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HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

REPORT

Human Rights Baseline Research on Climate Change Related Impacts, And Impacts of Climate Change Measures on Rights Holders









Conducted in August & Produced on 30th September 2026.
By: The Directorate of Climate Change and Information Services - HRCSL

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS i

ABBREVIATION iii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY v

Key Deliverables v

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Background Information on the impacts climate change in Sierra Leone 2

1.2 Project objectives 3

1.3 Milestone Achievements 4

1.4 Key Project Issues Identified 4

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT PROGRESS DELIVERABLES 6

2.1 Methodology 6

2.2 Description of Structure, Process and Outcome Indicators 7

2.3 Human Rights Themes Captured in the Research Report 8

2.4 Project Progress/ Deliverables 9

2.5 Lessons Learned and Human-Interest Stories 10

2.6 Criteria for Human Rights-Based Approach to Data Collection 11

2.7 Criteria for Selection of Location and Participants 12

3.0 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED FRAMEWORKS 13

3.1 National Legal and Policy Frameworks 13

3.2 Regional Legal Framework 14

3.3 **International Legal Framework** 15

3.4 **Institutional Frameworks and Structures** 17

4.0 FINDINGS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON RIGHTS HOLDERS 21

4.1 Climate Theme: Adaptation 21

4.1.1 Human Rights Theme: General Human Rights Obligations 21

4.2 Climate Theme: Disaster Risk Reduction 24

4.2.1 Human Rights Theme: Substantive Human Rights Obligation 24

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 31

5.1 Summary of Findings 31

5.2 Recommendations 32

5.3 Conclusion and Next Steps 33

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION FRAMWORK TOOL 34

ABBREVIATION

ACHPR - African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CESCR - Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child

DCCIS - Directorate of Climate Change and Information Service

DIHR - Danish Institute for Human Rights

DRF - Disaster Risk Financing

DRM - Disaster Risk Management

EMDAT- Emergency Events Database

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

ETF - Emergency Trust Fund

FPIC - Free Prior Informed Consent

GANHRI - Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

GEWE - Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

GoSL - Government of Sierra Leone

GRiF - Global Risk Financing Facility

HARPIS-SL -Hazard Profile Assessment Sierra Leone

HRCSL - Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ITCZ - Inter-Tropical Conversion Zone

MDAs - Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MLCP - Ministry of Lands and Country Planning

MoECC - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

MTCA - Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs

NaCSA - National Commission for Social Action

NAP - National Action Plan

NCCP - National Climate Change Policy

NDC -	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDMA -	National Disaster Management Agency
NDPRP -	National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
NGOs -	Non-Governmental Organization
ONS -	Office of National Security
PSSNYE	-Productive Social Safety Nets and Youth Employment
SDG -	Sustainable Development Goals
SLEPA -	Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency
SLMA -	Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency
SRSP -	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
UDHR -	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN -	United Nations
UNDP -	The United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC -	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF -	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOHCHR -	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
USAID -	United States Agency for International Development
WAPNaP-	Western Area Peninsula National Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) views climate change as a human rights issues due to it negative impacts on human beings and the environment. As a national human rights institution, HRCSL holds that Climate change and its impacts is one of the greatest challenges of the day, directly and indirectly affecting the full enjoyment of human rights, including social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights, the right to development and the right to a healthy environment.

The Commission observes that climate change already affects the human rights of countless Sierra Leoneans and the impacts are only getting worse. The impacts of climate change interfere with the effective enjoyment of human rights with disproportionate effect on many disadvantaged, marginalized, excluded and vulnerable individuals, communities and groups, including those whose ways of life are inextricably linked to the environment. The impacts of climate change, such as extreme rainfall, sea level rise, heat, flooding, etc. are harming and undermining human rights enjoyment, destroying lives and livelihood. The State has obligations to prevent foreseeable harm through disaster preparedness, climate adaptation measures and disaster response. HRCSL's focus is therefore on a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to climate action more broadly and specifically on disaster- risk prevention and response.

However, the lack of available data on the actual impact of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights is a very serious challenge in Sierra Leone. In this regards, HRCSL with support from UNDP and Irish Aid has conducted this human rights baseline research on the impact of climate change and the impact of climate change measures. The Commission employed its Analytical Framework tool developed in collaboration with the Danish Institution for Human Rights (DIHR) to assess climate change –related laws, policies, plans and programmes, and the impacts of climate change on the livelihood of rights holders from a human rights perspective.

Key Deliverables

Legal Assessment: The research team conducted an in-depth review and analysis of existing climate change-related laws, policies and plans from a human rights perspective through desk research. The overall aim was to probe whether these laws, policies and plans are compliant with

State human rights obligations in the context of climate action, and covered the interest of all vulnerable groups. Thorough analysis was also done to ascertain whether these laws and policies led to State initiatives and programmes that impacted positively and/or negatively on various vulnerable groups in the context of climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

Rights Holders Assessment: The research team conducted community outreach and data collection exercise in six (6) communities from 10th to 28th August, 2026 drawn from the following locations: Koidu City, Kono district; Sinkunia Town, Falaba District; Gbangbatoke town, Moyamba District; Mambolo town, Kambia District; Waterloo and Goderich in the process. The team identified outcome indicators drawn from the legal and structural assesmnet, which help to assess the results of State efforts in furthering the enjoyment of human rights.

State Compliance Rating: In rating the level of State compliance with specific human rights obligation, the responses from rights holders (Outcome Indicators) were analysed in relation to the findings from the legal and structural assessment (Structure and Process indicators) under the same or similar headings or human rights indicators and climate themes using percentage ratio.

Summary of Findings

The assessment was conducted in six communities across five regions, targeting 120 participants, of whom 88 (73.3%) were male and 32 (26.7%) were female. It examined the climate change and human rights situation of rights holders and the legal and institutional frameworks that apply to them. The key findings are summarised below.

CLIMATE THEME: ADAPTATION

The protection of human rights from the three planetary crisis of climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss is guaranteed under the Environment Protection Agency Act 2022; the National Disaster Management Agency Act 2020; the National Development-Induced Resettlement Act 2023; the National Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act 2012; and the National Climate Change Policy 2021.

In 2025, Sierra Leone has demonstrated commitment towards fulfilling its human-rights obligations in addressing these triple planetary. For example, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC) in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency Sierra Leone (EPA-SL) launched and submitted to UNFCCC the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0 2025 -2030), the review of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 3.0), and the development of a National Pollutant Inventory (NPI).

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned commitments, the baseline research noted significant gaps in the enforcement and implementations of current environmental laws, policies and programmes, and that many anticipated standards, guidelines and regulations remained undeveloped. For example, irrespective of the existing Sierra Leone's National Plastics and Plastic Waste Management Policy 2023, the Public Health Act 2022, and EPA Act 2022, waste management remained a challenge across the country especially in Freetown.

HRCSL also noted environmental degradation and deforestation as key eliments that wossren the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities. Monitoring activities conducted in Taiama and Gbangbotoke in Moyamba District, Manorkoh and Mange in Port Loko District, and Tongo Field in Kenema District revealed severe and irreversible environmental degradation caused by mining activities in communities along riverbanks / riverbeds. In the Western Area Peninsular National Park (WAPNaP), housing construction on vital mangrove wetlands and water catchment protected areas continued unabated.

Finding from the rights holders indicates that three (3) of the six communities (50%) received government support for climate change adaptation programmes, but all of them considered it insufficient. The remaining three communities (50%) received no support at all, pointing to unequal and inadequate access to adaptation initiatives.

CLIMATE THEME: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

State Compliance Indicators

- Sierra Leone leverages a National Emergency Coordination Pillar System during national disasters, which has been noted as a successful approach for the coordination of disaster management in the country

- Sierra Leone has the Disaster Risk Financing (DRF) Strategy, which is an integral component of the country's broader risk mitigation and preparedness framework
- The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) Act 2020 established the Sierra Leone NDMA to coordinate and implement all aspects of disaster management, including governance, policy, planning, inter-agency coordination, training, and response
- The Public Health Act 2022 provided for the setting up of Disaster Management Fund and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund respectively to address Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Public Health emergencies.
- In support of the Government, UNDP designed a country-led intervention that focuses on building adaptive capacity to catalyse active public and private sector participation to manage the exposure and sensitivity of water supply services to climate change (Water and Climate Change Project).
- The **Feed Salone" Programme** (strategy runs from 2023-2028) is currently the government flagship aimed at boosting agriculture productivity to fuel inclusive growth, increase local food production and reduce country's dependence on food import, reduce hunger, increase export earnings, create jobs, and improve climate resilience mainly through climate-smart agriculture techniques.
- Sierra Leone has a National Development-Induced Resettlement Act, passed in 2023, to guide the planning, implementation, and monitoring of resettlement activities related to development projects.
- Sierra Leone has recently made progressive laws by enacting two new laws in August 2022: the Customary Land Rights Act (2022), and the National Lands Commission Act (2022). These laws provide rights to local communities, previously left out of negotiations. The new laws also provide protective rights to all landowning and land-using communities, including guaranteed Free Prior and Informed Consent for all groups including women.
- The Right to Access Information Act, 2013 and the Sierra Leone's Climate Change Communications Strategy under the National Adaptation Plan 2020 also recognises the public right to access environmental information by creating awareness, influencing behaviour change and fostering coordination in tackling climate change
- No clear legislative framework existed that provide citizens' right to appeal against government decision on matters related to climate policies or plans through non-legal

mechanisms. However, the non-legal mechanism framework that exists as redress mechanism for violation of rights by state and non-state actors is the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. This institution's intervention is limited to conducting public inquiry /or receiving complaints from diverse victims of human rights violation and resolve them through non-legal means. The institution has a broad mandate to protect and promote the rights of all in Sierra Leone including those affected by climate change actions.

Outcomes human rights compliance indicators from communities/rights holders

- **Right to life:** All six communities had experienced natural disasters in the last five years, including floods, storms, rising water levels, heavy rainfall and wildfires. Four communities recorded 13 deaths (6 men, 6 children and 1 woman), and some communities experienced the same type of disaster twice within five years.

- **Right to health:** All six communities (100%) reported diseases or health disorders linked to changing climatic conditions, including respiratory diseases, malaria, typhoid, stress, depression and hyperthermia, affecting women, men, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

- **Right to water:** All six communities (100%) reported water shortages caused by prolong dry season or drought, saltwater intrusion and, in mining communities, pollution of water sources by mining activities. Women, girls, boys, older persons and persons with disabilities were the worst affected.

- **Right to adequate food:** All six communities (100%) reported food shortages or problems of availability, quality and accessibility in the last five years, resulting from extreme temperatures, storm damage, flooding and reduced crop yields.

- **Right to adequate housing:** Five of the six communities (83.3%) had not relocated, but three (60%) of the five communities had experienced temporary displacement due to floods. Only one community (16.7%) holds formal or legally recognised land documents, and all six (100%) feel insecure about their land and property rights.

- **Crosscutting issues:** Participants had little knowledge of the link between climate change and human rights; environmental monitoring and enforcement in mining areas were considered

weak; hard-to-reach areas such as parts of Falaba District face additional exclusion; and, where State support was absent, communities relied on local councils, NGOs and family members.

