



Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of
UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP
3 June 2022

BACKGROUND NOTE

An integrated approach towards sustainable investment in People and Planet: Leaving no one behind (LNOB) as a principle for Climate Action to ensure a transformative path for the most vulnerable

1. Introduction

The world is in crisis and at a crossroads. Last year¹, the Joint Meeting of the Boards (JMB) considered it was facing the greatest threat to development in a generation as COVID-19 ravaged already fragile health systems and de-stabilized social and economic progress². Today, the war in Ukraine and protracted conflicts across the world are ‘supercharging’ these pre-existing vulnerabilities and exacerbating the planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation by further undermining people’s food and energy security and welfare³. Half of the least developed and other low-income countries were already at high risk of debt distress even before the pandemic.⁴ With a few exceptions, employment and output will typically remain below pre-pandemic trends through 2026. However, these pressures should not prevent governments from prioritizing spending with well-targeted support for the vulnerable—including refugees, those struggling because of commodity price spikes, and those affected by the pandemic.⁵

Simultaneously, climate change and its impacts are intensifying these conditions and jeopardising hard-won human development gains, worsening inequalities and triggering displacement and conflict. The latest [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) WGII report](#) has warned us that human-induced climate change has caused widespread losses and damages to nature and people, with the most vulnerable communities and systems disproportionately affected. Combined, these conditions have created a perfect storm that threatens to tip millions more people into poverty, thus threatening the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and foundational principle to **Leave No One Behind (LNOB)**.

The multiple, overlapping shocks and impacts are exacerbating rising inequalities ‘within’ and ‘between’ the countries and propelling the vulnerable further into poverty. By 2030, up to two-thirds of the world’s extreme poor are expected to live in countries characterized by fragility, conflict, violence, and high levels of disaster risk. Currently, 50% of the world’s population does not have access to even one social protection benefit; less than half of the global population has access to essential healthcare services; respectively, 2.2 billion and 4.2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water and sanitation⁶. Globally, income inequality is at record highs, with the top 10% earning more than half of the world’s

¹ 2021 JMB Background Note - https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/5396/file/2021-JMB-Background_note-EN-2021.05.24.pdf

² https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/5396/file/2021-JMB-Background_note-EN-2021.05.24.pdf

³ UN Secretary-General’s [Global Crisis Response Group](#), 2022

⁴ While about 90% of advanced economies are expected to regain their pre-pandemic per capita income levels by the end of 2022, only a third of emerging market and developing economies are expected to do the same

⁵ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2022/04/19/world-economic-outlook-april-2022>

⁶ The United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, United Nations publication issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.



income. At the same time, 759 million people still lack access to any form of electricity, with most living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Population groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion are at greater risk of experiencing adverse effects from crises and inequalities. For example, women's dependence on and unequal access to land, water, and other natural resources and productive assets means that they are also disproportionately affected by climate change and disasters, leading to higher poverty and mortality rates⁷. Similarly, the lack of land rights places the livelihoods of *Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)* at greater risk, especially considering indigenous peoples manage around 25% of the earth's territory, containing 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity (90% of IPLC lands are carbon sinks).⁸ IPCC report states that "women and children are also at greater risk of experiencing climate change and conflict". Climate change has exacerbated malnutrition, especially among women, pregnant women, and indigenous populations. Children are most impacted. Almost half (48%) of children in low-income countries are in extreme poverty versus 5% of children in upper-middle-income countries. Currently, 1 billion children live in countries at an 'extremely high risk' from climate change (nearly half of the world's children).

Food systems bear critical responsibility for the nutritional quality, safety, affordability, and sustainability of children's diets. However, food systems often fail to account for children and adolescents' special dietary and nutritional needs when determining what foods need to be produced, processed, packaged and marketed. Today's food systems are driving pervasive undernutrition – both stunting and wasting – widespread micronutrient deficiencies, and rising rates of overweight, obesity and diet-related diseases among children and adolescents, whilst also being the single largest pressure on the environment. Globally, millions of children and adolescents do not benefit from diets that support healthy development. More than two in three (72 per cent) children aged 6–23 months are not fed even the minimum diverse diet needed to grow and develop.

