COP21
SEALING A FAIR AND JUST CLIMATE DEAL FOR THE WORLD’S POOREST PEOPLE
CARE International’s expectations for the 2015 climate talks in Paris, France
Purpose of this paper

This paper outlines key issues on the agenda at the 2015 UN climate talks in Paris, France (COP21) and summarises CARE’s key expectations.

CARE demands of governments at UN climate conference, COP21

1. Drastically cut emissions from fossil fuels and speed up the transition to renewable energy to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

2. Build climate resilience and adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable and marginalised people, and address the loss and damage they are facing.

3. Protect the food and nutrition security of the poorest, marginalised and most vulnerable people.

4. Massively scale up financial support for poorer countries and communities, and especially for vulnerable and marginalised people.

5. Ensure that actions to tackle climate change advance gender equality and human rights.
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Introduction

Tackle climate change and poverty

The causes and consequences of climate change reflect one of the world’s greatest inequalities. Billions of people living in poverty – people who are the least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions – are bearing the brunt of climate impacts. This is an extreme global injustice.

Across the many countries where CARE works, the devastating impacts of climate change are already eroding and reversing development gains. Changes in climate exacerbate existing social and economic injustices, including gender inequality. Poor people are increasingly forced to leave their homes due to escalating climate-induced disasters, and these and gradual climatic changes are simultaneously deteriorating livelihoods and food security.

As emissions continue to rise, and the impacts of climate change escalate, CARE’s vision of a poverty-free world of hope, tolerance, and social justice, where all people lead dignified, secure lives, is increasingly threatened.

International action lags far behind the actions needed to tackle climate change. The United Nations climate summit (COP21) in Paris, December 2015, is a critical crossroads. It will be a litmus test of governments’ ability to accelerate global efforts to avert the severest impacts of climate change, to promote equity, and to deliver on the promises of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Step up action to cut emissions and fund climate resilience

Unsustainable production and consumption drive climate change and contribute to deepening inequalities in people’s ability to access and use resources. To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, 80% of the world’s fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground. Yet, year after year, governments persist in subsidising high-carbon infrastructure to the tune of hundreds of billions of US dollars. Many countries have recently made announcements to cut emissions, outlined in their so-called Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), which are starting to bend the curve of emissions growth. However, the gap between the actions taken and the actions
needed is glaring, leaving the world on a dangerous pathway to a 3°C, or more, temperature increase. Taking action on climate change offers new opportunities for cleaner air, better long-term health, greater food and nutrition security, less inequality and safer livelihoods for the poor. Moreover, clean energy solutions are readily available and becoming cheaper day by day.

Current financial pledges to the Green Climate Fund for mitigation and adaptation projects in developing countries are worth about 10 billion US dollars. This is a good start, but there is a stark gap between the funds promised and the needs of the most vulnerable populations in developing countries, as well as the actual funds received to help them adapt and deal with loss and damage. Moreover, the 2014 United Nations Environment Programme Global Adaptation Gap Report estimates that the cost of adaptation in developing countries is likely to be two to three times more than previous estimates that originally put the cost at 70 to 100 billion US dollars. The current public finance support from developed countries for adaptation is estimated to be approximately 5 billion US dollars per year. Every moment of delay means that the costs of reducing emissions and tackling the impacts of climate change continue to rise.

Catalyse global action on climate change

The COP21 climate summit must mark a turning point in the global fight against climate change. The Paris Agreement, which is expected to come into force by 2020, is an important opportunity to agree on a long-standing, legally binding deal that avoids catastrophic climate change in an equitable manner. The agreement must help countries to harness opportunities to expand renewable energy, step up fossil fuel divestment and intensify preparations for adverse impacts of climate change.

The Paris Agreement alone will not solve the climate crisis, but it can catalyse global action. Governments must act boldly to provide hope and confidence to all people, but especially those living on the frontlines of climate change. Shifting the responsibility to take action onto future decision-makers and generations is not an option. COP21 also provides an opportunity for world citizens to showcase their actions and solutions. Each government, company, organisation and human being, both individually and collectively, has the responsibility to act. We have no time to lose.
1. Drastically cut emissions from fossil fuels and speed up the transition to renewable energy to keep global warming below 1.5°C

The world is warming at a dangerous speed, almost 1°C in the last century. If current business-as-usual emission trends continue, the global average temperature is likely to rise above 4°C from pre-industrial levels by the end of this century. At the same time, with climate change impacts unfolding in front of our eyes, and the planet being locked in for more, there is increasing recognition that the proposed 2°C limit cannot guarantee a safe world. This has also been confirmed in expert discussions in the UNFCCC. Therefore, more than 100 developing countries and hundreds of civil society organisations are demanding that global warming must be limited to less than a 1.5°C increase to avoid large-scale and irreversible impacts and further loss and damage. In this respect, the recently adopted 2030 Agenda: Action for Sustainable Development also backs the goal to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C.

