantly located in the Southern Hemisphere
¹⁷ UN News, "UN emissions report: World on course for more than 3-degree spike, even if climate commitments are met" (2019)

¹⁸ The New York Times, "A Warning That Africa's Last Glaciers Will Soon Vanish" (2021)
¹⁹ UN News, "UN emissions report: World on course for more than 3-degree spike, even if climate commitments are met" (2019)
²⁰ The American Prospect, "The Industrialized World is Failing to Meet Paris Agreement Goals" (2019); The New York Times "Biden Cancels Keystone XL Pipeline and Rejoins the Paris Climate Agreement" (2021)

Differential impacts of climate change

The most severe impacts of climate change tend to fall on those least responsible for the problem, within states, between states, and between generations.²¹ The global south will be significantly impacted by the changing climate, despite contributing less to global greenhouse gas emissions.²² Low-income countries and vulnerable populations globally will face more severe climate and human rights impacts as climate risk is exacerbated where human rights protections are weakest. These risks compound such that poor and low-income people in under-developed and low-income countries will be the most affected by climate change impacts, particularly those who earn a living in agricultural, forestry, and fishing industries. For example, climate change impacts are intrinsically linked to low wages, exploitative business practices, and poor working conditions.²³ We explore some of these vulnerabilities in more detail later in the report.

Differential capacity to shape climate action solutions

The worst-affected and most vulnerable states, groups, and individuals are underrepresented in international climate negotiations and are often excluded from participating in decision-making processes on mitigating and adapting to climate impacts.²⁴ Specifically, many countries in the global south have limited resources for, and access to international policy decision-making on climate change mitigation measures, such as international environmental regulations, developing low-carbon solutions, providing funding and access to adaptive technologies, and reversing historic environmental damage.²⁵ The pressure to adapt to climate change while protecting people from its present and worsening impacts poses a challenge for many low- and middle-income countries who will be in need of insurance and relief. Otherwise, many of these costs will be borne by individuals in these countries.²⁶ These financial burdens may be worsened by the adoption of binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon taxes.

Differential future response capacity

Some states, groups, and geographies are at risk of being left behind as the world progresses to a low-carbon economy. According to the UN Climate Partnerships for the global south,

“Climate change threatens to reverse the development gains that these countries in the global south have made in previous years”²⁷

While necessary, climate change mitigation efforts place legitimate burdens on development of low- and middle-income countries, as well as vulnerable groups of workers and communities, as they transition to low-carbon models of production and consumption.²⁸

21 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Special Report: Global Warming on 1.5°C” (2018)

22 UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, “Unprecedented Impacts of Climate Change Disproportionately Burdening Developing Countries, Delegate Stresses, as Second Committee Concludes General Debate” (GA/EF/3516, 2019)

23 Environmental Justice Vol.2, “The International Dimension of Climate Justice and the Need for International Adaptation Funding” (2009)

24 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Special Report: Global Warming on 1.5°C” (2018)

25 The Elders, “Our View of Climate Change: Climate Justice”

26 Environmental Justice Vol.2, “The International Dimension of Climate Justice and the Need for International Adaptation Funding” (2009)

27 UN Sustainable Development Goals, “About the UN Climate Partnerships for the Global South”

28 IPCC, “Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C” (2018)



The Mary Robinson Foundation –Climate Justice

A center for thought leadership, education, and advocacy on the struggle to secure global justice for those people vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, has developed the following principles of climate justice as a call to action in order to advance its vision of a world engaged in the advancing of climate justice.

- **Respect and protect human rights**
- **Support the right to development**
- **Share benefits and burdens equitably**
- **Ensure that decisions on climate change are participatory, transparent, and accountable**
- **Highlight gender equality and equity**
- **Harness the transformative power of education for climate stewardship**
- **Use effective partnerships to secure climate justice**

Citation: Mary Robinson Foundation—ClimateJustice, “Principles of Climate Justice”, (2015)



WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE? continued

Transitions to a low-carbon future and other actions to tackle climate change will have a greater impact on the livelihoods of low-income groups. Human rights experts and civil society groups have also drawn attention to concerns of inequity in both the transition to less carbon-intensive production and consumption and in climate change adaptation efforts. As described by the Institute for Human Rights and Business,

“The workers who could lose their jobs in the process of climate mitigation are not always those who stand to gain from the considerable business opportunities of green and sustainable ‘net zero’ economies.”²⁹

This dynamic is captured in calls for a “just transition.” For example, workers and communities are at risk through “transition out” decisions, such as the relocation of supply chains leading to job losses, and “transition in” decisions, such as switching to clean energy technologies and the exploitation associated with conflict minerals.³⁰ A just approach to these transitions requires workers and communities to be involved in dialogue that explores these impacts and how they interact and implement measures to address them.

There is also significant scope for human rights abuses in scenarios in which climate change necessitates relocating people to “areas that are less vulnerable to climate impacts,”³¹ or scenarios in which climate change compounds already complex situations of conflict, poverty, and persecution. The UN Refugee Agency notes that forced displacement across borders as a result of climate change triggers refugee emergencies and international protection needs, as well as itself also being a “source of tension and political conflict if there is added competition for natural resources, land rights, food, and water.”³² It is predominantly communities in the global south living in arid, hot zones or coastal communities that will be most impacted by rising temperatures and sea levels, as well as the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events.³³ Residents of Central America and the Pacific Islands, among other locations, are already facing threats to their survival from related impacts such as contaminated water supplies, food insecurity, overcrowding, and violence. In turn, climate migration increases risks of human trafficking, modern slavery, and child labor.³⁴

The Institute for Human Rights and Business has called for policy responses to “acknowledge migrants’ agency and the complexity in decisions to move, as well as the differing ability of people to move,” as well as the importance of strengthened resilience in urban areas where climate migrants will likely move.³⁵

In sum, climate justice seeks to address the injustice that those who are least responsible for causing the problem of climate change are also those most likely to suffer directly and severely from its early impacts.³⁶ Environmental and climate justice organizations are working to bring human rights issues to international and domestic climate policy discussions and are calling for an equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens associated with climate change adaptation and mitigation.³⁷ However, central to a rights-based approach to climate policy is the inclusion of all groups that are most likely to be affected by climate change, including: women, youth, poor and low-income people, Black communities, indigenous and first nations peoples, people of color, and those at the intersections of these identities. Grassroots and multi-stakeholder solutions encapsulated by calls for climate justice represent powerful opportunities for a more sustainable, effective, and inclusive approach to tackling climate change.

Adaptation vs. Mitigation

ADAPTATION

Adapting to life in a changing climate involves adjusting to actual or expected future climate.

MITIGATION

Reducing climate change involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere

²⁹ Institute for Human Rights and Business, “Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights and Climate Action” (2020)

³⁰ Institute for Human Rights and Business, “Connecting the Just Transitions and Business and Human Rights Agendas” (2020)

³¹ Institute of Human Rights and Business, “Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights and Climate Action” (2020)

³² UNHCR, “Climate change and displacement: How conflict and climate change form a toxic combination that drives people from their homes” (2019)

³³ The New York Times Magazine, “The Great Climate Migration” (2020)

³⁴ The Revelator, “The Surprising Link Between Climate Change and Human Trafficking” (2018); ILO “Migration and child labor”; and Anti-Slavery, “Climate change and modern slavery” (2019)

³⁵ Institute for Human Rights and Business, “Top 10 Business and Human Rights Issues for 2021 – Climate Migration: Responding to the Reality of Displaced Communities” (2021)

³⁶ Environmental Justice Vol.2, “The International Dimension of Climate Justice and the Need for International Adaptation Funding” (2009)

³⁷ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “Principles of Climate Justice” (2015)

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE



2

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE

“Human beings are part of nature, and our human rights are intertwined with the environment in which we live. Environmental harm interferes with the enjoyment of human rights, and the exercise of human rights helps to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development.”³⁹

There has been growing support for applying human rights norms to environmental issues, including the human right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and more expansively the rights to life, adequate living standard, decent work, health, food, water, housing, culture, development, property, and privacy.³⁸ The UN Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment (presented on the following pages) has put forward guidelines for such support.



38 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment” (2018)

39 UN Human Rights Special Procedures “Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment” (2018)

40 UN Environment Programme, “Facts about the Climate Emergency” (2020)

41 UN Environment Programme, “Facts about the Climate Emergency” (2020); Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes, “Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C” (2018), NRDC, “Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?” (2016)

42 UN Environment Programme, “Facts about the Climate Emergency” (2020); Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes, “Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C” (2018), NRDC, “Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?” (2016)

43 UN, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (1948)

44 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Climate Effects on Health” (2020), NRDC, “Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?” (2016)

45 CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities” (2015)

46 UN Environment Programme, “Facts about the Climate Emergency” (2020); Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes, “Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C” (2018); NRDC, “Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?” (2016)

47 Stanford Medical University, “How does Climate Change Affect Disease?” (2019) and CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities” (2015)

48 Stanford Medical University, “How does Climate Change Affect Disease?” (2019)

49 CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities” (2015)

50 CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities” (2015)

51 UN, “International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ 2005-2015” (2014)

52 WHO, “Climate change and health” (2018) and UNHCHR “Climate Change and Disaster Displacement” (2020)

53 WHO, “Climate change and health” (2018)

54 WHO, “Climate change and health” (2018)

55 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Climate Change and Social Inequality” (2017)

56 Colombia University, “How Climate Change Impacts Our Water” (2019)

57 UN, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (1948)

58 CDC, “Impact of Climate Change on Human Health & Exacerbation of Existing Inequities” (2015)

59 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Climate Effects on Health” (2020), NRDC, “Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?” (2016)

60 UNHCHR “Climate Change and Disaster Displacement” (2020)

61 UNHCHR “Climate Change and Disaster Displacement” (2020)

62 The New York Times Magazine, “The Great Climate Migration” (2020)



Present effects of climate change →



Impacts on human rights

Rising temperatures

Average temperatures for the five-year (2015-2019) and 10-year (2010-2019) periods are the highest on record.⁴⁰ Higher temperatures are changing precipitation patterns and increasing the frequency and severity of cyclones and hurricanes, heat waves, floods, and droughts.⁴¹ Higher temperatures are also contributing to increased ground level ozone concentration, the primary component of smog, due to reactions between pollutants emitted from cars, factories, and other sources with sunlight and heat.⁴²