Furthermore, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected women and girls and threaten to push back recent progress and further entrench persistent gender inequalities. Women are 24% more likely than men to lose their employment as they assume care responsibilities, even though women are overrepresented in essential work such as the health or cleaning sectors.⁹ **Likewise, women's dependence on and unequal access to land, water, and other natural resources and productive assets mean that they are disproportionately affected by climate change.** Women's capacities to withstand and recover from disasters are also strongly affected by gender inequalities.¹⁰ Only 17% of mothers and children in the poorest fifth of households in low- and lower-middle-income countries received at least six out of the seven basic maternal and child health interventions, compared to 74% for the wealthiest fifth of households.¹¹

⁷ https://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/climate_change/downloads/Women_and_Climate_Change_Factsheet.pdf

⁸ IPCC, 2022

⁹ UNDP's Gender Social Norms Index

¹⁰ Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); UN-Women, 2022

¹¹ World Health Organization, 'World Bank and WHO: Half the world lacks access to essential health services, 100 million still pushed into extreme poverty because of health expenses', Tokyo, December 2017, <https://www.who.int/news/item/13-12-2017-world-bankand-who-half-the-world-lacks-access-to-essential-health-services-100-million-still-pushed-into-extreme-poverty-because-of-healthexpenses>, accessed 19 July 2021.



LNOB-led development approaches require systemic solutions that address these multi-dimensional vulnerabilities and risks and link environmental and social investments in People and the Planet.¹² The most recent IPCC report shows that countries face a ‘now or never’ moment to take decisive climate action, emphasising sustainable economic development, climate change, and social vulnerability, including in crisis contexts. As the report underscores, climate action and responses interact with social justice and progress. Inclusive, participatory decision-making and implementation are critical to addressing differential impacts and inequities in responses, and climate action contribute to SDGs, Leaving No One Behind. The [2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review \(QCPR\)](#) also reinforces the interconnectedness of addressing climate change and peoples’ needs, specifically those most at risk, through improved policy and innovative approaches, partnerships, and financing opportunities. Scaled-up public and private finance are urgently needed to close mitigation and adaptation gaps amounting to over \$5 trillion per year through 2030.¹³ However, climate change-driven actions must accompany long-term development strategies to ensure adequate social protection and support for health, education, skills training, affordable clean energy access and security, and resilient infrastructure and services.¹⁴

The impact of climate change can often be felt most severely in conflict-affected and highly fragile contexts, which lack necessary investments and suffer high vulnerability. Thus, ensuring access to climate finance is critical to supporting communities in the most vulnerable contexts. Similarly, amid the worsening climate crisis, the international aid system is overstretched and cannot respond adequately to humanitarian needs. More than ever, there is a greater need for strengthened partnerships between humanitarian, development and peace actors to address root causes and avoid the protracted and recurrent nature of humanitarian crises. By implementing integrated programs for climate action, we can join efforts to most effectively achieve our shared goal of leaving no one behind.

2. Challenges and approaches for Climate Action, LNOB – Food Security, Energy, and Health

The climate crisis, along with political conflict and disputes over land and natural resources, is driving displacement and migration, higher rates of poverty and inequality, and food insecurity, malnutrition, and hunger, which disproportionately impact the poorest, most vulnerable children and women. In 2020, climate extremes were the predominant driver for acute hunger in 15 countries, affecting 16 million people and internally displacing 30 million people. By 2050, this number could rise to 216 million people. Slow onset events and increased climate variability also push people from chronic to acute food insecurity. In the top 20 countries that are the most vulnerable to climate change, and the least able to adapt, 12 are in conflict.

Population growth, expected to reach 9 billion people by 2050, will add to the challenge, requiring an estimated 70% increase in food production. With most of this growth happening in cities in developing countries and LDCs, the provision of resilient infrastructure services and systems for growing urban populations is intrinsically linked to the LNOB principle. By 2030, nearly two-thirds of people will live in

¹² The CSW 66 The Commission emphasizes the mutually reinforcing relationship among achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full, effective, and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.]

¹³ WRI, et. al., 2021

¹⁴ Infrastructure is responsible for 79% of all greenhouse gas emissions, and 88% of all adaptation costs. Infrastructure also influences 92% of all targets across the SDGs. Therefore, unless we get our infrastructure planning, development and management right, we will fail in achieving the SDGs, exacerbate climate change and lock the world in an unsustainable development trajectory increasing the risk of leaving vulnerable populations yet further behind.



cities, with 60% under the age of 18. Urban vulnerable populations in informal settlements, especially women and girls, are disproportionately affected by climate due to the lack of access to infrastructures, such as clean water and sanitation, sustainable energy, and affordable and resilient housing.