Fortunately, the situation is not hopeless and positive changes are taking place across the world. Renewable energy options are becoming cheaper and widely available. The number of companies that aim to go 100% renewable keeps on growing. Investors are increasingly pulling out of fossil fuel-based companies, some of whose businesses are rapidly eroding in light of the new renewable energy dynamics. Moreover, renewable energies are often the more economically viable solution for the poor. These developments are partially already reflected in governments’ actions. The so-called Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), submitted by over 170 countries, have started to narrow the gap. However, their ambition is far too low to close it, with many countries (in particular developed countries) having submitted “inadequate” or at best “moderate” INDCs. In other words, the world is still on a pathway to a dangerous 3°C temperature rise.

Equity in this context means that the minimum fair share countries should undertake in reducing emissions in line with the required global pathways should reflect their historic responsibility and capability (taking into account poverty thresholds), such as those contained in the 2015 Civil Society Equity Review. At the same time, the new climate agreement should incentivise everyone to do more.

The Paris Agreement must send a loud and clear signal to world citizens and the private sector that the transformation of the global economy is inevitable, beneficial, and underway.

Transformative change will require several ingredients: long-term temperature and emission limitation goals, binding commitment for countries to regularly take stock and submit forward-looking plans with increased climate ambition, and increased climate action, with equity as the underpinning factor.

The legally binding Paris Agreement should include:

- A temperature limit of 1.5°C, strengthening the agreed goal to limit global warming to below 2°C.
- A compatible long-term goal aiming for full decarbonisation and zero carbon emissions by 2050, initiating a rapid phase-out of fossil fuel emissions and a just transition to energy efficient, 100% clean and sustainable renewable energy, with countries with higher historical and current emissions taking a lead role.
- Each country to commit to increasing its climate ambition over time, without backtracking, and to deliver minimum commitments at least every 5 years (with longer-term indicative targets) in line with each country’s fair carbon budget share. This should form the basis for a regular stocktaking and review of the collective progress towards the temperature limit and emission reduction goal, and mechanisms to scale-up ambition as needed.

Furthermore, all countries should intensify efforts to go beyond their current emission reduction pledges for 2020 and 2030, as well as phase-out counterproductive measures such as fossil-fuel subsidies in a pro-poor manner.
2. Build climate resilience and adaptive capacity of the most vulnerable and marginalised people, and address the loss and damage they are facing

2.1 Adaptation to climate change impacts

The scale of the unfolding climate change impacts, and the disproportionate vulnerability of the populations affected, makes a massive adaptation and disaster risk reduction response both necessary and urgent. In CARE’s view, as a humanitarian organisation working with many vulnerable communities, promoting community-based adaptation is of particular importance. This should incorporate interrelated strategies that include the promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods, disaster risk reduction efforts to reduce the impact of hazards on vulnerable households, capacity development for local civil society and government institutions, as well as advocacy and social mobilisation to address the underlying causes of vulnerability. CARE has been actively engaged in UNFCCC work related to adaptation, which is a central forum on international negotiation and cooperation for supporting developing countries in their efforts to safeguard development in a changing climate.

In recent years, adaptation to climate change impacts has received increased attention as climate change affects more and more lives. Many countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), have started to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) that seek to reduce vulnerability and promote the integration of adaptation into national strategies and programmes. Institutions under the UNFCCC, such as the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, have assisted countries in their adaptation efforts resulting in an increase in climate finance for adaptation.

The 2030 Action Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction both underline the importance of adaptation as a strategy for safeguarding development. The Paris climate talks are an important opportunity to draw more attention to adaptation action through political parity with mitigation.
Countries should further promote climate change adaptation through the Paris Agreement. This should include:

- **A global adaptation goal** that advances adaptation to help build resilience of all communities, recognising that rising temperatures will require greater adaptation efforts and support, and that achieving this goal is a common responsibility, which includes support to developing countries based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

- **The affirmation of key principles of gender equitable, participatory, community-based adaptation promoting human rights**, based on the Cancun Adaptation Framework, as overarching guidance applied to all adaptation action.

