

## **World Vision UK Response to IDC Inquiry on Climate Change and COP26**

1. We welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the International Development Select Committee inquiry into climate change, development and COP26. World Vision is the world's largest international children's charity. We are a Christian multi-mandated organisation implementing relief, development and advocacy activities for children, their families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. We work in 100 countries to help improve the lives of millions of people worldwide.
2. World Vision UK has serious concerns about the disproportionate impact the effects of climate change on the world's most vulnerable children and their communities. The most vulnerable bear the brunt of climate disaster and children will face the consequences of inaction for the rest of their lives:
  - a. **Climate change threatens child rights** risking 25 years of gains made in child health and reducing child mortality,<sup>1</sup> with increasing risks of vector borne diseases, under-nutrition, diarrheal diseases and heat stress.<sup>2</sup> Severe droughts and extreme weather also affect families' livelihoods, contributing to an increased risk of violence against children including child labour and child marriage.<sup>3</sup> Over 2 billion people around the world suffer food insecurity,<sup>4</sup> while 1.3 billion people live on degraded agricultural land<sup>5</sup> and over 160 million children live in areas of high or extremely high drought severity.<sup>6</sup> Up to 100 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030.<sup>7</sup>
  - b. **Climate change is a threat multiplier, amplifying existing vulnerabilities and inequalities**, including those based on age, gender, class, ethnicity, ability, and land-rights. Threatened livelihoods and competition for resources have proven to put women and girls at increased risk of sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> Girls and boys living in urban slums and informal settlement often have much greater exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events.
  - c. **Climate change is having severe humanitarian consequences.** More frequent and severe natural hazards are amplifying already high levels of humanitarian need globally, through the destruction of livelihoods, reduced access to essential public services and displacement. By 2050, the World Bank estimates that an additional 143 million people across sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America could be

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<sup>1</sup> Philipsborn, P and Chan K (2020), Climate Change and Global Child Health, <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/141/6/e20173774.full.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Bennett M, Friel S (2014), Impacts of Climate Change on Inequities in Child Health, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4928733/>

<sup>3</sup> Chuang E, Pinchoff J, and Psaki S (2018), Brookings Institution, How Natural Disasters Undermine Schooling, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2018/01/23/how-natural-disasters-undermine-schooling>

<sup>4</sup> FAO (2019), The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, (2019), <http://www.fao.org/state-of-food-security-nutrition>

<sup>5</sup> UNCCD (2017), Global Land Outlook – First Edition, [https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/2017-09/GLO\\_Full\\_Report\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/documents/2017-09/GLO_Full_Report_low_res.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF (2019), Fact Sheet: Climate Crisis is Child Rights Crisis, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/fact-sheet-climate-crisis-child-rights-crisis>

<sup>7</sup> World Bank (2016), Shockwaves – Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22787/9781464806735.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> WHO (2002), World Report on Violence and Health, Chapter 6 – Sexual Violence, [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/chapters/en/](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/chapters/en/)

internally displaced as a result of slow onset impacts of climate change including water stress, crop failure and sea-level rise.<sup>9</sup>

3. The UK's role as host of COP26 this year offers a unique opportunity for concerted and dedicated action to address long-term causes of climate change and to prevent disaster. However, the lack of clarity from the UK Government and recent aid cuts threaten to disrupt progress on international commitments to stop the impacts of climate change. In order to make the most impact on climate change the UK Government must meaningfully engage with vulnerable and marginalised voices (including children) ahead of international platforms such as COP26.

***The extent to which the Government has made progress on implementing the Committee's recommendations, particularly those on climate finance, climate justice, the use of ODA to support fossil fuels and making climate change a strategic priority in all aid spending;***

4. The UK Government have made a number of commitments in these areas but there are question marks over the extent that it has made progress on them. For example, the recent cuts to UK Aid and delays in releasing funding programmes have made it unclear how close the Government are to reaching its commitments on climate finance. Climate change is reversing development gains and presenting new challenges to the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Those least responsible for causing climate change are suffering the worst consequences of it, on top of pre-existing development challenges, and now a global pandemic.
5. Now is not the time for the UK to renege on a legally binding commitment to 0.7% GNI for ODA, especially since it has also not provided "new and additional" climate finance under the UNFCCC. Consequently, all climate finance now comes from a shrinking aid budget. In the UK Biennial Finance Communication to the UNFCCC submitted in December 2020, it was stated that: "Our funding will be new and in addition to our previous £5.8bn ICF commitment."<sup>10</sup> It should not need to be stated that a financial spending commitment for the period 2021-2025 would be in addition to money already committed and spent in a different period (2016-2020). This is clearly acting against what new and additional climate finance means under the UNFCCC.
6. Faced with a climate emergency not of their making, developing countries had a reasonable expectation of extra support, and under the UNFCCC countries including the UK committed to provide this. However, the cuts to the aid budget now present a double cut in support to developing countries, who have not received new and additional climate finance, and now will receive both climate finance and aid from the same but much smaller pot. Climate finance was not meant to come at a cost/compromise to non-climate ODA, yet now this is inevitable in the context of fulfilling the UK climate finance commitments from a shrinking aid budget.

