



## Towards a Just, Resilient and Sustainable Future: Building South Asian Positions on Loss and Damage, Adaptation, Climate Finance, and Urban Climate Resilience



**SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025 | Colombo, Sri Lanka**

## **Towards a Just, Resilient and Sustainable Future: Building South Asian Positions on Loss and Damage, Adaptation, Climate Finance, and Urban Climate Resilience**

Climate Action Network South Asia organised a regional meeting on 15-16 October 2025 in Colombo where the member organisations from across South Asian countries, namely India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan actively contributed to the discussions and way forward.

### **The purpose of this workshop was:**

- To reflect on various thematic issues in the climate discourse, identify policy actions, success stories/ pilot initiatives in South Asia contributing to keeping the global temperature below 1.5 degrees in line with Paris Agreement.
- Highlight existing policy gaps, challenges in achieving desired outcomes and upcoming opportunities in various sectors to keep us on track with our commitments.

The discussions were expected to inform CANSA's two-year strategic plan, keeping it aligned with the evolving priorities of climate action in South Asia, while also helping to shape the region's position for COP30.



### **Inaugural Session**

Dr. Janaka Hemathilaka, CEO / Executive Director of Janathakshan, a CANSA member and co-host of the conference, welcomed the participants during the inaugural session and encouraged everyone to contribute to the discussions to the best of their ability.

### **Setting the Context**

Following the inaugural, Dr. Sanjay Vashist, Director of CANSA, set the context for the discussions. He shared his reflections on '**The Changing Geo-Politics and Its Implications for South Asia**'. The key highlights of his presentation were:

**At the Global level:** The world is deeply divided, with multiple geopolitical conflicts shaping climate and energy priorities.

Global geopolitical tensions have deepened energy insecurity and slowed climate progress. The Ukraine war has pushed Europe to prioritise short-term fossil fuel investments over renewable transitions, while U.S.–China trade disputes have disrupted clean energy supply chains, raised solar costs and stalled renewable energy momentum. Ongoing conflicts, including the Israel–Palestine crisis, continue to divert global attention and resources from urgent climate and development priorities.

The global climate agenda remains dominated by mitigation-focused narratives led by powerful nations, sidelining the urgent needs of the Global South for adaptation, loss and damage, and climate justice. Climate finance remains inequitable — current allocations (around \$300 billion) are far below the trillions needed, and the reliance on loans rather than grants entrenches economic dependency. The “Fill the Fund” campaign calls for developed countries to uphold their Paris Agreement commitments and deliver fair, accessible, and justice-based climate finance.

**At the Regional level: Climate change impacts are worsening across South Asia.**

South Asia is facing escalating climate impacts marked by record-breaking heatwaves across India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and intensifying floods in Nepal and neighbouring countries that are destroying critical infrastructure and overwhelming disaster response systems.

Shifting monsoon patterns — with extended rains into October — are disrupting agriculture and cultural calendars, while early Himalayan snowfalls signal growing weather volatility. The region has already suffered climate-induced losses amounting to USD 129 billion in 2025 (1.8% of GDP), and the World Bank warns that annual losses could rise to USD 160 billion if current trends persist, underscoring the urgent need for decisive climate action.

### South Asia is also affected by rising regional tensions:



Governance and institutional responses in South Asia are failing to keep pace with escalating climate crises. Regional conflicts — particularly between India–Pakistan and Pakistan–Afghanistan — have eroded cooperation, while disputes such as the suspension of Indus water sharing illustrate the politicisation of natural resources. Shared ecosystems like watersheds, monsoons, and forests are increasingly mismanaged due to declining regional collaboration.

At the same time, civic space across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan is shrinking, with activists and organisations facing repression, undermining collective climate action and social justice. Ambitious visions of regional energy cooperation, such as transboundary solar grids, remain unrealised. The political paralysis of SAARC, largely due to India–Pakistan tensions, has further weakened South Asia’s ability to pursue coordinated climate governance despite its shared vulnerabilities and interdependence.

### What we need to do as CAN South Asia

- CANSA’s foundation is rooted in the belief that regional cooperation can bring resilience, prosperity, and collective strength to South Asia. However, this core belief is being threatened by growing geopolitical fractures and diminishing trust between nations.
- Despite political divisions, regional cooperation remains the only viable path for resilience and recovery.
- CSOs must continue to work together, even when governments fail to coordinate, to prevent wasted effort and fragmentation. Civil society organisations (CSOs) in South Asia have demonstrated solidarity — seeing the region as a shared ecosystem, not a collection of isolated nations.
- Civil society must stand united to push for a people-centred, justice-based climate agenda that values adaptation, rights, and shared resilience over narrow mitigation targets.

Before moving into deeper discussions, the floor was opened to seek expectations from participants from the ongoing two-day conference.

### Key Expectations from Participants

1. **Strengthening Regional Cooperation:** Participants emphasised the need to revitalise South Asian regional cooperation amid growing political and geopolitical fractures. There was a shared recognition that South–South cooperation and joint regional action are crucial to amplify South Asia’s voice in global climate negotiations.
2. **Building Solidarity and Common Agenda:** There was strong consensus on nurturing South Asian solidarity and developing a unified civil society position for global negotiations



— especially ahead of COP discussions, ensuring regional concerns are collectively represented. Calls were made to revive cross-country working groups to sustain collaboration beyond the meeting.

3. **Legal and Institutional Strengthening:** One table highlighted the need to make **CAN South Asia legally stronger** by reviewing domestic laws across member countries, building legal literacy among members, and considering coordinated legal action to uphold compliance and accountability when governments fall short.
4. **Climate Finance and Market Mechanisms:** A strong call for **grant-based climate finance**, not loans, to prevent debt dependency. Calls to critically assess the **role of carbon markets** and the **private sector**, ensuring that commercial mechanisms align with justice, human rights, and adaptation needs.
5. **Setting Common Minimum Decisions:** Participants recommended identifying a few “**common minimum decisions**” or priority outcomes from the meeting — realistic, shared goals that can guide CANSA’s collective advocacy over the coming year.

### The Bigger Picture: UNFCCC Negotiations and COP 30

The presentation by Mr. Shreeshan Venkatesh, Policy Lead at CAN International was on the bigger picture of climate negotiations, ‘**The Road to Belem and the Status of the UNFCCC Negotiations**’. The session highlighted ongoing tariff and trade tensions between major economies and their impact on renewable energy supply chains.



Geopolitical polarisation, worsened by the U.S.’s inconsistent engagement, is straining the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC processes, heightening the need for strong civil society advocacy and regional cooperation. The ICJ’s advisory opinion affirmed states’ legal duty to act on climate change in line with equity, CBDR, and the 1.5°C goal. COP30 in Brazil faces uncertainty — despite promises of ambition and inclusivity, unclear leadership signals raise doubts about its capacity to build consensus.

**Just Transition:** A top advocacy focus for CAN this year, framed as a holistic, people-centred process linking adaptation, resilience, and finance — not just energy or labour shifts. The UNFCCC’s Just Transition Work Programme remains under negotiation, with disputes over trade measures affecting developing countries’ fair transitions.

**Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA):** Talks continue on setting indicators to track adaptation progress, with disagreements on including finance, technology, and capacity support. Efforts

to boost adaptation finance and strengthen National Adaptation Plans persist but remain uneven.

**Loss and Damage (L&D):** Despite the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, financing and access remain stalled. The “Fill the Fund” campaign seeks real replenishment and transparency, while the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism offers a chance to enhance coordination across L&D mechanisms.

