



Beyond Climate
Collaborative

From Vulnerability to Agency: It's Time for Climate Mobility Justice

COP30 Key Messages

November 2025

International School
on **CLIMATE MOBILITIES**

Acknowledgements

Beyond Climate Collaborative (BCC) would like to extend its deepest thanks to all those who have contributed to shaping this policy brief and the collective vision it represents.

Lead authors: Lauren Grant, Gabriela Nagle Alverio, Daniela Alba, and Nida Zehra

This brief draws on key messages developed collaboratively throughout the 2024 and 2025 International School on Climate Mobilities (ISCM), adapted for COP30.

Co-authors of the original key messages include current and former BCC & ISCM team members: Daniella Otte, Caitlin Burrows, Lucia Tremonti, Arzina Lakhani, Jake Clarke, and Labiba Rukhsana.

Additional inputs were generously provided through consultation by the following contributors: Leonardo Torres Llerena, Fanone Tchindebe, Muhammad Arif Goheer, Enock Sangaka Mong'are, and Nizni Hans, along with several contributors who preferred to remain anonymous.

BCC would like to thank all ISCM visiting experts and facilitators, as well as the 2024 and 2024 ISCM cohorts for their invaluable insights and shared commitment to advancing climate mobility justice at the ISCM and beyond. Their ideas, knowledge, wisdom, lived experiences, and collective care have profoundly shaped these key messages, the spirit of this brief, and our shared commitment to advance justice-based, rights-respecting, and self-determined approaches to the intersections of climate-related (im)mobilities.

The order and framing of the messages have been adapted to create a more organic flow between themes, while preserving the integrity and intent of each contribution.

Special thanks to Prashant Kirpalani for his creative collaboration.