Climate-related shocks and stressors also undermine the stability of infrastructure systems and their ability to operate and provide essential services, including energy and health services, for communities, especially for the most vulnerable. Climate change can push more than 100 million people into poverty by 2030, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia¹⁵. In those fragile contexts, access gaps to public services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, health services and electricity are most acute, where resource competition and inequality are likely to drive instability and conflict.¹⁶ Today, 1 billion people, including 350 million children, live in slums and informal settlements. Urban vulnerable populations in informal settlements, especially women and girls, are disproportionately affected by climate due to the lack of access to infrastructures, such as clean water and sanitation, sustainable energy, and resilient housing.

COVID-19 reinforced the special case of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). While developing and developed countries worldwide are experiencing economic shocks, the magnitude of impact for most SIDS is unparalleled. It also exacerbates SIDS' exposure and, thus, their vulnerability to other ongoing risks from climate change which are projected to worsen in the coming decade. Development challenges faced by SIDS include structural constraints, such as lack of economic diversification, need for social protection and inclusion, fiscal constraints, heavy indebtedness, and barriers to full integration into the global economy. At the same time, SIDS are among the world's most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The SIDS closely and urgently feel the brunt of intensified extreme-weather events, rising sea levels and ocean acidification. These impacts are exacerbated by the degradation and depletion of natural capital, which sustain livelihoods and the economy.

Globally, an estimated 1 billion people rely on healthcare facilities without electricity, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 70% of healthcare facilities lack reliable electricity. An equitable and fair transition to clean energy is also imperative to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement since fossil fuels account for 70% of global emissions.

Investment in climate-resilient development, including social and physical infrastructure, is urgently needed at scale and should be rights-focused, gender-transformative and people-centred, considerate of the rights and aspirations of key populations, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. **LNOB approaches to climate action and resilience also must respond to and address differential impacts across vulnerable groups.** This includes women and girls, children, people with disabilities, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, and communities affected by poverty, displacement, discrimination, and adversity. Additionally, people facing humanitarian crises are particularly at risk of multidimensional impacts of climate change and lack of infrastructure services. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) emphasizes the empowerment of women and girls as also essential in promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies. This is also essential in enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions

¹⁵ World Bank, 'Climate: What we know', <<https://ida.worldbank.org/theme/climate>>, accessed 6 May 2021.

¹⁶ Fantini C., Morgan G, Kumar S, Adeoti T, Reese A, Schouten P, Crosskey S & O'Regan N.' Infrastructure for Peacebuilding: The role of infrastructure in tackling the underlying drivers of fragility', UNOPS, Copenhagen, Denmark.



UNOPS



everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all. It recognizes that women and girls play a vital role as agents of change for sustainable development.

National climate policies play a key role in determining equitable responses to climate change, including plans for building adaptive capacities and resilience to ensure No One is Left Behind. For example, a review of the inclusion of gender in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) identified significant gaps in critical sectors such as disaster risk reduction (DRR), adequate systems to ensure continued agency of women and girls, agriculture, and climate finance.¹⁷ The [Climate Promise](#), delivered in partnership with 35 global organizations across and beyond the UN system, is supporting over 120 countries to strengthen their NDCs. Through both mitigation and adaptation efforts that build political will and societal ownership at national and sub-national levels. Among these, 105 countries emphasize the importance of child protection and resilience, 90% of all countries prioritise clean energy access and transition to meet the Paris Agreement, 61% support sustainable agriculture, and 91% of LDCs and SIDS raised mitigation ambition and 97% raised adaptation ambition.

National statistical offices, monitoring systems, and data infrastructure can also strengthen countries' ability to monitor the impacts of climate change to ensure that No One is Left Behind. Climate-related vulnerability assessments and actions must be informed by disaggregated population data - including the location, characteristics, and mobility of populations in places exposed to climatic hazards - to enable evidence-based early warning and contribute to countries' National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). For instance, geospatial data and analysis map population vulnerability and identify health service gaps and required investments in health facilities, personnel, and other supplies. Foundational data infrastructure is also crucial in enabling access to and sharing innovations between and within SIDS. This includes national open data portals where spatial data infrastructures and data communities are being enabled through digital tools, open data, capacity-building workshops, training curriculums, and finance mechanisms. Investments in data infrastructure are also necessary to use advances in machine intelligence and computational analytics. Such investments must be made in parallel with the ongoing digital transformation and clean energy transition, as promoted in the SIDS.