**Climate Finance and Fair Share:** Progress on finance remains weak after last year's COP, with most developed countries delaying NDC submissions and failing to meet emission and finance obligations. Civil society warns that misinterpretation of Article 2.1(c) could restrict developing countries' access to crucial infrastructure finance. A fair outcome requires deep emission cuts by developed nations and accessible, high-quality climate finance for developing ones.

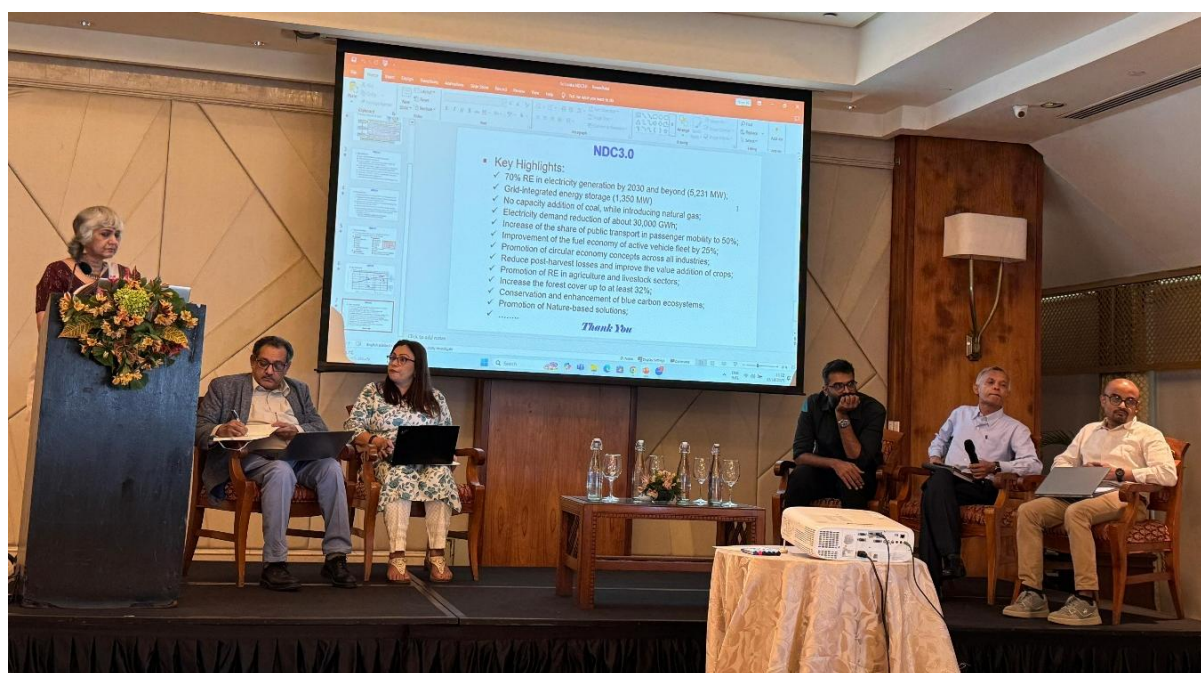
**Tropical Forest Forever Fund (TFFF):** A Brazilian-led, non-UNFCCC initiative offering results-based forest conservation payments, was criticised for weak accountability, corporate influence risks, and inadequate safeguards for indigenous and forest communities.

**NDCs and GST:** Uncertainty persists over how these processes will guide the next phase of global climate action.

**Finance at COP30:** Expected to be highly contentious. The "Baku to Belém Roadmap" aiming to mobilise USD 1.3 trillion is a technical report, not a formal negotiation outcome, and current discussions show limited clarity or optimism.

From the bigger picture, the discussions moved into country-level interventions and status.

## STATUS OF NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCs) FROM SOUTH ASIA



### Dr. Shafqat Munir, SDPI – Presentation on Pakistan NDC 3.0

- Pakistan's third NDC integrates emissions reduction and nature-based solutions, and linking with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land).
- Unlike earlier NDCs, this one connects national climate policy with broader development and SDG frameworks, improving coherence and policy alignment.
- The plan is ambitious, targeting 70% national emission reduction, but with a 33% financing gap, raising serious concerns about where the required funds will come from.
- The policy-making process remains work in progress, with loss and damage, and financing challenges identified as major discussion points for future sessions.

### Ms. Manisha Subedi, NWCF – Presentation on Nepal NDC 3.0

- Nepal's NDC 3.0, launched at the Sagarmatha Sambad, includes 25 'calls to action' and marks a step-up in ambition, extending the target year to 2035 with expanded sectoral goals.
- The process was rushed, though some civil society inputs were incorporated.
- Financing remains a major concern: 85% of the plan depends on international climate finance, with only 15% domestic contribution, echoing feasibility issues seen in Pakistan.
- Nepal targets 28,500 MW of clean (hydro) energy, but hydropower dependence exposes it to climate risks from floods and infrastructure damage.
- Implementation hurdles persist — bureaucracy, limited resources, and difficult terrain.
- A key innovation is adding "D" for Disability Inclusion, evolving the framework into a Just, Equitable, and Disability-Inclusive Transition (JET-D).

### Ms. Avantika Goswami, CSE – Presentation on India NDC 3.0

- India is unlikely to submit a new NDC at COP30 but will present its National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The government calls for COP30 to be a "COP for Adaptation", prioritising finance, indicators, and multilateral commitment.
- Mitigation Progress:
  - Emissions Intensity: 36% reduction achieved vs. 2005; target 45% by 2030.
  - Non-Fossil Capacity: 49.75% achieved (target 50% by 2030) — five years ahead of schedule.
  - Carbon Sink: 2.29 gigatons CO<sub>2</sub>e achieved toward a 2.5–3 Gt target, though data remain contested.
- Energy & Emissions Trends: Power sector contributes 39% of total emissions; slight 2025 decline due to economic slowdown and weather, not systemic transition. Rapid demand growth (~9.25%/yr) poses challenges for balancing renewables with energy security.
- Finance Needs: Estimated \$460 billion (2022–2030) or \$54 billion/year (~1.3% of GDP); largely domestic financing with limited international inflows.
- India's climate trajectory is cautiously progressive—ahead on several goals but constrained by financing gaps, rising energy demand, and the need for a just and balanced transition.



### Mr. Nazmul Ahsan, Action Aid – Presentation on Bangladesh NDC 3.0



Bangladesh's third NDC extends targets to 2035, aiming for a 20.31% emissions reduction (6.39% unconditional, 13.92% conditional on international support). It aligns closely with SDGs, promoting policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration.

#### **Sectoral Highlights:**

- Energy: 25% of electricity from renewables by 2030 (~18,000 MW needed), though current trends make this goal challenging.
- Industry: 19.2% improvement in energy efficiency.
- Transport: 30% of passenger vehicles to be electric by 2030.
- Agriculture: 30% emission reduction via improved land and irrigation management.
- Waste: For the first time, includes quantified reduction targets.



- Finance & Implementation: Requires USD 316 billion by 2030 (USD 270B conditional, USD 46.38B domestic). Actual climate finance received is under 3%, with financing and institutional coordination as key barriers.
- Positive Developments: Stronger links with national policies and SDGs, a rights-based and just transition approach, enhanced participation of women, youth, and children, and co-benefits for adaptation, resilience, and human rights.

