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How can fragile and conflict-affected countries benefit from COP28 declarations?

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About the Author

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Summary

This insight discusses the significance of the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace, which was introduced during COP28 in the UAE. This declaration is vital, as it acknowledges the complex relationship between climate change, fragility, and conflict, especially in vulnerable communities. It aims to integrate these issues into the global climate action agenda to ensure targeted and effective responses.

- The Declaration was endorsed by 80 governments and 43 organisations, emphasising the need for international cooperation to support communities facing the dual threats of climate change and conflict.
- Climate change disproportionately affects marginalised populations and exacerbates vulnerability, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Therefore, there is an urgent need to support these communities to adapt.
- The Declaration focuses on enhancing financial support and capacity building, improving good practices and programming, and ensuring coordinated action among different stakeholders.
- The state of climate finance is critical, particularly for countries in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where there is often less funding and higher perceived risks.
- Several financial mechanisms and funds are highlighted, including Loss and Damage Fund, Climate Adaptation Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, and Green Climate Fund, illustrating the global effort to support vulnerable regions.
- This insight underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to address the intertwined issues of climate change, conflict, and fragility, highlighting the importance of international cooperation, targeted financial support, and inclusive strategies to ensure resilience and sustainable recovery in affected regions.
- The policy recommendations include the following:

1. Improving access to climate finance and utilising dedicated resources effectively, ensuring that financial support is readily available and efficiently allocated to where it is most needed.
2. Promoting innovative financing solutions and integrating climate action with peace efforts, highlighting the importance of creative financial mechanisms and the synergy between environmental sustainability and conflict resolution.
3. Strengthening local capacities to ensure sustainable community-level impacts, and emphasising the need for building resilience and adaptive capabilities at the grassroots level to achieve long-lasting benefits.

The Issue

During the most recent COP28 event held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, a new item to the global climate action agenda was introduced: The first dedicated thematic day labelled "Relief, Recovery and Peace" addressing the intersecting effects of climate change conflict, fragility settings, and humanitarian needs. A key outcome of this focused day was the release of the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace. This document was shaped by the collaborative efforts of a diverse coalition of both governmental and non-governmental organisations operating within the spheres of climate action, environmental stewardship, development, humanitarian efforts, and peace and security. This declaration, the first at a climate COP focusing on climate change and countries in fragile and conflict-affected settings, was endorsed by 80 governments and 43 organisations.

The COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace is a vital step in recognising and addressing the complex interplay between climate change, fragility, and conflict. This declaration is crucial because it acknowledges the unique challenges faced by communities and countries that are simultaneously grappling with the effects of climate change and the realities of fragility or conflict. By bringing these issues into the global climate action agenda, it ensures that the specific needs and circumstances of these vulnerable groups are not overlooked but are instead integrated into broader climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The declaration's main aim is to benefit people, communities, and countries enduring the dual threats of climate change and conflict. It offers a framework for international cooperation and support, tailored to address their unique conditions and needs. This declaration paves the way for more targeted, effective, and integrated approaches to climate action that consider peace and security as integral components of response strategies. By aligning the efforts of governments and organisations, the declaration could help mobilise resources, enhance resilience, and foster sustainable recovery and peace in regions that are most in need. Ultimately, it represents a commitment to ensure that climate action is inclusive and equitable, reaching those who are most vulnerable to the combined impacts of climate change, fragility, and conflict. It is important to translate the declaration into action by enabling significantly increased financial support to move from climate agenda to actionable solutions, and by enhancing the ability of these affected countries to access and efficiently utilise climate finance mechanisms.