Social protection, including safety nets, is essential as price shocks for food and energy, driven by multiple crises, ripple across the poorest nations, communities and most vulnerable groups, including IPLCs and children.¹⁸ The criticality of social protection measures has become increasingly evident in supporting health and basic services, food and energy security, and nutrition while enabling households to cope, absorb and bounce back from shocks. Due to COVID-19 and other socio-economic factors, the government budgets are contracted, risking many social protection efforts and programmes remaining underfunded. Some LDCs also experience a significant liquidity crisis with extremely limited lending opportunities, especially to farming communities. It is critical to provide financial tools¹⁹ such as cash transfers and insurance to catalyse public and private funding to support recovery and resilience. Public

¹⁷ Including the review commissioned by UNFPA, "[Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in National Climate Policy: A Review of 50 Nationally Determined Contribution Documents](#)".

¹⁸ 107 developing countries are vulnerable to at least one dimension of the Ukraine crisis and 69 countries are affected by triple food, energy and debt vulnerabilities, UN Secretary-General's Global Crisis Group, May 2022.

¹⁹ Certain financial instruments - such as the ones governing international climate finance - have a bias on non-fragile and 'investable' settings, while the most vulnerable communities live in situations of high fragility and do not have access to these instruments: <https://www.undp.org/publications/climate-finance-sustaining-peace-making-climate-finance-work-conflict-affected-and>).



and private finance mechanisms also must be geared towards more seamless access to finance by the land users and rural communities to grow sustainable agribusinesses and improve their financial inclusion. UN entities supporting the [Financing for Development under the COVID-19](#) initiative propose integrating climate change and inclusive social and economic development within national budgets to encourage enhanced sustainable investment and alignment. This further ensures that these policy commitments are costed and financed from domestic or international sources.

Equitable access to modern, affordable, sustainable energy is a critical enabler that dramatically improves the quality, accessibility and reliability of essential social services while making these public systems more resilient to the impacts of climate change. It also aids in advancing the SDGs and reducing multidimensional poverty. Energy transformation and shift towards renewable sources are also important for low carbon agriculture technologies (i.e., irrigation) and facilities (i.e., storage). Smart energy solutions could also be promoted by providing easier access to financial support, particularly for women-led enterprises and MSME development. Inclusive energy access is also key to ensuring continuity of quality services for maternity and reproductive health and basic amenities like cooling, ventilation, digital connectivity, and clean and hot water.

Mainstreaming climate resilience into health policy, planning, and systems is critical to addressing the combined impacts of climate and health crises, especially safeguarding the safety and security of the most vulnerable. For example, incorporating indicators of climate stress linked to major health impacts, including sexual and reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health, and using early warning reduce the impacts of climate hazards. Ensuring a functional protection system that can prevent and respond to gender-based violence as climate-related stresses on livelihoods, security of place, mental health, and other factors grow is also vital to resilience at household, community, and societal levels. Integrated approaches to health systems and service delivery can likewise be a catalyst for equity, poverty reduction and resilience. There is a further need for a transformational shift towards more support for locally-led action to conserve, manage and restore nature, where finance and decision-making power is shifted to the local level to support local solutions and implementation.

The combined planetary and food, health, energy, and financial crises decelerate development progress and accelerate humanitarian needs. Urgent solutions that mitigate the avoidable risks to people and the planet and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities are required. Thus, governments and the private sector urgently need to direct adequate investment in social and physical infrastructure so that **No One is Left Behind**.

2.1 Joint actions for Agriculture and Food Security

JMB entities support numerous interventions that address the interrelation between the planetary crises, conflict, and human development, especially affecting the most vulnerable.²⁰ The multidimensional crises confronting countries demand comprehensive and integrated solutions that ensure *No One is Left Behind*. **Below are examples of joint and integrated work, including among JMB entities and across the UN system - such as with ILO, WHO, UNEP, and FAO, among others—implemented in partnership with Governments, Civil Society Organizations, NGOs, and communities.**

²⁰ An analysis by UNICEF of NDCs submitted prior to COP26, revealed that only 34% of the 103 submitted new and updated NDCs address the needs and priorities of children. Likewise, a UNFPA analysis of 50 national climate policies and NDCs indicate that only 6 reference sexual and reproductive health and only one policy references gender-based violence, despite these being central needs for women and girls.