Recommendations

1) **Expand and target adaptation programmes.** The MoECC, EPA and local councils should extend adaptation programmes to the communities that currently receive no support, and increase the scale and adequacy of support to those that do, guided by community-level needs assessments.

2) **Strengthen disaster risk reduction.** The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), the Office of National Security (ONS) and local councils should invest in early warning systems, community-based preparedness, accurate recording of disaster losses, and timely emergency assistance, with priority for flood- and storm-prone communities.

3) **Integrate public health into adaptation.** Health authorities and adaptation planners should strengthen malaria and typhoid prevention, improve drainage and safe water supply, and provide psychosocial support for people affected by climate-related disasters.

4) **Secure access to safe water.** The Ministry of Water Resources and partners should develop drought-resilient and protected water sources, and ensure that water sources are safeguarded from mining pollution and saltwater intrusion.

5) **Promote climate-resilient food systems.** The Ministry of Agriculture and food Security should scale-up climate-smart agriculture, including improved seeds, extension services, storage facilities and sustainable farming practices, with particular attention to women farmers.

6) **Protect land tenure and housing rights.** The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning and local authorities should accelerate the documentation of land and property, recognise and protect customary tenure, and ensure genuine consultation with rights holders before any relocation, resettlement or eviction.

7) **Enforce environmental safeguards in mining areas.** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Minerals Agency (NMA) should strengthen monitoring and

enforcement of license conditions, require restoration of mined land, protect mangroves and forests, and support alternative livelihoods for affected communities.

8) **Ensure inclusion and reach out:-** Adaptation and disaster programmes should deliberately include women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, and prioritise hard-to-reach areas by improving roads and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

9) **Raise awareness and build capacity:-** The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), civil society organisations and local councils should raise community awareness of the link between climate change and human rights, and build the capacity of duty bearers to apply a rights-based approach to climate action, bio-diversity conservation and environmental protection

10) **Improve coordination and monitoring: -** Ministry of Environment and climate change, EPA, HRCSL, and CSOs should establish a coordination and monitoring mechanism that includes human rights-based indicators in climate change impact assessment and disaster reporting.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Human Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) like all national human rights institutions globally perceives climate change as a human rights issue because it hampers the full realization of several rights including right to life, food, housing, education, clean water and sanitation, among others. This precipitated the need for the Commission to establish the Directorate of Climate Change and Information Service with the aim of taking the lead responsibility for coordinating public education, monitoring and research activities on the human rights implications of climate change impacts and environmental degradation. Through this directorate, the Commission works in collaboration with government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and other partners to integrate human rights-based approach into climate change and environmental laws, plans and policies geared towards the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

The specific obligations pertaining to climate adaptation are contained in Article 7, paragraph 9, of the Paris Agreement, which provides that "each Party shall, as appropriate, engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions, including the development or enhancement of relevant plans, policies and/or contributions".

The Paris Agreement also underlines that "Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights". States must analyse and address different vulnerabilities of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations in line with a human rights-based approach. Basically, a human rights-based approach leads to more sustainable and effective climate action and climate policies.

A human rights-based approach to climate action include:

- ✓ Aligning climate policies and programmes with human rights standards
- ✓ Meaningful and inclusive participation of rights-holders in decision-making processes
- ✓ Non-discrimination and equality with attention to groups most at risk
- ✓ Accountability and access to justice
- ✓ Transparency and access to information

The Commission recognizes the importance of protecting the environment and biodiversity for present and future generations. HRCSL also holds that environmental pollution and biodiversity loss worsen the impact of climate change and is a threat to human security as it affect the right to health, clean water and conducive environment. HRCSL is concerned that climate change disproportionately affects the most vulnerable reinforcing existing disparities and creating new economic and social inequalities.

1.1 Background Information on the impacts climate change in Sierra Leone

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our generation with consequences that transform life on earth and adversely affect the livelihood of many people. It poses great risks and threats to the environment, human health, accessibility and inclusion, access to water, sanitation and food, security, and economic and social development. The impacts of climate change interfere with the effective enjoyment of human rights with disproportionate effect on many disadvantaged, marginalized, excluded and vulnerable individuals, communities and groups, including those whose ways of life are inextricably linked to the environment.

Sierra Leone has already witnessed the negative impact of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights. It is ranked as one of the 10 most vulnerable countries in the world to the impacts of global climate change[1]. Climate change impacts in the recent past had include mudslides, flooding, seaweeds, abnormal rainfall leading to poor agricultural yield, water shortage due to deforestation and prolong dry season, and heatwaves leading to outbreaks of diseases such as malaria, Ebola, water borne disease etc. It is obvious that like in most developing countries, Sierra Leone climate change has started threaten the effective enjoyment of a range of human rights including the right to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, culture and other procedural and developmental rights.

Sierra Leone and other States in Africa are parties to the climate pillar instruments, in particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement, which represent and set the foundational standards for global governance to

[1] Vulnerability rankings | ND-GAIN Index

address the causes and consequences of climate change. Sierra Leone has already adopted the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Therefore, the State has a human rights obligation to prevent the foreseeable adverse effects of climate change and ensure that those affected by it, particularly those in vulnerable situations, have access to effective remedies and means of adaptation to enjoy lives of human dignity. The implementation of the Paris Agreement is the responsibility of everyone and every stakeholder and the Commission with its broad mandate plays a key role in monitoring government's compliance to its international treaty-body reporting obligation.

The Commission, being a problem-solving institution, heavily influences law reform to address human rights issues in the country. The Commission sees climate change impacts on the environment as a serious human rights issue in the current dispensation, which precipitated the need for HRCSL to establish the Directorate of Climate Change and Information Service.

1.2 Project objectives

The specific objectives of the rights-holder assessment were as follows:

- Assess the impact of climate change in six affected communities across five regions on vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Document instances where climate change has led to human rights violations, including issues related to displacement, loss of livelihoods, access to resources, food and water insecurity, and health impacts.
- Raise awareness among government institutions, civil society organisations, development partners, and local communities about the urgent need to integrate human rights perspectives into climate change policies and actions.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks addressing the intersection of climate change and human rights.

1.3 Milestone Achievements

The quick successes were:

a) A draft Analytical framework assessment tool for climate change impacts draws on the UN OHCHR human rights indicators methodology was tested for the second time.

b) A good number of climate change – related laws, policies, action plans and programmes strategies were identified and analyzed. These laws, policies and plans included:

- Nationally Determined Contributions reports
- Environmental protection laws and policies
- Mid-Teem National Adaptation policies, plans and programmes
- National Mitigation Policies And Action Plans,
- National Development Plan (2024- 2030)
- Sierra Leone National Climate Change Police, Etc.

c) State compliance rating of various substantive human rights indicators with regards to disaster risk reduction were assessed, gaps identified and recommendations proffered.

d) HRCSL research team knowledge of using the draft analytical framework tool in analyzing existing climate change-related laws, policies and national actions plans broaden and prepared them for date collection and documenting rights holders' assessment of climate change impacts and impacts of climate change measures.

e) The research team discovered that there is no direct climate change law in Sierra Leone except environmental laws and climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and plans.

f) Community outreach and awareness raising, and data collection were successfully conducted in six localities with a total number of 120 community stakeholders actively participated.

g) Report compiled, validated and submitted against deadline.

1.4 Key Project Issues Identified

- **Time management** – the commencement of the project coincided with the heavy rains fall season in Sierra Leone, and at the prime of the farming season of the targeted communities. Also limited time was given to implement a research of this nature, which requires enough time to prepare the data collection framework, analysis of the existing legal, policies, initiatives

and plans, and selection of appropriate communities for field data collection of outcomes from right holders. This issues were addressed through collective collaboration with other directorates and the regional offices in order to fast track the implementation of activities and meet reporting deadlines

- **Understanding the draft analytical framework tool**: Although the use of the draft national legal assessment and rights holders' assessment questionnaire has been tested once, majority of staff have not still comprehensively understand the content of the framework tool and how to administer it. This issue was addressed by holding further in house special training sessions with the research staff engage directly in the implementation of the project on the content of the framework questionnaires and its application.
- **Rights holders perception of the data collection exercise and their expectations**: On receiving letters from HRCSL for the community engagement and focus group discussion on the climate change impacts climate change on rights holders, some community stakeholders received the letters with mixed feelings. Some stakeholders were reluctant to attend thinking that the Commission want to probe into their personal affairs and the way they are using their lands and the environment. This issue was addressed through repeated phone calls to explain to them the rationale of the focus group discussion. Also, the approach of the data collection team was to first raise awareness on the connection between climate change impacts and the enjoyment of human rights as well as educated them on the mandate and functions of HRCSL in ensuring that duty bearers are held accountable of their human rights obligations in the context of climate change impacts.

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT PROGRESS DELIVERABLES

2.1 Methodology

In this baseline research, the 'Analytical Framework Tool (AFT) was used to collect and analysis data as a benchmark for climate change impact assessment from a human rights perspective. The tool was developed with support from the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) in collaboration with other partners and is based on the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) methodology for developing human rights indicators. This method involves identifying the relevant human rights and state obligations to monitor and document.

The Analytical Framework Tool provides for both legal, policy, programmes and institutional evaluation and for rights holders assessment on the impact of climate change using the same climate theme and human rights indicators. The tool generates both qualitative and quantitate data depending on how you customised it.

