COP31: Climate promises mean little without funding reaching communities, CARE warns

3 November 2026 – As climate disasters intensify, CARE International calls on world leaders gathering for COP31 to turn years of promises into concrete financial commitments. The widening gap between pledges and delivery is leaving vulnerable communities dangerously exposed, particularly women and girls, who are disproportionately affected.

Across the world, climate disasters are striking with growing ferocity: glaciers melt, rivers burst their banks, fields turn to dust, forests go up in flames, and storms tear through homes and livelihoods. Yet the money available to help communities adapt to safeguard their homes, crops and water supplies remains far below what is needed. While developing countries are estimated to need between $310 billion and $365 billion annually for adaptation by 2035, according to the UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2025, the commitment made at COP30 to triple adaptation finance by 2035 remains far below those needs, with no clear plan for delivering the money.

"Farmers need water, families need protection from floods -communities need the resources to secure their livelihoods as temperatures rise. Yet the finance needed to make this possible remains woefully inadequate. Governments have spent years negotiating targets and making commitments. At COP31, the focus must shift from promises to delivery: how much finance will be provided especially towards adaptation action, when it will arrive and, crucially, whether it will reach the communities who need it most in a form they can easily access," said Marlene Achoki, Global Climate Justice Policy and Advocacy Lead at CARE International.

CARE is urging wealthy countries to set out credible plans to deliver the $300 billion annual climate finance goal agreed at COP29, including at least $120 billion a year for adaptation by 2035.

How climate finance is distributed is as important as the amount pledged. CARE is calling for a clear plan showing when and how the money will be delivered, with funding provided primarily through grants rather than loans that push already vulnerable countries deeper into debt. Complex application procedures and limited access to international funds also frequently prevent local organisations from securing support, even when they are best placed to respond.

Women are particularly affected by these barriers. Although they often play a leading role in food production, water management and community resilience, they frequently have less access to land, finance and decision-making power. CARE International helps communities adapt to climate change, with women at the forefront of solutions: in Vietnam, women farmers are adapting poultry production to changing weather conditions; in Kenya, they are adopting climate-smart farming practices and diversifying incomes; and in Bangladesh, solar energy helps women expand their businesses and livelihoods.

Communities cannot adjust to worsening climate impacts without decisive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the COP28 commitment to transition away from fossil fuels, emissions remain far above levels compatible with the 1.5°C goal. CARE is urging governments to strengthen their 2035 climate plans, accelerate the shift to renewable energy and end public financing for new fossil fuel expansion, while ensuring a fair transition that protects workers and communities and creates opportunities for women.

“Global temperatures are set to overshoot 1.5°C in the coming years, making an ‘overshoot, peak and decline’ trajectory our best remaining option. In Bangladesh, we see what is at stake: mangroves protect coastal families from storms, while solar power helps women earn a living after sunset, in areas with no or limited grid connections. But these solutions cannot keep pace with unchecked warming. Every fraction of a degree means more lives and livelihoods at risk. Governments must move away from fossil fuels, protect vital ecosystems and

invest in a just clean energy transition to bring warming back to 1.5°C or below by the end of the century," said Mrityunjoy Das, Deputy Director, Humanitarian and Resilient Futures Program at CARE Bangladesh.

For many communities, climate impacts have already exceeded the limits of adaptation. Yet the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage remains critically underfunded, with just $822 million pledged and only $448 million paid in, against estimated needs of around $400 billion annually. CARE International calls on wealthy countries to urgently scale up predictable, public and predominantly grant-based finance to help vulnerable communities recover from irreversible climate impacts.

"There are limits to adaptation. You can prepare for floods and droughts, but you cannot bring back lives lost or restore everything destroyed. Communities cannot be left to shoulder the consequences of a crisis they least contributed to create. The devastating floods in Nepal are a stark reminder that, for many communities, climate change is no longer a question of adapting to future risks. Lives have been lost, homes destroyed and livelihoods swept away. No amount of adaptation can undo these losses. Communities, women-led organizations, Indigenous peoples and local governments must have decision-making power over climate investments and recovery efforts. Climate-vulnerable countries should not be forced into further debt to address a crisis they did not create. We are not asking for charity; we are asking for climate justice," said Mona Sherpa, Country Director at CARE Nepal.

As Parties are heading to Antalya, CARE is urging governments to move beyond announcing ambitions and demonstrate how existing commitments will translate into financial support, stronger climate policies and measurable improvements in people's lives.

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Media contact:
Monica Ellena, ellena@careinternational.org, Cell / Signal +44 7876 277 898
CARE International experts are available for interviews in Antalya during COP31.

Notes to Editors

- The UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Limiting Overshoot Report 2026 warns that the world is no longer on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C, underscores the urgency of accelerating emissions reductions, as every fraction of a degree of additional warming increases the risks of extreme weather, food insecurity, displacement and irreversible climate damage.
- The UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2025 calculated that the cost of adaptation finance needed in low- and middle-income countries is $310 billion per year in 2035, when based on modelled costs. When based on extrapolated needs expressed in Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans, this figure rises to $365 billion a year.
- CARE International's COP31 position paper, *From Promise to Delivery: Scaling Up Adaptation Finance for Those Most at Risk*, is available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish.

About CARE International

CARE International is a leading humanitarian and development organization fighting global poverty and inequality, with a particular focus on women and girls. CARE works with communities and local partners to respond to humanitarian crises and to strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacities to the effects of climate change.