## Dr. Thusitha Sugathapala – Presentation on Sri Lanka NDC 3.0



Sri Lanka submitted its third NDC in September 2025, showing greater ambition with expanded quantitative and qualitative actions across mitigation, adaptation, and, newly, loss and damage. Covers 89 actions across 16 sectors — 35 mitigation, 49 adaptation, and 5 loss and damage — with loss and damage included as a distinct area for the first time.

Emissions Targets (2025–2035): Unconditional: 8.1% reduction, Conditional: 10.12% reduction, Total potential: ~20% (~116,000 Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e) from a 2010 BAU baseline. Includes CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, N<sub>2</sub>O, and HFCs (first inclusion).

### Sectoral Highlights:

- Energy: 70% of electricity from renewables by 2030–2035; no new coal, limited gas for stability; 1,350 MW grid storage; 20% energy demand savings through efficiency.
- Transport: Raise public transport share from 35%→50% by 2035; improve vehicle fuel economy by 25%.
- Forestry & Land Use: Increase Forest cover 29%→32%, prioritise mangroves and blue carbon restoration.
- Agriculture & Industry: Promote renewable-powered irrigation and circular, low-carbon industrial practices.
- Strong emphasis on NbS and blue carbon ecosystems for resilience.
- Implementation & Inclusion: Supported by updated national plans and technology assessments; includes robust monitoring, data-driven accounting, and a Just and Inclusive Transition lens integrating youth and gender perspectives.

## Reflections, Questions and Answers

- ❖ How inclusive and consultative NDC development processes truly are? The perception is that consultations are often tokenistic or rushed, aimed more at meeting submission deadlines (e.g., before COP) rather than ensuring genuine participation. Meaningful consultation should go beyond technical inputs to include communities, grassroots actors, and civil society, ensuring climate democracy and accountability.
- ❖ Panellists agreed that in many South Asian contexts, consultations remain largely ritualistic, with weak follow-through during implementation.
- ❖ A question was raised about how countries like Pakistan are managing the 70% domestic and 30% international finance gap in NDC implementation.
- ❖ Panellists noted that building consensus among multilayered policy actors — from national to international levels — remains a major challenge. There is a need for political buy-in, credible financial pathways, and clear accountability mechanisms to make conditional finance realistic.
- ❖ Participants asked whether South Asian countries are leveraging the NDC Partnership and its Action Fund for technical and financial support.

- ❖ The response indicated that some countries have benefited, but utilisation is uneven — many governments are unaware, under-resourced, or slow to access such mechanisms. Strengthening regional coordination and capacity to engage with global support mechanisms was suggested.
- ❖ A strong suggestion was made for a South Asia–level comparative analysis of NDCs to identify good practices, encourage peer learning and healthy competition, and pressure lagging countries (like India) to enhance ambition. Such an exercise could highlight equity, inclusion, and just transition approaches across Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and others, fostering regional climate cooperation.

### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ The discussion acknowledged that political economy realities often shape NDC ambitions more than technical feasibility.
- ❖ NDC 3.0 processes across South Asia show progress in scope and integration, still implementation, financing, and inclusivity remain key gaps.
- ❖ Strengthening consultation quality, regional collaboration, and accountability emerged as shared priorities for the next phase of NDC implementation.

## THEMATIC SESSION – LOSS AND DAMAGE

**Moderator:** Dr. Shafqat Munir, SDPI

**Presenters:** Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, CPRD; Dr. Jayanta Basu, EnGIO; Ms. Purnima Joshi CAN South Asia; Mr. Johnson, PHIA Foundation; Mr. Shahid Iqbal, WISE; Ms. Karin Fernando; Mr. Shailendra Yashwant, CAN South Asia



### Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, CPRD – Presentation on Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage

South Asia is among the most climate-vulnerable regions globally, suffering annual GDP losses of 4–5% due to floods, heatwaves, droughts, glacial melt, and sea-level rise. The region's transboundary vulnerabilities — particularly in water systems — demand regional cooperation and solidarity.



Over the past two decades, South Asia has played a leading role in expanding the global climate agenda to include Loss and Damage (L&D), especially non-economic losses such as cultural heritage, mental health, and displacement. Civil society and academia from the region were instrumental in shaping global recognition of these issues and in advocating for the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund at COP27. However, implementation and financing of this fund remain uncertain.

Current national and global frameworks largely prioritise visible, short-term impacts like infrastructure loss, neglecting secondary effects such as migration, gender-based violence, and education disruption. Most countries lack integration between L&D strategies and related national policies (e.g., gender, displacement), and inter-ministerial coordination is weak. There is growing concern that the new L&D Fund could become loan-based and top-down, reinforcing inequities. South Asian stakeholders stress the need for a grant-based, community-centred mechanism with transparency, accountability, and direct local access.

South Asia's collective experience shows that Loss and Damage is not only a financial issue — it is a justice and survival issue. The struggle doesn't end with putting L&D on the agenda — it must translate into real finance and justice.

#### **Mr. Shailendra Yashwant, CAN South Asia - Update on Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) progress and outcomes from the Manila B7 meeting (7-10 October)**



The Manila meeting marked a modest but meaningful advance in operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund after prolonged stagnation in climate finance talks. Delegates agreed on four key pillars — project cycle, funding criteria, eligibility arrangements, and interim access modalities — meeting the minimum civil society demands to make the fund functional.

An initial USD 250 million has been approved for disbursement as grants, with individual projects expected to receive USD 5–20 million and the first call for proposals anticipated by COP30. However, this amount is seen as inadequate and unsustainable without clear replenishment mechanisms.

Major concerns persist around accessibility, application processes, and the lack of a long-term, predictable financing roadmap. While the meeting was hailed as a turning point, civil society stresses that continued vigilance and advocacy are essential to ensure the fund remains equitable, transparent, and justice-driven, benefiting the most vulnerable communities.

#### **Dr. Jayanta Basu, ENGIO, and Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, CPRD - Sundarbans Case Study Presentation on Non-Economic Loss and Damage**

The Sundarbans delta, spanning 19,000 sq km across Bangladesh and India, is the world's largest mangrove forest and a global biodiversity hotspot — yet also one of the most climate-vulnerable regions. A CANSA-commissioned study led by EnGIO (India) and CPRD (Bangladesh) reveals that non-economic losses in the Sundarbans surpass economic losses, with deep social, psychological, and cultural impacts.

- Poverty rates are twice national averages; sea-level rise is nearly double the global rate. Multiple climate drivers — cyclones, erosion, salinity — act simultaneously, worsening risks.
- The region affects ~13 million people, yet political divisions limit recognition and response. Just three cyclones in Indian Sundarbans caused losses of ₹1.5 lakh crore.

- High post-disaster migration disrupts families; many children live with grandparents, leading to school dropouts. Youth (ages 14–16) report chronic climate anxiety.
- Agriculture and fisheries — employing the majority — are heavily affected; erosion exceeds 10 metres in many areas.
- Around 20–25 people die annually from tiger attacks, linked to reduced fish catch and longer forest stays.
- Rising salinity drives human trafficking and child marriage; some disaster shelters have been linked to trafficking.
- Post-Cyclone Aila migrants working in stone-crushing suffer from silicosis, reflecting indirect, long-term non-economic losses.
- Tribal communities are losing traditional livelihoods and identities.
- Women and girls face disproportionate burdens, yet gender dimensions remain underrepresented in global climate discussions.