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<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2018), Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29461>

<sup>10</sup>HM Government (2020), United Kingdom Biennial Finance Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/943566/UK\\_Biennial\\_Finance\\_Communication\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943566/UK_Biennial_Finance_Communication_2020.pdf)

7. The UK's progress on climate justice is also unclear. The voices of those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially to increased disaster risks, are not being heard at the local, national or international level. The needs of children are strikingly absent, as well as marginalised groups such as people with disabilities. Decision-making processes for climate finance spending are not open for local communities to hold governments to account, meaning vulnerable children and people with disabilities are generally not involved in these decision-making processes, reducing the opportunities for climate justice. This must be rectified as, despite holding the least responsibility for the unfolding climate crisis, the most vulnerable children, particularly those living in informal urban settlements, fragile, and developing contexts, will be disproportionately burdened by its impacts.

***The extent to which the Government's work to date on climate change and development has taken the sustainable development goals and the needs of low-to-middle income countries and vulnerable groups into account;***

8. The UK Government has funded the WISER (Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa) programme since 2015. This project has yielded excellent results and there are a number of elements of the programme which World Vision recognises as best practice. We believe there are positive lessons to be learned from the project which the UK Government should implement in other areas of climate-related work.
9. During the most recent phase of WISER, 12 projects were funded, mainly in East Africa, as well as the Sahel region. World Vision was the lead agency for the WISER project in Uganda ('Strengthening Weather and Climate Information Services in Uganda'), working together with the Uganda National Meteorological Authority and the Office of the Prime Minister.
10. The Uganda project was focused on translating weather and climate information into local languages and disseminating the information across 22 districts – this included a different language for each district and covered 22 languages in total. Translated weather forecasts, advisories, updates, and other forms of information were disseminated in a number of ways to ensure maximum coverage. This included: broadcasts on local FM radio stations; published leaflets posted in district and sub-county headquarters; information updates in email and SMS; and knowledge sharing by district level 'champions' and agricultural extension officers in trainings with farmers groups.
11. Over 200,000 people were reached directly in the 22 districts with climate and weather forecasts, and it is estimated that nearly 3 million more people accessed the information through local radio broadcasts. The end of project evaluation showed that 80% of those surveyed had taken actions to improve their resilience because of information provided through the translated forecasts. This was an improvement on the baseline figure of 60% of people acting because of weather and climate information. It is likely that the actions of individuals and communities during the project were more effective in increasing resilience as they were based on improved weather and climate information. The evaluation also noted that 78% of those surveyed reported that the forecasts were accurate and relevant for them, an increase from only 13% at baseline.
12. World Vision's Uganda project was 18 months long, with a budget of just £500,000. However, a recent socio-economic analysis report conducted for the UK Met Office<sup>11</sup>

calculated that the net benefits of the project over the next 10 years will be between £18 million and £30 million. Similar socio-economic benefits have been calculated for other WISER funded projects. This demonstrates the immediate positive impact of this programme, and the importance of early investment to mitigate long-term risk of climate disaster. Further, the changes made to climate and weather information services will yield long-term benefits, not only in forecast accuracy, but also increased access and usability for marginalised and vulnerable communities who are particularly dependant on the weather for their livelihoods (for example, small holder farmers practising rainfed agriculture, people in informal urban settings, those working on fishing boats and small transport vessels on Lake Victoria).

13. The most recent phase of the WISER programming has now ended, and with the current cuts to UK Aid and delays in decision making about funding, there has been no suggestion of further WISER funding. This is disappointing. Given the results and forecasted socio-economic benefits, investing in scaling up the project to reach more people, rather than reducing its reach, would be a wise investment for the UK Government.
14. The increased benefit the project model offers could be realised by scale-up, and would be a quality investment in a proven model. However, this is not achievable if climate financing is not available.

***The potential of COP26 to address these remaining challenges effectively and the steps the Government needs to take if COP26 is to succeed in tackling them.***

15. COP26 has the potential to address the challenges that remain in terms of promoting climate justice, increasing climate finance and the other recommendations of the International Development Committee. However, given the challenges of COVID-19 there is a significant danger of the voices of the most vulnerable, including women, children and people with disabilities being excluded. If COP26 is held as an in-person meeting, then travel for such excluded and minority groups may well be limited. Even if it is partially held online or remotely, there will still be significant challenges in ensuring the voices of the more vulnerable are included and heard. Nevertheless, these challenges must be addressed if meaningful engagement is to be achieved.
16. World Vision would like the UK Government to clarify what measures it will take to enable the voices of children, women, people with disabilities and the most vulnerable and marginal communities to be heard during COP26. We would also like to see steps being taken at COP26 to enable greater participation of these groups in national decision-making processes, and to strengthen social accountability so that the most vulnerable people and communities can hold their own governments to account for the action they take to strengthen resilience, mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.