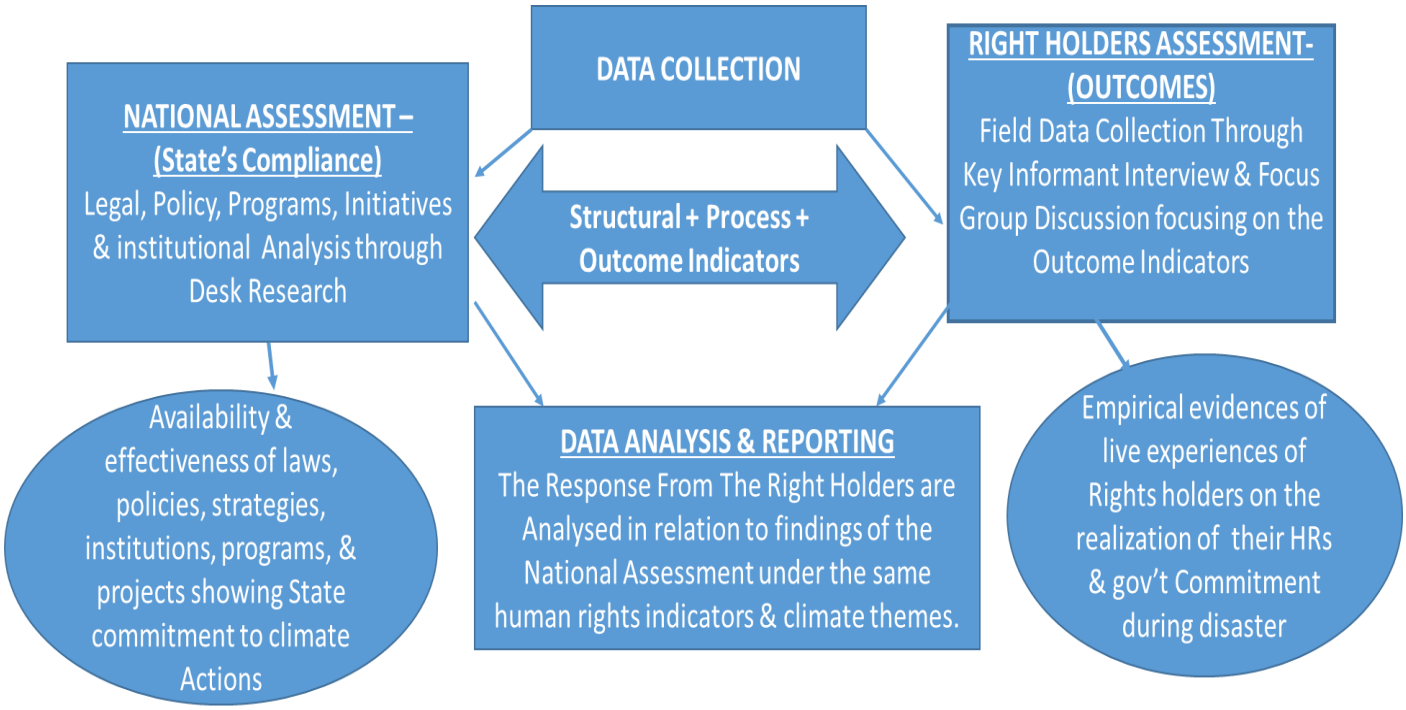


Figure 1: Analytical Framework Approach to Data Collection

2.2 Description of Structure, Process and Outcome Indicators

During the information gathering, relevant laws and policies, plans and programmes were analysed. In some instances, the information was complemented by interviews with relevant government authorities and representatives of civil society organisations. After identifying relevant human rights, such as the right to life, key obligations in the context of climate change are identified based mainly on General Comments and other human rights instruments - for example the obligation to ensure equal access to initiatives and programmes for disaster risk reduction. The assessment of whether the State is living up to this particular obligation is then assessed through structure, process and outcome indicators and related questions captured in the framework tool as in the example below:

Structure indicators	Process indicators	Outcome indicators
Structural indicators help capture the acceptance, intent and **commitment** of the State to undertake measures in keeping with its human rights obligations.	Process indicators help assess a State's **efforts,** through its **implementation** of policy measures and programmes, to transform its human rights commitments into the desired results.	Outcome indicators help assess the **results of State efforts** in furthering the **enjoyment of human rights**
For example, Existence of a national disaster risk reduction strategy.	For example, Implementation of initiatives and programmes to address climate disaster-related risks and impacts for groups in vulnerable situations.	For example, • Number of deaths, missing and directly affected persons attributed to climate-related disasters • Equal access to initiatives and programmes for disaster risk reduction

The right holders' assessment tool was used to assess and document c*limate change impacts on human rights enjoyment and Impacts of climate change measures* (mitigation and adaptation related) on rights enjoyment. This assessment process require interviews with rights holders – as individuals or in focus groups. The rights holders' questionnaire consists exclusively of outcome indicators, as it is intended to capture outcomes in terms of rights realisation in practice. Hence, the structural and process indicators is found in the national assessment.

2.3 Human Rights Themes Captured in the Research Report

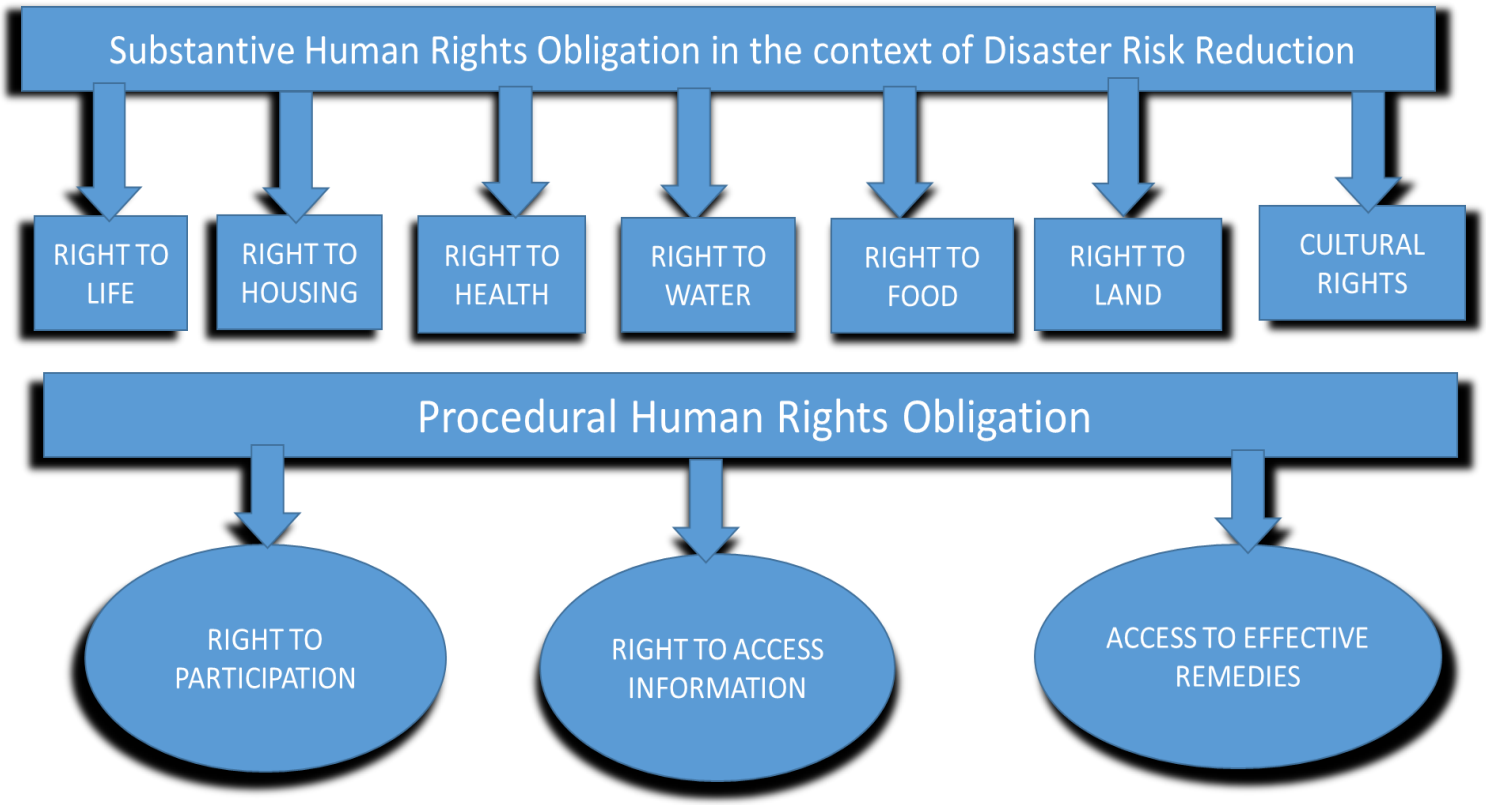


Figure 2: Substantive and Procedural human rights Obligations of the State

Substantive Human Rights Obligation: - These are State duties to ensure that rights holders impacted by climate change enjoy their specific rights, including the right to life itself. The State should have a clear focus on what human rights standards must be upheld including during and after climate-related disasters. The rights in scope in this assessment include the right to life, to health, water, food, housing, cultural rights and land rights. The findings and analysis of both the national and the rights-holders assessment in each of the category of right and indicator were integrated and presented in the findings.

Procedural human rights obligations: These are State duties to ensure that rights holders must participate in decision-making, access to information, and access to effective remedies and due process. The right to participation and access to information are about the enabling environment

for the people of Sierra Leone to meaningfully contribute to, benefit from climate change initiatives, and understand challenges and opportunities in this regard.

The State can fulfil these obligations by enacting laws that protect rights and establishing institutions, setting up courts that are accessible to vulnerable communities, ensuring the participation of rights holder in policy design and implementation, and providing alternative redress mechanisms accessible to all.

2.4 Project Progress/ Deliverables

National Assessment of climate change-related laws and policies from a Human Rights Perspective

The research team conducted an in-depth review and analysis of existing climate change-related laws, policies and plans through desk research. The overall aim was to probe whether these laws, policies and plans are compliant with State human rights obligations in the context climate action, and covered the interest of all vulnerable groups. Thorough analysis was also done to ascertain whether these laws and policies led to State initiatives and programmes that impacted positively and/or negatively on various vulnerable groups in the context of climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction.

Community Outreach and Data Collection on Rights Holders 'Assessment

The research team conducted community outreach and data collection exercise in six (6) communities from 10th to 28th August, 2026 drawn from the following locations: Koidu City, Kono district; Sinkunia Town, Falaba District; Gbangbatoke town, Moyamba District; Mambolo town, Kambia District; Waterloo and Goderich in the Western area. One hundred and twenty (120) Rights holders participated in the data collection process.

The discussions and interviews provided an opportunity to gather diverse perspectives, identify key challenges and gaps, and assess existing practices. The findings generated from the engagement contributed to inform the recommendations and strengthen human rights awareness, participation, and engagement among relevant stakeholders.

The table below shows participants' analysis of gender disaggregation by community and region respectively.

No.	Date Implemented	Locations	No. of Participants	Male	Female
1	11 /08/ 2026	Koidu, Kono District	20	15	5
2	13/08/2026	Sinkunia, Falaba district	20	17	3
3	17 /08/2026	Gbangbatoke, Moyamba District	20	17	3
4	**20/08/2026**	Mambolo, Kambia District	20	17	3
5	26 / 08/ 2026	Waterloo, Western Rural	20	13	7
6	27 /08/2026	Goderich, Western Urban	20	9	11
	Total		**120**	**88**	**32**

2.5 Lessons Learned and Human-Interest Stories

The key project successes and factors, which supported these successes, included:

- The draft national assessment framework tool developed by HRCSL with aid of partner NHRI found to be very exhaustive and useful in analysing and identifying gaps on the existing climate change-related laws, policies, initiatives and plans. This enable the research team to align climate change themes with structural and process indicators.
- Similarly, the rights holders assessment questionnaire, although bulky, it was user friendly and allows meaningful interactions between and among the interviewees and interviewers. The tool enable the research team to identify human rights themes and outcome indicators of state compliance to it substantive and procedural human rights obligation.
- The willingness of participants help in the successful outcome of the entire exercise
- Working with community stakeholders such as area chief, town chief helps in the successful project implementation of this nature.

Few issues observed that may have been done differently or requires some changes to attain higher project results included:

- **Manageability of the framework tool**: Although all the indicators on the rights holders assessment are relevant, however, the questionnaire appears to be too details and cumbersome to administer and time consuming. There is the need for more modification of the questions under procedural human rights obligation since there is no direct law enacted on climate change; e.g. questions under Rights to access to information, and access to effective remedies need to be further simplified.