Climate Change and Countries in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings

Climate change is increasingly being recognised as a significant driver of insecurity, affecting communities, regions, and nations across the globe. The implications of climate change on security are multifaceted and complex, encompassing environmental, economic, social, and political dimensions. The environmental implications include more frequent extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods, which can devastate communities, disrupt economies, and lead to mass displacements of populations. Such events strain the resources and capacities of states to respond effectively, thereby increasing the risk of conflict and instability, especially in regions already vulnerable due to existing tensions or economic fragility.[2] Economically, climate change can undermine livelihoods, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and tourism, which are heavily dependent on climatic conditions. Loss of income and employment can exacerbate poverty and inequality, leading to increased competition over dwindling resources. This economic strain can fuel grievances and social unrest, potentially escalating into violence. Socially, climate change acts as a "threat multiplier" that exacerbates existing societal tensions and inequalities. It can lead to resource scarcity, particularly of water and arable land, heightening competition and conflict between communities or nations. Additionally, climate-induced migration can place pressure on urban centres and host communities, leading to social tensions, xenophobia, and clashes. Politically, the challenges posed by climate change can undermine the legitimacy and authority of governments, particularly if they are perceived as unable or unwilling to effectively address the impacts. This can lead to political unrest, a weakening of state institutions, and even the creation of power vacuums that non-state actors or extremist groups can exploit.[3,4]

The consequences of climate change are severe and disproportionately affect marginalised populations in the world. Increasingly intense, frequent, and unpredictable weather extremes, such as higher temperatures, erratic rainfall, violent storms, extended droughts, and rising sea levels, pose significant threats to people's lives. These climate impacts jeopardise access to food, water, and essential services, endanger physical and mental health, and threaten development milestones. The Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Health Organisation, and other United Nations organisations have highlighted that 50 years of progress in global health are at risk, with climate-induced food insecurity on the rise after decades of decline, due to repeated weather shocks and conflicts, among others.[5] At the same time, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies warned that humanitarian assistance needs could double by 2050 because of the climate crisis.[6]

Climate change exacerbates the vulnerabilities of those already facing hardships, particularly in developing countries, where livelihoods are heavily dependent on weather conditions. This can lead to drastic changes in ways of life, driving people towards overcrowded urban areas prone to disasters. In conflict-affected areas, where institutions and essential services are weakened and communities are marginalised, climate change compounds existing challenges. Conflicts not only disrupt people's coping mechanisms, but also cause environmental damages, which limits their ability to adapt to climate change. This vulnerability is reflected in the ND-GAIN Index, which summarises countries' vulnerability and readiness to adapt to climate change. 60% of the 20 countries that are considered the most climate-vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change are in fragile and conflict-affected situations.[7] These countries face heightened risks due to weakened societal foundations, undermining their capacity for climate adaptation.

There is a critical need for urgent and ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reduction to mitigate this climate crisis. Equally important is ensuring that communities, especially those in conflict sones, receive adequate support to cope with and adapt to a changing climate. Despite growing recognition of this need, climate action and financing remain limited in conflict-affected areas. This reality highlights a significant gap in governments, international organisations, and humanitarians, among others, to respond to the converging challenges of climate crises, environmental degradation, and violence. This leaves many people and communities living in countries threatened or affected by fragility or conflicts facing severe humanitarian needs. They are also on the frontline of the changing climate and are among the least resourced to adapt to the changing climate. Addressing this gap requires a focused approach to climate action and development, moving beyond emergency responses, to support sustainable climate adaptation. This is what the COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace attempted to address.