Right to health

(UDHR 25)⁴³

Heat: As temperatures spike, so does the incidence of heat-related illness, emergency room visits, and death.⁴⁴ Dirtier air is linked to higher hospital admission rates and higher death rates for asthmatics and those with diminished lung function.⁴⁵ Increased heat also worsens the health of people suffering from cardiac or pulmonary disease.⁴⁶

Spread of disease: As the climate warms in different regions of the world, mosquitoes and other biting insects that transmit several human infectious diseases will migrate to regions with temperatures that were previously too cold for them.⁴⁷ The transmission of malaria, dengue fever, and West Nile Virus, and several waterborne diseases is predicted to spike, particularly in the global north.⁴⁸ In addition, diarrheal diseases, including salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis, are more common when temperatures are higher, though patterns differ by place and pathogen.⁴⁹

Mental health impacts: Following disasters, mental health problems increase, both among people with no history of mental illness, and those at risk—a phenomenon known as “common reactions to abnormal events.” These reactions may be short-lived or, in some cases, long-lasting. Some people with mental illness are especially susceptible to heat; for example, suicide rates rise with high temperatures, suggesting potential impacts from climate change on depression and other mental illnesses.⁵⁰

Right to water

(UN Resolution 64/292)⁵¹

Droughts & wildfires: Long periods of record-high temperatures are associated with droughts that can destroy crops and cause famine, contribute to dry conditions of land, and drive wildfires in some areas.⁵² Exposure to wildfire smoke, containing several dangerous air pollutants, increases respiratory and cardiovascular hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and other severe health impacts.⁵³

Floods contaminate freshwater supplies, heighten the risk of waterborne diseases, and create breeding grounds for disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes. They also cause drownings and physical injuries, damage homes, regional infrastructures, social/ neighboring structures, and harvests, and disrupt the supply of medical and health services.⁵⁴

Changes in water demand: Climate change could change how we use water and how much we need. Presently, two thirds of the global population are estimated to live under conditions where water is severely scarce for at least one month of the year; this exposure is expected to increase with climate change.⁵⁵ Higher temperatures and evaporation rates due to increased temperatures could increase the demand for water in many areas. Increased demand is likely to exacerbate existing water shortage issues and limit access to safe drinking water.⁵⁶ Drawing more water from wells may decrease groundwater levels and limit the ability of the poorest to access water.

Rights to life & an adequate standard of living

(UDHR 3, 17 & 25)⁵⁷

Food and livelihood security: Climate change is expected to threaten food production, as well as food prices and distribution systems. Many crop yields are predicted to decline because of the combined effects of changes in rainfall, severe weather events, and increasing competition from weeds and pests on crop plants. Livestock and fish production are also projected to decline. As these impacts contribute to rising food prices, food insecurity is likely to increase. In addition, the cumulative impacts of climate change on farming are projected to lead to a decline in the nutritional value of some foods.⁵⁸

Extreme weather events have taken lives, destroyed homes and communities, caused billions of dollars of damage and losses, exacerbated the spread of diseases, and taken many years to recover from.⁵⁹ Extreme weather events also displace people: There were 18.8 million new disaster-related internally displaced people recorded in 2017.⁶⁰ While most disaster displacement linked to the impacts of climate change is internal, displacement across borders also occurs, and may be interrelated with situations of conflict or violence.⁶¹ Mass cross-border migration as a result of extreme weather events and resulting economic pressures (such as hunger and poverty) is expected to significantly increase. By 2070, 19% of the world's population may be living in hot zones that make survival untenable.⁶²

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE continued



Present effects of climate change →



Impacts on human rights

Rising sea levels

Around the world, mountain glaciers, ice sheets covering West Antarctica and Greenland, and Arctic sea ice are melting. The rate of melting ice is highest at the Earth's poles, where it is most essential. Global sea levels are rising 0.13 inches (3.2 millimeters) a year, and the rise is occurring at a faster rate in recent years.⁶³ Rising sea levels due to thermal expansion and melting land ice sheets and glaciers put coastal areas at greater risk of erosion and storm surge.⁶⁴

Ocean acidification

The oceans absorb about 30% of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) that is released in the atmosphere. As levels of atmospheric CO₂ increase from human activity, the oceans' pH decreases, and the oceans become more acidic. Since the industrial revolution, the oceans have had a 30% increase in acidity.⁷¹ Ocean acidification is already impacting many ocean species, especially organisms like oysters and corals that make hard shells and skeletons by combining calcium and carbonate from seawater.⁷²

Rights to property, water, health, and an adequate standard of living (UDHR 17 & 25, UN Resolution 64/292)⁶⁵

Displacement: More than 600 million people (around 10% of the world's population) live in coastal areas that are less than 10 meters above sea level,⁶⁶ and it's estimated that 147 million to 216 million people live on land that will be below sea level or regular flood levels by the end of the century, assuming emissions of heat-trapping gases continue on their current trend.⁶⁷ People may be forced to move, which in turn heightens the risk of a range of health effects, from mental disorders to communicable diseases.⁶⁸ This has already dramatically impacted Pacific Island nations. Over 23% of migrants from Kiribati named climate change impacts as a reason for migration—70% of the population of the island have expressed that they would migrate for climate change risks, and it is predicted that by 2055, internal migration will increase 100% and international migration will increase 35%.⁶⁹

Water quality impacts: In general, coastal and near-shore habitats and their ecosystems are more exposed to the effects of climate change, including flooding, erosion, and salinity intrusion. Saltwater intrusion occurs when seawater flows into freshwater aquifers, often leading to degraded water quality of drinking and sanitation water sources. Increased water salinity disrupts coastal farmers' abilities to grow crops, impacting their right to work. A large portion of those living in coastal and near-shore habitats around the world are low-income or poor communities who cannot afford to live in safer areas. As a result, these groups are disproportionately exposed to salinity intrusion caused by climate change.⁷⁰

Rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, and to participate in the cultural life of the community (UDHR 23, 25, and 27)⁷³

Industry impact: Many jobs and economies in the many countries around the world with a coastline and fishery depend on the fish and shellfish from the ocean.⁷⁴ Ocean acidification is having a significant impact on these livelihoods. For example, as of 2015, acidification is believed to have cost the Pacific Northwest oyster industry in the U.S. nearly USD 110 million.⁷⁵ Additionally, ocean acidification will directly harm coral reef ecosystems, which half a billion people depend upon within the tourism industry.⁷⁶

Food security: Over 3 billion people worldwide rely on food from the ocean as their primary source of protein. Ocean acidification endangers this source of food as increased acidity threaten oysters, clams, corals, and their surrounding ecosystems; putting fish, other marine life, and humans—who all depend on those ecosystems—at risk. This threat is disproportionately felt by low-income communities who make up a third of the global population that depend upon the ocean for food security.⁷⁷

Loss of cultural identity: The loss of fisheries due to ocean acidification threatens the cultural identities of indigenous communities. This threat is intensified for indigenous communities who not only value marine life culturally, but also depend upon it for sustenance. For example, threats to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia could jeopardize the Yirrganydji people—an Australian Aboriginal tribe—who value the reef and surrounding ecosystem as central to their cultural beliefs, sense of identity, and local economy.⁷⁸

63 UN Environment Programme, "Facts about the Climate Emergency" (2020); Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes, "Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C" (2018), NRDC, "Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?" (2016)

64 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce, "Climate Change Impacts" (2020)

65 UN, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948)

66 UN, "The Ocean Conference" (2017)

67 Climate Central, "New Analysis Shows Global Exposure to Sea Level Rise" (2014)

68 WHO, "Climate change and health" (2018)

69 United Nations University, "Climate Change and Migration in the Pacific: Links, Attitudes, and Future Scenarios in Nauru, Tuvalu, and Kiribati" (2017)

70 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Climate Change and Social Inequality" (2017)

71 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Ocean Acidification" (2020)

72 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Ocean Acidification" (2020)

73 UN, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948)

74 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Ocean Acidification" (2020)

75 NRDC, "Are the Effects of Global Warming Really that Bad?" (2016)

76 EPA, "Effects of Ocean and Coastal Acidification on Ecosystems" (2019)

77 Climate Central, "Ocean Acidification Threatens Food Security Report" (2012)

78 Phys.org, "Great Barrier Reef Survival Key to Indigenous Identity" (2014)

GROUPS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE INJUSTICE

Climate change will have major human rights implications, and these impacts will be most acutely felt by the world's most vulnerable populations—the youth and future generations, both groups with limited ability to influence the projected course of events.

According to Human Rights Watch, “Indigenous populations, poor and socially marginalized individuals, women, and people with disabilities, are often most affected by climate change.”⁷⁹ These groups often have less protection from environmental health hazards and less access to the decision-making processes to advocate and secure a healthier environment to live in.⁸⁰ Inequitable climate change impacts include, but are not limited to, drought, famine, storms and flooding, exposure to toxins, distribution of waste, as well as loss of biodiversity and livelihood and forced migration.

A central principle of climate justice is to ensure that decisions on climate change are participatory, transparent, and accountable.⁸¹ This principle recognizes the importance of including vulnerable voices in both deliberations and decisions on mitigating the impacts of climate change and in transitioning to different energy and consumption models. Climate justice also acknowledges that the environmental movement has historically been criticized for the exclusion of Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) voices.⁸² Inclusive partnerships will be better able to address the impacts of climate change, as well as ensure that fundamental human rights—including the right to information, public participation, and access to justice—are upheld.

Vulnerable groups may lack both access to remedy or channels to hold the public and private sector accountable for failures to address climate and human rights impacts.⁸³

“Those who are at greater risk from environmental harm . . . often include women, children, persons living in poverty, members of indigenous peoples and traditional communities, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic, racial, or other minorities and displaced persons.”⁸⁴

More information on the way different vulnerable groups experience climate injustice is found in the stakeholder profiles in the sections that follow.