- **Limited Community public education on environmental rights and the impacts of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights**: It was observed that majority of community members were unaware of environmental laws, policies and climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and plans. Community awareness of their environmental rights and responsibilities, and the State human rights obligation to protect, respect and fulfil, would enable them to provide more useful information in a focus group discussion or person to person interview in the context of climate change.

2.6 Criteria for Human Rights-Based Approach to Data Collection

The principle applicable to human rights-based approach to data collection include:

- **Participation:** Enable meaningful participation of rights-holders in data collection. This requires taking into account power imbalances, security concerns, language/interpretation needs, accessibility and timing of interviews, etc. It is important to pay extra attention to hear the voices of women, persons with disabilities, minority groups, etc. Strategies will depend on the context (for example, it may be necessary to organise separate discussions with women to ensure that they are comfortable expressing their views).
- **Disaggregation:** Ideally, data should be disaggregated by key characteristics identified in international human rights law. This may require separate focus group discussions and specific follow-up questions to capture the situation for different rights holders, understanding intersecting forms of marginalisation.

- **Self-identification:** Rights-holders/respondents should define their own characteristics and have the option to disclose, or withhold information about their personal characteristics.
- **Do no harm:** Data collectors should consider how to avoid inadvertently contributing to harm such as stigmatisation, tension, conflict or retaliation through the data collection exercise.
- **Transparency**: Clearly explain who the data collectors are, the purposes of the data collection and how data will be used.
- **Privacy:** Ensure data protection and confidentiality, for example by not capturing or exposing the names of individuals.
- **Accountability:** Use data to hold duty bearers accountable for their human rights obligations and support rights-holders/respondents to use the data for their own purposes.

2.7 Criteria for Selection of Location and Participants

Criteria for Location Selection: The communities and regions were selected based on the vulnerability and records of incidents of climate-related impacts reported to the Commission over the years. These communities are highly prone to disasters related to the impacts of climate change and other related matters. The impact of climate change has caused significant loss of lives, properties, and poverty in these communities as a result of flooding, environmental degradation by multiple mining companies, deforestation, and mudslides during the rains. There has also been a decline in rainfall across the regions, shortages of water and its negative impact caused when it rains.

Criteria for Selecting Participants Focus group discussion: Participants were selected purposefully based on their roles and knowledge of the community. Therefore the participants comprised of community stakeholders such as traditional leaders, security personnel, CSOs, youth leaders, women's leaders (mammy queens), community health workers, landowners, school heads, community social workers, community elders, land/property/house owners' rep, persons with disabilities rep., farmers' association rep, district human rights committees, local councilors, community school heads rep, and religious leaders (Muslim & Christian rep).

3.0 LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED FRAMEWORKS

3.1 National Legal and Policy Frameworks

The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone provides the supreme legal foundation for natural resource governance in Sierra Leone. Chapter two of the constitution provides the Fundamental obligations and Principles of State Policy about achieving political, social, economic and educational objectives. The key provisions include protects citizens' rights to livelihood, food security and economic participation[2]; directs the State to manage natural resources for the benefit of all citizens; requires government institutions to promote environmental protection and sustainable development; and supports decentralization and local participation in resource management.

However, the gaps include limited constitutional guidance on community environmental rights, and there is no explicit recognition of the impact of climate change. Also, the provisions contained in Chapter two of the Constitution do not confer legal rights and therefore cannot be enforceable in any court of law. They are policy objectives fundamental principles in the governance of the State, and lay emphases on Parliament to apply these principles in making laws[3].

The Environmental Protection Act, 2022 - The Environmental Protection Act is the Principal Environmental Legislation that provides the overarching framework for environmental management. The key provisions of the Act relevant to fisheries include Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); mandatory for projects likely to affect the environment (including fish processing plants, aquaculture facilities, and coastal infrastructure); pollution control (marine pollution and prevention, and waste management requirements); biodiversity conservation (habitat protection and ecosystem restoration); and climate change (climate adaptation and mitigation measures). The significance of this Act is that it made provisions for the protection of coastal ecosystems, estuaries, mangrove habitats, and fish breeding grounds[4]. However, enforcement and monitoring limitations remain the huge gaps.

[2] Section 7 (1)(d); 8 Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, p.8
[3] GoSL, The Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991; Section 14, p.
[4] GoSL, The Environmental Protection Act, 2022; Section 73 (1)–(2); p.52

The Forestry (Amendment) Act, 2022 - This Act replaces the Forestry Act of 1988 and it is the Modernization of Forest Governance in Sierra Leone as it strengthens forest conservation measures. Key Improvements in this Act are that it enhanced penalties for illegal logging, improved protection of mangroves, and provides stronger conservation mechanisms. The fisheries significance of the Act is that it supports protection of fish breeding habitats, climate resilience, and coastal ecosystem sustainability. Irrespective of the good provisions in this Act, enforcement capacity and community dependence on mangrove resources remain a huge challenge.

National Protected Areas Authority Act, 2012 - The Act is a Biodiversity and Conservation Framework, which establishes the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) responsible for protected areas management. Its relevance to fisheries is that it provides for the protection of critical marine and coastal ecosystems. The primary functions of the NPAA include management of protected areas, biodiversity conservation and community participation. The key benefits to the fisheries sector are that protected areas help rebuild fish stocks, protect spawning grounds and maintain ecosystem services. However, among the challenges include potential conflicts between conservation objectives and fishing livelihoods; and resource constraints for management.

3.2 Regional Legal Framework

Article 24 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) provides that "all peoples shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favourable to their development". The effects of climate change will threaten the right to food guaranteed to everyone under the combined reading of articles 4 (right to life), 16 (right to health) and 22 on the right to food of the ACHPR, article 14 (2)(c) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the goal of the Older Persons Protocol, article 20(1) of the Persons with Disabilities Protocol, article 14(2) of the African Youth Charter, and article 9(2)(b) of the Kampala Convention. The right to water is not expressly mentioned in the African Charter but can be derived from article 16(1) of the African Charter. In fulfilment of article 14(2)(c), the ACRWC imposes an obligation on states to ensure the provision of adequate water. A similar provision can be found in article 15 of the Maputo Protocol, and a similar call on states for the provision of access to water is found in the Older Persons Protocol.

During the Africa Climate Summit (ACS) held in Nairobi, Kenya from 5th to 6th September, 2023, African Heads of State endorsed a Declaration on Climate Change and Call for Climate Action. Paragraph 10 of the declaration 'expresses concern that many African countries face disproportionate burdens and risk arising from climate change-related unpredictable weather events and patterns, including prolonged droughts, devastating floods, out-of-season storms, and wildfires, which cause massive humanitarian crisis with detrimental impacts on economies, health, education, peace and security, among other risks'. The Declaration went further to call on member states to "strengthen actions to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, deforestation, and desertification, as well as restore degraded lands to achieve land degradation neutrality; and implement the Abidjan declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration...

3.3 **International Legal Framework**

Sierra Leone and other States in Africa are parties to the climate pillar instruments, in particular, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement which represent and set the foundational standards for global governance to address the causes and consequences of climate change. In particular, the UNFCCC defines climate change as 'a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.' State parties to the Paris Agreement have recognised the importance of human rights in climate action, agreeing "to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights" when taking climate action.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA Resolution A/76/L.75) also calls upon States, international organisations, businesses, and other stakeholders to "scale up efforts" to ensure a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all, and affirms that its promotion "requires the full implementation" of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) "under the principles of international environmental law" .

Sierra Leone has adopted the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The implementation of the Paris Agreement is the responsibility of everyone and every stakeholder and HRCSL with its broad mandate can play a key role in monitoring this implementation. Also, when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda was adopted in September 2015, which was also a landmark, NHRIs, including HRCSL, met in Mexico to discuss how they can contribute

to the international commitment “to leave no one behind”. Their meeting resulted in the Merida Declaration, which specifies the various roles that NHRIs can undertake to monitor the implementation of such goals, while discharging their protective and promotional mandate.

The 2022 UN Climate Change Conference or the Conference of the Parties Decision ‘acknowledged that climate change is a common concern of humankind; and that States Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity’.

Furthermore, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) at its annual conference on Climate Change and the role of national human rights institutions in December 2020 called for ‘a human rights-based approach that leads to more sustainable and effective climate action and climate policies. GANHRI calls on states to ratify and implement international and regional human rights treaties, taking into account the recommendations and guidance from the UN Human Rights Council, UN Special Procedures and UN Treaty Bodies.

Sierra Leone has either or ratified several international human rights treaties, conventions and thereby assumed binding obligations to respect, protect and fulfill human rights, including in the context of climate change impacts. These international instruments included:

- 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR);
- 1965 International Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICAFRD);
- 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- 1982 United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- 1990- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- 2007 International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD)
- 2018 UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)

3.4 Institutional Frameworks and Structures

The Ministries Departments and agencies (MDAs) highlighted below are key structures for climate change mitigation and adaptation mechanism and the governance and management of bio-diversity conservation and land degradation. They are also relevant to ocean and marine conservation, and are institutions responsible for implementing the aforesaid laws and policies. These MDAs work most effectively when they coordinate their efforts, as climate change, environmental pollution and bio-diversity conservation require collaboration across environmental, security, labour, land, agriculture and local governance sectors. HRCSL work in collaboration with these MDAs to ensure that their policies, programmes and plans integrate a human rights-based approach in their formulation and implementations.

These institutions are hereby highlighted below.

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) - The mandate of this Ministry is to formulate and facilitate the implementation of appropriate policies and programmes for sustainable management of the Environment. The Ministry provides effective leadership, partnership and good governance to protect, conserve and sustainably utilise environmental resources for the betterment of the present and future generations. HRCSL hopes to collaborate with MECC in achieving the collective goals and aspirations of the two institutions in protecting, conserving and restoring the environment of Sierra Leone; and in implementing government environmental policies in order to improve and maintain the quality of life of its citizens through sustainable development.

The National Protected Area Authority (NPAA) & Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) - The NPAA is a statutory institution with one of its functions under Section 12 (1) 'is to exercise oversight authority over national parks and protected areas designated for conservation purposes so as to protect the fauna and flora in its natural state, promote sustainable land use practices and environmental management'. Section 12 (2) (m) further gives NPAA the responsibility to 'sensitise local communities and address local stakeholders' interests on land conservation and socioeconomic issues'.

Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning- The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP) has the mandate to manage and administer the land resource and to

facilitate equitable access to and control over land within the context of food security, poverty alleviation, housing provision and economic growth. The Ministry is responsible for formulating appropriate policies/legislation on land management and administration that promote sustainable management of the environment and effective land use planning. The Ministry's role is vital in the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures especially considering the issue of rural–urban migration and its attendant social, economic and political challenges.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - The broad mandate of the Agency is to effectively protect and manage the environment; monitor and regulate companies with EIA Licences and illegal operations that have an impact on the environment and advise the Minister of Environment on all environmental matters. The HRCSL's partnership with this Agency in climate change action and environmental protections is vital as its responsibilities include ensuring compliance and enforcement of environmental impact assessment procedures, and to pursue environmental education to create public awareness of the environment and its importance to the economic and social life of Sierra Leoneans. Its mission statement is to effectively protect and sustainably manage the environment and its natural resources for human health and well-being for all in Sierra Leone.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Food Security- The core mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is to formulate agricultural development policies and to advise the Government on such policies relating to its administration and the management of the agricultural sector of the Sierra Leone's economy. The agricultural sector can be hard hit by the impact of climate change, and therefore, the Ministry is a key partner in ensuring the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Ministry of Water Resources -The Ministry is mandated to provide water sector leadership, formulate policies, regulations and standards for the water sector, and to ensure that the population is provided with adequate and reliable potable water supply. The Ministry has the responsibility to engender collaboration and cooperation amongst water sector stakeholders in ensuring that the country's water resources are properly managed. Climate change can greatly affect the supply of water particularly because of the deforestation of water catchment areas. HRCSL therefore needs

to collaborate with this Ministry in raising awareness to protect the water catchment areas and to ensure access to reliable and sustainable potable water supply and well managed water resources.

National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) - is an Agency established by an Act of Parliament to manage disasters and similar emergencies throughout Sierra Leone. It has offices in every district and has established disaster management committees at national, regional, district and chiefdom levels throughout the country. The Agency is responsible for preparing, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating and updating disaster management plans, and providing the first-line response in the event of disasters and in establishing early warning systems. NDMA also investigates reports of hazards and analyse their nature, vulnerability, and risk situations in specific areas. The HRCSL can work with NDMA in ensuring that a rights-based approach is used in disaster preparedness and management.

Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA) – This Foundation was established in 1992 to inspire and enable community-led programs for sustainable environmental management as a basis for poverty alleviation in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia. The strategy and mission of EFA is that in order to protect the natural environment in Sierra Leone, root causes of environmental degradation in the region must be addressed. In 2005 EFA put forth a concept to link all environmental players under one network known as the Green Actors of West Africa (GAWA) – with a mission to synchronise environmental efforts, transfer skills, and speak with one unified voice on the most urgent environmental threats facing West Africa and its people. HRCSL would tap into the experiences of this organisation in its thrust to address the human rights implications of climate change and environmental degradation.

Office of National Security - The Office of National Security (ONS) was established by an Act of Parliament – The National Security and Central Intelligence Act (2002) to serve as the secretariat of the National Security Council (NSC) in fulfilling an urgent demand for a high-level authority to provide for the coordination and oversight of the security sector. The mandate of the ONS encompasses the specific responsibilities of the National Security Coordinator and other assigned and implied tasks/responsibilities provided in the Act including disaster preparedness and management.

Guma Valley Water Company: - An Ordinance of Parliament established this Company in April 1961 with the primary objective of providing safe and affordable water to the residents of Greater Freetown. The 1961 Ordinance that created the Company was repealed and replaced by the Guma Valley Water Company Act (No. 6) of 2017. The Guma Valley Water Company Act (No. 6 of 2017) expanded the mandate of the company to cover the whole of the Western Area with a population of 1.5 million residents. The Company relies principally on a single source, the Guma Dam, with over 90% of the total water supply to Freetown supplied from the Guma Dam and the Guma Water Treatment Plant at Mile 13. Other sources include Kongo Dam, Sugar Loaf, Charlotte Weir, Blue Cemetery, White Water, etc.; however, all these secondary sources are seasonal and only supply during the rainy season to early dry season period.

4.0 FINDINGS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON RIGHTS HOLDERS

4.1 Climate Theme: Adaptation

Climate change adaptation refers to adjustments in natural and human systems that reduce vulnerability to the actual or expected effects of climate change. From a human rights perspective, adaptation measures must be accessible to everyone on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, informed by the meaningful participation of affected communities, and designed to protect those who are most vulnerable. This section presents the findings on the extent to which rights holders in the six communities have access to adaptation initiatives and programmes, and how adequate they consider that support to be.

4.1.1 Human Rights Theme: General Human Rights Obligations

General Human Rights Obligations

In the context of climate change adaption, the state has three major obligations to fulfil:

1) **Obligation to respect** - The State must refrain from actions that unjustifiably interfere with human rights in the name of climate adaptation. For example, it should avoid arbitrary evictions or forced displacement of coastal communities during flood-control, mangrove-restoration or relocation projects.
2) **Obligation to protect** -The State must take reasonable and effective measures to protect individuals and communities against human rights harm caused by businesses, private actors and environmental hazards. Examples include regulating construction in flood-prone areas, controlling pollution, enforcing environmental standards and protecting communities from unsafe industrial activities.
3) **Obligation to fulfil-** The State must take positive legislative, administrative, budgetary, judicial and practical measures to progressively realise human rights. Examples include investing in early-warning systems, climate-resilient health facilities, drainage, safe drinking water, resilient agriculture and adequate housing.

Key international and regional human rights instruments that provide the legal foundation for assessing State obligations in climate change adaptation include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006)
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)
- Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003)
- Paris Agreement (2015)-Art.7

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992) – Art 4 & 5

Findings

Access to and adequacy of adaptation support. Three of the six communities visited (50%) confirmed receiving support from government initiatives aimed at climate change adaptation, while the remaining three (50%) reported receiving no support at all. In all three communities that received support, participants indicated that it was not sufficient to meet their needs. The findings therefore point to unequal and inadequate access to government adaptation programmes, with a half of the communities assessed excluded entirely.

Community experiences and adaptation needs. Participants described a range of climate-related pressures for which they felt adaptation measures were needed:

Sinkunia, Falaba District: Participants reported degradation and deforestation of the rainforest and irregular, unpredictable rainfall, which have reduced crop yields and increased poverty among farming households. They called for stronger environmental protection, climate change adaptation measures and support for sustainable agricultural practices.

Kombili, Falaba District: Following repeated ground tremors, the Council facilitated the relocation of affected residents to another settlement, with additional support from Falaba Women's Organization.

Gbangbatoke, Moyamba District: Deforestation, degradation of mangrove ecosystems, pollution and the creation of artificial lakes linked to mining activities were reported to have affected livelihoods. Participants noted the absence of alternative livelihood opportunities and questioned the effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Minerals Agency (NMA) in monitoring and enforcement of laws and regulations.

Kono District: After a heavy storm in Gbane chiefdom that affected over 100 people, emergency support in the form of used clothing, foodstuff and building materials came from the Mayor, NGOs and family members. By contrast, Samadu community, which experienced flooding, received no support.

Reach and accessibility. Participants identified Falaba District as one of the most vulnerable districts. Chiefdoms such as Falamusu, Kaliyereh, Waliya, Kulorsaradu and Gbentu were described as hard-to-reach because of poor road networks and limited access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities. These conditions are likely to make it more difficult for adaptation programmes to reach these communities, and increase the risk of their being left behind.

Awareness and participation. Communities had little or no knowledge of the link between climate change and human rights, although they recognised the effects of changing temperatures, flooding, drought, erosion, thunderstorms and rising water levels on their lives. Limited awareness constrains the ability of rights holders to claim adaptation support and to take part in decisions that affect them. In addition, women accounted for only 26.7% of participants in the assessment, which underlines the need for deliberate efforts to include women's perspectives in the design of adaptation programmes.

Land tenure and displacement. Only one of the six communities (16.7%) holds formal or legally recognised documents for its land and property, and three of the five communities that had not relocated have experienced temporary displacement due to floods (see the findings on the right to adequate housing in Section 4.2). Insecure tenure and recurrent displacement can weaken the capacity of communities to invest in, and benefit from, long-term adaptation measures.

Human rights implications. Overall, the findings show that adaptation support is not yet consistent with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and accountability. Where government support exists, it is inadequate; where it is absent, communities depend largely on local councils, NGOs, community organisations and family members. Duty bearers should therefore expand and target adaptation programmes towards the communities left behind, prioritise sustainable livelihoods and climate-resilient agriculture, strengthen environmental monitoring and enforcement, and ensure that affected rights holders, including women, are meaningfully involved in the design and delivery of adaptation measures.

4.2 Climate Theme: Disaster Risk Reduction

4.2.1 Human Rights Theme: Substantive Human Rights Obligation

Substantive Human Rights Obligations:

In the context of climate-induced disaster risk, the State has an obligation to take reasonable, effective and non-discriminatory measures to prevent or reduce foreseeable disaster risks, protect people from harm, and ensure that everyone can enjoy their human rights before, during and after a disaster.

These obligations apply to disasters caused by natural hazards, such as floods, landslides, droughts, storms and coastal erosion, as well as disasters intensified by climate change, environmental degradation and unsafe human activities.

The substantive human rights obligation include:

- Protect the right to life
- Protect the right to health
- Ensure the right to adequate food and nutrition
- Ensure the right to clean water
- Protect the right to adequate housing
- Protect land, property and livelihoods
- Protect and prioritise vulnerable and disproportionately affected groups
- Protect cultural rights and community heritage
- Protect a healthy environment

The key instruments mentioned at the general human rights obligations and the State duties to respect, protect and fulfil is as well applicable on the substantive and procedural human rights obligations.

Findings

In all of the communities visited, participants reported that they have experienced several disasters associated with climate change in the past five years including flooding, heavy storms, heavy rainfall and extreme heat. One of the communities greatly affected was Gbane Chiefdom, where more than 100 people were directly affected.

The affected victims received support from the Mayor, family members and other NGOs. The support included clothing, food items and some building materials. Chiefdoms such as Samadu and Gbeseh Market were also affected, but the victims were not fortunate enough to receive support. In Sinkunia, one house was burnt and three households were affected. No deaths were reported, but property was lost. The Matrix below highlights some of the key findings.

Findings Matrix

No	Climate & Human Rights Theme	Indicators	Analysis of Rights Holders' Responses
1	Adaptation	Equal access to initiatives and programmes for climate change	The findings show that out of the six communities visited, four communities (50%) confirmed receiving support from government initiatives aimed at climate change adaptation, while the remaining two communities (50%) confirmed not receiving any support at all. Of the 50% that received support, all indicated that the support was not sufficient. This suggests that even where government intervention exists, it is inadequate or does not create the desired impact. Overall, the above findings indicate unequal and inadequate access to government adaptation programs. The fact that 33.3% of the communities are excluded shows a significant gap in equity and coverage.
2	Right to life	Equal access to Initiatives and programmes for disaster risk reduction	Out of the six communities visited, they all have experienced natural disasters in the last five years ranging from floods, storms, rising water levels, heavy rainfall, wildfires and so on. Four of these communities had 13 deaths as a result of the above climate change disasters: 6 men, 6 children (mainly boys) and 1 woman. One community confirmed a lost fishing boat and an individual that went missing. One confirmed people were directly affected with no deaths or missing person.