November 2025



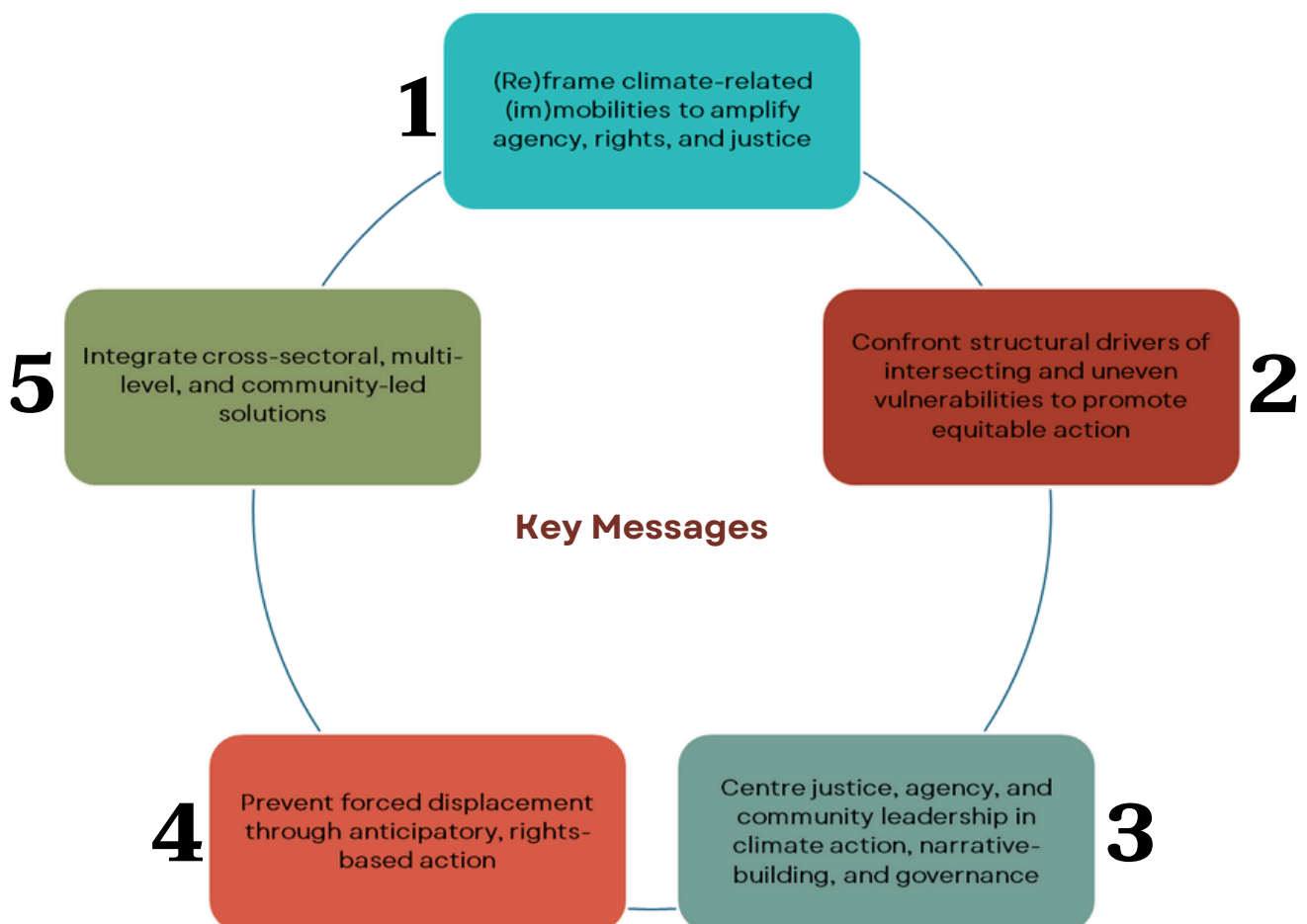
Beyond Climate
Collaborative

Executive Summary

From Vulnerability to Agency: It's Time for Climate Mobility Justice

Climate mobility – encompassing migration, displacement, planned relocation, and immobility – is not simply a challenge to manage; it is a critical site for justice, dignity, and systemic transformation. Human mobility is natural, yet today's climate-related (im)mobilities disproportionately affect those least responsible – often Indigenous, rural, pastoral, and smallholder communities – who also sustain the majority of the world's biodiversity. Historical and structural injustices, including colonial legacies, extractive economies, and exclusionary governance, continue to determine who can move, who must stay, and whose lives are deemed expendable.

This brief calls for a radical rethinking: climate mobility must center the agency, self-determination and knowledge, and leadership of frontline communities. Policies, research, and governance must move beyond crisis narratives, top-down interventions, and technical solutions to embrace reparative, community-led, and intersectional approaches. Mobility and immobility are not problems – they are opportunities to strengthen resilience, restore justice, and transform the systems that perpetuate vulnerability.



Executive Summary

Questions for Decision-Makers

- *Will global climate policy and governance continue to treat human mobility as a ‘problem’ to be managed – or recognize movement as a site of climate justice, reparations, repair and transformation?*
- *Are states, multilateral institutions, and funders willing and ready to redistribute power and resources to the communities most affected – ensuring that those displaced or immobile by climate impacts are not only protected, but uplifted to shape their own futures?*
- *What would it take to build a politics of care in climate action – one that replaces extractive, securitized responses with solidarity, accountability, and the repair of historical harm?*

At COP30, decision-makers face a defining choice: whether to perpetuate systems that manage displacement through control and containment – or to reimagine climate mobility as a catalyst for justice and transformation. Governments, multilateral institutions, and funders must move beyond technocratic fixes toward a politics of care that values protection, rights, agency, belonging, and responsibility towards the planet and her people.

The future of climate mobility must be shaped with affected communities, not for them – grounded in justice, dignity, and the right to move and to stay. **COP30 must mark the turning point where the global community shifts the narrative from vulnerability to agency – and delivers the climate mobility justice this moment demands.**



Introduction

As we head into COP30, this policy brief calls for a radical rethinking of how climate mobility – including migration, displacement, planned relocation, and immobility – are understood and addressed. **We urge for a collective reorientation of environmental and climate-related (im)mobilities not as a problem to be managed, but as a site of collective social, economic, political, cultural, and systemic transformation.**

Human mobility is written into nature itself: people have always moved to navigate changing climatic and environmental conditions, shifting landscapes, and evolving social and economic change. At the same time, forced migration, dispossession, and displacement have long been tied to struggles over land, resources, and power. Across centuries, peoples have been uprooted in the name of colonial conquest, so-called conservation and development, resource extraction, industrialization, and more recently, climate mitigation projects. These patterns are not new. The violent destruction and upending of place, livelihood, and culture is a centuries-old feature of racial capitalist colonial modernity – one that continues to shape who can move and under what conditions, who must stay, and whose lives are deemed expendable.

Across generations and geographies, communities have resisted displacement and the forces of ecocidal, genocidal, epistemic, slow and structural violences. Today many of the same marginalized communities – Indigenous peoples, rural and pastoral communities, smallholder farmers, and fisherfolk – are on the frontlines of mounting inequality, discriminatory and oppressive governance, persecution and restrictive border regimes, environmental degradation, and climate change. They carry the burden of eroding livelihoods, loss and damage, and the devastation of ecosystems, while sustaining biodiversity and cultural heritage within systems built to exploit rather than protect.

Climate-related (im)mobilities unfold within the same structures that have historically enabled exploitation and inequity: extractive, neoliberal, patriarchal, and racial capitalist colonial economies; exclusionary governance; and a global political economy that prioritizes profit, control, and unsustainable growth over justice, dignity, personhood and ecological wellbeing. These dynamics determine who can move, who must stay, and who is rendered invisible.