### Mr. Johnson Topno, PHIA Foundation – India Context on Loss and Damage



India faces intensifying climate shocks — floods, droughts, landslides, and heatwaves — that disproportionately impact indigenous, Dalit, Adivasi, and minority communities. Yet, the concept of *loss and damage* (L&D) remains disconnected from local realities due to inaccessible policy language and frameworks.

In 2024, India experienced extreme weather across 314 days, with Jharkhand swinging from a 47% rainfall deficit in 2023 to a 50–56% surplus in 2024. Such volatility devastates agroforestry-based livelihoods that sustain over 70% of the population. Existing social protection and disaster relief systems are ineffective, and losses often go unrecorded, delaying or denying assistance.

Climate-induced migration is widespread: in Jharkhand, 45% of people migrate seasonally and up to 90% of Adivasi youth migrate for survival. Droughts, termed “silent disasters,” erode rural economies and social cohesion. The 2023 South Lhonak Lake burst and other recent disasters across northern India highlight the need for rapid loss assessment and relief mechanisms.

Meanwhile, Jharkhand’s extractive economy (supplying 45% of India’s minerals and 72% of its electricity via coal) has caused displacement, deforestation, and trauma for local communities. A just energy transition must therefore ensure fair rehabilitation, livelihood alternatives, and community participation.

True progress on Loss and Damage in India hinges on:

- Translating policy frameworks into locally understandable terms,
- Empowering communities to negotiate with authorities, and
- Centring community voices in civil society–government collaboration.

### Mr. Shahid Iqbal, WISE - Loss and Damage due to 2025 Pakistan Floods and its Gendered Impacts

Pakistan is at a climate tipping point. In 2025, unprecedented rainfall (300–500% above average) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Punjab caused catastrophic floods, displacing over 2.5 million people and affecting more than 6 million. The floods resulted in significant human, animal, and infrastructure losses, with severe gendered and child impacts:

- Women: 170 deaths, 292 injuries; 40% of rural women lost livestock; increased household burdens, sexual harassment, and limited medical access.
- Children: 283 deaths, ~300 injuries, over 1 million displaced; leading to psychological trauma and school dropouts.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) coordinated evacuations (1 million+), rescues (3 million), 499 relief camps (152,000 people), and 741 medical camps (600,000 treated), but gaps remained in preparedness, gender-sensitive planning, and early warning systems. Local aggravating factors included deforestation, unplanned urbanisation, riverbed encroachment, and weak environmental enforcement. Pakistan's 2025 floods represent a hybrid crisis: combining glacial melt, monsoon excess, and transboundary river flow, distinct from 2010 and 2022 flood patterns. The Government of Pakistan is developing a National Anticipatory Action Strategy to improve preparedness, coordination, and localised funding. Unlike previous disasters, no international flash appeal was launched; domestic resources were prioritised to demonstrate accountability before seeking global support.



Despite contributing <1% of global emissions, Pakistan faces disproportionate climate impacts, highlighting the need for international financing, technology transfer, and fair adaptation and loss-and-damage mechanisms, while holding high-emission countries accountable.

### **Ms. Karin Fernando - Sri Lanka and the NDC/Loss and Damage Process**

Sri Lanka demonstrates that nationally structured planning can support climate risk management, but implementation remains weak. Since 2016, the country has emphasised early warning systems, needs assessments, and inter-sectoral coordination, reflected in the 2025 NDC revision, yet turning plans into action across governance levels is slow.

#### **Key challenges include:**



**Fragmented leadership:** Slow-onset (drought) and rapid-onset (flood) events are handled separately, with unclear mandates and isolated sectoral action. L&D is often treated as a residual issue, leaving its definition and management ambiguous.

**Data gaps:** Reliable, standardised, and integrated data systems are lacking, limiting the ability to quantify L&D and access international funding.

**L&D Fund access:** The fund is nascent, with no country yet accessing it. Bureaucratic complexity and North–South funding divides hinder civil society engagement and national preparedness.

**Gender and inclusion:** While recognised in policy, actual implementation is limited; vulnerability assessments and participation remain largely formal rather than action-oriented.

**Policy–practice disconnect:** National policies are top-down and compliance-driven, often failing to incorporate local realities and community experiences. Stronger vertical integration is needed to link local evidence to national planning and reporting.



**Ms. Purnima Joshi, CANSA – Presented the Compendium on Climate Change and Non-Economic Loss and Damage**



***Launch of the Sundarbans Non-Economic Loss and Damage Research Report & Compendium of Non-Economic Loss and Damage Case Studies from Sri Lanka and Nepal***

The fellowship explored how climate change impacts cultural heritage, health, identity, and livelihoods — areas often overlooked in conventional loss-and-damage discussions. Media fellows from Sri Lanka and Nepal documented these effects:

- **Health:** Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall are increasing dengue in Sri Lanka, while extreme heat in Nepal affects maternal health, contributing to premature births and fetal complications.
- **Cultural Heritage & Identity:** Ancient monasteries, palaces, and cave dwellings in Nepal's Upper Mustang are deteriorating due to climate stress, while Sri Lanka's Kalpitiya Peninsula faces sea-level rise that threatens villages, schools, and historic churches.
- **Livelihoods & Traditions:** Adivasi communities in Sri Lanka struggle to maintain traditional honey-harvesting practices amid habitat loss, deforestation, and climate-driven ecosystem decline.
- **Extreme Weather & Community Impact:** Frequent flash floods in Kalutara disrupt homes, schools, and infrastructure, highlighting the need for community resilience.

A webinar on “Communicating Non-Economic Loss and Damage” highlighted that reporting on intangible climate losses requires a human-centric approach, using storytelling to connect lived experiences with policy understanding.

### **Reflections, Questions & Answers**

- ❖ Given that the Loss and Damage Fund requires quantifiable data to justify claims, is there any existing mechanism—or effort to create one—for calculating the cost of non-economic losses? How can governments access such funds without measurable economic equivalents?”
- ❖ Participants highlighted the need for globally accepted metrics to recognise non-economic losses alongside physical and financial damages. They noted a domestic gap in South Asia,

where everyday, and slow-onset climate impacts — like heatwaves affecting informal workers in India — often go unrecognised and unaddressed.

- ❖ To address this, revising L&D training was proposed to involve community groups, unions, and local institutions, enabling community-driven assessments that reflect local realities.
- ❖ Emphasis was given to redefining “disaster” to include slow-onset and everyday stresses, and framing loss and damage as encompassing, not just post-disaster recovery but also mitigation, adaptation, and anticipatory actions.
- ❖ Finally, they stressed the need for greater conceptual clarity on non-economic loss and the potential role of the Santiago Network in providing technical support to measure and address these losses.

### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ Countries must institutionalise L&D assessment through national disaster response systems and anticipatory frameworks. There is a need to engage actively in national anticipatory action strategy processes — as these provide an entry point to mainstream L&D into policy and funding structures.
- ❖ Need to redefine loss and damage through a human-centric approach — linking governance, social protection, and livelihood resilience.
- ❖ Encourage South–South collaboration in developing common L&D assessment tools for the region. Leverage and strengthen regional collaboration, especially among South Asian countries, to harmonise approaches, data systems, and advocacy.
- ❖ Establishing regional financing mechanisms for faster, more equitable response.