			Overall, a large number of people are directly affected. Some of these communities have experienced some of these climate change disasters twice in five years.
3	Right to the highest attainable standard of health	Prevalence of disease or health disorders with a possible link to changing climate conditions	The findings reveals that all of the communities have had people who experienced prevalence of some disease or health disorders as a result of climate change conditions, ranging from respiratory diseases, malaria, typhoid, stress, depression and hyperthermia. A large number of people were affected, including women, men, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. This shows a direct link between changing climatic conditions and public health outcomes. The high prevalence of malaria and typhoid can be attributed to increased flooding, poor drainage and contamination of water sources, which creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes and waterborne disease. Overall, this 100% prevalence across all communities suggests that the health impacts of climate change are widespread and not isolated. It implies an urgent need to integrate public health interventions into climate change adaptation programmes.
4	Right to water	Enjoyment of the right to water in the context of climate change	The findings show that 100% (6 out of 6) of the communities visited reported water shortages due to drought, saltwater intrusion from sea level rise, mining activities in mining communities. In mining communities, mining activities frequently polluted water sources, making the water difficult to use. Those most affected are women, girls, boys, older persons, persons with disabilities. The 100% prevalence shows that the scarcity of water is a universal challenge across all the assessed communities and this can be attributed to climate variability and environmental degradation.

			Participants reported that women and children are particularly affected because they often travel long distances to fetch water. They stated that girls may face safety risks when going to fetch water, including sexual violence, and sometimes, some the girls affected ends up becoming teenage mothers and drop out of school. Participants also reported that the long distances can sometimes cause school going children to arrive late at school
5	Right to adequate food	Enjoyment of the right to adequate food in the context of climate change	All 6 communities (100%) have agreed they have experienced food shortage or other issues related to availability, quality and accessibility of food in the last five years. They all share common reasons related to this and these range from extreme temperatures, damage caused by storms, reduced crop yields and so on. Those disproportionately affected are women, men, boys, girls, older persons, persons with disabilities. The unanimous response indicates that food insecurity is a widespread and systemic impact of climate change across the communities assessed. Extreme temperatures affect food security in different ways. High heat leads to loss of soil moisture, reduced pollination and increased pest and disease infestation. Participants in Gbangbatoke and Mambolo informed the Human Rights team that food shortages are linked to the unavailability of land for cultivation. In Gbangbatoke, participants also reported that as a result of the extreme heat, storm damage, flooding, drought and delayed rainfall, has caused reduction of fish stock and crops harvest. In Mambolo, participants also reported that the heavy flooding that happened on the 26 September 2024 destroyed crops and farmlands. They also reported the emergence of new crop pests that have damaged crops and contributed to poor harvests.
6	Right to adequate housing	• Enjoyment of the right to adequate housing in the	Out of six communities assessed, five out of the six communities (83.3%) have not relocated due to climate change impacts. Among the five communities, three communities (60%) have experienced temporary displacement due to floods. Only one out of the six communities (16.7%) has formal or legally

		context of adverse climate change impacts • Incident of dispossession, displacement or relocation due to climate change measures and projects. • Tenure security in the context of climate change measures. • Consultation with rights holders prior to eviction relocation and resettlement.	recognised documents for their lands and properties. All six communities (100%) agreed that they are very likely to lose their rights to land and property and they all feel insecure because of it. One out of the six communities said they have experienced eviction due to mining activities and key stakeholders namely men, women and youth were involved in the consultation process. The data shows that while 83.3% of communities have remained in their original locations, they are living in a state of vulnerability. The fact that 60% have experienced displacement due to floods shows that climate induced displacement is recurrent. This temporary displacement often leads to loss of property, disruption of livelihoods and schooling, and exposure to health risks. The most critical findings are on land tenure security, where only 16.7% possess formal or legally recognised documents. This implies that 83.3% of the communities occupy land under customary or informal tenure without legal protection. The high level of tenure insecurity is worsened by climate change impacts. The communities visited reported several housing challenges linked to climate change. In Kono, participants reported that they have experienced flooding, which forced some affected people to temporarily relocate to other neighborhoods. Some were assisted by family members and friends, although the alternative accommodation was sometimes uncomfortable, unsuitable and inaccessible. Participants explained that they had no choice but to relocate temporarily to protect themselves from disasters that could threaten their right to life. They also mentioned that, it is very likely for them to lose their lands in the next five years as a result of climate change related issues.
7	Tenure security in the context of climate change measure	•	90% of respondents denied having any document claiming ownership of their rights to property, land and natural resources. They therefore see it very likely that they may lose their rights to their property, land and natural resources. Participants informed the team that they had experienced relocation for mining purposes. However, registered their forestation that these mining companies failed to meet the co-operate social responsibilities of the communities felt needs and deprivation of property rights.

Procedural Human Rights Obligations			
8	Right to Participation	• Rights-holder participation in impact assessments prior to approval of climate change-related projects; • Meaningful participation of rights-holders in the design, implementation, monitoring of climate change-related policies, plans laws, and projects	The participants in the 6 communities stated that community heads and local authorities are sometimes involved in decision making but their voices and ideas have not been reflecting in the outcome, leaving them with the notion that they were not heard. When asked whether community members actively participated through representatives in the design, implementation, monitoring of climate change-related policies, plans laws, and projects, 3 (50%) communities said yes but 50% expressed that they were not involved or represented.
9	Rights of Access to Information	Equal access to environmental information	One out of six (6) communities admitted that Information about applications for permits, licenses and authorizations for projects related to climate change, as well as the reasoning and decisions for those applications, was made available.
10	Access to Effective Remedies	• Possibility to appeal against government decisions regarding climate change-related policies, plans or projects through administrative and other mechanisms • Possibility to take legal action to litigate rights and seek remedies for infringement of rights due to climate change impacts and measures	All of the communities denied ever attempting to appeal against government decision regarding climate change related policy, plan or projects mainly because of lack of information about rights, financial resources, limited access to legal aid, distance to relevant authorities and limited access to environmental information and scientific evidence necessary for appeal. Note: respondents complained of have serious challenge with redress mechanism with mining companies as most damage caused by their activities remained unresolved even after complaining to the Paramount Chiefs; At Black Johnson, Western Rural, participants claimed that Government took their lands and they were unable to repossess it due to lack of legal representation and appropriate remedy framework. In some cases, the affected individuals do not know where to channel their complaints without going through rigorous court proceedings.

Photos of Community Participants



Participants in Manbolo, Kambia district



Participants in Waterloo, Western Rural



Participants in Koidu, kono district



Participants in Goderich, Western Urban



Focus Group Discussion in Gbangbatoko



Awareness raising in Koidu, Kono district



Participants in Gbangbatoko, Moyamba District



Engagement with Sinkunia Paramount Chief



Focus group discussion in Kono

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The assessment was conducted in six communities across five regions, targeting 120 participants, of whom 88 (73.3%) were male and 32 (26.7%) were female. It examined the climate change and human rights situation of rights holders and the legal and institutional frameworks that apply to them. The key findings are summarised below.

Adaptation: Three of the six communities (50%) received government support for climate change adaptation, but all of them considered it insufficient. The remaining three communities (50%) received no support at all, pointing to unequal and inadequate access.

Right to life: All six communities had experienced natural disasters in the last five years, including floods, storms, rising water levels, heavy rainfall and wildfires. Four communities recorded 13 deaths (6 men, 6 children and 1 woman), and some communities experienced the same type of disaster twice within five years.

Right to health: All six communities (100%) reported diseases or health disorders linked to changing climatic conditions, including respiratory diseases, malaria, typhoid, stress, depression and hyperthermia, affecting women, men, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Right to water: All six communities (100%) reported water shortages caused by drought, saltwater intrusion and, in mining communities, pollution of water sources by mining activities. Women, girls, boys, older persons and persons with disabilities were the most affected.

Right to adequate food: All six communities (100%) reported food shortages or problems of availability, quality and accessibility in the last five years, resulting from extreme temperatures, storm damage and reduced crop yields.

Right to adequate housing: Five of the six communities (83.3%) had not relocated, but three of these (60%) had experienced temporary displacement due to floods. Only one community (16.7%) holds formal or legally recognised land documents, and all six (100%) feel insecure about their land and property rights.

Cross-cutting issues: Participants had little knowledge of the link between climate change and human rights; environmental monitoring and enforcement in mining areas were considered weak;

hard-to-reach areas such as parts of Falaba District face additional exclusion; and, where State support was absent, communities relied on local councils, NGOs and family members.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to duty bearers and other stakeholders.

Expand and target adaptation programmes. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and local councils should extend adaptation programmes to the communities that currently receive no support, and increase the scale and adequacy of support to those that do, guided by community-level needs assessments.

Strengthen disaster risk reduction. The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), the Office of National Security (ONS) and local councils should invest in early warning systems, community-based preparedness, accurate recording of disaster losses, and timely emergency assistance, with priority for flood- and storm-prone communities.

Integrate public health into adaptation. Health authorities and adaptation planners should strengthen malaria and typhoid prevention, improve drainage and safe water supply, and provide psychosocial support for people affected by climate-related disasters.

Secure access to safe water. The Ministry of Water Resources and partners should develop drought-resilient and protected water sources, and ensure that water sources are safeguarded from mining pollution and saltwater intrusion.

Promote climate-resilient food systems. The ministry responsible for agriculture should support climate-smart agriculture, including improved seeds, extension services, storage facilities and sustainable farming practices, with particular attention to women farmers.

Protect land tenure and housing rights. The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning and local authorities should accelerate the documentation of land and property, recognise and protect customary tenure, and ensure genuine consultation with rights holders before any relocation, resettlement or eviction.

Enforce environmental safeguards in mining areas. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Minerals Agency (NMA) should strengthen monitoring and enforcement

of licence conditions, require restoration of mined land, protect mangroves and forests, and support alternative livelihoods for affected communities.

Ensure inclusion and reach. Adaptation and disaster programmes should deliberately include women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, and prioritise hard-to-reach areas by improving roads and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

Raise awareness and build capacity. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), civil society organisations and local councils should raise community awareness of the link between climate change and human rights, and build the capacity of duty bearers to apply a rights-based approach.

Improve coordination and monitoring. Government, the HRCSL, civil society and development partners should establish a coordination and monitoring mechanism that includes human rights indicators in climate change and disaster reporting.

5.3 Conclusion and Next Steps

The assessment shows that climate change is already affecting the enjoyment of the rights to life, health, water, food and adequate housing in the communities visited, and that adaptation support is limited, unevenly distributed and insufficient. Women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and communities in mining and hard-to-reach areas bear a disproportionate share of the impact. Addressing these gaps requires a rights-based approach in which duty bearers are accountable and rights holders are informed and meaningfully involved in decisions that affect them.

The following next steps are proposed:

- Disseminate the final report to relevant MDAs, local councils, civil society organisations, development partners and the participating communities.
- Engage duty bearers in follow-up discussions on the implementation of the recommendations, and on agree responsibilities and timelines.
- Carry out follow-up activities in the assessed communities, including awareness raising and media engagements, to sustain the momentum of the assessment.
- Integrate the findings into the HRCSL's ongoing monitoring of climate change and human rights, and consider extending the assessment to additional communities.

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION FRAMWORK TOOL

RIGHTS HOLDERS ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

CRITERIA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION

A human rights-based approach to data collection must be ensured by implementing the principles of:

Participation: Enable meaningful participation of rights-holders in data collection. This requires taking into account power imbalances, security concerns, language/interpretation needs, accessibility and timing of interviews, etc. It is important to pay extra attention to hear the voices of women, persons with disabilities, minority groups, etc. Strategies will depend on the context. For example, it may be necessary to organise separate discussions with women to ensure that they are comfortable expressing their views).