Today, climate change affects more than 3.6 billion of the world's 8 billion inhabitants – a number that will rise as fossil fuels continue to burn. Its impacts are experienced not only as floods, droughts, and heatwaves, but as hunger, thirst, loss of livelihoods, erosion of cultural traditions, and the destruction of homes, schools, and sacred sites.



Introduction

Millions are forced to move; millions more remain, adapting under conditions of deepening poverty, duress, and loss. Those least responsible for the climate crisis remain most exposed to its consequences and least able to rebuild or relocate—yet are too often marginalized in the very governance spaces that decide their futures.

This moment presents a crucial opportunity to unlearn, disrupt, and radically reimagine responses to climate change, displacement, and environmental injustice – beyond exclusionary systems of knowledge production, research, policy, governance, finance and praxis. It calls for courage to confront the political economic interests entrenched in climate and migration governance, to reckon with the colonial and structural legacies that shape vulnerability and opportunity, and to embrace responsibility, reparation, and collective care in policy, narrative, and practice.

This brief is not a wish list. It is a call to action for all those shaping how climate-related (im)mobility is framed and addressed—researchers, advocates, policymakers, humanitarian and development practitioners, private actors, funders, investors, activists, creatives, and the media. Most importantly, it calls for centering the communities most gravely impacted. Transformative change requires these stakeholders to step aside, share power, and enable those living these realities to lead –guided by lived experience, local and traditional knowledge, and a commitment to rights, agency, and self-determination.

Such transformation demands courage: the courage to confront entrenched political and economic interests embedded in climate action and migration governance, and the patriarchal and racial capitalist colonial systems that sustain them; to question the centrality of the nation-state and the very concept of borders; and to reckon with the colonial and structural legacies that continue to shape vulnerability and opportunity. It also requires responsibility, reparation, and collective care – in policy, in the narratives we tell, in the solidarities we build, and in the futures we dare to imagine.

As governments gather at **COP30**, the task is not merely to refine frameworks, but to reimagine the terms of our shared future – grounded in solidarity, justice, and collective care. **Moving from vulnerability to agency means centering those most affected as solutions-holders and visionary leaders of transformation – shaping not only the path forward, but the very meaning of a just, equitable, and livable world. It's time for climate mobility justice.**



Key Messages

(Re)frame climate-related (im)mobilities to amplify agency, rights, and justice

1 **How we frame (im)mobilities in the context of climate change matters: ensure impacted communities define their lived experiences.**

Framing (im)mobilities in the context of climate change is not a semantic exercise – it determines whose voices shape data, narratives, and policy. Communities on the frontlines hold the most nuanced understanding of movement, belonging, and adaptation, yet their perspectives are often overwritten by external framings that reproduce colonial assumptions of displacement and vulnerability. Centering their perspectives ensures that frameworks, data, and responses reflect real human conditions rather than external assumptions, including the fluidity of changing social, economic, cultural, political, and environmental conditions across time and space. We need terminology that is adaptable to a multitude of diverse (im)mobility contexts, and that is defined and framed by and for individuals and communities on the frontlines of environmental and climatic change. Policymakers and researchers must co-create language and definitions with affected communities, ensuring their epistemologies and lived realities guide how (im)mobilities are understood and governed.

Are researchers, advocates, and policymakers prepared and enabled to cede authority over language and definitions to the communities most affected, ensuring their lived realities guide framing, data collection, and policy responses?



Key Messages

2 Climate-related (im)mobilities are shaped by multiple factors: recognize complexity.

Climate change impacts do not drive (im)mobilities alone. Environmental stressors such as floods, droughts, and degradation intersect with demographic pressures, social hierarchies, economic inequalities, political instability, and legal constraints to produce diverse and uneven outcomes. Recognizing this complexity matters because siloed, one-dimensional approaches obscure lived realities and lead to ineffective or unjust interventions. Humanitarian actors, disaster risk practitioners, and climate policymakers must therefore design responses that are sensitive to context-specific and intersecting structural factors—especially inequality, colonial legacies, and governance failures—rather than applying uniform solutions. Integrated, cross-sectoral action that links climate, governance, and rights can generate policies that reflect real conditions and strengthen both resilience and justice.

Are humanitarian actors, disaster risk practitioners, and climate policymakers ready to design interventions that reflect the intersecting and uneven factors shaping mobility, rather than relying on oversimplified labels and one-size-fits-all solutions?



Key Messages

3 Most people impacted by climate change and disasters don't move: account for those who stay behind.

While climate mobility receives growing attention, most people affected by environmental change remain in place, sometimes by choice, often by constraint. Voluntary immobility reflects deep cultural, spiritual, or livelihood connections to the land, and these decisions to stay must also be supported through investments that make remaining safe and sustainable. At the same time, involuntary immobility—when poverty, age, gender, disability, or lack of infrastructure limit people's ability to move—requires urgent attention, as these populations face heightened vulnerability. Development and climate interventions should therefore strengthen in-situ resilience, through social protection, livelihood diversification, climate-resilient infrastructure, and access to early warning systems, so that staying can reflect a safe, informed, and dignified choice rather than a condition of exclusion or neglect.