Box 1: Syria Case Study

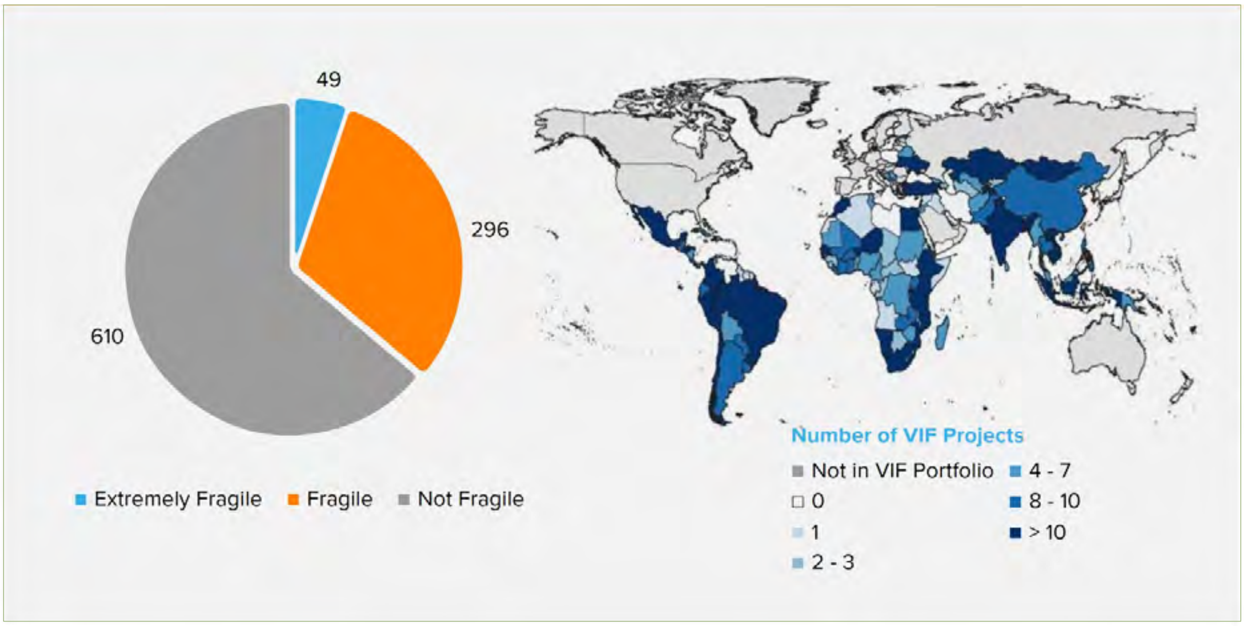
Following a decade of conflict in Syria, merely 50% of the nation's water infrastructure functions properly.[8] The destruction of infrastructure, such as water treatment facilities, has made it difficult for the country to adapt to changing environmental conditions. The year 2021 brought a significant ecological crisis to Syria as the Euphrates River experienced unprecedented low water levels. This development had widespread and profound effects on the country and its people. Primarily, the diminished river flow severely restricted access to drinking water for countless communities, setting the stage for a significant health crisis. As the availability of clean water dwindled, there was a marked increase in the incidence of water-borne diseases, impacting the health and wellbeing of the Syrian population. Beyond the immediate health concerns, the low river levels also had a significant impact on Syria's infrastructure and economy, particularly in sectors reliant on the river's water. The generation of hydroelectric power, a vital source of electricity for many areas, faced disruptions due to insufficient water flow through dams on the Euphrates. This reduction in hydroelectric power generation led to energy shortages, affecting residential areas, businesses, and critical services alike. Agriculture, a cornerstone of Syria's economy and a critical source of sustenance for its people, was another sector severely hit by the Euphrates' reduced flow. Irrigation systems, dependent on the river for water, were unable to function effectively, leading to decreased agricultural productivity. Crops suffered from the lack of water, resulting in lower yields and increased food insecurity among the population.[9] This illustrates the profound and multifaceted impact on safety, health, food access, water, and economic security. The conflict in Syria has not only damaged the country's infrastructure but also amplified the country's vulnerability to climate change. This is not a challenge that countries at peace, with more resources and stability, have to face to the same extent.

Climate Finance for Fragile and Conflict Affected States

Climate finance is a pivotal element in the global response to climate change, facilitating the implementation of essential mitigation and adaptation measures, particularly in vulnerable and less-economically developed regions. This type of finance is essential to fund efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, implementing or enhancing carbon sinks, and helping communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, particularly in developing countries where resources are scarce and the impact of climate change is more severe. The effectiveness and equity of the distribution of climate finance and its use are critical for achieving global climate goals and supporting the transition towards sustainable, resilient, and low-carbon societies. Climate finance involves various sources and channels. Public funding comes from governmental sources, often channelled through international mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility, and the Adaptation Fund, established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Private finance involves investments from private entities, like corporations, private equity, and individual investors, often motivated by profit, corporate social responsibility, or regulatory requirements. Alternative sources include financial instruments such as green bonds and carbon credits. These funds can be used for a wide range of activities, from renewable energy projects and energy efficiency measures to forest conservation and water resource management.