Disaggregation: Ideally, data should be disaggregated by key characteristics identified in international human rights law. This may require separate focus group discussions and specific follow-up questions to capture the situation for different rights holders understanding intersecting forms of marginalisation.

Self-identification: Rights-holders/respondents should define their own characteristics and have the option to disclose, or withhold information about their personal characteristics.

Do no harm: Data collectors should consider how to avoid inadvertently contributing to harm such as stigmatization, tension, conflict or retaliation through the data collection exercise.

Transparency: Clearly explain who the data collectors are, the purposes of the data collection and how data will be used.

Privacy: Ensure data protection and confidentiality for example by not capturing or exposing names of individuals for example.

Accountability: Use data to hold duty bearers accountable for their human rights obligations and support rights-holders/respondents to use the data for their own purposes.

QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

FULL ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL

CLIMATE THEME: ADAPTATION

Indicator: Equal access to initiatives and programmes for climate change adaptation

Questions:

Have there been government initiatives to support you to adapt to changes in the climate?

YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Did the support reach and benefit all groups within your community equally? (women, men, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations)
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Was the support sufficient and effective

YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Please describe the initiatives and how you have benefited from them
---

SUBSTANTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

RIGHT TO LIFE
CLIMATE THEME: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
Indicator 1: Equal access to initiatives and programmes for disaster risk reduction
Questions:
Have you experienced disasters in the last five years (due to heavy rainfall and/or floods, storms, rising water levels, drought, wild fires)?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

If yes answer the following questions:

No.	*Questions*	*YES*	*NO*	*DK*
A	*Did you receive emergency support from the authorities after the event?*			
B	*Did the support reach and benefit all groups within your community equally?*			
C	*In particular, did it equally benefit groups and identities that may face barriers to accessing their rights, including women and LGBTQIA+ communities, persons with disabilities, etc.*			
d	***Was the support sufficient and effective?***			

Explain the nature of support……
……

Indicator 2: Number of deaths, missing and directly affected persons attributed to climate-related disasters per 100,000 population
Question:
Has anyone in your community lost their lives, gone missing or been directly affected by climate-related disasters in the last year (Jan-Dec.) in the country?
YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ ***….***
If yes, what is the number of persons?

Disaggregation for each sub-question:

Category	*Death*	*Missing*	*Directly Affected*
Men			
Women			

Children			
Persons with Disability			
Others			
Total			
Disaster Type			
Geography/ Administrative Unit			

RIGHT TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF HEALTH

Indicator3: Prevalence of disease or health disorders with a possible link to changing climate conditions

Questions:

Have any of the following become more frequent in your community in the last five years?

No.	*Diseases*	*YES*	*NO*	*DK*
i	Respiratory illnesses			
ii	Vector-borne diseases (e.g dengue, malaria, chikungunya, yellow fever, Zika, Japanese encephalitis etc.)			
iii	Water-borne diseases, such as following floods (e.g cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery)			
iv	Symptoms or diagnoses of stress, depression and other mental health issues linked to climate change and climate-induced hazards			
v	Heatstroke, hyperthermia and other heat-related disorders			
vi	Others:			

……

Is anyone in your community particularly affected or vulnerable to these?

E.g. women, men, boys, girls, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations (please specify). Please mention groups and describe how they are impacted.

……
……
……

RIGHT TO WATER

Indicator 4: Enjoyment of the right to water in the context of climate change

Questions:

Have you experienced water shortage or poor water quality in the last 5 years?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **….**

If yes, were the reasons related to any of the following?

No.	*Reasons*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
i	Drought or prolong dry season			
ii	Damage caused by storms			
iii	Extreme rainfall and/or flooding			
iv	Lack of access to water resources			
v	Salt water intrusion from sea level rise			
vi	Other (please specify)			

Please describe the circumstances----------

Has anyone in your community been disproportionately impacted by this?

E.g. women, men, boys, girls, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations (please specify).
YES ☐ *NO* ☐ ….

Please mention groups and describe how they are impacted.

RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Indicator 5: Enjoyment of the right to adequate food in the context of climate change

Have you experienced food shortage or other issues related to availability, quality and accessibility of food in the last 5 years?
YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ ….
If yes, were the reasons related to any of the following?

No.	*Reasons*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
i	*Drought*			
ii	*Extreme temperatures (high or low)*			
iii	*Damage caused by storms*			
iv	*Extreme rainfall and/or flooding*			
v	*Reduction in crop yields*			
vi	*Reduction in fishery stocks*			
vii	*Access to land and marine territories due to climate adaptation and mitigation measures*			
viii	*New pests and diseases related to changes in climate*			
xi	*Salt water intrusion from sea level rise*			
x	*Other (please specify)*			

Has anyone in your community been disproportionately impacted by this?
E.g. women, men, boys, girls, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups in vulnerable situations (please specify).
Please mention groups and describe how they are impacted.
YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ ….

If yes, Please name them ----------

RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Indicator 6: Enjoyment of the right to adequate housing in the context of adverse climate change impacts

Questions regarding relocation as a measure to prevent against expected climate change harms:

Have you had to relocate because of expected harm to housing due to climate change?
YES ☐ *NO* ☐ ….

If yes, does the relocation site/your new place to live have access to the following:

No.	*Status of the relocation Site*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*

i	*Natural and common resources required for your livelihood?*			
ii	*Safe drinking water?*			
iii	*Energy for cooking, heating and lighting?*			
iv	*Sanitation and washing facilities?*			
v	*Means of food storage?*			
vi	*Refuse disposal?*			
vii	*Site drainage?*			
viii	*Emergency services?*			
xi	*Is it affordable*			

Do you have adequate space and protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Is it accessible for you and all members of your household?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Is the location acceptable with access to employment options, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Does your new place comply with your standards for what is culturally appropriate for you and your community/people?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Questions regarding displacement due to climate change impacts:

<u>Have you experienced displacement</u> (from land and property) due to for example heavy rainfall, floods, storms, rising water levels, drought; wild fires, extreme temperatures?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

If yes, did you receive any government support - including temporary shelter?
Was any support provided for return? YES NO

Did the support reach and benefit all those in need who required assistance in your community?
YES ☐ *NO* ☐ *….*

If displaced/relocated/resettled/returned, please answer the questions above regarding the adequacy of the housing.

Indicator 7: Incidents of dispossession, displacement or relocation due to climate change measures and projects

(No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return).

Question: Have you experienced dispossession, displacement or relocation in connection with climate change-related measures and projects?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Indicator 8: Tenure security in the context of climate change measures

Questions:
Do you have formal/legally recognized documents which recognize your rights to lands, property or natural resources?
YES ☐ *NO* ☐ ....

In the next 5 years, how likely or unlikely is it that you could lose the right to your land, property or resources, or part of this land, against your will?
Please probe to find out if the respondents consider it:

No	***Options***	***Total Figure***			
		Men	***Women***	***Youth***	***Elderly***
I	Very unlikely				
Ii	Unlikely				
Iii	Somewhat likely				
Iv	Very likely				
v	Don't know				

Please ask women, men, elderly and young separately to capture disaggregated data.

If you feel insecure regarding your tenure situation, are the reasons related to climate-change related policies, laws, measures and projects?
YES ☐ *NO* ☐ .... *Others indicate……..*

Indicator 9: Consultation with rights-holders prior to evictions, relocation and resettlement
Questions:
If you have experienced eviction, relocation or resettlement, were you consulted prior to the process?
YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **….**
Who participated in the consultation process?

No.	*Category of Representatives*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	Our chosen representatives (male)			
b	Our chosen representatives (female)			
c	Our chosen representatives (other gender)			
d	Women from the community			
e	Men from the community			
f	Other gender from the community			
g	Young people from the community			
h	Older people from the community			
	Persons living with disabilities from the community			

Click here to enter text.----------

Was the process designed in a way that enabled your community to participate meaningfully:
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Please probe about the following parameters for meaningful consultation in line with human rights standards:

No.	*Parameters met*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
I	Receive information in sufficient time to prepare			
Ii	Receive all relevant information including about rationale, options, problems, alternatives, solutions, possible impacts			

Ii	Understand the information shared (languages and formats)			
Iv	Support to overcome barriers to participation in terms of costs (is funding available), distance, safety and security			
V	Input to the process in multiple ways (online, in writing, in person)			
Vi	Shape the outcomes, decisions and processes			
Vii	Share the perspectives of women, children and marginalised groups within communities			
Viii	Receive information about outcomes of process, online and offline, reasons for decisions, what feedback was taken, what was left out			
Ix	Receive information about procedures for taking judicial, administrative and quasi-judicial actions			
x	Submit complaints in multiple ways (written, oral, electronic, in person)			
	Raise issues without pressure or fear of retaliation			

(Please provide further information if any)

Indicator 10: Impacts of climate change on working / farming conditions

Question:

Are there any discomforts or risks that you face in your work that have been made worse due to changes in the weather over the last five years (extreme heat, storms, etc.)?

☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

This question seeks to uncover the impacts of climate change on the just and favourable conditions of work. For example, small-scale fishers may be facing more intense storms, agricultural workers more extreme heat et cetera.

Indicator 11: Equal access to social security schemes in the context of climate change

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
Access to adequate social protection programmes without discrimination	*Some gaps in access to adequate social protection programmes*	*Significant gaps in access to social protection programmes and inadequacy of support*

Questions:

In the last 5 years, have you accessed relevant social protection programs (social health protection, child support, old age pension, unemployment benefit, benefits during maternity leave)? ☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

Did the support reach all of those most in need in your community? ☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

Has the amount of social security benefits provided been adequate to ensure your community/peoples an adequate standard of living in view of climate change risks and impacts?

☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

CULTURAL RIGHTS

Indicator 12: Changes in the practice of cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies in the context of climate change-related impacts

☐ No human rights harm	☐ Some harm	☐ Human rights harm

No negative change due to climate change	*Some negative change due to climate change*	*Significant negative change due to climate change*

Questions:
Have any climate change-related impacts restricted your cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies? ☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

If yes, which climate change-related impacts restricted your cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies?
Climate change-related impacts could include:

No.	*Parameters met*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
I	*Heavy rainfall and/or floods;*			
Ii	*Storms;*			
Ii	*Rising water levels;*			
Iv	*Drought;*			
V	*Wild fires;*			
Vi	*Extreme temperatures;*			
Vii	*Changes in flora (vegetation, plants);*			
Viii	*Changes in fauna (animal life);*			
Ix	*Other*			

Are some groups within your community disproportionately impacted by these restrictions?
☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***
Have you received any support to protect your cultural heritage if threatened by climate change? ☐
YES ☐ ***NO***
(Please provide further information if any)
Click here to enter text.
.

Indicator 13: Changes in the practice of cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies in the context of climate change-related measures and activities
Questions:
Have any climate change-related laws, plans, policies, measures or activities caused restrictions on your cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Are some groups within your community disproportionately impacted by these restrictions?
YES ☐ NO ☐ …e.g…….