## THEMATIC SESSION – GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION AND SOUTH ASIA

**Moderator:** Mr. Ramesh Babu, EFICOR

**Presenters:** Ms. Pooja Dave, CAN I (online); Dr. A. Nambi Appadurai, WRI; Prof. Buddhi Marambe, University of Peradeniya (online); Mr. Mohammad Shahjahan, YPSA, Dr. Ngamindra Dahal, NWCF; Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury

### Pooja Dave CAN-I (online) - Presentation on Renewable Energy for Adaptation and Analysis of the GGA Indicator

The presentation focused on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) — its evolution, current frameworks, and key priorities leading to COP30. It highlights recent decisions such as the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and the Baku Adaptation Roadmap (BAR), emphasising the need for concrete indicators, finance commitments, and operational mechanisms to make the GGA truly impactful. It also links adaptation with renewable energy as a resilience-building strategy.

The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), established under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, aims to enhance adaptive capacity, resilience, and reduce climate vulnerability in line with sustainable development. The UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, adopted at COP28, sets thematic and dimensional targets and initiated a two-year UAE–Belém Work Programme to develop progress indicators. Building on this, the Baku Adaptation Roadmap

(BAR) from COP29 provides a structured platform to advance GGA implementation, coordination, and maintain adaptation as a political and financing priority.

As COP30 approaches, the operationalisation of the GGA will determine its effectiveness, hinging on the adoption of robust Means of Implementation (MoI) indicators, particularly on adaptation finance. With adaptation costs projected at USD 215–387 billion per year and the Glasgow pledge expiring in 2025, civil society (CAN) is calling for a new, ambitious finance goal aligned with the GGA and UAE Framework. CAN also emphasises the inclusion of MoI indicators and the BAR's role in ensuring coherent implementation.

Additionally, renewable energy is highlighted not only as a mitigation measure but also as a means to strengthen community resilience and sustainable livelihoods, with CAN developing a discussion paper to explore these linkages further.



### **Prof. Buddhi Marambe (online) - Case study on Adaptation and Food Systems in Sri Lanka**

The study analysed food flows between rural production zones and Colombo, focusing on agricultural adaptation under changing climate and urbanisation. Rapid urbanisation in peri-urban areas has reduced local production, making rural–urban connectivity essential. Long “food miles,” especially for rice, increases costs, delays, and losses, prompting adaptation strategies such as **shorter supply chains, decentralised processing, and modern milling facilities** through private sector–led investments, supported by the government near production zones.

Complementary measures like **urban community gardens** improve nutrition, community cohesion, and urban resilience. Sri Lanka’s experience shows that coordinated efforts by government, private sector, and communities can strengthen city-region food systems, reduce losses and carbon footprint, and support national and global adaptation goals.

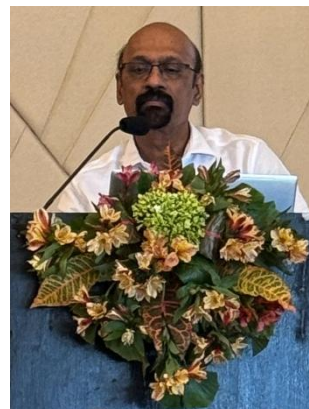


## Dr. A. Nambi Appadurai, WRI – Presentation on National Adaptation Planning (NAP)

### Key elements

Embedding adaptation into global climate policy has been a long, uneven process, with adaptation still less developed than mitigation. The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) framework helps countries identify and address medium- and long-term needs, linking adaptation with development goals.

Effective adaptation planning is iterative, decentralised, context-driven, and inclusive, incorporating local knowledge, gender, and equity considerations. Because adaptation outcomes — like resilience, capacity, and equity — are harder to quantify, robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks are essential. Adaptation often delivers co-benefits for livelihoods, food security, and infrastructure, supporting SDGs and the Sendai Framework, and strengthens access to climate finance. Adaptation requires localised ownership, continuous learning, and sustained investment, bridging science with community realities rather than relying on uniform global standards.



### Four Core Elements of the NAP Process

- Laying the Groundwork: Mapping existing data, institutions, and enabling systems, and identifying gaps.
- Addressing Gaps (Preparatory Elements): Analysing historical, current, and projected climate and socio-economic trends — including migration patterns and social vulnerability.
- Implementation: Translating plans into actions through sectoral integration, financing strategies, and stakeholder engagement.
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting: Establishing continuous feedback loops to assess progress, adjust strategies, and track financing.

## Dr. Ngamindra Dahal, NWCF – Presentation on Adaptation Best Practices and Learnings from Nepal



Nepal and India's Himalayan regions face **new climate hazards** — landslide-dammed floods from heavy monsoons and prolonged dry seasons stressing water and agriculture. Adaptation spans sectors, including climate-smart agriculture, solar-hydro hybrid energy, community forestry, and early warning systems. Farmers are adopting drought-resistant crops and modern irrigation. Further, Nepal has increased forest cover, electrification, and gender-inclusive adaptation planning.

**Despite progress, challenges persist.** Hydropower risks, unsustainable groundwater use, weak monitoring, limited local accountability, reliance on international finance, and disconnects between development and climate planning. Traditional practices remain resilient, but **sustained climate resilience** requires stronger institutional coherence, local civil society engagement, integrated planning, and transparent financing to translate national goals into durable community-level outcomes.

### Mr. Mohammad Shahjahan, YPSA - Presentation on Adaptation in Cities

Urban risk assessments in **Chittagong, Bangladesh** reveal growing vulnerabilities among low-income and migrant populations affected by climate-induced displacement, highlighting the need for skills training, livelihood support, and rehabilitation. Priority adaptation measures include **early warning systems, disaster preparedness, livelihood diversification, water and infrastructure management, coastal protection, renewable energy, and sustainable transport**. Chittagong has also pioneered a **Plastic Waste Management Bank**, collecting over 24,000 metric tons of plastic in 2.5 years through multi-stakeholder cooperation.

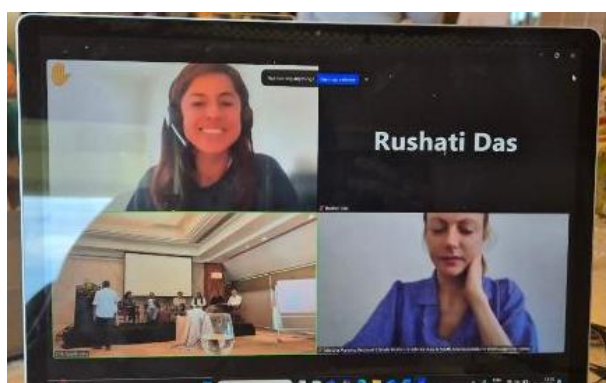


The city emphasises **dual capacity building**, training both communities and service providers via initiatives like Urban Volunteers and school-based disaster programmes. Anticipatory action frameworks link early warnings to rapid response, while **telemedicine** ensures health access during crises. Chittagong's approach demonstrates how **local innovation, municipal leadership, and community engagement** can operationalise national adaptation policies into practical urban resilience, offering a model for other South Asian cities.

### Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury, TDH - Framing Climate Change Through a Child Lens

- Climate change is about people—especially children, who bear the brunt of crises they did not create. Children's rights to health, education, safety, and dignity are increasingly threatened by climate impacts.
- Highlighted adaptation begins with people, not sectors—soft systems like education, equity, and mental health are also adaptation infrastructure.
- Emphasised local knowledge and youth participation must guide national adaptation plans; without this, NAPs remain “technically sound but socially hollow.”
- Integrate sectors—health, education, WASH, and protection—under a unified resilience matrix and empower panchayats, women's groups, and youth collectives with both finance and authority. True adaptation is not only about embankments or solar megawatts—it is about protected childhoods.