The current state of climate financing for Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings (FCS), is a complex issue marked by several challenges and disparities. Climate finance is essential for helping vulnerable countries to adapt to climate impacts and to transition to low-carbon economies. However, research from the UNDP indicates that fragile and conflict-affected regions often receive less climate finance than more stable areas.[10] This underfunding is significant because these regions are usually among the most vulnerable to climate change, suffering from high vulnerability and low investment in adaptation and coping capacities. These findings suggest that the degree of fragility and conflict in a region significantly influences access to climate finance. For example, between 2014 and May 2021, fragile and extremely fragile states received considerably less funding per capita from major climate vertical funds than non-fragile states. Specifically, extremely fragile states received an average of just US$ 2.1 per person, in stark contrast to US$ 10.8 per person in fragile states, and to US$ 161.7 per person for non-fragile states. This underfunding was due to the perceived higher risks and the complexities associated with implementing climate projects in these areas.

Figure 1. Total vertical fund projects by country fragility classification 2014-May 2021 (excluding co-financing).



Source: Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace (2021); UNDP

The providers of climate finance are diverse. Developed countries pledge to provide financial support to developing nations, as outlined in international climate agreements, recognising the common but differentiated responsibilities principle. Multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, private sector entities, and philanthropic organisations also contribute significant funding. The goal is to enable effective climate action by providing the necessary financial resources to implement projects, and the strategies that mitigate climate impacts and drive sustainable development.

Developed countries, as signatories to various international climate agreements, recognise their role and responsibility in supporting FCS countries in dealing with the climate crisis. They acknowledge the disproportionate impact of climate change on these vulnerable regions, despite being responsible for a small proportion of emissions, and the necessity of integrating climate resilience and sustainable development into their recovery and peacebuilding processes. Providing climate finance to FCS is not only a moral obligation but also a strategic imperative to ensure global stability and security. Failing to support FCS in facing climate challenges can lead to further instability and conflict, which can have spillover effects beyond their borders.[11] Developed countries are already channelling climate finance to FCS through various mechanisms, including bilateral aid, contributions to international funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and the Adaptation Fund, and through other multilateral institutions and development banks. These funds are used to finance projects that address both immediate and long-term climate resilience needs, such as infrastructure development, agricultural support, water resource management, and capacity building initiatives. However, the flow of climate finance from developed countries to FCS has been inconsistent and is considered insufficient. A recent report by OXFAM found that between 2019 and 2020, the climate finance provided to FCS was notably lower on average per person compared to non-fragile states. Disparity in funding is more pronounced in regions with active conflicts, underscoring the need for improved targeting and allocation of resources. Notably, the distribution of funds is uneven, with some FCS receiving significantly less per capita funding than others, indicating disparities and highlighting the necessity for a more equitable distribution mechanism. A significant portion of climate finance to these states has been in the form of loans, which can exacerbate debt burdens and hinder sustainable development efforts. This approach raises concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of current financing models and calls for a shift towards grant-based financing and more favourable loan conditions to ensure that climate finance does not lead to further financial strains on these already vulnerable nations.[12]

Moreover, the flow of climate finance to FCS is often hindered by challenges such as political instability, lack of institutional capacity, and a higher perceived risk of investment. To overcome these barriers, developed countries and international funders are increasingly adopting more flexible and innovative financing mechanisms. These include risk insurance, blended finance solutions, and the use of crisis modifiers that allow for rapid reallocation of funds in response to shocks and stresses.

While progress is being made, there is a growing recognition among developed countries that better targeted, coherent, and transparent approaches are needed to ensure that climate finance effectively reaches the most vulnerable populations in FCS. They are also acknowledging the importance of aligning their financial support with peacebuilding and state-building objectives to ensure sustainable development and long-term resilience in these regions.