Transforming our food systems is among the most powerful ways to progress toward all SDGs. Over 70% of the global food supply comes from only 12 plants and five animal species. Just three (rice, maize, wheat) make up nearly 60% of calories from plants in the entire human diet. The current crises have exposed the need for diversified food systems and agricultural livelihoods, particularly in declining agricultural productivity, which aggravates food insecurity and wider threats to human development and is compounded by climate change and the degradation of land and ecosystem services.

Supporting smallholder farmers, especially women and indigenous populations, is critical to maintaining genetic agricultural diversity and sustainability by incorporating their traditional knowledge. Nature-based solutions, especially with the participation of women, indigenous people and their knowledge, are also critical to ensure a fair and equitable transition to food systems through equitable land rights and access to assets. As key users and custodians of natural resources, women in rural areas and indigenous peoples play a crucial role in conserving and managing surrounding environments to provide food, medicine, and fuel for their families. Further data collection on women's farming practices that considers their traditional knowledge is key for successfully adopting more sustainable agricultural practices.²¹

- [The UN entities' work on food systems for children](#) focuses on improving children's foods through policy, guidelines, and supply chains; food environments through policies and programmes and private sector products and practices; and food practices through behavioural change and social practices.
- The Agencies also fully consider and support customary land rights, especially among local and indigenous populations that traditionally act as stewards of their land and surrounding natural resources. For example, in **Timor Leste**, all community interventions fully regard local Tara Bandu customary land ownership and stewardship laws.
- In **Nepal**, the main beneficiaries of interventions are the indigenous populations. Livelihood development fully regards secured access to natural resources, such as forests and forestry products, by empowering community forestry groups and developing forestry products value chains.

JMB entities support diversified farming systems and approaches for greater biodiversity, livelihoods and food and nutrition security.

- For example, in **Suriname**, Agencies are working to establish financing solutions to address the financing constraints to pineapple value chains to increase the productivity and income of smallholder farmers in an environmentally sustainable manner, generating income for women indigenous communities.
- **The Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture (SCALA)** programme supports **12 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America** to translate their NDCs and/or NAPs into actionable, transformative and gender-responsive climate solutions in land-use and agriculture with multi-stakeholder engagement.
- In **El Salvador**, female farmers are being supported to establish and manage nurseries for agroforestry development and resilient agriculture. Agencies are also supporting El Salvador with the diversification of seeds that are resilient to the variability and promote agroforestry, pastoral systems that have improved soil regeneration and water retention, as well as working to address

²¹ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/35ec6754-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/35ec6754-en>



gender gaps in social protection, including by supporting costed action plans following review of social protection programmes and care systems.

- In Bilwi, **Nicaragua**, agencies worked together to ensure that children, adolescents and their families have safe and equitable access to safe water. Multiple hurricanes disrupted the access to water and sanitation for thousands of people in the region, particularly in schools and health centers, in 2020. In response, agencies carried out a study to assess solutions for the rehabilitation of the potable water system of Nuevo Amanecer regional hospital. The hospital treats 65,000 patients annually.
- In **Ecuador**, the [GCF-funded REDD+ Results-Based Payments Project \(PPR\)](#) promotes sustainable production systems and the restoration of deforested and degraded areas by providing direct payments to landowners who conserve native forests and other vital ecosystems. This is an example of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), where transfers are conditional on environmental outcomes.
- In the **Arab region**, the UN inter-agency **Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on food security, climate change, and the environment** supports multi-stakeholder regional dialogues, knowledge products, and other interventions to strengthen the sector's resilience and production capacity.
- The new **"Supporting Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security and Climate Adaptation in Yemen"** joint programme aims to reduce vulnerability and strengthen the resilience of crisis-affected communities. This is achieved through creating sustainable livelihoods and improving climate resilience, food security, and solar solutions for displaced and conflict-affected communities.
- **34 Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** have advanced policy, planning and national interventions ranging from ecological sanitation to watershed management to groundwater protection. A series of Climate Change Adaptation projects have assisted local communities in maintaining, diversifying and improving access to water for domestic and other uses, for example, through the [Supporting Vulnerable Communities in the Maldives to Manage Climate Change-Induced Water Shortages](#) project.