- A commitment by all countries to promote integration of climate risks into planning and action, with financial and technical support for vulnerable developing countries, and to regularly communicate planned national, voluntary adaptation actions in a flexible manner.

- **A platform that regularly considers adaptation progress**, particularly in the most vulnerable countries, and scales up ambition and closes gaps in light of projected adaptation needs.

Furthermore, as part of the required increase of climate finance before 2020, 50% of public climate finance should be allocated to adaptation resulting in about 35 billion US dollars by 2020, thereby correcting the huge imbalance in favour of mitigation. Additional efforts should be undertaken to scale-up adaptation action, such as support for the development of NAPs, contributions to the Adaptation Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, as well as finance for other community-based adaptation through civil society organisations.

### 2.2 Addressing loss and damage from climate change impacts

In CARE’s view, loss and damage is the residual impact of climate change, resulting both from insufficient mitigation and adaptation efforts, and very real adaptation limits.

Loss and damage can be reduced through adaptation and disaster risk reduction, but there are limits to adaptation, which have also been recognised in the 2015 IPCC Fifth Assessment report. Limits to adaptation are generally breached when the expected increase in frequency or severity of catastrophic events overwhelms the ability of countries to cope with damage, undermines their adaptive capacity and resilience, and contributes to humanitarian disasters. Rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, such as salinisation, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification are all major challenges to adaptation and, in many cases, make it impossible. For example, a recent study estimates that the impacts of unmitigated ocean acidification could represent a loss to the world economy of more than 1 trillion US dollars annually by 2100.

The climate vulnerable countries have been pushing forward the issue of loss and damage since 2008. Significant technical work has gone into better understanding the actual impacts, preparing the ground for future decisions in the UNFCCC. The establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage at COP19 (2013) was a political landmark and now provides countries with the institutional framework under the UNFCCC to seriously tackle loss and damage. Its first 2-year work plan (2015-2016) covers areas, such as how to address the needs of the most vulnerable communities, countries and ecosystems, non-economic losses (such as cultural losses or loss of territory), consequences of slow-onset events, financial instruments, and climate-related migration and displacement. The experience and work of humanitarian organisations, such as CARE, will be an important input to this process. A future, 5-year work plan (2017-2021) is also envisaged.
This important start-up phase needs to lay the groundwork for adequate action on loss and damage, identifying functional approaches to the various challenges. In light of the long-term, durable nature of the Paris Agreement, vulnerable countries are looking for the assurance that this issue stays on the agenda and receives adequate attention as the problem evolves, while ensuring that the more technical work can progress under the WIM.

At COP21, countries should strengthen work on loss and damage in various areas by:

- **Anchoring loss and damage** associated with climate change impacts into the Paris Agreement, including a link to mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- **Ensuring that institutional arrangements under the Paris Agreement** will further strengthen the work on loss and damage as the problem evolves, with the Warsaw Mechanism providing the foundation for this.
- Reflecting in the Paris Agreement that the need for additional financial and technical means to address occurring loss and damage should be provided based on countries’ responsibilities and respective capacities, primarily by those who have contributed the most to the problem.
- Agreeing that the Warsaw Mechanism will continue its work beyond the planned review in 2016, and strengthen its role particularly with regard to promoting financial instruments (through the establishment of a financial panel).
- Promoting additional concrete action and frameworks that assist the poorest and most vulnerable in facing loss and damage (e.g. the development of schemes that redress affected populations, adequate pro-poor regional insurance approaches, frameworks on climate-induced displacement etc).

Climate change is a life-or-death issue in Somaliland, as extreme weather is becoming ever more common. CARE has improved the water system in the Xaaxi village, ensuring that people have access to clean water. Photo: CARE/Johanna Mitscherlich
3. Protect the food and nutrition security of the poorest, marginalised and most vulnerable people

The world faces a greater challenge today than perhaps ever before: tackling hunger and malnutrition in the face of a changing climate and increasing natural resource scarcity. Civil society, governments, researchers, donors, and the private sector are trying to find solutions, but the dominant narrative currently over-emphasises food production, as discussed in a recent report by CARE and partners.xiv

In a changing climate, agriculture and food systems must be both sustainable and productive. But our efforts cannot end there: they must be profitable for those whose livelihoods depend on them; they must be equitable, to facilitate a level-playing field in the market, to secure rights to resources for food producers, and to ensure access to nutritious food for all; and they must be resilient to build the capacity of populations vulnerable to economic shocks, political instability, and natural hazards to recover and lift themselves out of poverty.