Are development practitioners and funders prepared and willing to invest in solutions for those who remain in place, ensuring that immobility is not ignored in adaptation, protection, and resilience programming?



Key Messages

4 Climate-related (im)mobilities are not a ‘problem’ to be solved: stop framing mobility as crisis.

Climate change, disasters, conflict, migration, displacement and their intersections only become “crises” when we frame and therefore render them that way. In reality, mobility is a natural and universal characteristic of humanity—an adaptive response to environmental and structural change, and an expression of resilience, agency, and belonging. When framed as a crisis, mobility becomes pathologized, reinforcing restrictive, security-oriented, and technocratic approaches that obscure lived realities. Truly respecting all peoples’ rights to choose, whether to move or remain, requires reframing climate-related (im)mobilities as part of a continuum of adaptation—one that confronts the structural forces driving vulnerability and upholds dignity, rights, and self-determination

Are researchers, states, private actors and the media ready to move beyond alarmist framings and support frameworks that uphold agency, rights, and dignity for all mobile and immobile populations?

Is the private sector involved in climate negotiations willing to take accountability for their extractivist practices and disregard of prior consent mechanisms by actively collaborating across sectors and governments to prioritize human rights and invest mechanisms to equitably protect those on the move?



Key Messages

5 Most people impacted by climate change and disasters don't move: account for those who stay behind.

(Im)mobility is not an anomaly. It is the fabric of everyday life. People continuously move across neighborhoods, regions, and landscapes to sustain livelihoods, social ties, and cultural belonging. Recognizing these ongoing patterns is essential for climate policy, migration governance, and practice, ensuring interventions build upon existing adaptive strategies rather than imposing external notions of stability. Grounding climate action in the lived, day-to-day realities of movement and settlement enables more just, context-sensitive, and resilient responses to environmental change.

Are researchers and policymakers prepared to ground interventions in the lived, day-to-day, and normative mobility patterns of individuals and communities, rather than treating mobility as an anomaly in our interconnected world?



Key Messages

6 More comprehensive data and methodologies to capture the complexity of migration dynamics in the context of environmental change is crucial: invest in people-centred research.

Conventional data collection often fails to capture the intersectional and lived realities of climate-related (im)mobilities, especially among Indigenous, rural, and marginalized populations. Understanding these dynamics requires methodologies that move beyond numbers, acknowledging how structure, agency, and context shape movement and staying. People-centred, participatory approaches, including oral histories, participatory mapping, and storytelling offer richer insights into lived adaptation strategies. True understanding of climate (im)mobilities demands epistemic justice—valuing knowledge produced by communities, not merely about them—and investing in research that listens deeply, adapts boldly, and honors the layered realities of life on the move and in place.

Are researchers, research institutions, and funders ready to prioritize methodologies that centre peoples' lived experiences and intersectional realities, even if they challenge conventional approaches to data collection and policy analysis?'



Key Messages

Confront structural drivers of intersecting and uneven vulnerabilities to promote equitable action

1 Climate and environmental-related displacement are not experienced evenly: address disproportionate vulnerabilities, inequalities and inequities.

Climate- and environmental-related (im)mobilities are not experienced evenly. The impacts of climate change intersect with gender, race, Indigeneity, class, age, and ability—shaping who can adapt, who must move, and who is left behind. Marginalized groups, including women, Indigenous peoples, the poor, and rural communities, often bear the greatest burden of environmental disruption. Addressing these disproportionate vulnerabilities requires intersectional, equity-focused policies that prioritize inclusion, protection, and access to resources, ensuring that adaptation and resilience efforts do not reproduce inequality but advance justice and collective security.

Are research, policy, and funding frameworks actively addressing intersectional inequalities, or reproducing them through one-size-fits-all approaches to climate (im)mobility?



Key Messages

2 **Climate vulnerability and (im)mobility are shaped by historical, ongoing and structural injustices: address past and present legacies, honor accountability, and advance reparatory approaches.**

Climate vulnerability is not natural – it is the product of centuries of colonialism, extractive development, and systemic neglect. From forced dam displacements to toxic mining zones, communities have borne the costs of profit-driven policies that dispossess people and degrade ecosystems. Legacies of colonialism and historical injustice continue to define who is exposed to risk, who is protected, and whose knowledge counts in research, data, and policymaking. These dynamics reproduce mistrust in state and international institutions, shaping responses to disasters, migration, displacement, and immobility today. Building resilience and justice requires acknowledging these structural harms and repairing them through redistributive, reparative, and trauma-informed approaches that prioritize self-determination, agency, and healing for affected communities. Governments and international actors must acknowledge historical harm, guarantee Indigenous territorial rights, and invest in community-led restoration and self-determination. Without confronting these legacies, climate policy risks perpetuating the same cycles of dispossession that caused the crisis.