Social protection is key to protecting rural livelihoods, food security and nutrition and helping the most vulnerable cope with shocks and crises.

- For example, in the **Sahel**, Agencies are supporting shock responsive social protection systems with nutrition and child-sensitive explicit objectives in an area with cyclical drought-related impacts.²²
- Additionally, the **InsuResilience Global Partnership** supports access to climate and disaster risk finance and insurance across 324 projects in [108](#) countries.
- In **Mongolia**, the government is being supported to design a climate-adaptive social protection system to support households with severe winters; the climate adaptive child grant (which covers nearly 97% of children in Mongolia) was leveraged as a delivery system for the government's COVID-19 response.²³
- In **Bangladesh**, early warning data is being deployed to transfer cash to 145,000 poor, vulnerable people at risk of flooding during the monsoon season, enabling beneficiaries to buy food and medicine, fortify homesteads, and protect critical assets.²⁴

²² <https://www.unicef.org/wca/building-resilience-sahel>

²³ UNICEF (2021). *Half a billion US dollars leveraged for children in Mongolia during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Available here: <https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/stories/half-billion-us-dollars-leveraged-children-mongolia-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

²⁴ These investments reduced humanitarian response costs in the affected area by 50%, WFP, 2020



- In **Uganda**, Agencies are supporting smallholder farmers²⁵ and women-headed households to improve agricultural livelihoods, aiming to directly reach 1 million beneficiaries, mostly vulnerable rural poor and women.
- Through the **African Risk Capacity (ARC) Replica sovereign insurance initiative**, 754,000 people in **Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, and the Gambia** have been protected from catastrophic drought hazards 2021.
- **A new fisheries convention came into force and strengthened fisheries management capacity across the 14 Pacific Island Countries** was catalyzed by the long-term partnership with Pacific CROP agencies. As of 2019, all four tuna stocks in the West and Central Pacific, representing half the world's tuna catch, have achieved sustainable use for the first time.
- **Freshwater-specific projects are supported in over 40 countries linked to integrated natural resources management and multidimensional poverty eradication through access to basic services.**

2.2 Joint Actions for Energy and Health Systems and Services

Climate investments, including mitigation and resilience, must promote human development. It is impossible to achieve universal health care and major development goals without electricity. This includes reduced child mortality, improved maternal health, disease treatment and prevention (SDG 3 on Health); inclusive and quality education for all (SDG 4 Education); clean water and sanitation (SDG 6 WASH) and inclusive employment opportunities (SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic growth), among others.

UN Agencies have developed myriad guidance on good practices to directly support communities and countries and strengthen the enabling environment for human-development led investments in food and water security, health (including sexual and reproductive health and rights), education, livelihoods, and sustainable growth.

- For example, the 2021 [High-Level Dialogue on Energy](#), co-convened with inputs across the UN system, illustrated how the energy sector could influence 72 SDG targets across all 17 SDGs (43 per cent)²⁶.
- This includes providing basic services to households and communities, improving overall health, and supporting industrial and economic development and educational services.
- Similarly, the multi-partner Climate Investment Platform (CIP) is facilitating clean energy investments such as wind and solar in [nine SIDS countries](#), to create jobs, advance gender equality, improve the delivery of social services, generate financial savings, enhance economic competitiveness, and make energy systems more resilient to future crises and climate change impacts.
- In the **Caribbean**, 6.2 MW of renewable energy was installed in St. Lucia and four other Caribbean countries, achieving a financial leverage ratio of 1:13, and National Energy Transition Strategies were completed for **St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Belize**.
- **38 SIDS** have gained access to a USD\$500k grant covering water, ecosystem, energy, chemicals and adaptation to implement SDG related actions.

²⁵ An estimated 2.5 billion people are involved in full- or part-time smallholder agriculture and any solution to shifting the food systems towards climate resilient and sustainable pathways won't happen without the smallholder farmers becoming the agents of change and drivers of transformation of rural landscapes; WFP, 2022

²⁶ Thacker S, Adshead D, Morgan G, Crosskey S, Bajpai A, Ceppi P, Hall JW & O'Regan N, Infrastructure: Underpinning Sustainable Development, UNOPS, Copenhagen, Denmark.