“Indigenous populations, poor and socially marginalized individuals, women, and people with disabilities, are often most affected by climate change.”⁷⁹

A note on intersectionality

It should be acknowledged that many vulnerable people and communities do not fit neatly into the profiles listed above and often overlap across multiple identities. This is called intersectionality. These intersections can amplify disadvantage, inequality, and systemic discrimination. Similarly, vulnerability to climate change is compounded and risks are heightened.

Citation: UN World Data Forum, “[Integrate Intersecting Inequalities to Leave No One Behind](#)” (2020)



⁷⁹ A Human Rights Watch, “[There is No Time Left](#)”: Climate Change, Environmental Threats, and Human Rights in Turkana County, Kenya” (2015)

⁸⁰ The New York Times Magazine, “[Pollution is Killing Black Americans. This community Fought Back](#)” (2020)

⁸¹ Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice, “[Principles of Climate Justice](#)”

⁸² Shado Magazine—Climate Justice, Issue 03; “[The Climate Action Movement is Coconuts](#)” (O’Neil Leardon, 2020)

⁸³ The Journal of Peasant Studies “[Is there a global environmental justice movement?](#)” (2016)

⁸⁴ UN Human Rights Special Procedures “[Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment](#)” (2018)

GROUPS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE INJUSTICE continued



Low-income and poor communities



Low-income and poor communities are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change threats because of their heightened exposure to climate change and susceptibility to climate change hazards, as well as barriers to resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts.⁸⁵

- **Heightened exposure:** Poor communities are often located in areas exposed to hazards from rising water, droughts, flood, and famine. Low-income people also experience higher rates of medical conditions due to lower accessibility of healthcare resources, translating to greater sensitivity to climate health hazards.⁸⁶
- **Heightened susceptibility:** Impoverished people are also more susceptible to climate change impacts as a lack of access to information, capital, resources, or a diversification of assets can impact their ability to prepare and respond to climate change.⁸⁷
- **Decreased ability to cope:** Low-income and poor communities also face financial barriers to climate change mitigation or adaptation strategies that are often expected or forced upon them by wealthier nations with minimal financial supports.⁸⁸ Low-income countries and people face systemic discrimination, underrepresentation in international climate negotiations, and are generally excluded from climate decision-making processes.⁸⁹

For example, according to Mercy Corps, a U.S. humanitarian aid NGO, three out of four people living in poverty rely on agriculture and natural resources to survive.⁹⁰ As such, low-income and poor communities will face significant livelihood impacts as a result of climate change, particularly smallholder farmers, herders, and fisheries, who are also currently experiencing heightened challenges as a result of COVID-19 and difficulties in accessing finance (see box).⁹¹ The workforce of the global south is particularly at risk to climate change, presenting risks to both workers⁹² and food security and agricultural value chains, as 78% of the world's harvested cropland lie within developing countries.⁹³ These compounding impacts of climate change exemplify the vulnerability of low-income and poor communities and the importance of business having a nuanced understanding of climate-vulnerable groups.

⁸⁵ UN, "Climate Change and Social Inequality" (2017)

⁸⁶ EPA, "Climate Impacts on Human Health" (2017)

⁸⁷ UN, "Climate Change and Social Inequality" (2017)

⁸⁸ Environmental Justice Vol.2, "The International Dimension of Climate Justice and the Need for International Adaptation Funding" (2009); UN, "Climate Change and Social Inequality" (2017)

⁸⁹ The Journal of Peasant Studies "Is there a global environmental justice movement?" (2016)

⁹⁰ Mercy Corps, "The facts: How climate change affects people living in poverty" (2019)

⁹¹ Eco-Business, "How can Asia's smallholder farmers endure both climate change and Covid-19?" (2021)

⁹² UN, "Climate Change and Social Inequality" (2017)

⁹³ Brookings, "Where does the world's food grow?" (2016)



Women

Women are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change because systemic social inequalities translate to higher poverty rates, higher health risks, and lack of legal or political participatory power.⁹⁴

- **Higher poverty rates:** Women experience poverty at a higher rate than men, resulting in more barriers to mitigating climate crises.⁹⁵ Examples of these barriers include limited capital and lower pay, higher rates of unpaid work, land ownership restrictions, less access to technological resources, and discrimination at household, workplace, local, national, and international levels.⁹⁶
- **Higher health risks:** Women face heightened health risks due to poverty, discriminatory health care practices, and heightened vulnerability surrounding pregnancy.⁹⁷ Exposure to climate-related risks like extreme heat waves, air pollution, and water-borne diseases has led to dramatic health challenges for pregnant women and the health of newborns, including spontaneous abortions, neonatal death, malnutrition, psychological stress, and various diseases.⁹⁸
- **Lack of participatory power:** Gender barriers limit the ability women have to participate in political or legal governance and diminish their voice in climate change decision-making. This weakens their ability to adapt to climate risks and can greatly impact their human rights, including, the right to equality, the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, and the right to have just working conditions free of discrimination.⁹⁹

While it is important to recognize women as a vulnerable group to climate crises, it is equally crucial to support and implement the climate solutions women are already providing. The central roles women play in agriculture, food production, food security, family management, and income generation provide them with critical knowledge and experience central to climate justice and adaptation.¹⁰⁰ If women are empowered to participate more fully, they can be a productive voice in climate justice efforts and can further business productivity.¹⁰¹



Children

Children are highly vulnerable to climate impacts due to heightened health risks, higher rates of poverty, and lack of access to participatory power.

- **Health risks:** Children are positioned within a vulnerable window of development and often have maturing, and therefore weaker, immune, metabolic, and physiological systems.¹⁰² This leaves them highly susceptible to environmental changes including increased heat, decreased air quality, water-borne illnesses, various diseases, and extreme weather events.¹⁰³ Children connect to their environment differently and, through play, often have greater exposure to environmental contaminants.¹⁰⁴
- **Higher rates of poverty:** Children are at higher risk for malnourishment, leading them to be disproportionately vulnerable to food insecurity.¹⁰⁵ Especially in the global south, children are more likely to live in families facing poverty.¹⁰⁶ In addition to establishing barriers to sanitation, education, and capital, poverty directly reduces the ability children have to mitigate and adapt to climate change and environmental risk.¹⁰⁷ As impoverished families face climate impacts, there is heightened risk of them being drawn into child labor and facing financial barriers to education¹⁰⁸—directly impacting child rights. This can perpetuate systems of poverty, greatly placing the future generation at risk of human rights violations.
- **Lack of access to political participation:** Children face the challenge of intergenerational justice whereby the youth and future generations will inherit the consequences of today's decisions yet have little if any access to participatory power; rather, it is currently living adults who hold the power for climate decision-making.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁴ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Women’s Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice](#)” (2015)

⁹⁵ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Women’s Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice](#)” (2015)

⁹⁶ BSR, “[Climate + Women: The Business Case for Action](#)” (2018)

⁹⁷ World Health Organization, “[Gender Biases and Discrimination: A Review of Health Care Interpersonal Interactions](#)” (2007); US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

⁹⁸ US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

⁹⁹ UN, “[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)” (1948)

¹⁰⁰ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Women’s Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice](#)” (2015); BSR, “[Climate + Women: The Business Case for Action](#)” (2018)

¹⁰¹ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Women’s Participation: An Enabler of Climate Justice](#)” (2015); BSR, “[Climate + Women: The Business Case for Action](#)” (2018)

¹⁰² UN Human Rights Special Procedures “[Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment](#)” (2018); US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

¹⁰³ US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

¹⁰⁴ US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

¹⁰⁵ UNICEF, “[Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa](#)” (2011); US Global Change Research Program, “[Climate and Health Assessment](#)” (2016)

¹⁰⁶ UNICEF, “[Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa](#)” (2011)

¹⁰⁷ UNICEF, “[Exploring the Impact of Climate Change on Children in South Africa](#)” (2011)

¹⁰⁸ UNICEF, “[The Challenges of Climate Change: Children on the Front Line](#)” (2014)

¹⁰⁹ UNICEF, “[Children on the Front Line](#)” (2014)

GROUPS VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE INJUSTICE continued



Black, indigenous and first nations peoples, people of color, and systemically oppressed communities

While Black, indigenous and first nations peoples, and people of color are grouped together under the term BIPOC (a term predominantly used in the United States, but applicable globally), vulnerability and climate risks among these identities are experienced differently.

Black, indigenous and first nations peoples, and people of color (BIPOC) communities around the world are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change due to historical and ongoing colonialism, discrimination, and racism. Importantly, the social and political identities of all people are intersectional, meaning they often overlap—for example across race, class, and gender. These intersections can amplify disadvantage, inequality, and systemic discrimination.¹¹⁰ Similarly, vulnerability to climate change is compounded and risks are heightened. Histories of oppression—including slavery, segregation, and colonialism—can be directly tied to the disadvantages and climate vulnerability BIPOC communities face today.¹¹¹

- **Black and people of color communities:** Black and people of color (POC) communities around the world are more likely to live in climate risk-prone areas often categorized by higher pollution rates, vulnerable infrastructure, and land susceptible to rising sea levels.¹¹² Systemic racism and structural inequality—manifested in practices such as redlining¹¹³ and ghettoizing¹¹⁴—have enclosed Black and POC communities within climate-vulnerable areas by limiting access to capital, resources, education, and participatory governance, perpetuating racial discrimination.¹¹⁵ This greatly increases the socioeconomic challenges Black and POC communities face; it often traps them in poverty and limits their ability to mitigate, adapt, and recover from climate change risks.¹¹⁶ An example of this in the United States of America is that Black communities are 75% more likely to live near hazardous waste facilities than other identities.¹¹⁷ In South Africa, the apartheid policy that institutionalized racial segregation from 1948 until 1994 perpetuated systemic inequalities that are still experienced today. The country's disproportionate racial wealth gap entraps

the majority of Black South Africans in resource-poor informal settlements, which are often in close proximity to oil refineries, coal mines, and other pollution-intensive industries.¹¹⁸

Residents of informal settlements report higher levels of asthma, cancer, and other pollution-related health risks.¹¹⁹ Systemic racism further prevents Black South Africans' ability to advocate for change and mitigate climate risks.¹²⁰

- **Indigenous and first nations peoples:** Indigenous and first nations peoples have ties—both voluntary and forced—to specific geographic locations that are disproportionately impacted by climate change and activities that contribute to climate change, such as land clearing for agricultural reasons or mining. Threats to this land also present threats to food security, water security, and loss of cultural identities—all tied to a multitude of human right impacts.¹²¹ For example, the indigenous peoples of the Brazilian Amazon are facing climate change impacts to their cultural lands including increased forest fires, intense droughts, delayed rainfall, decreased crop production, and a rise in corresponding health risks.¹²² As a result of these vulnerabilities, the UN recognizes that indigenous and first nations peoples have specific rights under FPIC (free prior and informed consent).¹²³

One major factor that positions BIPOC communities as vulnerable stakeholders is the lack of representation they have in climate-change decision-making. The lack of political power BIPOC communities hold often results in marginalization, further exposing them to environmental vulnerability and perpetuating systems of discrimination.¹²⁴

¹¹⁰ UN World Data Forum, "Integrate Intersecting Inequalities to Leave No One Behind" (2020)

¹¹¹ Yale Environment 360, "Unequal Impact: The Deep Links Between Racism and Climate Change" (2020)

¹¹² US Global Change Research Program, "Climate and Health Assessment" (2016); UN, Africa Renewal, "Global warming: severe consequences for Africa" (December 2018–March 2019);

¹¹³ Redlining is the systematic denial of various services, such as insurance or bank loans, to residents of certain areas based on their race or ethnicity. It is recognized as both discriminatory and unethical and has been widely criticized for contributing to entrenching poverty, inequality, and environmental racism, as well as violations of various human rights.