### Reflections, Questions and Answers



- ❖ The NAP process is often described as a national process, but since it is actually subnational in nature, how can cities and state governments in India become more actively involved? What is the current status of civil society engagement in this space?

- ❖ Rapid urbanisation in **India** is increasing climate risks — heat stress, floods, and resource scarcity — requiring urgent attention. Current adaptation efforts are **fragmented**, with overlapping policies across departments, highlighting the need for **coherent integration** between urban planning, sectoral policies, and climate frameworks. **Civil society** has a key role in advocacy and connecting local realities to subnational planning, though formal engagement mechanisms are still developing.
- ❖ Question directed to Prof. Marambe - participants asked about the role of agrochemical reduction and promotion of natural or organic farming in the context of Sri Lanka's climate adaptation strategy, given the health and environmental impacts of agrochemical use.
- ❖ Sri Lanka is navigating environmental protection and food security after the 2021 agrochemical ban caused a 35% drop in rice production and national food shortages. The current approach emphasises gradual reform, using environmental impact indicators (EIQ) to select safer pesticides. While the long-term goal is sustainable agriculture and reduced chemical dependence, the immediate priority is restoring productivity and ensuring domestic food supply, balancing sustainability with urgent food needs.
- ❖ Query raised on Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) indicators, highlighting tension between *means of implementation* (finance, capacity, and technology) and *enabling factors* (governance, transparency, accountability). The concern was that while enabling factors are necessary for ensuring effective fund utilisation, they must not become conditional barriers preventing developing countries from accessing adaptation finance.
- ❖ It was clarified that ongoing UNFCCC deliberations have secured language ensuring that means of implementation indicators remain distinct and prioritised, emphasising direct tracking of finance access, quality, and adequacy, rather than restricting eligibility through enabler compliance.
- ❖ Can emerging tools like AI, simulation, or IoT-based methodologies be integrated into national adaptation plans or India's adaptation work going forward?
- ❖ Science and technology are constantly evolving — we've already advanced from coarse 250x250 km grid models to finer 25x25 km ones. Tools like AI and IoT can improve forecasting, data modelling, and early warning systems. However, these technologies cannot replace human systems. Local wisdom, social understanding, and participatory approaches remain essential. Adaptation, at its heart, is about people, not just data models. So, while new tools can enhance planning, they must complement — not substitute — human-centred systems.

### SESSION OUTCOMES

- ❖ Strengthen global advocacy for equitable access to adaptation finance and integrate people-centred approaches in all adaptation frameworks.
- ❖ Establishing clear benchmarks and measurable indicators for tracking progress and aligning with global adaptation targets.
- ❖ Urban resilience must be guided by sustainable urban planning, green infrastructure, renewable energy, and public transport reform.



## THEMATIC SESSION – CLIMATE FINANCE FOR SOUTH ASIA

**Moderator:** Dr. Henna Hejazi, Change Alliance

**Presenters:** Ms. Sehr Raheja, CSE (online); Mr. Ritwajit Das, CAN South Asia; Mr. Shreeshan Venkatesh, CAN I; Mr. Golam Rabbani, BRAC; Mr. Nalin Karunatileka, DFCC Bank PLC

**Ms. Sehr Raheja, CSE – Presentation on Climate Finance Landscape and Priorities for COP30 (Belém)**



COP29, expected to focus on climate finance, fell short of expectations. The headline commitment — USD 300 billion per year by 2030 and an aspirational USD 1.3 trillion by 2035 — was widely criticised as insufficient and delayed. Developing countries demanded upfront funding, while developed nations pushed for broader contributions, reflecting stalled negotiations and geopolitical tensions. The emphasis on private-sector finance raised concerns about debt sustainability, even as systemic barriers for the Global South were acknowledged.

The COP pledged to triple UNFCCC fund outflows by 2030 and introduced the Baku to Belem Roadmap to operationalise long-term finance goals, though it remains non-binding. Questions persist over the Just Transition Work Program, Belem Action Mechanism, and Article 9.1, highlighting unresolved issues of equity, access, accountability, and timelines. Overall, COP29 exposed growing North-South fragmentation and the urgent need for transparent, timely, and reliable climate finance.

### What to expect at COP30

COP30 (Belém) will not be a formal “finance COP,” but climate finance — particularly the USD 1.3 trillion roadmap, Loss & Damage Fund access, and private vs. public finance commitments — will dominate side negotiations. Developing countries and civil society will push for greater ambition, transparency, inclusion of adaptation and non-economic losses, and governance reforms to ensure equity and accessibility.

The COP follows COP29, which highlighted persistent imbalances: funding is insufficient, delayed, and overly reliant on private capital. COP30 presents a critical opportunity to redefine ambition, rebuild trust, and restore justice in the global climate finance architecture, particularly regarding the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG).

## Mr. Ritwajit Das, CAN South Asia – Presentation on Climate Finance Mechanisms, Civil Society Perspectives, and Inclusion Gaps in South Asia

The discussion highlighted challenges in climate finance in South Asia, including reliance on IMF facilities, private investors, and multilateral development banks (MDBs), which often favour mitigation over adaptation and can increase debt burdens. Nominal pledges of \$300 billion shrink to under \$100 billion when adjusted for inflation and grants, while loss-and-damage funding remains largely ignored. Adaptation is severely underfunded due to a lack of measurable indicators, and marginalised communities — Dalits, Adivasis, Scheduled Tribes, and minorities — remain underrepresented in financing and NDC implementation.

Emerging legal and policy frameworks (ICJ Advisory Opinion, Bridgetown Initiative, ACROMAT) offer avenues for South Asian advocacy on finance, debt reform, and climate justice, emphasising the need to align global mechanisms with regional realities and ensure equitable participation in climate decision-making.

### Country-Specific Observations

- Bangladesh: ~\$450 million directed to *infrastructure-heavy adaptation*; limited investment in *social resilience* or local livelihoods. Weak data on adaptation finance and limited quantifiable targets reduce inflows.
- Pakistan: *No domestic climate-finance roadmap*; high reliance on unpredictable external funds. Rising debt–climate nexus undermines justice goals.
- Sri Lanka: Debt crisis intertwined with climate finance (“debt-climate nexus”) — violating climate-justice principles.
- Nepal: Disaster finance present in NDCs, but mountain and Indigenous communities excluded from allocation decisions.
- Across South Asia: Persistent justice deficit — both unmet international pledges and inequitable domestic allocation

### Exclusion manifests in three ways:

- **Conceptual:** Local experiences of vulnerability and loss are not recognised within formal definitions of loss & damage (L&D).
- **Institutional:** Access barriers and procedural complexities prevent local CSOs from engaging with national or multilateral finance frameworks.
- **Functional:** Private-sector-led approaches increasingly crowd out CSO participation in decision-making.

## Mr. Shreeshan Venkatesh, CAN I – Presentation on Carbon Markets, Unilateral Trade Measures, and Implications for South Asia

Unilateral trade measures like the EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) integrate carbon pricing into trade to prevent “carbon leakage,” but they disproportionately burden developing and least developed countries. These countries face dual carbon costs, limited financial or technological support, and potential market distortions, while CBAM revenues remain in the EU rather than aiding exporters in the Global South. If widely adopted, such measures could undermine **industrial competitiveness** in South Asia, particularly in energy-intensive sectors, perpetuating historic North–South economic imbalances.