Changes in climate have severe effects on agriculture and all aspects of food and nutrition security. Recent projections show that global warming could reduce agricultural production by 2% every decade for the rest of the century.xv Climate change also affects the quality and price of food, as well as access to safe water. By 2080, changes in climate could lead to an additional 600 million people going hungry.xvi Although agriculture and other land uses emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases, governments must ensure that measures to cut emissions – as well as those to adapt to climate impacts – also protect livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and the rights of food producers.

In Paris, governments should adequately address this challenge and:

- Adopt provisions in the Paris Agreement, which ensure that climate actions protect poor people’s food and nutrition security and do not undermine it, and commit to apply this immediately.
- Decide to start (in 2016) developing principles and guidelines for environmental/social safeguards, which must be in place before the start of the new agreement, to protect and promote food security, land rights, and the environmental integrity of natural ecosystems.
- Step up efforts (in 2016) to increase the climate resilience of food systems, and of small-scale food producers in particular, and share experience in the near-term, including through community-based adaptation actions, supported by climate finance, promoting the integration of climate risks in agricultural planning, and making good use of the UNFCCC work programme on agriculture.

If we are to achieve the new Global Goal for Sustainable Development on ending hunger by 2030, we must address the underlying inequalities in food systems.

Norma Castillo in Shullcas, Peru, plants trees as part of a restoration project through the Impact of Rapid Glacier Retreat in the Tropical Andes Project. Photo: CARE/Ana Castañeda Cano
4. Massively scale up financial support for poorer countries and communities, and especially for vulnerable and marginalised people

Climate change impacts result in significant additional costs, particularly for the most vulnerable countries and communities. Scientists estimate that the costs are currently at about 75-100 billion US dollars per year in developing countries, and this figure could be even higher as not all impacts are covered by recent studies. These amounts will likely further surge in the next decades as climate impacts evolve. However, the level of global warming makes a difference. For a temperature increase scenario of 4°C by the end of the century, adaptation costs are expected to be significantly higher already in the next decades than for a 2°C scenario. Residual damage costs increase further in the case of inadequate adaptation.

Even though the international community cannot cover all of these costs, developed countries have an obligation to assist poorer nations in meeting the costs of adaptation enshrined in the UN climate convention. The pledge from developed countries to mobilise 100 billion US dollars by 2020 for climate action in developing countries has, despite some progress, not yet led to a sufficiently strong shift towards more predictable and reliable public finance (as part of overall greater investment in climate action).

If governments will not be able to provide the required level of funding to support all climate action, they should not rely on the private sector to secure the bulk of the necessary funding. It is only by scaling up their own financial commitments that governments will trigger additional finance, including from the private sector.

There are some positive developments as adaptation finance is more significant today than a few years ago.
Half of the pledged 100 billion US dollars for the new Green Climate Fund will go to adaptation. There is also increasing awareness that many developing countries already undertake adaptation measures on their own, expressed, for example, in the INDCs or National Adaptation Plans. Furthermore, a number of development finance institutions are now integrating climate risks into their portfolios, making investments more climate-resistant.

Nevertheless, there are significant shortfalls. For example, there are two climate funds under the UNFCCC – the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Adaptation Fund – that have a long list of projects that could be implemented immediately, but need to be pipelined as no money is available. But there is no clarity on the level of climate finance in upcoming years. At the same time, evidence shows that adaptation projects often have significant other development benefits as it helps making development more resilient. Thus, there is a triple burden undermining development progress: higher costs with higher temperatures, higher losses, and foregone development benefits due to inadequate adaptation.

The Paris Agreement must be instrumental in raising additional finance, in particular to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people, based on the commitments under the UNFCCC, while also initiating a broader shift of investments towards climate resilience. In Paris, countries should:

- **Prioritise international adaptation finance** for the poorest and most vulnerable people, communities and countries.
- **Establish in the Paris Agreement** a process for regularly updated **public finance support targets** separated for mitigation and adaptation, provided by developed countries and complemented by other similarly capable countries. This should be based on identified needs in poorer countries, taking into account the projected temperature increase, as well as the 1.5°C limit, and building on the 100 billion US dollar-commitment as the floor. This can ensure greater predictability and accountability.
- **Implement measures in a pro-poor manner** that put a real price on carbon to generate additional funds, for example through contributions from international air and sea transport that could generate significant additional resources. The Paris Agreement could promote this through a specific work programme starting in 2016.
- **Commit to shift (finance and policy) to investments** that are climate-resilient and consistent with a pathway towards keeping global warming below 1.5°C, respecting environmental and social safeguards.