¹¹⁴ Ghettoizing or ghettoization refers to the process of physical isolation or concentration of particular groups in society—often based on race, religion or ethnicity—in response to external pressures, such as discriminatory real-estate practices or threat of violence. It can also refer to treating a particular group in society as if they are different from other parts of society and as if their activities and interests are not important to other people.

¹¹⁵ Shado Magazine—Climate Justice, Issue 03, "The Degradation of the Environment is Inseparable from the Degradation of Black Bodies" (Teju Adisa-Farrar, 2020); Yale Environment 360, "Unequal Impact: The Deep Links Between Racism and Climate Change" (2020)

¹¹⁶ Yale Environment 360, "Unequal Impact: The Deep Links Between Racism and Climate Change" (2020); US Global Change Research Program, "Climate and Health Assessment" (2016)

¹¹⁷ The New York Times Magazine, "Pollution is Killing Black Americans. This community Fought Back" (2020)

¹¹⁸ Time Magazine, "What South Africa Can Teach Us as Worldwide Inequality Grows" (2019); New York Times, "End of Apartheid in South Africa? Not in Economic Terms" (2017)

¹¹⁹ Yale Environment 360, "As South Africa Clings to Coal, A Struggle for the Right to Breathe" (2020)

¹²⁰ Planet Forward, "South African environmental justice activists push toward change, one victory at a time" (2020)

¹²¹ US Global Change Research Program, "Climate and Health Assessment" (2016)

¹²² Viana V., "Health Climate Justice and Deforestation in the Amazon" In: Al-Delaimy W., Ramanathan V., Sánchez Sorondo M. (eds) Health of People, Health of Planet and Our Responsibility. Springer, Cham. (2020); Mongabay News, "Green alert: How indigenous people are experiencing climate change in the Amazon" (2020)

¹²³ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Free Prior and Informed Consent: An Indigenous Peoples' Right and a Good Practice for Local Communities" (2016)

¹²⁴ UN Human Rights Special Procedures, "Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment" (2018)

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN CLIMATE-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS



3

CLIMATE-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS AND THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs),¹²⁵ while states have a duty to protect human rights, businesses have a responsibility to account for the adverse human rights impacts they cause, contribute to, or are directly linked to through their business relationships, products, or services.

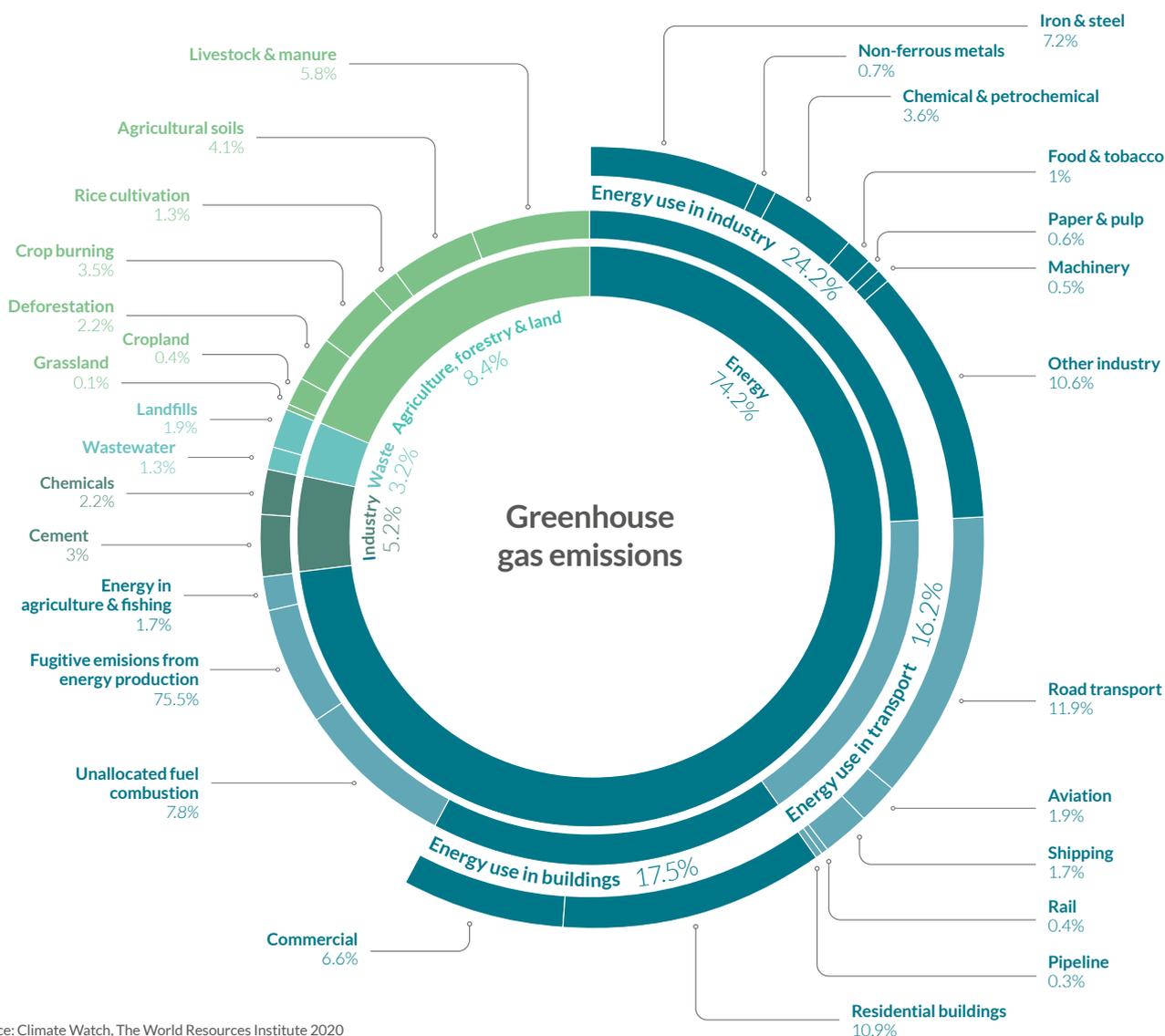
While economic growth has played a driving role in the reduction of poverty and hunger over the centuries, it has regularly been cited as a key cause of environmental harm and depletion of the earth’s natural resources.¹²⁶

According to the Institute for Human Rights and Business, carbon intensive production and consumption harms communities and ecosystems, and “businesses are not bearing the full social and environmental costs of their operations.”¹²⁷

Business has played a role in the unequal distribution of climate impacts felt today, through major contributions to global GHG emissions, as well as other environmental impacts,¹²⁸ and in some cases even concealing their knowledge of the negative climate impacts of their operations.¹²⁹ Some businesses have also made political donations and lobbied against climate policy, slowing the adoption and implementation of effective climate change mitigation measures, including policies aimed at implementing the Paris Agreement.¹³⁰ On the other hand, a number of more proactive companies have lobbied in favor of climate action, as mentioned in the section on the Importance of Private Sector Leadership.

As shown in the below chart, second to the energy sector, agriculture was the industry with the next highest levels of GHG emissions in 2016.¹³¹

Greenhouse gas emissions by sector¹³¹



Source: Climate Watch, The World Resources Institute 2020

The climate impacts of business can be influenced by certain practices that rely on low wages and poor working conditions. The groups that are most vulnerable to business-related climate impacts are BIPOC, women, children, migrants, and communities in the global south who often work upstream in supply chains and live in communities with more production-related hazards.¹³² Multinational businesses often look to the global south to source raw commodities and shift manufacturing activities. This happens within a broad and complex framework that includes factors like subsidies or production quotas, often resulting in companies deploying production activities in countries with weaker rule of law and environmental and labor rights protections. While this has brought jobs and economic development to communities, many companies have failed to invest in robust human rights and environmental practices. For disadvantaged groups, this contributes to a limited safety net and weak realization of human rights such as just and favorable working conditions and adequate living standards.

For example, many agricultural products are sourced from sub-Saharan Africa,¹³³ yet it is predominantly the low-skilled and low-income farm workers in the region who experience the health effects of extreme heat exposure and other indirect health impacts such as exposure to dangerous chemicals, which will be needed in greater quantities for fertilization as a result of droughts and desertification caused by climate change.¹³⁴ Low-paying jobs in the agricultural sector are one of the factors that has led to a steady flow of labor out of rural and into urban environments in many countries in the global south. These communities stand to suffer further economic and food insecurity as a result of reductions in agricultural labor and arable land due to climate change.¹³⁵ Furthermore, threats to livelihoods as a result of climate change will compound issues of poverty and oppression, increasing risks of worker exploitation in the supply chain, particularly among climate migrants.¹³⁶

“The climate impacts of business can be influenced by certain practices that rely on low wages and poor working conditions. The groups that are most vulnerable to business-related climate impacts are BIPOC, women, children, migrants, and communities in the global south who often work upstream in supply chains and live in communities with more production-related hazards.”¹³²

¹²⁵ The UNGPs are a set of guidelines consisting of 31 principles implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” framework on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. Under the UNGPs, businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights. The UNGPs were unanimously endorsed by resolution of the UN Human Rights Council in 2011.