Debates continue over whether CBAM should be regulated under the WTO or UNFCCC, with concerns about equity, just transition, and non-discrimination. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement allows carbon trading, but most national carbon markets remain domestic, highlighting the need for international cooperation and support to avoid penalising vulnerable economies.

## **In South Asia**

India is advancing its Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), initially covering 282 industrial units in high-emission sectors like paper, cement, aluminium, and chemicals, with plans to expand to steel, petrochemicals, and plastics. Other South Asian countries are exploring readiness frameworks, but national systems remain nascent. SMEs face disproportionate challenges — high compliance costs, risk of being outcompeted by larger firms, and potential job losses — highlighting that poorly designed carbon markets could exacerbate inequality rather than support a just transition.

## **Strategic Considerations for South Asia**

South Asian governments should assess vulnerabilities from CBAM-like measures, advocate for compensation or flexibility under UNFCCC/WTO, develop regionally aligned carbon markets, integrate social protection for affected workers and SMEs, and secure international finance and technology for industrial decarbonisation. Without such measures, carbon markets and unilateral trade policies risk deepening global inequities, penalising underfunded developing economies. The region's priority is to create just, inclusive, and harmonised frameworks that safeguard both the environment and livelihoods.

## **Mr. Golam Rabbani, BRAC – Presentation on Climate Finance Landscape and Gaps in Bangladesh**



Bangladesh, one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, receives limited climate finance: USD 0.4 billion/year for adaptation and USD 0.9 billion/year for mitigation, far below national needs (USD 6 billion for adaptation, USD 9 billion for mitigation, plus USD 3 billion in climate damages annually).

Over 22 years, the country accessed USD 1.3 billion from global funds, but financing is skewed toward loans and co-finance, raising debt concerns. Domestic allocations average USD 2.4 billion/year, while private climate investments are fragmented. Only 3% of adaptation finance reaches local communities, forcing households to bear 97% of costs through borrowing or asset depletion. The growing reliance on loan-based financing contradicts climate justice principles, highlighting

the inequitable burden of climate impacts on the poorest citizens.

Bangladesh exemplifies the broader South Asian challenge: adaptation and recovery costs disproportionately fall on vulnerable populations rather than those historically responsible for emissions.

## **Mr. Nalin Karunathilaka, DFCC Bank PLC – Insights on Climate Finance and Banking Sector Opportunities in Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, private banks are increasingly expected to drive domestic green finance, especially as public funding is constrained by the economic crisis. Climate-related credit lines since 1995, backed by guarantees and technical support, have familiarised banks with financing renewable energy projects. The Sustainable Banking Initiative (2015) introduced Green Banking Principles to integrate sustainability into financial decision-making, but green lending still accounts for only ~1% of total banking assets (≈ USD 600 million).

Banks face capacity, awareness, and credit-risk challenges, particularly for adaptation projects with uncertain returns. The adoption of IFRS Sustainability Reporting Standards now mandates climate risk disclosure for top listed companies, embedding sustainability and accountability into the financial sector.



## Opportunities

- Green and blue bonds are emerging instruments to fund both mitigation and adaptation initiatives, with some Sri Lankan banks already issuing them.
- Carbon markets present a new opportunity for monetising climate resilience efforts, particularly in forestry and ecosystem restoration projects.

## Reflections, Questions and Answers



- ❖ How do we reconcile the shrinking role of civil society with the increasing dominance of private sector actors in climate finance, particularly when one speaks of *beneficiaries* and the other of *customers*?
- ❖ The language and approach between civil society and private sector remain fundamentally different — one rooted in rights and justice, the other in profit and service delivery. The importance of developing a “shared vocabulary” was emphasised that bridges humanitarian and market-based narratives. Civil society must not retreat from advocacy but instead occupy spaces where climate finance frameworks are designed — influencing how “beneficiaries” are represented in financial systems and ensuring human rights-based climate action. The “magic line” lies in building partnerships without surrendering principles: aligning private investment incentives with social justice outcomes through accountability and inclusion mechanisms.
- ❖ Participants highlighted that most adaptation finance focuses on large projects, while household and community-level needs remain ignored. Only 3% of adaptation finance reaches communities, yet local women, farmers, and small-scale producers bear most of the climate burden.
- ❖ Establish community-managed, gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms that deliver resources directly to the last mile. Empower women and local institutions to manage funds, ensuring equitable benefit-sharing. This approach should be scaled globally to make adaptation finance truly inclusive and transformative.
- ❖ What role can NGOs play in carbon markets?
- ❖ NGOs can contribute in three critical ways:
  - Governance and oversight — ensuring carbon markets are transparent, equitable, and rights-based.
  - Safeguarding community rights — preventing land grabs and exploitation under the guise of carbon offset projects.
  - Capacity-building and advocacy — helping communities understand and engage in carbon credit generation without losing control over natural resources.

- The NGO sector must focus on democratising access to these emerging markets and protecting vulnerable groups from exclusion or exploitation in carbon trading schemes.
- ❖ A critical discussion emerged on the role and responsibility of private sector actors, while private corporations in India and the region hold significant financial and infrastructural capacity, their engagement is often limited to CSR-driven projects, not systemic climate investments. A point for deliberation was to define the private sector's role within the broader climate justice agenda — beyond profit motives and towards sustainability, transparency, and accountability.

### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ A coordinated, research-driven, and rights-based strategy is needed to unify South Asian voices for climate justice in global negotiations.
- ❖ Strengthen regional collaboration in South Asia by sharing knowledge, aligning priorities, and jointly accessing fair climate finance to tackle shared climate challenges.
- ❖ Empower indigenous peoples, women, and local communities as decision-makers to ensure climate justice and equity guide all financing frameworks.
- ❖ Bridge the gap between policy and practice by establishing simplified, transparent climate finance mechanisms that enable direct local access, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities.

### THEMATIC SESSION – BUILDING URBAN RESILIENCE IN SOUTH ASIA

**Moderator:** Mr. Aravind Unni, Urban Platform

**Presenters:** Mr. Ritwajit Das, CAN South Asia; Ms. Shreya KC, Clean Energy Nepal, Ms. Tamanna Rehman, Practical Action; Prof. Jagath Munasinghe, University of Moratuwa; Mr. Kanchan Mani Dixit, ISET; Dr. Jayanta Basu, EnGIO



## Mr. Aravind Unni, Urban Platform - Presentation on Building Urban Resilience

Developing countries rely on finance from high-emission developed nations while needing to transition to sustainable growth. Urbanisation in South Asia is highly unequal, with ~40% of residents living in vulnerable conditions, making inclusive adaptation and resilience planning essential. Much of the region's future urban infrastructure is yet to be built, offering a critical opportunity to embed climate resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness — especially in secondary cities. Planning should adopt a long-term, 2050 horizon, emphasising foresight, adaptability, and cross-sector collaboration. Regional cooperation, knowledge exchange, and shared innovation are key to advancing sustainable urban futures across South Asia.

## Mr. Ritwajit Das, CAN South Asia – Presentation on Urban NDCs

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs/NDCs), introduced after the Paris Agreement, provide a standardised yet flexible framework for countries to outline mitigation and adaptation commitments under the UNFCCC. NDCs include sectoral assessments, quantifiable targets, and reporting mechanisms, aiming for inclusiveness across government, civil society, and non-state actors, though actual participation remains questionable. The third-generation NDCs (NDC 3.0) expand coverage to energy, transport, urban resilience, waste management, and supply chains, distinguishing between unconditional targets achievable domestically and conditional targets reliant on international finance, technology, and cooperation.