This was reflected in the COP28 Declaration on Climate Relief, Recovery, and Peace, which was endorsed by 82 governments and 43 international organisations and emphasised as the primary objective the enhancement of financial support for climate adaptation and resilience. Among the countries that committed to the declaration, only 30% were classified as developed nations (with a Human Development Index (HDI) above 0.8, according to the UNDP). This may appear as a modest number of developed countries committing to the new declaration, yet it can also be viewed as an encouraging beginning, with the anticipation that additional developed nations will pledge their support for the declaration in light of the considerable demand for climate financing.

Several global climate financing funds, established under the UNFCCC, among others, could support this declaration and as COP28 numerous countries have made financial commitments to these funds, demonstrating a global willingness to support climate action. However, the statement points out a critical gap: the pledges made were not explicitly earmarked for FCS countries. This lack of specificity raises concerns about the allocation of these funds and whether sufficient resources will directly address the unique challenges faced by FCS countries. FCS countries are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, yet they often have the least capacity to adapt to and mitigate these effects due to existing fragility, conflict, and socio-economic challenges. While global climate finance initiatives represent a vital resource for implementing climate action, it is important to ensure that FCS countries have access to the necessary financing and receive an equitable share of these funds for climate adaptation and resilience. This would involve not only general pledges but also targeted commitments and mechanisms designed to guarantee fair accesses to critical resources in these high-need areas.

Leveraging Climate Finance Actors in FCS

In the context of leveraging climate finance for countries in FCS, it is essential to recognise and utilise the roles of established financial actors proficient in navigating these challenging environments. Notably, the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and the International Monetary Fund stand out as critical resources. The GFDRR specifically focuses on helping countries that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters and climate impacts, providing them with the necessary tools and funding to enhance their disaster resilience and climate adaptation capacities. Similarly, the IMF supports economic stability in FCS countries by offering financial assistance and policy advice that can also include climate-related actions, such as implementing climate resilience strategies within broader economic reforms.

World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

The GFDRR is a global partnership managed by the World Bank. It provides grant funding and technical assistance to help countries mainstream disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in national development strategies and investment programs. GFDRR helps high-risk, low-capacity countries increase their resilience to natural hazards and adapt to climate change.

In Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) countries[13] , the World Bank and the GFDRR play vital roles by integrating risk reduction and resilience strategies into the broader context of conflict prevention and recovery. They ensure that climate finance and disaster risk management initiatives support peacebuilding, state-building, and resilient recovery, addressing the compound risks of climate change, natural disasters, and conflict. By providing resources, expertise, and convening power, the World Bank and the GFDRR help FCV countries design and implement strategies that mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, thereby contributing to sustainable development and peace.

In its latest report that reviews Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for FCV countries between 2012 and 2022, the World Bank provided funding of US$ 143 billion to FCV countries of which US$ 29.4 are for DRM activities. During the same decade, the GFDRR provided 320 grants in 50 FCV countries worth US$ 153 million.[14]

International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides monetary cooperation and financial stability by offering policy advice, financial assistance, and technical expertise to its member countries.

In the context of Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCS) [15] , the IMF plays a significant role by providing financial support and policy advice aimed at stabilising economies, reducing poverty, and laying the groundwork for sustainable growth. Although the IMF does not provide "climate funds" per se, its initiatives can indirectly support climate resilience and adaptation efforts in these states. Through its programs, the IMF assists FCS in building stronger institutions, improving governance, and enhancing the capacity to manage economic challenges, including those posed by climate change. For example, the IMF's policy advice can help integrate climate change considerations into economic policies and fiscal frameworks, ensuring that climate risks are managed effectively, and that countries are better prepared to deal with natural disasters and climate-related shocks. Additionally, through its capacity development programs, the IMF can help FCS build the expertise needed to address the economic aspects of environmental and climate change policies. Over the past decade, the Fund has provided emergency financial support worth US$7.5 billion to 28 economies that are considered FCS.[16]

The World Bank's GFDRR and the IMF not only provide financial resources to FCS countries, but also bring expertise in risk assessment and capacity building, which are crucial for integrating climate resilience into the national policies of FCS countries. Their involvement is vital in ensuring that climate finance is both effective and aligned with the specific needs and circumstances of FCS nations, thereby maximising the impact of global efforts to address climate vulnerability in some of the world's most at-risk regions.