¹²⁶ The Guardian, “[Capitalism is destroying the Earth. We need a new human right for future generations](#)” (2019)

¹²⁷ Institute of Human Rights and Business, “[Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights and Climate Action](#)” (2020)

¹²⁸ For the sake of this report, we have predominantly concentrated on climate impacts; however, business has contributed to noteworthy other forms of environmental impacts through poor practices such as deforestation; desertification; the release of toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials into air, land and water; and harmful dumping—or exporting—of waste near residential communities. These also often have inequitable impacts, which are evaluated at a local scale often termed Environmental Justice.

¹²⁹ The Guardian, “[Major global firms accused of concealing their environmental impact](#)” (2019)

¹³⁰ Nature Climate Change, “[Lobbying for and against climate solutions](#)” (2019; 9,427)

¹³¹ Our World in Data, “[Sector by Sector: where do global greenhouse gas emissions come from?](#)” (2020)

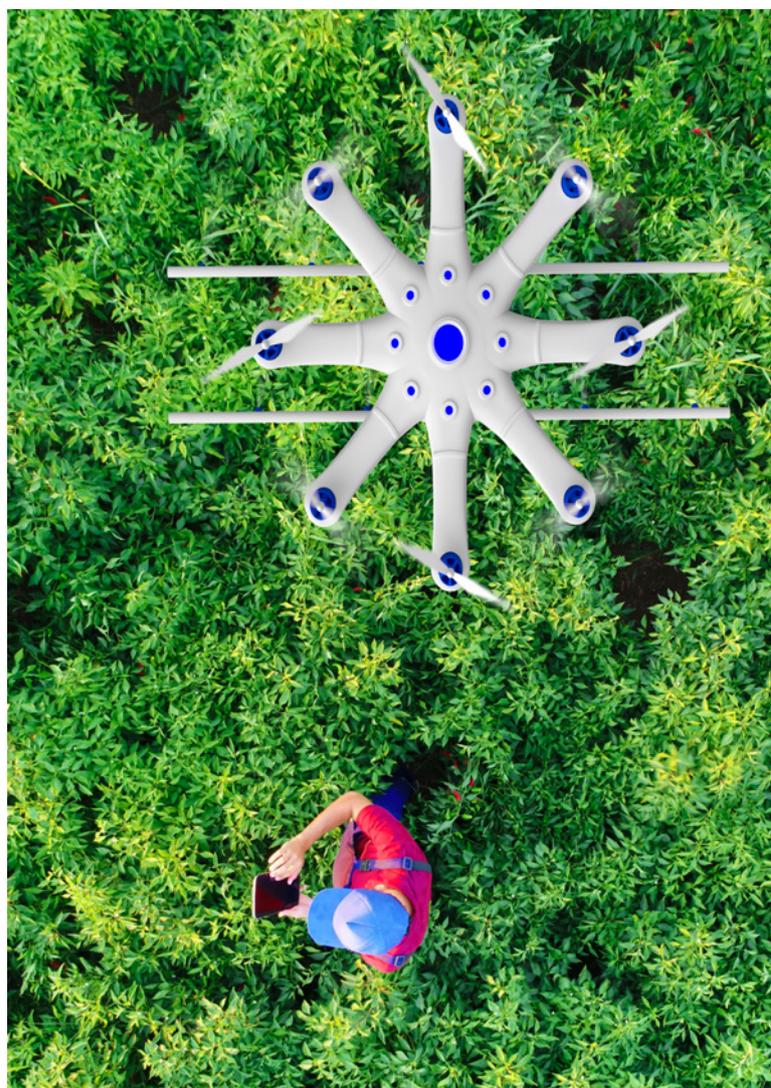
¹³² Shado Magazine—Climate Justice, Issue 03, “[Addressing the climate crisis requires Britain to urgently acknowledge its colonial past](#)” (Fope Olaleye, 2020) (source behind pay wall) and Institute of Human Rights and Business, “[Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights and Climate Action](#)” (2020)

¹³³ Boston.com, “[Wealthy nations outsource crops to Ethiopia’s farmland](#)” (2019)

¹³⁴ International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, “[Impacts of Climate Change on Outdoor Workers and Their Safety: Some Research Priorities](#)” (2019 Sep; 16(18))

¹³⁵ PloS One, “[Outsourcing Agricultural Production: Evidence from Rice Farmers in Zhejiang Province](#)” (2017; 12(1))

¹³⁶ Mercy Corps, “[The facts: How climate change affects people living in poverty](#)” (2019)



CLIMATE-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS AND THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY continued

As is true of many segments of the broader agricultural industry, the tobacco industry contributes to climate change at each stage of its supply chain, with several human rights impacts occurring along the way.

For example, even though tobacco farming is a small percentage of global agriculture, salient climate justice risks for tobacco cultivation are likely to arise given that almost 90% of all tobacco cultivation is concentrated in the global south.¹³⁷ As a result, the environmental burdens of tobacco farming, deforestation, and water consumption are mainly borne by less developed regions. There is limited verifiable public data on the impacts of the tobacco industry on the climate; however, one study based on secondary data sources estimated that the annual production of 5.6 trillion cigarettes:¹³⁸

- Contributes **almost 84 million tons** of CO₂-equivalent emissions to climate change. For reference, in 2018, agriculture-related emissions contributed 9.3 billion tons of CO₂e to climate change.¹³⁹
- **Consumes over 22.2 billion m³ of water.** Globally, 4 trillion m³ of freshwater is consumed annually, of which 70% is for agriculture.¹⁴⁰ According to these estimates, water consumed for tobacco production would equal 0.5% of total water consumption.
- **Requires a total of nearly 5.3 million ha of land.** For reference, in 2018, there were 4.8 billion hectares of agricultural land.¹⁴¹ According to these estimates, land consumed for tobacco production would equal approximately 0.11% of agricultural land.

At the same time, it's necessary to balance mitigation of long-term climate impacts related to tobacco cultivation with the importance of tobacco production to farmers, foresters,

PMI's efforts to address the climate crisis¹

- Carbon neutrality in own operations by 2025
- Carbon neutrality across the value chain by 2050
- Water stewardship across all factories by 2025
- Zero net deforestation in the tobacco supply chain since 2020
- Zero net deforestation in the paper and pulp supply chain by 2025

Citation: 1. Philip Morris International, [Integrated Report 2020](#)

agricultural service providers, and manufacturing workers to sustain their livelihoods. The ability to balance these rights depends on a number of factors and efforts by different stakeholders, including the nation's health and educational facilities, political stability, resilience to climate shocks, access to markets, public infrastructure, and enforcement for regulations.¹⁴²

If these factors are not present or are insufficiently developed, tobacco communities risk being locked in a cycle of poverty, which can lead to poor working and living conditions, including the use of child labor.¹⁴³

The tobacco industry is likely to benefit from multi-stakeholder collaboration, improved disclosure, the development of reliable and measurable standards, and emissions targets that accurately assess the industry's collective contribution to climate change. Leveraging the limited estimates currently available about the contribution of the tobacco industry to climate change, and contextualizing it with available data from other sectors, it's possible to identify three key intersections between the tobacco value chain and climate justice:

1. **Cultivating tobacco**
2. **Forestry for curing tobacco & tobacco paper**
3. **Water consumption for agriculture and manufacturing**

A detailed summary of the key intersections of tobacco production and climate justice impacts is provided on the next page.



¹³⁷ WHO, "Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's global environmental footprint across its entire supply chain, and strategies to reduce it" (2018); Ambio, "The environmental externalities of tobacco manufacturing: A review of tobacco industry reporting" (2019)

¹³⁸ WHO, "Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's global environmental footprint across its entire supply chain, and strategies to reduce it" (2018)

¹³⁹ FAO, "Emissions due to agriculture, Global, regional and country trends 2000-2018", FAOSTAT Analytical Brief Series, No 18, (2020)

¹⁴⁰ The World Counts, "Tons of Freshwater Used" (2021)

¹⁴¹ Food & Agriculture Organization of the United States "Land Statistics: Global, Regional and Country Trends, 1961-2018" (2018)

¹⁴² Philip Morris International, "Delivering a Smoke-Free Future: Progress Toward a World without Cigarettes: Integrated Report | 2019" (2019)

¹⁴³ Philip Morris International, "Delivering a Smoke-Free Future: Progress Toward a World without Cigarettes: Integrated Report | 2019" (2019)