Climate change is predicted to hundreds of millions of people at risk of hunger, especially women and children. Manju B.K and Sobha B.K work with the rest of their family to plant millet seeds in their field in Mulpani VDC, Dhading District, Nepal. Photo: CARE/Brian Sokol.
5. Ensure that actions to tackle climate change advance gender equality and human rights

Climate change is not just an environmental issue; it is fast becoming the greatest human rights challenge of our time. People living in poverty, who have done the least to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions that trigger global warming, are worst affected by climate change impacts and have the fewest resources to cope with them. For women and girls who live in poor conditions or who belong to vulnerable groups, gender inequality often exacerbates threats from climate change by restricting their access to and control over resources, or by limiting their options to act in the face of risks and uncertainties. Overall, gender inequality is a widespread, persistent barrier to securing a world of hope, tolerance and social justice.

CARE believes that tackling climate change and reducing gender inequality are central to building a fair and sustainable world where all realise human rights.

While there has been significant progress in raising attention on gender disparities under the UNFCCC, discussions have mostly focused on the composition of governance bodies, with a recently ever-increasing gender imbalance and a growing majority of men. It is worth noting that the Lima work programme on gender adopted at COP20 began addressing key content issues, such as gender in mitigation, and will focus on gender in adaptation in 2016.

The transition to low-carbon economy and resilient communities provides an opportunity to address climate change while promoting human rights and gender equality. A human rights perspective provides a holistic picture of the connections between the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of the problem, strengthens the long-term effectiveness of climate action, and builds public support for such actions. Under human rights law, states have obligations to protect those whose rights are affected by climate change, with a priority on groups that are particularly vulnerable.
Including references to human rights and gender equality in the Paris Agreement would reinforce existing obligations under the UNFCCC and those provided under ratified international human rights treaties. By extension, the UNFCCC, through the Cancún Agreements in 2010, the Human Rights Council, and various resolutions, has already recognised that countries must ensure that their responses to climate change do not violate human rights. A significant number of countries have highlighted in their INDCs the need to include human rights and gender equality as guiding principles for climate action. By focusing on empowerment, participation and transparency, a human rights-based approach to climate change can help mobilise the society for sustainable solutions. Basic human rights, such as the right to participation in decision-making, increase support for and public ownership of climate policies.

COP21 is a crucial opportunity to establish a new framework for climate action that tackles discrimination, exclusion, and inequality, and guarantees the participation of all individuals potentially impacted, in particular those marginalised and most vulnerable, in the climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes designed to help them. The 2030 Action Agenda for Sustainable Development sends a strong message regarding the necessity to adopt an integrated approach to sustainable development.

In Paris, governments should:

- Include in the Paris Agreement an operational recognition of human rights – including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality and full and equal participation of women, a just transition, and food security – as key guiding principles for climate action.
- Ensure that such principles apply to all climate action, including initiatives planned under the Lima Paris Action Agenda.
- Commit to promote the implementation of these principles from now on and after 2020 when the agreement will come into force, and track their progress, including in international climate funds through a UNFCCC work programme.
Endnotes


v http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/sb/eng/inf01.pdf

vi See e.g. the CARE co-hosted website http://www.1o5C.org


viii Report from Arabella Advisors released on September 22, 2015, shows that more than 400 institutions and 2,000 individuals have pledged to divest from fossil fuels, topping USD 2.6 trillion. These commitments include governments and investors from 43 countries and multiple sectors, including pension funds, health, education, philanthropy, faith, entertainment, climate justice and municipalities.

ix See e.g. Climate Action Tracker, ranking Australia, Canada, Japan, Indonesia as “inadequate”, and EU, India, Norway, USA (amongst others) as “medium”


xix By late September 2014, developed countries were expected to set out how they plan to scale up their contributions. A few weeks after that deadline, only the EU and New Zealand had made submissions. Both submissions substantially lack clarity regarding the scaling-up of finance, particularly public finance, between now and 2020.

xx This may also result, over time, in decreasing support for specific purposes such as mitigation, where costs steadily decrease.

xxi See e.g. CIEL/CARE, 2015 : Climate change: tackling the human rights challenge of our time. http://careclimatechange.org/publications/human-rights-climate-change/


xxiii http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/06.pdf


Founded in 1945, CARE is a leading humanitarian organisation fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. In 90 countries around the world, CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. To learn more about CARE’s work on climate change, visit www.careclimatechange.org