Are governments, funders, and international actors prepared to confront and repair the historical injustices—colonialism, extractivism, and dispossession—that continue to structure who bears the brunt of climate impacts today?



Key Messages

3 Climate-related (im)mobility is deeply shaped by structural inequality and governance: govern climate change and (im)mobilities with justice.

The ability to move – or not – is determined not only by climate conditions but by social, legal, and institutional systems that shape access to resources, protection, and decision-making. Across rural and urban contexts alike, inadequate governance, exclusionary policies, and uneven service provision exacerbate vulnerability and restrict agency. Embedding justice within governance frameworks means ensuring that institutions enable, rather than inhibit, safe, dignified, and equitable (im)mobility. This must include ensuring systems are in place to combat exploitative and extractive movements, including human trafficking, child labor, and other forms of coercive or exploitative migration. Responsible governance and equality require shifting power, funding, and decisions to those most affected. It means protecting against exploitation and enabling safe, informed pathways to move or stay. Justice starts when systems stop speaking for people and start listening.

Are governance systems—at local, national, and global levels—willing to redistribute power and resources to those most affected, ensuring mobility decisions are grounded in rights and justice rather than inequality and neglect?



Key Messages

4 Climate mobility intersects with livelihood, food, and health systems that are rooted in colonial and neoliberal legacies: decolonize livelihood, food, and health systems to build just and resilient futures.

Climate-related (im)mobilities are inseparable from global systems of production and care shaped by colonial extraction, neoliberal reform, and racialized labor hierarchies. From the erosion of pastoralist and smallholder livelihoods to dependence on volatile global markets and precarious wage labor, vulnerability is reproduced through the same systems that exploit both people and nature. Food and health insecurities among mobile and displaced populations are not isolated crises—they are symptoms of deeper structural harms. Confronting them requires dismantling extractive, profit-driven models and investing in community-led, sovereign systems of work, nourishment, and care.

Will climate, development, and private actors, as well as states, confront the economic and colonial structures that commodify land, labor, and life—or continue to reinforce the systems that make livelihoods, food, and health insecure on a warming planet?



Key Messages

Centre justice, agency, and community leadership in climate action, narrative-building, and governance

1 **Climate mobility justice requires community-led solutions, collaboration and solidarity for systems transformation: move beyond top-down approaches and make space for impacted persons to drive their own futures.**

Responses to climate-related (im)mobilities must centre the leadership, knowledge, and self-determination of frontline communities—not replicate extractive or paternalistic models of “support.” Climate justice demands more than inclusion: it requires transforming the systems that sustain inequality. (Im)mobility should be understood as a site of systemic transformation, where new social contracts and solidarities can be forged while reflecting the intersectional realities of climate-related dispossession and displacement. Decoloniality goes beyond critique; it builds practices that transform relationships, redistribute power, and shift governance toward justice. Building just and sustainable futures demands collaboration, cross-border solidarity, and ethics of care that honor community-rooted ways of knowing, being, and organizing. This involves (re)imagining inclusive, rights-based futures that challenge colonial modernity, state-centric, carceral, and exclusionary models of governance. Achieving just climate futures requires bold, intersectional, and co-created responses rooted in justice, shaped by those on the frontlines, and grounded in local and traditional knowledge beyond ‘Western’ frameworks. Centering frontline voices cannot remain tokenistic; it is essential for fostering equitable, sustainable, and transformative futures, where deeper solidarities complement stronger policies.

Are researchers, policymakers, humanitarian and development actors, and funders prepared to step aside and enable those living these realities to lead? Are they willing to genuinely centre lived experience, local and traditional knowledge beyond ‘Western’ frameworks, and co-create climate mobility responses that transform systems of inequality rather than merely manage risks?



Key Messages

2 **Re-source democracy and local governance are pathways to dignity and sustainability: place governance in local hands and return land and resources back to their rightful owners.**

Resilience is not technocratic—it's political. It grows when communities govern their own lands, waters, resources, and energy according to their priorities. Returning land and decision-making power to local and Indigenous stewardship strengthens climate mitigation, safeguards biodiversity, and protects territorial sovereignty. It also ensures self-determination, cultural continuity, and accountability while preventing extractive expansion, dispossession, and displacement. Making way for local governance beyond tokenization transforms adaptation from a technical exercise into a process of rights-respecting liberation and justice.

Are governments, funders, development actors, aid programs and other key stakeholders prepared to return land, resources, and decision-making power to local and Indigenous communities, centering their self-determination, territorial sovereignty and governance systems in climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building efforts?