Primary tobacco industry intersections with climate justice

Value chain stage	 Potential climate justice impacts →	 Potential impacts on human rights
Cultivating tobacco	<p>Tobacco farming and sourcing may contribute to weakening the ecological resilience of land to climate change specifically in the tobacco-producing countries of the global south.</p> <p>Impacts from farming on land resilience can be attributed, in part, to weaker agriculture regulations in developing nations and limited access to appropriate farming equipment and research, where tobacco is an annual crop.</p> <p>As a result, there are risks of depleting the nutrients and organic matter in the soil, which lowers the resilience of the land to heat and extreme weather events. Ultimately, these risks increase the vulnerability of tobacco farmers who might lose their rights to work, property, and an adequate standard of living as they recover from extreme weather events.¹⁴⁴</p>	<p>UDHR 13: Freedom of Movement UDHR 17: Right to Property UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 27: Right to Cultural Participation UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms UN Resolution 64/292: Right to Water UN Resolution 48/13: Right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment</p>
Forestry for curing tobacco and tobacco paper	<p>In various countries of the global south, deforestation for tobacco growing and curing has contributed to shortages of timber for construction, deficiencies of fuel wood for cooking, decreased land resilience, and food insecurity.¹⁴⁵ Globally, deforestation is the second largest anthropogenic source of CO₂ in the atmosphere, contributing to climate change and resulting in the loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, increased risk of flooding, and other impacts.¹⁴⁶</p> <p>Deforestation can impact the human freedoms of movement and religion, and the rights to property, work, adequate standards of living, cultural participation, and an enabling environment for the realization of human rights and freedoms.</p>	<p>UDHR 17: Right to Property UDHR 18: Freedom of Religion UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 27: Right to Cultural Participation UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms UN Resolution 64/292: Right to Water UN Resolution 48/13: Right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment</p>
Water consumption for agriculture and manufacturing	<p>Water consumption for agriculture irrigation and manufacturing of tobacco products contributes to heightened vulnerability for water scarcity. Agriculture is the largest water user globally, and a major source of water pollution due to runoff from pesticide use.¹⁴⁷ Tobacco is generally considered a drought-tolerant plant, and irrigating tobacco at different stages of its growth can improve the physical and chemical nature of the cured leaf.¹⁴⁸ However, some irrigation methods are more sustainable than others. Unsustainable agricultural water use practices threaten the resiliency of livelihoods dependent on water and agriculture. These risks are exacerbated by climate change, which will limit crop productivity and reduce water availability in areas where water is most needed.¹⁴⁹</p> <p>Agriculture has the greatest environmental impacts relative to other production stages of tobacco, followed by tobacco manufacturing. Dry Ice Expanded Tobacco treatment, packaging, and tobacco-pulp processing during cigarette manufacturing consume a significant amount of water.¹⁵⁰ For reference, a 2018 study in the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology on the environmental impacts of tobacco throughout its supply chain found that global production of 6 trillion cigarettes consumed 22.2 billion m³ of water during tobacco cultivation and 14.72 m³ of water during manufacturing of filters and cigarette papers.¹⁵¹</p> <p>At these production stages, the human rights and freedoms potentially impacted by water consumption for farming and manufacturing tobacco products include the rights to water, life, freedom of movement, work, an adequate standard of living, and an enabling environment that supports the realization of these rights.</p>	<p>UDHR 3: Right to Life & Security of Persons UDHR 17: Right to Property UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 27: Right to Cultural Participation UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms UN Resolution 64/292: Right to Water UN Resolution 48/13: Right to safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment</p>

¹⁴⁴ WHO, "The environmental and health impacts of tobacco agriculture, cigarette manufacture and consumption" (2015); The Lancet, "Environmental Consequences of Tobacco Production and Consumption" (2019); Kungl Vetenskaps Akadamen, "The environmental externalities of tobacco manufacturing: A review of tobacco industry reporting" (2020)

¹⁴⁵ Tobacco Control, "Environmental health impacts of tobacco farming: a review of the literature" (2012)

¹⁴⁶ The Lancet, "Environmental Consequences of Tobacco Production and Consumption" (2019)

¹⁴⁷ The World Bank, "Agriculture holds the key to tackling water scarcity" (2016)

¹⁴⁸ The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, "Irrigating Tobacco" (2012)

¹⁴⁹ The World Bank, "Agriculture holds the key to tackling water scarcity" (2016)

¹⁵⁰ WHO, "Tobacco" (2017)

¹⁵¹ Environmental Science & Technology Journal, "Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's Global Environmental Footprint Across Its Entire Supply Chain" (2018)

PMI'S EFFORTS TO DATE

Much still needs to be done on this topic; however, PMI has already implemented a number of programs toward climate protection and respect for human rights. The below table shows a summary of PMI's activities that contribute to climate justice at the different stages of the tobacco value chain.

PMI's initiatives toward climate justice¹⁵²

Value chain stage	 Environmental impacts	 Impacts on people	 Human rights impacted
Cultivating tobacco	Crop diversification: Supporting farmers in diversifying their crops has become an even more important focus area for PMI.	Improving income: Growing and marketing a range of complementary crops can improve farm income. Improving resilience: By diversifying their crops and engaging in other income-generating activities, farmers are more resilient against climate change and food security.	UDHR 17: Right to Property UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms
Forestry for curing tobacco and tobacco paper	Limited deforestation of old growth forests: As of 2020, 100% of the flue-cured tobacco purchased is at no risk of deforestation to primary and protected forests.	Improving resilience¹⁵³: Forests are critical to regulating climatic conditions and maintaining rainfall patterns. They absorb carbon dioxide and provide the right conditions to preserve biodiversity. Forests contribute substantial economic value and resilience. Tobacco farmers, for instance, rely on forests as an important element in the water cycle and for soil protection.	UDHR 17: Right to Property UDHR 18: Freedom of Religion UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 27: Right to Cultural Participation UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms
Water consumption for agriculture and manufacturing	Effective irrigation methods: PMI supports farmers by introducing effective irrigation methods, where shared water challenges are present, such as drip systems. Water stewardship in our manufacturing operations: In order to use water sustainably within the watersheds where it operates, PMI has embraced the Alliance for Water Stewardship (WAS) standard and is implementing it across its manufacturing operations, with a target to certify all factories by 2025.	Improving income: Effective irrigation methods improve farmers' household income by improving the efficiencies and savings in their operations. These save not only water, but also time and labor costs, while increasing the yield and quality of tobacco (and other complementary crops) produced. Improving resilience: In certain countries, irrigation can play a significant role in diversification, allowing farmers to grow crops during the dry season.	UN Resolution 64/292: Right to Water UDHR 23: Right to Work UDHR 25: Right to an Adequate Standard of Living UDHR 28: Right to an Enabling Environment for Human Rights & Freedoms

¹⁵² Philip Morris International, "Delivering a Smoke-Free Future: Progress Toward a World without Cigarettes: Integrated Report | 2019" (2019)

¹⁵³ Philip Morris International, "Forest Protection: Protecting the Environment" (2021)

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

*As evidenced by millions of youths taking to the streets and calling for a commensurate response to the climate emergency, most governments have failed to take effective action on climate change and meet the Paris Agreement targets, already considered to be conservative by environmental advocates.*¹⁵⁴

Many governments have not yet enacted sufficient legislation and regulation that would require businesses to reduce and mitigate their impact on the environment, account for harm previously committed, and transition to a clean energy and lower emissions future.

“The manifest refusal of leaders to deal with massive inequality stands in the way of urgently needed climate ambition. We need a just transition, for workers, their families, and communities at all levels, from the work floor, in economic sectors, at the national level, and at the global climate negotiations. We need climate justice and a voice at the table for those most affected by the climate emergency.”¹⁵⁵

Private sector leadership can play an important role in bridging the governance gap and realigning financial incentives with the Paris Agreement.¹⁵⁶ Businesses are increasingly committing to science-based energy transition, GHG emissions reduction, and deforestation targets and transparently reporting on progress, as well as disclosing their emissions. Many are also taking leadership positions through individual and collective action in the fight against climate change and by advocating to influence government action both to address climate change and regulate the human rights impacts of business. Through their links with civil society, businesses can play a role in bringing multiple voices to the table and integrating rights protection into decision-making. Investors are also driving both climate-risk awareness and sustainability measures through ESG rankings and other examples of shareholder activism.¹⁵⁷

Businesses can also contribute through innovation or a realignment of their existing products and operations, as shown by agricultural companies adopting regenerative farming techniques, the repurposing or repowering of old energy plants, transport fleets, or other assets to run on cleaner natural gas or biomass, or large technology firms using data and artificial intelligence to help evince effective solutions and enable communities to develop resilience.¹⁵⁸ Responsible agricultural activities such as nature-based solutions¹⁵⁹ or regenerative agricultural practices¹⁶⁰ can contribute positively to local societies, improve soil health, and result in net carbon capture.

Along with efforts to introduce robust responsible sourcing processes, businesses with complex and diverse supply chains can encourage the adoption of responsible environmental practices, including emissions reductions or necessary business model transitions, among their suppliers through sets of standards and other capacity-building and support initiatives. Some of these practices have been driven by increased political scrutiny of supply chains and the development of new regulations to encourage responsible social and environmental practices, such as France’s Corporate Duty of Vigilance of 2017 and proposed measures within the EU to introduce mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence.

However, at the very heart of this is the need for businesses to understand, through due diligence, how climate change and sustainability measures impact the people associated with their activities across the full range of affected stakeholders and to ensure that business practices and working conditions contribute to improved outcomes that account for the reality of a warming planet. The businesses that take steps to protect workers and communities from climate insecurity, including those in the supply chain, will advance human rights principles of justice, inclusion, and equity, seize on opportunities presented by just transitions, and scale the collective impact of the fight against climate change. In addition to the moral imperative, there is a strong business case for companies to take an aggressive stance on climate change and incorporate a climate justice approach, including the use of an environmental strategy to build competitive advantage and more resilient, future-focused supply chains. Opportunities for best practice by business going forward will be explored in the final section of the report.

By using the language and lens of human rights in relation to climate, businesses have the means to take action to mitigate the broad impacts of both climate change and climate injustice. Businesses are already obligated under the UNGPs to identify, address, and report on their human rights impacts. As such, businesses must “know and show” their impacts on the climate, but the UNGPs also provide a framework for business-led GHG emission reductions and advancing rights sensitivity of business approaches to mitigation and adaptation, including through enacting a just transition and providing access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights impacts.¹⁶¹ Stakeholder engagement that pays special attention to the voices of BIPOC, women, and other marginalized groups can help to ensure that climate justice is a key consideration in business decisions around transitions.

Examples of private sector participation in collective action on climate change

- UN Global Compact’s “Business Ambition for 1.5°C—Our Only Future”
- 1% for the Planet
- Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change
- World Economic Forum’s Climate Change Initiative
- We Mean Business Coalition
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development’s Future of Work and Climate Policy Working Groups
- B Corp Climate Collective
- We Are Still In Coalition
- CEO Climate Dialogue

¹⁵⁴ Council for Foreign Relations, “Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures” (2021)

¹⁵⁵ Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Congress, quoted in Oxfam Media Briefing, “Confronting carbon inequality: Putting climate justice at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery” (2020)

¹⁵⁶ The Financial Times, “How to measure the impact of business decisions on climate change” (2020)

¹⁵⁷ The Financial Times, “Big investors’ sustainability push drives demand for sustainability expertise” (2020)

¹⁵⁸ National Geographic, “Climate Change—How to Fix It: Businesses”

¹⁵⁹ Nature-based Solutions Initiative, “About: What are Nature-based Solutions?”