Other climate funds support developing countries in their adaptation and mitigation actions, but do not necessarily support FCS countries. These funds could integrate conflict and fragility sensitivity assessments in their mechanisms:

Loss and Damage Fund

The Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) was first announced At COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. The fund is intended to help vulnerable countries most affected by climate change, recover from disasters, and mitigate adverse effects attributed to climate change, such as severe weather events, drought, floods, and rising sea levels. The funding mechanism for the LDF involves contributions from various countries and entities, with a particular focus on supporting developing countries that are most affected by climate change but have the least capacity to deal with its impacts. The fund is designed to mobilise resources from developed countries, as well as from private and public sources, to provide financial assistance to those in need.

At COP28, the strategy to advance the operational aspects of the LDF was endorsed. The fund is hosted by the World Bank, which serves as its trustee for the first four years and has its Board Members nominated.[17] The total amount of pledges to the fund communicated during COP28 amounted to US$ 661.39 million.[18] This fund is a pivotal step towards addressing the impacts of climate change that have already caused significant harm to vulnerable communities around the world.

Climate Adaptation Fund

The Climate Adaptation Fund, established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, is dedicated to assisting developing countries in building resilience and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The fund is unique in its approach, as it provides full ownership of adaptation projects to beneficiary countries, covering the entire process from planning to implementation while maintaining transparency and accountability. The fund is managed by the Adaptation Fund Board, which supervises and manages its operations. The daily operations and secretariat services for the Fund are provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (which serves as the trustee of the Fund), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The funding mechanism of the Climate Adaptation Fund allows for direct access, meaning that national and regional entities can directly receive and manage funds for climate adaptation and resilience projects. This approach empowers local stakeholders to ensure that projects are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the communities that they aim to serve. The fund supports a variety of projects across different sectors, such as agriculture, water management, and disaster risk reduction, with the goals of preserving natural habitats, enhancing food security, and improving livelihoods.

At COP28, the Climate Adaptation Fund received significant financial support, with over US$ 192.31 million pledged by various parties. This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of critical projects that aim to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and foster sustainable development in developing countries.[19]

Least Developed Countries Fund

The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) is specifically designed to assist the world's poorest nations in tackling the challenges posed by climate change and is mandated to serve the Paris Agreement. Administered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the LDCF focuses on supporting these vulnerable countries in their efforts to formulate and implement National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs). These programs enable them to identify and address their most pressing climate adaptation needs, such as agricultural productivity, water resources, and infrastructure resilience.

The funding mechanism of LDCF allows for the direct allocation of resources to the most urgent and immediate adaptation projects identified by the least developed countries (LDCs) themselves. This ensures that funding is targeted and effective, addressing specific vulnerabilities and needs, as defined by recipient countries.

At COP28, the LDCF received new pledges totalling US$ 141.74 million. This commitment reflects the international community's recognition of the critical need to support LDCs in their climate adaptation efforts and the importance of directing financial resources to where they are most needed, which can be most effective in reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience to climate change. [20]

Special Climate Change Fund

The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) is a financing mechanism that supports a wide range of activities related to climate change. Unlike other funds that may specifically focus on adaptation or mitigation, the SCCF is designed to finance projects that cover various aspects of climate change, including adaptation, technology transfer, and capacity-building. SCCF aims to support projects in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The fund addresses sectors such as agriculture, water resources, coastal zone management, infrastructure, and health, among others. It seeks to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies into national development plans and policies. Similar to LDCF, SCCF is managed by GEF. Financing from the SCCF is available to developing countries that are parties to the UNFCCC, and projects are implemented by various agencies, such as the UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, and others accredited by the GEF. At COP28, the SCCF secured US$ 32.5 million in new pledges.[21]