Key Messages

3 Mobility can enhance resilience and shape development—when grounded in rights, not repression: uplift mobility as a site to disrupt top-down neocolonial models of development.

Climate-related (im)mobilities can be understood as adaptive strategies that, in some cases, strengthen resilience and sustainable development when supported through inclusive governance, service provision, and local agency. Properly supported, mobility can contribute to SDG 1 (no poverty) by securing livelihoods and SDG 3 (good health and well-being) by ensuring access to essential services for displaced or mobile populations. In contrast, criminalization, containment, and top-down approaches erode resilience and reproduce vulnerability. Climate mobility can also serve as a site for disrupting top-down and neocolonial development approaches, creating space to challenge entrenched norms, question dominant interests, and amplify the voices of those on the frontlines in shaping their own futures.

Are governments and policymakers, development actors, humanitarian organizations, and climate practitioners ready to recognize and support mobility as a human right and a legitimate, self-determined adaptation strategy that strengthens sustainable development, rather than treating it as a threat to be managed through top-down containment or criminalization?



Key Messages

4 Art, language, and storytelling are tools for justice: harness and respect lived experiences expressed beyond words.

Dominant narratives of climate mobility often dehumanize or erase those on the move. Further, they often fail to capture the emotional, cultural, and historical dimensions of nuanced experiences. Creative practices, including storytelling, art, and oral traditions allow communities to reclaim their narratives, transmit memory, and reimagine justice on their own terms. Artistic forms of expression also make knowledge more accessible, emotional, and relational. Language itself shapes action—how we name experiences shapes how we act and comes with limitations. Being intentional with language, and amplifying expression that cannot be captured in words, is part of practicing justice and accountability, and can lead to reparatory responses that better reflect lived realities.

Whose stories are shaping global climate mobility narratives—and whose truths remain unheard? Are researchers, practitioners, policymakers and the media ready to make space for alternative and creative mediums of expression, beyond statistics and case studies, even when these challenge traditional and ‘Western-dominated’ ways of representation?



Key Messages

5 **Community participation is fundamental to effective protection: centre community knowledge, wisdom and agency, beyond tokenization.**

Planned relocations, adaptation programs, and disaster responses too often impose external solutions that disregard community priorities and undermine local agency. When participation is central-rooted in consent, trust, and recognition of lived knowledge—interventions become more legitimate, just, and sustainable. Centering community-defined priorities not only strengthens protection and adaptation but also advances dignity, self-determination, and long-term resilience. Protection, of people, resources and the environment, are most effective when defined by communities themselves: when safety and resilience are understood through local values, networks, and identities. When communities lead, protection becomes meaningful. When people define safety for themselves, adaptation becomes stronger, fairer, and lasting. That's the future worth investing in.

What would protection and adaptation look like if communities—not institutions—defined what safety, security and resilience mean?



Key Messages

Prevent forced displacement through anticipatory, rights-based action

1 Large-scale forced displacement is not inevitable: mitigate, prioritize resilience, and prevent large-scale forced displacement.

Whether and how people move in response to climate impacts depends on the policy choices made today. Displacement is not a natural consequence of climate change—it is a political, economic, systemic and governance failure. Climate-related (im)mobility reflects the strength—or absence—of resilience systems. When communities have access to early warning systems, adaptive livelihoods, social protection, and inclusive governance, movement can occur safely and voluntarily. When adaptation is underfunded, exclusionary, or inequitable, displacement becomes forced and destabilizing. Preventing forced displacement requires tackling root causes of vulnerability through anticipatory action, rights-based adaptation, and equitable access to resources, land, and decision-making. Investing in locally led adaptation, inclusive planning, and equitable financing can turn potential crises into opportunities for resilience, stability, and sustained development.

What would it take for governments and global institutions to treat the prevention of displacement with the same urgency as the responses to it? Are states and investors ready to prioritize investments in locally-led adaptation, inclusive planning, and equitable resilience systems? If they did so, how many displacements could be prevented?



Key Messages

2 Legal innovation in climate protections is emerging, but justice requires dismantling colonial legacies in existing systems: disrupt and confront colonial legacies within legal protection innovations and solutions.

While international legal developments advance slowly, innovation is emerging through strategic litigation, regional agreements, and community-led protection mechanisms. Yet, existing legal and border regimes often replicate colonial hierarchies that determine whose movement is deemed legitimate and whose protection is denied. To be transformative, legal innovation must not only expand protection pathways but also dismantle the structural and racialized power relations embedded in current frameworks. When legal frameworks incorporate community knowledge, when courts listen to frontline experiences, and when protection systems are co-created rather than imposed, law becomes what it ought to be: a tool for dignity, justice, self-determination and collective liberation in a warming world, rather than control and containment.

Are states, legal institutions, and lawyers willing to transform legal protection systems from instruments of control into tools for justice—dismantling the colonial hierarchies that determine who gets to move with dignity?