¹⁶⁰ Regeneration International, “Why Regenerative Agriculture?”

¹⁶¹ Institute of Human Rights and Business, “Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights and Climate Action” (2020)

OPPORTUNITIES

4

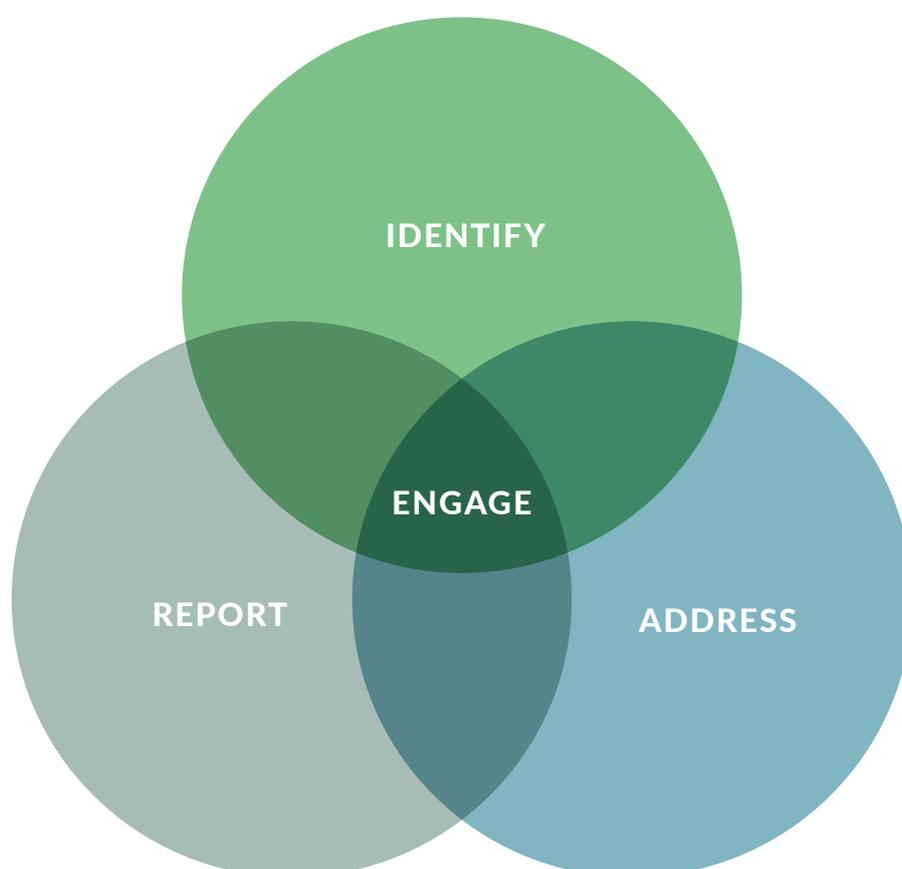


ADDRESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The private sector has an important role to play in addressing the human rights impacts of climate change. The climate justice perspective sees human rights and climate change through the same lens.

Without climate justice, businesses' attempts to tackle climate change will not be successful. In defining and implementing a climate strategy, companies should recognize the importance of climate justice by including it in their materiality analysis, setting appropriate targets and milestones, and integrating its principles into their strategy and key decisions associated with its implementation. The UNGPs provide a useful framework for this integration, articulating businesses' responsibility to respect human rights, including climate-related rights, through enacting human rights due diligence. Human rights due diligence asks companies to "know and show" that they understand their impacts and have put in place plans to address them, either through mitigation or through providing access to remedy. Businesses must also report transparently on this process, as well as engage meaningfully with stakeholders throughout to ensure they are incorporating the perspectives of the most vulnerable groups.

Companies seeking to improve their performance on climate-related and human rights issues are often applying separate frameworks. Approaching the challenge of climate justice through the business and human rights lens provides a composite framework that allows companies to leverage existing knowledge from within their environmental and human rights teams and create synergies for cross-functional, rights-aware decision-making. The underlying values of the UNGPs—consultation with rightsholders, proactive due diligence, focus on mitigating potential harms, and providing effective remedy—reflect characteristics of best practice in both environmental and human rights functions, and therefore the framework of the UNGPs is used to structure our suggestions. Article One has identified the following opportunities for consideration by businesses seeking to advance climate justice in their operations and supply chains. They are informed by a review of best practices, our engagement with civil society, and our experience advising companies on how to address climate-related human rights impacts.



Identify



1. Expand human rights due diligence to include climate-related human rights impacts. As outlined by the Institute for Human Rights and Business and building on the framing provided above, this will “help to assess the distant impacts of greenhouse gases attributable to business activities. It can also build understanding of the impacts of climate change on all those affected by the necessary transition away from a carbon-based economy, as well as developing greater resilience to the effects of climate change itself.”¹⁶² This will also help businesses with just transition planning and implementation, and creating opportunities for mitigating adverse impacts and maximizing opportunities to proactively advance human rights protections and develop resilience for vulnerable groups associated with the business and its supply chain.¹⁶³

2. Ensure that due diligence includes a targeted focus on women and other vulnerable groups. In order to address intersectional risks, a recent report by the Danish Institute for Human Rights¹⁶⁴ advances an understanding of the need to holistically integrate vulnerabilities into business and human rights frameworks and approaches to avoid single-issue interpretations of the challenges facing specific groups, such as women.¹⁶⁴ This is particularly important in the context of climate-related human rights impacts given the compounding challenges of poverty, conflict, and food insecurity often facing vulnerable groups. For example, women play an important role in agricultural supply chains but low incomes and other challenges mean that they often face significant poverty risks.

3. Companies should undertake detailed mapping exercises to assess the specific vulnerability to climate change and associated transitions among disaggregated stakeholder groups connected to their operations and value chain. This will require meaningful engagement with these groups and their legitimate representatives, as well as visibility across all levels of the value chain, in order to assess those vulnerable to sea-level rise, extreme weather (including heat), and biodiversity loss. This information will help to inform a climate justice engagement strategy, prioritizing these groups for programs that address inequities and build resilience.

4. Review external spending through a climate justice lens in order to ensure that political activities, public policy advocacy, and marketing do not contradict the company’s stated climate ambitions or deny or propagate misinformation relating to climate change.¹⁶⁵ The dichotomy of companies committing to ambitious green practices but making external spending commitments to individuals or groups that act to obstruct proactive climate policy is increasingly recognized as undermining the value of corporate action on climate change.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² IHRB, “[Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action](#)” (2020)

¹⁶³ IHRB, “[Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action](#)” (2020) and Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Mary Robinson addresses UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)” (2013)

¹⁶⁴ The Danish Institute for Human Rights, “[Addressing the Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights](#)” (2021)

¹⁶⁵ MSNBC, “[Fox host Tucker Carlson’s comments on Biden’s marriage, explained](#)” (2021)

¹⁶⁶ Bloomberg Green, “[American Politicians Who Vote Against Climate Get More Corporate Cash](#)” (2020)



Address



- 1. Develop a set of climate justice principles, or commit to an existing public framework,** and integrate these principles across the business, particularly the work of sustainability teams. There are a number of existing climate justice and just transition frameworks (see box), and several organizations have recently focused on the opportunity presented in the aftermath of COVID-19 to incorporate ideals of justice and sustainability into the economic system.¹⁶⁷ Alongside policy commitments and environmental sustainability targets, climate justice principles can provide a roadmap or set of requirements for the business that incorporate human rights into all facets of sustainability work. This should include commitments to mitigate negative climate impacts, engage stakeholders, incorporate justice into business model and supply chain transitions, and build resilience in the face of climate risks.¹⁶⁸

Examples of existing roadmaps toward climate justice, just transitions, and building back better:

- ✔ [Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice’s Principles for Climate Justice](#)
- ✔ [Bali Principles of Climate Justice](#)
- ✔ [Climate Justice Alliance’s Environmental Justice Principles and Just Transition Principles](#)
- ✔ [Kate Raworth’s Doughnut Economics](#)
- ✔ [Just Transition Centre’s Report for the OECD on Just Transition](#)
- ✔ [ILO’s Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#)
- ✔ [350.org’s Principles for a #JustRecovery](#)
- ✔ [Wellbeing Economy Alliance’s 10 Principles to Build Back Better](#)
- ✔ [Capital Institute’s Eight Principles for a Regenerative Economy](#)
- ✔ [Friends of the Earth’s Principles for a Just Recovery](#)
- ✔ [Stockholm Environment Institute’s Seven principles to realize a just transition to a low-carbon economy](#)
- ✔ [Institute for Human Rights and Business’ Just Transitions for All—Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action](#)

- 2. Work with suppliers and business partners to address value chain contributions to climate change.** Climate justice is a powerful lens that can strengthen existing efforts to address climate change within value chains.¹⁶⁹ Businesses should build on existing initiatives within the supply chain to reduce emissions and deforestation, provide access to information, funding, and resources to support these efforts, and ensure stakeholder perspectives are incorporated.
- 3. Support the efforts of frontline communities and impacted stakeholders to adapt and develop climate resilience.** This approach should be informed by the assessment of the holistic vulnerabilities of stakeholder groups to climate change (opportunity 3) and based on a detailed understanding of context and needs generated through engagement. Examples could include skills development, regenerative farming and agroforestry techniques, support for healthy ecosystems, crop diversification, and infrastructure development. Businesses should also support communities in their value chains toward expanding climate justice and partner with local organizations with expertise in climate resilience. And in accordance with recent guidance from International Alert, gender and security should be integrated into any climate adaptation measures.¹⁷⁰

- 4. Commit to living incomes in the supply chain,** starting with an assessment study to understand current wage practices and where gaps exist in meeting living incomes. Increased incomes in the supply chain will improve financial and food security for farmers and supply chain workers, leading to immediate improvements in climate resilience. In the medium term, living incomes will improve adaptability to supply chain and workforce transitions and increase scope for skills development. The long-term benefits of living incomes include contribution to country-level GDP; at scale, this will improve the abilities of low-income countries to adapt to climate change mitigation measures, such as carbon taxes.
- 5. Facilitate access to remedy for climate-related human rights impacts, in line with the UN Guiding Principles.** Companies should ensure that they have effective grievance and remedy mechanisms in place for reporting climate-related human rights impacts they may have caused or contributed to. While a complex topic, businesses should investigate ways to account for historic emissions to the greatest extent possible and collaborate with peers to explore opportunities to contribute toward remedy, such as investing in renewable energy, sequestration, reforestation, independent climate research and mitigation measures etc. For example, in 2020, Google took the historic step of offsetting its carbon legacy from start of its own operations in 1998 to 2007, when it became carbon neutral.¹⁷¹ For impacts in which a company is directly linked, such as GHG emissions in the supply chain, the company should use leverage to seek that the impacts be mitigated. Examples of remediation in the supply chain include the opportunities above, such as supporting impacted groups for adaptation,¹⁷² climate-related disaster risk reduction, reducing gaps in resource allocation, and facilitating just transitions for supply chain workers and their communities. In the face of extreme weather events, this could also include supporting in the provision of compensation, food, and other resources or help with relocation.