Green Climate Fund

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is the world's largest multilateral fund established within the UNFCCC framework to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change. The GCF is intended to be the centrepiece of efforts to raise climate finance under the international climate agreement, focusing on supporting projects, programs, policies, and other activities in developing countries. Funding comes from contributions by developed countries and is distributed to developing nations in the form of grants, loans, equity, and guarantees. This financial mechanism aims to promote a paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development, considering the needs of nations that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including LDCs, small island developing states, and African states.

At COP28, six new pledges totalling $ 3.5 billion were announced, bringing the total second replenishment of the fund to $12.8 billion. This new funding will enable the GCF to channel new, expected financial resources to developing countries over the next four-year programming cycle to tackle the impacts of climate change and protect the most vulnerable communities.

Two other financial mechanisms worth noting are the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, and the International Monetary Fund. Even if they are not part of the UNFCCC climate finance mechanism, they could play an important role in climate adaptation finance since they channel financing to FCS countries as mentioned above.

The COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace

The COP28 Declaration on Climate Relief, Recovery, and Peace represents a significant step in the global response to the intersecting challenges of climate change, conflict, and humanitarian crises. This declaration, unveiled at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, marks a pioneering commitment by a broad coalition of stakeholders. These key global actors include governments, international organisations, financial institutions, and organisations from the climate, development, humanitarian, and peace sectors. Its purpose is to enhance climate resilience in vulnerable communities, particularly those affected by fragility, conflict, or severe humanitarian needs.

The declaration emphasises the urgent need for a substantial increase in support, including financial resources, technical and institutional capacities, and enhanced partnerships at all levels. This underscores the heightened vulnerabilities faced by communities at the forefront of the climate crisis, often compounded by fragility and conflict, which hinder their coping capacities and adaptation options. This declaration acknowledges the complex interplay between environmental degradation and conflict, noting how climate change exacerbates humanitarian needs and poses a significant challenge to stability.

Three key focuses are included in the Declaration. The first is **Enhanced Financial Support and Capacity Building.** This emphasises the critical need for significantly increased financial support and capacity building for communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts, especially those in conflict-affected regions. The declaration advocates a substantial boost in funding and technical assistance to empower local and national actors. By enhancing the ability of these actors to access and efficiently utilise climate finance, the initiative aims to foster more resilient communities capable of adapting to environmental challenges. This approach recognises the importance of local governance structures and community-based organisations in effective climate adaptation strategies. The focus on capacity building is not just about financial resources but also involves transferring knowledge and skills, ensuring that climate resilience efforts are sustainable and grounded in local realities.

The second key focus is to **understand and improve good practice and programming.** The declaration outlines a comprehensive strategy for climate-adaptation programming that is responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable populations. This entails designing and implementing climate adaptation projects that are not only informed by an in-depth understanding of local vulnerabilities, but also integrated with broader development and peacebuilding goals. This approach calls for adaptive interventions that can mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, while simultaneously contributing to social cohesion and sustainable development. By prioritising inclusive, community-led initiatives, this strategy aims to build the resilience of societies from the ground up, ensuring that climate actions are harmoniously aligned with efforts to address socio-economic inequalities and promote peace. The third and final key focus is ensuring **coordinated and collaborative action** by declaring an imperative for coordinated and collaborative partnership action across various stakeholders, including governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector. Recognising the interconnected nature of climate, peace, and development challenges, this approach advocates a unified response that leverages the strengths and resources of diverse actors. Such collaboration seeks to enhance the efficiency and impact of climate resilience efforts, ensuring that interventions are well-coordinated, avoiding duplication, and addressing effectively the complex needs of affected communities. This coordinated effort is essential for fostering a holistic approach to climate adaptation, in which peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance are integrated into climate responses. An approach that creates synergies that can lead to more sustainable and peaceful outcomes.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The COP28 Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery, and Peace is significant for countries in FCS as it acknowledges the complex relationship between climate change, fragility, and conflict. This declaration aspires to integrate these issues into the global climate action agenda to ensure targeted and effective response. Moreover, it emphasises the need for international cooperation to support communities facing the dual threats of climate change and conflict. The declaration focuses on enhancing financial support and capacity building, improving good practice and programming, and ensuring coordinated action among different stakeholders. Climate finance is critical, particularly for FCS countries, where there is often less funding and higher perceived risks. Improving access to climate finance for these nations requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both systemic barriers and the specific challenges faced by these regions. Several financial mechanisms and funds could enhance the global effort to support these vulnerable regions by making sure to prioritise community-level Impacts. It is essential that climate finance initiatives focus on outcomes that directly benefit the communities most affected by climate change, fragility, and conflict. Considering the above, this Insight makes the following recommendations:

- **Utilise Dedicated Financial Resources:** Make full use of existing financial mechanisms like the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, and the International Monetary Fund, that includes conflict and fragility sensitivity assessment into climate finance to ensure climate adaptation and resilience projects for FCS. These two institutions not only furnish financial resources to FCS countries, but they also bring expertise in risk assessment and capacity building, which are essential for incorporating climate resilience into the national policies of FCS countries. Their participation is critical in guaranteeing that climate finance is both effective and tailored to the needs and conditions of FCS nations, thereby optimising the impact of global efforts aimed at addressing climate vulnerability in some of the world's most susceptible regions.

- **Enhance Financial Resources Access:** Support FCS countries in gaining direct access to international climate funds by strengthening local and national entities' capacities. This involves building their technical, managerial, and fiduciary capabilities to meet the accreditation requirements of major climate funds. At the same time, **foster localised financing solutions** by encouraging the development and use of localised climate finance solutions that can operate effectively within the context of FCS. This includes supporting local climate funds and financial institutions that understand the local context and can manage and disburse funds effectively.

- **Streamline Application Processes:** Simplify the application and approval processes for accessing climate funds. Complex procedures can be a significant barrier for FCS with limited technical capacities. Simplification should aim to reduce bureaucracy while maintaining transparency and accountability. This could be enhanced through the creation of **dedicated windows for FCS countries.** Establishing special funding windows within existing climate finance mechanisms that are specifically designed for FCS. These should have less stringent requirements and be more flexible to accommodate the unpredictable nature of fragility and conflict.

- **Promote Innovative Financing Mechanisms:** Leverage blended finance mechanisms to attract private sector investment into climate projects in FCS countries. Combining concessional funds with private investment can reduce the perceived risks and unlock additional resources for climate action. Moreover, develop and implement **financial instruments that can mitigate investment risks,** such as political risk insurance and credit guarantees. These tools can make climate projects more attractive to investors by reducing the potential losses associated with the fragility and uncertainty in FCS countries.

- **Enhance International Cooperation and Partnerships:** Strengthen Multi-stakeholder Partnerships, by fostering stronger collaborations between governments, international donors, NGOs, and the private sector to pool resources, share knowledge, and coordinate climate actions in FCS. Partnerships should aim to leverage the strengths and resources of each actor to maximise impact to support national and local climate adaptation and resilience initiatives. Also, **encourage developed country support commitment** in line with their obligations under international climate agreements. This includes not only direct financial contributions but also technical assistance and capacity-building efforts.

- **Focus on Capacity Building and Peace:** Strengthen the local capacities and build the technical and institutional competences of national and local entities to manage climate finance effectively, ensuring local ownership and prioritising tangible impacts and results at the community level. Additionally, **combine climate action with peace efforts.** It is important to foster a holistic approach by integrating climate action with strategies to address fragility, conflict, and humanitarian needs, promoting sustainable peace, social cohesion, and resilience in the face of climate change.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can enhance the efficiency and impact of climate finance and contribute to the adaptive capacity, recovery, and resilience of the most vulnerable populations.

Endnotes

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