Key Messages

3 In the absence of clear international legal frameworks to protect climate displaced persons, legal practitioners, institutions, and courts have used and can use a variety of tools and policy options to afford legal protection: use existing legal tools creatively.

In the absence of a dedicated international framework for climate-displaced persons, states already possess legal and policy tools that can extend protection—if applied with creativity and political will. International human rights law, domestic migration frameworks, and regional free movement agreements all hold untapped potential to safeguard dignity and prevent harm. When interpreted expansively, these mechanisms can fill protection gaps and provide life-saving stability for those forced to move across borders. Building on what exists, rather than waiting for new treaties, is both a moral and practical imperative in the face of accelerating climate risks.

Are courts, states, and private actors prepared to recognize bold, precedent-setting interpretations of existing law that uphold the rights and dignity of climate-displaced persons—and to do so in partnership with youth advocates leading calls for accountability and climate justice?

Are they ready to implement the evolving protection landscape shaped by the 2025 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, ensuring that legal obligations to safeguard climate-displaced populations are realized in practice?



Key Messages

4 For planned relocation to serve as a viable adaptation and resilience-building strategy, it must be community-led: centre self-determination, community agency and decision-making.

Planned relocation is often framed as a technical, logistical, or infrastructural challenge—but at its core, it is a profoundly social, political, and cultural process. When poorly designed, relocation can reproduce displacement and dispossession and erase histories. To serve as a pathway to resilience rather than a source of harm, relocation must be grounded in community leadership and self-determination from the very beginning. When relocation is defined as necessary, anticipatory planning, secure tenure, and investments in cultural continuity can transform relocation from a last resort into an adaptive, rights-based strategy for climate resilience. Decisions about if, when, where, and how to move – and how to preserve land rights, livelihoods, cultural practices, and social networks – must rest with affected people themselves. Participatory processes must extend beyond consultation to shared authority, ensuring transparency, accountability, and long-term support. Anticipatory planning, secure tenure, and investments in cultural continuity can transform relocation from a last resort into an adaptive, rights-based strategy for climate resilience. Without this, even well-funded efforts risk deepening vulnerability, undermining trust, and perpetuating the very injustices they seek to address.

Will planned relocations be treated as instruments of resilience, or as top-down “solutions” that sacrifice dignity for efficiency? Are states prepared to share decision-making authority fully with affected communities, and to accept that some solutions may challenge existing development or political agendas?



Key Messages

Integrate cross-sectoral, multi-level, and community-led solutions

1 Building coherence across systems is essential for just and sustainable (im)mobilities: align climate, development, and migration agendas around dignity, belonging, and rights.

Climate-related (im)mobilities are not isolated phenomena—they sit at the intersection of livelihoods, food and water security, housing, health, and a sense of belonging. Yet global governance remains fragmented across sectors of climate mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian response, sustainable development, migration governance, and peacebuilding. This disjointed architecture fails to address the lived interconnections between these domains, leading to duplication, inefficiency, and deepened inequality. Achieving climate mobility justice requires coherence: aligning climate, development, and migration frameworks under shared principles of rights, care, and solidarity. Integrated approaches must move beyond narrow project silos toward systemic transformation that centers human dignity and ecological balance. Collaboration across institutions—rooted in community leadership and transnational solidarity—is essential to bridge policy divides and ensure that people’s needs, aspirations, and belonging remain at the core of all action.

Will global and national actors move beyond fragmented governance to build coherent, justice-centered systems that bridge climate, development, and migration agendas – grounding them in human dignity, belonging, and care?



Key Messages

2 Resilience depends on inclusive participation, anticipatory action, and locally driven adaptation: co-design solutions with those most impacted.

Preventing forced displacement and ensuring positive outcomes for mobility, planned relocation, and immobility requires reducing vulnerability before crises emerge. Adaptive strategies are only as effective as the people who shape them. Participatory risk assessment, inclusive planning, and community-led adaptation can transform potential crises into opportunities for resilience. Engaging affected communities, diasporas, and local actors ensures that adaptation strategies reflect lived realities, respect local knowledge, and strengthen social cohesion. True participation goes beyond consultation—it must shape decisions on finance, governance, and implementation. Investments in skills, governance, and local capacity must be anticipatory, not reactive.

Are states and donors ready to invest in anticipatory, community-led adaptation with the same urgency as emergency response—and to ensure that marginalized and immobile populations meaningfully shape decisions rather than being tokenistically consulted?



Key Messages

3 Addressing the climate–conflict–displacement nexus requires coordinated, decolonial, and multi-level action: align cross-sector responses that elevate community agency and responsibility.