¹⁶⁷ B Lab and Partners, “[The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice](#)” (2021)

¹⁶⁸ Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Mary Robinson addresses UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)” (2013)

¹⁶⁹ B Lab and Partners, “[The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice](#)” (2021)

¹⁷⁰ International Alert, “[Integrating gender and security in climate adaptation](#)”, (2021)

¹⁷¹ Google, “[Our third decade of climate action: Realizing a carbon-free future](#)”, (2020)

¹⁷² Mary Robinson Foundation—Climate Justice, “[Mary Robinson addresses UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)” (2013)



OPPORTUNITIES continued

Engage



- 1. Ensure that stakeholder voices are reflected in the company's approaches to sustainability, resilience, and adaptation in a meaningful way.** Solutions that address disproportionate harm and disparities by incorporating grassroots perspectives, including those of the most vulnerable, will be both more equitable and more effective. This can also include ensuring access to information about climate change and business transitions.¹⁷³ Businesses should engage with climate justice experts and center the voices of those individuals and communities who have experienced climate change impacts. As put forward in the recent Climate Justice Playbook published by B Lab, this can include providing paid opportunities to lead and/or participate in company trainings, events, and conferences, offering remunerated features in newsletters or social media, funding their work directly, and creating positions on advisory committees or project teams.¹⁷⁴
- 2. Uplift and support frontline climate change solutions,** which serves as both an opportunity to engage stakeholders and contribute to remedy. While vulnerable communities unjustly bear the brunt of climate change impacts, they also create and pursue innovative climate solutions. However, frontline communities often lack the resources necessary to sustain or scale their initiatives. Businesses are uniquely positioned to uplift, support, and collaborate with these frontline communities. One example of frontline climate solutions are the reforestation efforts of indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "many indigenous territories prevent deforestation as well or better than other protected areas."¹⁷⁵
- 3. Advance climate justice awareness with stakeholder groups.** Create awareness about climate change within the organization and at all levels of the value chain, including proximate communities and customers, and incorporate a climate justice lens focused on increasing resilience. This outreach can take place where you primarily operate, in the locations of your suppliers and their communities, and/or where your products are regularly being used.¹⁷⁶ Ensure that education materials are accessible and available in all local languages.

- 4. Seek opportunities to partner with the public sector and advocate for accountable governance, as well as transformative climate change and just transition policy.** Furthermore, as described in the Climate Justice Playbook, climate justice intersects with a number of other public policy issues including health, energy, environmental, and agricultural policy.¹⁷⁷ The Institute for Human Rights and Business noted that there is scope for businesses to have significant positive impact through public policy partnerships, including through working with civil society and others "to prevent climate responses from triggering rollback of civil and political rights protections; and they can champion human rights as part of public policy processes associated with just transition."¹⁷⁸
- 5. Pursue opportunities to collaborate on climate justice through multi-stakeholder initiatives and forums.** Engaging with aligned businesses and civil society on climate justice projects and broader efforts to tackle climate change will help scale up efforts for greater impact.¹⁷⁹ Businesses should use their positions of influence within their sector and along their supply chains to ensure that approaches to sustainability that incorporate climate justice become the norm. Companies can also encourage peers to focus on the role of business and human rights frameworks in integrating these efforts.

¹⁷³ IHRB, "Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action" (2020)

¹⁷⁴ B Lab and Partners, "The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice" (2021)

¹⁷⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Forest Governance by Indigenous and Tribal Peoples" (2021)

¹⁷⁶ B Lab and Partners, "The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice" (2021)

¹⁷⁷ B Lab and Partners, "The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice" (2021)

¹⁷⁸ IHRB, "Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action" (2020)

¹⁷⁹ B Lab and Partners, "The Climate Justice Playbook for Business: How to Centre Climate Action in Climate Justice" (2021)



Report



1. Commit to collecting data and reporting transparently on the company's GHG emissions in scopes 1+2+3 of operations and supply chain.

Using the CDP frameworks and self-reporting, work to expand the disaggregation of data where possible by activity, product, commodity, and geographic location. A powerful recent example of corporate transparency was Veja's public statement on its CO₂ emissions.¹⁸⁰ While there is currently no standard reporting framework to aid in this process, companies might also wish to report transparently on efforts to account for historic emissions and work with external partners to improve on data collection and accounting methodologies.

2. Set transformative science-based climate targets, disclose strategies on how to achieve them, and report on progress.

Businesses should set science-based targets to reduce emissions and deforestation, switch to renewable energy and sustainably sourced fuels, and achieve carbon neutrality. Businesses should also report transparently on strategies and progress in achieving their targets. Tying executive pay to progress on meeting targets could be an effective way to ensure accountability. For example, Mars recently announced that it has linked executive pay to cutting GHG emissions.¹⁸¹

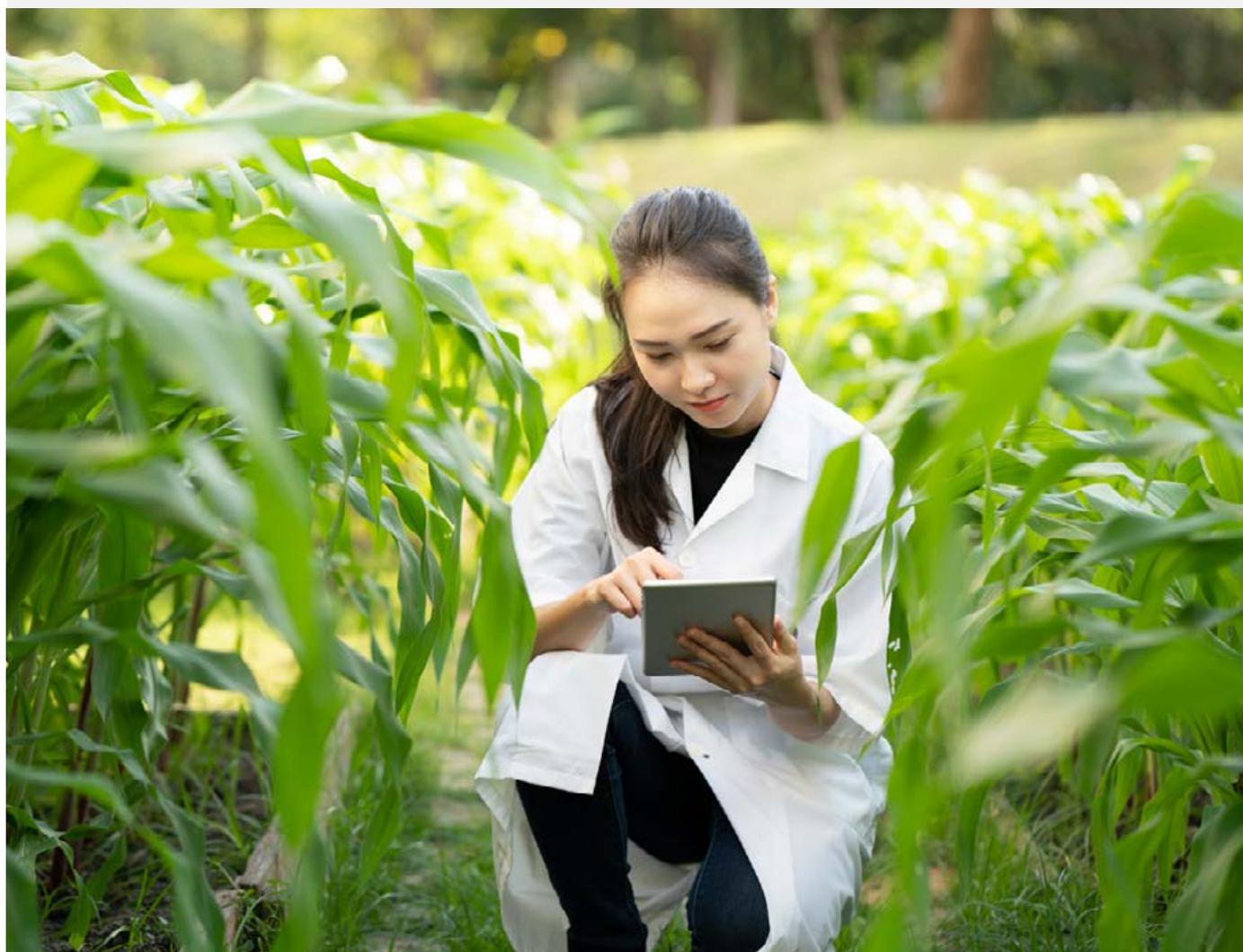
3. Share progress, including learnings and materials, on implementing a strategic approach to climate justice and integrating principles into operations.

Businesses should collaborate and share both learnings and internal materials (such as tools or resources) with peers to address the complex and intersectional barriers to climate justice. This collaboration could stimulate private sector momentum toward mitigating climate change impacts and level-set among peers and competitors.

“Collect data and report transparently on the company's GHG emissions in scopes 1+2+3 of operations and supply chain.”

¹⁸⁰ Veja, “CO₂ Emissions”

¹⁸¹ The Guardian, “Greta is right: climate pledges must be matched by action, say Mars executives” (2021).



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