The question seeks to capture whether the specific laws, policies or measures introduced to reduce emissions (mitigate) or adapt to the impacts of climate change have negative impacts on cultural, spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies. It is different from the question above which focuses on direct climate change impacts

RIGHTS TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND PEASANTS AND OTHER PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

Indicator 14: Effective control over lands, territories and resources

Question: Have there, in the last five (5) years been incidents of climate-change related laws, policies or activities which have negatively impacted your collective and individual rights and access to and control over:

1: The lands and territories, which you have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

2: The water bodies and coastal seas you have traditionally accessed and used
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

3: Other natural resources (including fisheries, forests and pastures) you have traditionally accessed and used
YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **….**
If yes, were the negative impacts experienced equally by all members of the community? *(women, men, elderly, youth, children, people living with disabilities).*

RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON

Indicator 15: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the last three (3) years.

Question: In the last five (5) years, have any community members experienced the following harmful acts while defending their rights in the face of climate change measures or impacts:

No	Harmful Act	Option		If yes Who is the Perpetrator:			Victim Profession
		Yes	No	State Actor	Non-State Actor	Individual	
A	Killings						
B	Kidnapping						
C	Enforced Disappearance						
D	Arbitrary Detention						
e	Torture						

Ensure participants do not give names but if possible indicate gender, age and profession (e.g. farmer, fisher, pastoralist, community leader, paralegal, activist, journalist, etc.). Without giving names of people or companies, indicate the type of perpetrator (e.g. state actor, company/private sector, private person).

Indicator 16: Threats to human rights defenders in the context of climate change (over the last 5 years)
Indicator 17: Threats to and prosecution of human rights defenders in the context of climate change

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
No threats or prosecutions	*NA*	*Threats and/or examples of prosecution*

Question:

In the last five (5) years, have there been any threats to and/or judicial prosecution of community members while defending their rights in the face of climate change-related measures or impacts?

☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

Please do not give names but if possible indicate gender, age and profession (e.g. farmer, fisher, pastoralist, community leader, paralegal, activist, journalist, etc.) Without giving names of people or companies, please indicate the type of actor issuing the threats or pressing charges (e.g. state actor, company/private sector, private person).

Procedural human rights obligations

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

Indicator 17: Rights-holder participation in impact assessments prior to approval of climate change-related projects.

Question:

Do local or central government institutions ensure that you or your chosen representatives participate in impact assessments of climate change related projects that may affect your lands, property or natural resources?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **….**

If, yes, who from your community had a chance to participate in the process?

Was the final impact assessment shared with you?

YES ☐ **NO** ☐ **….**

Please probe to find out who within the community participated (to get gender disaggregated data):

Additionally, ask who within the community participated (to get disaggregated data):

No.	*Category of Participants*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	Our chosen representatives (male)			
b	Our chosen representatives (female)			
c	Our chosen representatives (other gender)			
d	Women from the community			
e	Men from the community			
f	Other gender from the community			
g	Young people from the community			
h	Older people from the community			
i	*Persons living with disabilities from the community*			

Click here to enter text.

Indicator 18: Meaningful participation of rights-holders in the design, implementation, monitoring of climate change-related policies, plans laws, and projects

Question: **Has input from you or your chosen representatives been sought in the:**

No.	***Source of input sought***	***YES***	***NO***	***NA***
a	Design, development and updating of national or local climate change-related laws, policies, plans, and projects			
b	Implementation of climate change-related laws, policies, plans, and projects in your area			
c	Monitoring of climate change-related laws, policies, plans, and projects in your area			
d	Reporting on climate change-related laws, policies, plans, and projects in your area			

Click here to enter text.

Question: If 'yes' to any of the above, was the process designed in a way that enabled you or your chosen representatives to participate meaningfully?
YES ☐ NO ☐ ….

Were the following parameters for meaningful consultation in line with human rights standards met:

No.	*Parameters met*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a)	Receive information in sufficient time to prepare			
b)	Receive all relevant information including about rationale, options, problems, alternatives, solutions, possible impacts			
c)	Understand the information shared (languages and formats)			
d)	Support to overcome barriers to participation in terms of costs (is funding available), distance, safety and security			
e)	Input to the process in multiple ways (online, in writing, in person)			
f)	Shape the outcomes, decisions and processes			
g)	Share the perspectives of women, children and marginalised groups within communities			
h)	Receive information about outcomes of process, online and offline, reasons for decisions, what feedback was taken, what was left out			
i)	Receive information about procedures for taking judicial, administrative and quasi-judicial actions			
j)	Submit complaints in multiple ways (written, oral, electronic, in person)			
k)	Raise issues without pressure or fear of retaliation			

(Please provide further information if any)
Click here to enter text.

Indicator 19: Free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples' autonomous institutions before approval of measures that may affect them

Question: Do local or central government institutions obtain the free, prior and informed consent of your community/ties before they approve climate change-related projects and measures that affect you?
YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ **….**
If Yes to what extent
……
……

RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Indicator 20: Equal access to environmental information

Questions:
Have you tried to seek the following informa tion, and was it available to you?

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
Information is easily available	*Information is partially available (some gaps)*	*Information is not available (many gaps)*

Questions:
Have you tried to seek the following information, and was it available to you?

No.	*Availability of Information*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*

a	Climate change-related activities, measures, including administrative measures, plans and programmes affecting or likely to affect the environment and natural resources			
b	Information about applications for permits, licences and authorisations for projects related to climate change as well as the reasoning and decisions for those applications			
c	Climate change impact assessments of proposed projects			
d	Climate and environmental agreements, policies, legislation			
e	Cost-benefit or other economic analyses and assumptions used in climate change-related decision-making			
f	Climate change research			
g	Impact assessments for climate change-related projects and measures			
h	Information from periodic or ad hoc environmental assessments undertaken by state bodies			
i	Records from grievance mechanisms			

(Please provide further information if any)

Click here to enter text.

Was it made accessible in the following ways:

No.	*Accessible Format and terms*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	In languages spoken by you/your people?			
b	In formats other than writing (such as audio or visual)?			
c	In ways that are easy and practical for you to access and understand?			
d	At low or no cost?			
e	In a timely manner?			

ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE REMEDIES

Indicator 21: Possibility to appeal against government decisions regarding climate change-related policies, plans or projects through administrative and other mechanisms

☒ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
No barriers faced in appeal process	*Some barriers faced in appeal process*	*Significant barriers faced in appeal process*

Questions:

Have you wanted to/or tried to <u>appeal</u> against a government decision regarding a climate change-related policy, plan, or project through <u>administrative</u> or other (<u>non-judicial) mechanisms</u>? ☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***

Click here to enter text.

If yes, did you face any of the following barriers:

No.	*Barriers faced in appealing against gov't decision*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	Lack of information about rights			
b	Lack of necessary financial resources			
c	Limited access to legal aid			

d	Language barriers (lack of interpretation and translation)			
e	Distance to relevant institutions			
f	Discrimination against women or gender minorities			
g	Limited access to environmental information and scientific evidence necessary for the appeal			
h	Difficulty identifying responsible party or where to appeal			
i	Other reasons (please explain)			

(Please provide further information if any)

Indicator 22: Possibility to take legal action to litigate rights and seek remedies for infringement of rights due to climate change impacts and measures

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
No significant barriers to legal action	*Some barriers to legal action*	*Overwhelming barriers to legal action*

Question:
If your community has taken <u>legal action</u> to litigate rights and seek remedies for infringement of rights due to climate change impacts and measures, have you faced any of the following barriers:

No.	*Barriers faced in taking legal action to litigate rights/seek remedies*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	Non-recognition of your rights, including land and natural resource rights, by authorities			
b	Low awareness in your community/people about rights and legal opportunities			
c	Lack of necessary financial resources			
d	Limited access to legal aid			
e	Language barriers (lack of interpretation and translation)			
f	Distance to judicial institutions			
g	Discrimination against women or gender minorities			
h	Limited provision for legal standing in environmental matters affecting human rights			
i	Limited access to environmental information and scientific evidence necessary for legal action			
	Difficulty identifying responsible party for legal action			
	Other (please explain)			

(Please provide further explanation if any)
Click here to enter text.

Indicator 23: Violators of rights sanctioned by the legal or Court system
Question: If you have experienced violations of your rights in the context of climate change projects or in the defence of your rights in the context of climate change in the last 5 years, have the perpetrators been sanctioned by the judicial system?

YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ ….

Indicator 24: Adequate redress, restitution and compensation for lands, territories and resources which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged due to climate change-related measures

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant

Adequate redress, restitution and compensation without discrimination	*Some issues with redress, restitution and compensation*	*Inadequate redress, restitution and compensation*

Question:
If your community, in the last five (5) years, has experienced eviction, dispossession or displacement due to climate change-related measures, did you receive adequate redress, restitution and compensation?
☐ ***YES*** ☐ ***NO***
Indicate whether the affected community/-ies or their member(s) received adequate redress (e.g. a court decision ruling reverting the relocation), restitution (e.g. return to their traditional lands) or compensation (e.g. lands of equal quality and legal status).
Issues to consider in these responses include whether:

No.	*Considerations in redress restitution*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	*there was a negotiation of compensation levels or redress,*			
b	*the compensation or redress allows for the community to continue with a similar standard of living as they had prior to dispossession or displacement, and*			
c	*if there was any economic reliance on the land and proximity to markets, is this similar or better following redress or compensation (if compensation is in the form of alternative land).*			
d	*there was access to or ownership of any resources on the land, has this been considered in redress or compensation levels, and what is the legal status of any land provided as compensation.*			

Other things to consider include compensation (in land of at least equal legal status and value, or of access to resources, or in kind, if the community had negotiated or expressed a preference for doing so) or restitution (right to return) and to what extent.
See 'right to housing' section guidance for what constitutes adequate housing standards.

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Indicator 25: Adequate redress, restitution and compensation for deprivation of means of subsistence due to climate change

☐ Human rights compliance	☐ Some issues related to compliance	☐ Not human rights compliant
Adequate redress, restitution and compensation without discrimination	*Some issues with redress, restitution and compensation*	*Inadequate redress, restitution and compensation*

Questions:

Has your community suffered any harms to your means of subsistence and livelihoods as a result of:

No.	*Type of Harms suffered to the means of subsistence & livelihoods*	*YES*	*NO*	*NA*
a	Heavy rainfall and/or floods;			
b	Storms;			
c	Rising water levels;			
d	Drought;			
e	Forest fires;			
f	Extreme temperatures;			
g	Changes in flora (vegetation, plants);			
h	Changes in fauna (animal life);			

i	Other (please specify)			

Question: If your community, in the last five (5) years, has suffered harm to your means of subsistence and livelihoods due to climate change measures, did you receive adequate redress, restitution and compensation.

YES ☐ ***NO*** ☐ ***….***

Further questions could be used to capture more information:

1. Whether funding from international loss and damage mechanisms have trickled down and reached individuals and groups in countries. While this would provide relevant information it would be different from the state obligations to provide remedies for harms suffered within a particular jurisdiction.

2. Any redress, restitution or compensation from the government