Conflict and climate harm often strike the same communities again and again, reinforcing cycles of loss and marginalization. Fragmented, top-down and siloed responses risk repeating these patterns, cannot meet the scale or complexity of vulnerabilities intensified by climate change, conflict, and displacement. Warfare – often rooted in competition over environmental resources – devastates ecosystems, fuels displacement, and compounds human rights violations, with its environmental toll approaching the scale of ecocide. Effective and just action demands coordination across humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, and climate systems–grounded in local realities, historical accountability, and decolonial practice. Grassroots movements are vital for localizing action, but institutions must adapt to recognize and support community agency without shifting the burden of resilience onto those already at risk. Confronting the colonial and structural hierarchies that perpetuate inequality is essential to ensuring that responsibility and resources flow toward, not away from, affected communities. Only through such integrated, justice-centered frameworks can policy and humanitarian efforts meaningfully address the climate–conflict–displacement nexus and build equitable pathways in a warming world.

How will institutions confront the environmental destruction, human rights violations, and displacement driven by warfare—and ensure that responses to the climate–conflict–displacement nexus do not reproduce the same colonial hierarchies that caused them? Are governments and international actors prepared to redirect power and resources toward affected communities, acknowledging the compounded toll of conflict and climate on people and the planet?



Key Messages

4 Addressing loss and damage requires more than compensation—it demands justice: pursue reparations and community-led recovery

Loss and damage is not only about climate change, nor can it be reduced to an economic ledger of compensation. It is about reckoning with the historical injustices and structural inequalities that have produced present-day vulnerability and uneven capacities to recover. True redress must go beyond financial payouts to embrace restorative and reparative approaches, including debt cancellation, technology transfer, land restitution, and community-led recovery. Equally vital are cultural reparations: the restoration of heritage, memory, and collective identity eroded by centuries of colonial extraction and displacement. Justice must be defined by affected communities themselves, recognizing their knowledge, agency, and visions for the future. Without a justice-centered approach, responses risk reproducing cycles of harm, perpetuating dependency, and undermining trust in global systems meant to protect.

Will states and international actors commit to reparative justice, or merely offer financial compensation? How will these actors give way for communities to lead the definition and implementation of recovery that restores dignity, resilience, and autonomy?



Conclusion

Climate mobility is more than a policy agenda – it is a test of our collective responsibility, a measure of whether our governments, societies, economies, and systems can uphold dignity, equity, and belonging for all. The choices we make today will determine whether climate-related (im)mobilities perpetuate inequality or become pathways for transformation, grounded in agency, resilience, and self-determination.

Communities across the globe are already leading with care, creativity and imagination, local and Indigenous knowledge, crafting adaptive responses rooted in reciprocity, belonging, and survival with dignity. These are not stories of crisis management; they are stories of transformation. The innovativeness and resilience of persons on the frontlines of climate impacts show us that mobility and rootedness can coexist, and that justice begins when those most affected define what adaptation, safety, and home truly mean – and when policies enable them to lead rather than merely participate.

Human mobility is written into nature itself. Mountains shift, rivers reshape landscapes, and ecosystems evolve independently of human intervention. Yet, forced migration, displacement, and immobility today overwhelmingly affect those least responsible, often Indigenous, rural, pastoral, and smallholder communities that sustain the majority of the world's biodiversity. How can our responses respect and support these communities, while addressing the intersecting injustices that tie human displacement to ecological degradation, colonial legacies, and extractive systems?

A transformational framework for climate mobility justice requires more than technical solutions or humanitarian aid. It demands historical accountability, redistribution of power, reparations, and ecological restoration. Policies must center community-led adaptation, anticipatory action, and equitable access to resources, land, and decision-making. They must place lived experiences, intersectional vulnerabilities, the knowledge and wisdom of frontline communities at the core of research, governance, and finance.

We must ask ourselves:

- ***Are our systems prepared to enable agency rather than control?***
- ***Will states, international, and private actors step aside to allow frontline leadership to shape solutions?***
- ***Can we reimagine mobility and immobility not as crises to manage but as opportunities to repair, restore, and transform the systems that have long perpetuated vulnerability?***



Beyond Climate Collaborative

Beyond Climate Collaborative (BCC) works at the intersections of climate change, (im)mobility, and environmental justice. Our mission is to exchange knowledge, ideas, and resources to support emerging leaders advancing environmental mobility justice.

Through the Climate Mobility Justice Academy (CMJA) and its flagship program, the International School on Climate Mobilities (ISCM), and beyond, we engage a new generation of researchers, advocates, and practitioners from across the world in interdisciplinary learning, dialogue, and co-creation.

Together, we build bridges for (un)learning and (re)imagining how societies address climate-related (im)mobilities through the lenses of social, migrant, racial, feminist, economic, and environmental justice—uplifting emerging leaders to pioneer just, cross-sectoral, and sustainable solutions that restore equity, agency, and resilience for both people and planet.



[Learn more about our work.](#)



[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)



[Follow us on Instagram](#)