Linking social protection and energy access is critical to ensure No One is Left Behind. This combined approach can provide an effective mechanism for delivering clean, affordable, sustainable energy to the poor and ensure access to health and pathways to rebuild agriculture-based livelihoods, including promoting decent work for affected communities and refugees. Such combined interventions can have a multiplier effect. For instance, equitable and fair transitions to environmentally and socially sustainable economies, including providing access to clean energy, water, sanitation, and housing, can drive job creation and poverty eradication²⁷ and reduce the climate risk to children.²⁸

- **For example, in Sudan, the Solar Transformation Programme** aims to scale-up financing for solar energy solutions to increase energy access in rural areas, close the energy gap for poor and crisis-affected communities, and reduce demand for heavily subsidized fossil fuels.
- Other examples of how UN Agencies are supporting governments in facilitating a fair and equitable transition to sustainable and reliable energy access include **the Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in Clean Energy in India, which** promotes sustainable energy access and skills development and entrepreneurship for **women** in clean energy in rural off-grid areas
- The provision of micro-insurance in **Malawi**, which benefited over 65,000 **poor** households with a pay-out of USD\$2.45 million in 2021 – one of the largest microinsurance pay-outs ever recorded in Africa.
- The Agencies are also facilitating access to clean, affordable. Secure energy and clean cookstoves for improved health and humanitarian needs – for example, **the Africa Mini-grid Programme will provide off-grid solar access to poor people in rural areas across 18 countries who today lack any form of electricity**
- The **Health Facility Solar Electrification** will be delivered in partnership with GAVI, aimed at using solar energy to provide universal primary health care, such as in **Kenya**, where 57 rural health centres were rehabilitated by incorporating a range of green technology retrofits and solar powered-solutions, designed to minimize electricity usage and provide access to water services.
- The provision of on-grid solar systems in **Jordan's Za'atari & Azraq Refugee Camps**, helping to meet people's energy, hygiene, and food preservation needs.

Globally, UN entities are supporting climate-resilient, sustainable health care facilities in 56 countries through various renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives. This includes expanding the use of solar power for reliable energy access in vaccine cold chain, electrification, and water supply systems. UN entities are also addressing air pollution, childhood lead exposure and the impact of other environmental toxins on the health of children in 18 countries²⁹.

- UN entities are also working towards strengthening individual and community resilience, building on and scaling up successful models, including supporting sexual and reproductive health integration into climate adaptation interventions. This is achieved, for example, through supporting the CSW's aim to ensure **all women and girls** have full, equal effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in addressing climate change, environmental degradation and disaster risk reduction to achieve sustainable development.

²⁷ The ILO's 2015 Just Transition Guidelines²⁷ towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies provides guidance on how to manage the transition to low carbon economies with consideration to job creation, occupational safety and health, social protection, social dialogue and skills and training.

²⁸ Improved access to resilient WASH services can considerably reduce overall climate risk for 415 million children worldwide.

²⁹ Update of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, pg. 9. Available here:

https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/10696/file/2022-11-Update_IRRF_of_Strategic_Plan_2022-2025-EN-2022.04.25.pdf (2022).



- UN entities are also addressing health aspects of climate adaptation, mitigation, and environmental degradation – for example, through the **Health, Environment and Climate Change Coalition (HECCC)**, a multi-UN and multi-sectoral coalition.
- JMB Agencies and UN partners are working on several joint programmes to unlock the potential of **urban infrastructure to strengthen resilience, mitigate climate change, and alleviate poverty**. For example, **The Solar4Health** programme provides sustainable renewable energy in over 3,000 rural and urban public health facilities in **Liberia, Namibia, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Chad**.

In summary, shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic, protracted conflict, increased poverty and inequality, and the current food, energy and financial crises pose significant threats to advancing the SDGs, climate action and the foundational principle of LNOB. Since poverty, climate change and sustainability are understood as multidimensional phenomena, promoting integrated policy approaches should become a key area focus for UN entities in support of countries' needs and national priorities to ensure an LNOB approach links climate, energy, and health investments with social investment throughout the life course of all people, women and children.

See Annex for further information and examples of joint UN entities' support.