### Country-Specific NDC Highlights

- Bangladesh: Targets a 6.39% GHG reduction (unconditional) and 13.92% (conditional) below business-as-usual levels by 2035, requiring around USD 115 billion in climate finance. The NDC emphasises urban resilience, slum adaptation, and mass electrification of public transport — including 10,000 new electric/hybrid buses and expanded transit in Dhaka and Chittagong.
- Nepal: Focuses on climate-resilient urban infrastructure, electric mobility, air pollution control, and green codes within city planning. Loss and damage considerations are explicitly integrated.
- Sri Lanka: Prioritises decentralised urban planning, circular economy principles, waste management, transport electrification, and resilient infrastructure with clear attention to loss and damage.
- Urban and subnational governments are more agile and adaptive, capable of quick decision-making and direct community engagement. Empowering cities as frontline actors in NDC implementation can accelerate participation, ownership, and tangible results. The emerging trend across South Asia is to treat cities as collective climate actors, advancing mitigation, adaptation, and loss-and-damage responses at the local level.



The session concluded with the thought that while earlier NDCs — such as India's — barely mentioned cities or urbanisation, the new generation must recognise urban systems as critical climate frontiers. Integrating scientific rigour, local governance, and citizen participation into city-level NDC strategies will be essential to achieving national and global climate goals.



### **Ms. Shreya KC. CEN – Presentation on Urban Agenda at COP 30**



South Asian cities, contributing over 70% of emissions, face growing climate risks — heatwaves, floods, and droughts — yet lack robust adaptation systems. Urban growth has often prioritised infrastructure over ecosystems and social inclusion, deepening inequality. Resilient cities — supported by strong early warning systems, local governance, and civil society engagement, as seen in Nepal — can save lives and advance mitigation, adaptation, and resilience goals.

COP30 (Belém) will spotlight cities, regions, and civil society, linking urban systems with energy access, adaptation finance, and science-policy integration. While some South Asian countries now integrate urban priorities into NDCs, deeper on-ground engagement is needed. Empowering youth, protecting ecological foundations, and ensuring just transitions are central to inclusive urban climate action. Cross-border collaboration can strengthen regional knowledge sharing and amplify South Asia's urban voice in global climate forums.

### **Ms. Tamanna Rehman, Practical Action – Presentation on Plastic Pollution and Urban Climate Resilience**

Plastic pollution contributes 3.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, with single-use plastics dominating. In Bangladesh, urban per capita plastic use has tripled over 15 years, yet only 31% is recycled, posing severe environmental and public health challenges. Practical Action applies a “Cities Fit for People” systems approach, integrating solid waste, sanitation, and fecal sludge management, emphasising multi-stakeholder collaboration, inclusive governance, and digital solutions. Working with over 30 waste-picker cooperatives, they recycle plastics via pyrolysis, generating jobs, reducing emissions (~34 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>), and promoting circularity.

A data-driven resilience assessment guides municipal planning across floods, heat, and storms in pilot cities. The discussion stressed avoiding “green displacement”, ensuring that formalised climate and waste initiatives protect informal workers and uphold social justice while achieving environmental gains.

### **Prof. Jagath Munasinghe, University of Moratuwa – Presentation on Urbanisation and Resilience in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is “urban in practice but rural on paper” — official statistics under 20% urban population misrepresent the reality, especially in peri-urban and semi-rural areas. This rural bias in policy and funding leads to underinvestment in infrastructure, waste management, and climate resilience for functionally urban populations.

Mapping shows most of the country is already densely populated and non-agricultural, intensifying land-use pressure, environmental degradation, and climate exposure, particularly heat stress in western and southern regions. The National Physical Plan offers a framework to manage urban growth while conserving critical ecosystems and integrating resilience planning.



## Mr. Kanchan Mani Dixit, ISET - Presentation on Hospital Resilience and Health Systems in Urban Adaptation



By 2050, **70% of Nepal's population** will live in cities, increasing exposure to climate hazards like floods, heatwaves, and resource stress. **Hospitals**, critical urban lifelines, are highly vulnerable due to outdated infrastructure, single power sources, poor governance, and limited integration in resilience planning. A 2024 study revealed that **60% of hospitals have non-functional generators**, with cases like Medicity Hospital flooding forcing prolonged shutdowns. Vulnerabilities are compounded by weak facility design, poor maintenance, limited disaster training, and fragmented data systems.

The study proposed three strategic pathways for resilient health systems: **Infrastructure and Power Resilience**, **Governance and Capacity Building**, and **Equity and Inclusion**. Strengthening hospitals through **diversified energy, integrated planning, and community engagement** is essential to safeguard urban populations and maintain public trust amid escalating climate risks.

## Dr. Jayanta Basu, EnGIO - Presentation on Kolkata Climate Action Plan (KCAP): A Model for Urban Climate Resilience

The Kolkata Climate Action Plan (KCAP), led by CANSA in collaboration with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, is a pioneering, community-driven city-level climate resilience initiative in South Asia. The plan adopts a pragmatic, sector-specific approach, prioritising 30 key actions across 11 thematic areas, including slum resilience, heat action, wetland conservation, urban cooling, energy transition, and disaster preparedness. About one-third of Kolkata's residents live in slums, many in heat-stress zones, and KCAP explicitly integrates climate justice to empower marginalised communities through initiatives like solar rooftops, urban greening, and waste-to-energy.



Success depends on political approval, budget alignment, and citizen engagement, with the plan feeding into the broader West Bengal State Climate Action Plan. KCAP aims to serve as a replicable model for South Asian cities, combining technical planning, social inclusion, and governance for equitable urban adaptation.

## Reflections, Questions and Answers

- ❖ How can cities put human beings — not just infrastructure — at the centre of resilience planning?
- ❖ The urban resilience must start from lived realities, not from master plans or technology alone. The human dimension — equity, accessibility, and social inclusion — must define how cities adapt. Several interventions highlighted:
  - ✓ Urban planning often privileges physical infrastructure, but people's well-being and social networks are the foundation of resilient cities.
  - ✓ Civil society organisations and local governments are working together to map open spaces, strengthen community disaster preparedness units, and empower marginalised groups and women to lead local adaptation actions.

- ✓ Cities must be measured not only by “smart infrastructure” but also by quality of life, dignity, and inclusion — placing human needs alongside technical and environmental goals.
- ❖ With rapid and unplanned urbanisation, open spaces are disappearing, agricultural land is turning into housing, and post-earthquake reconstruction has erased local architectural identities. How can resilience integrate cultural and social dimensions?
- ❖ Nepal’s urbanisation is both physical and cultural. After the 2015 earthquake, the rush for “modern” (concrete) reconstruction led to loss of traditional design, local materials, and community cohesion. Urban resilience must value heritage and identity—reconstruction should integrate local architectural wisdom and cultural continuity. As rural migrants reshape cities, urban policy must recognise diversity and create inclusive spaces for all, including persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- ❖ Has there been research or policy collaboration among Nepal, India, and Bangladesh to address cross-border plastic pollution carried by rivers?
- ❖ While there is limited regional research quantifying transboundary plastic flow, field observations confirm that plastics from Nepal’s rivers are entering Indian and Bangladeshi waterways, particularly via the Ganga–Brahmaputra–Meghna basin. Practical Action focuses mainly on inland waste management, but Nepal’s National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and CSR policies now integrate plastic waste management as part of climate resilience strategies. The need for a regional South Asian framework for plastic governance — linking urban waste systems and riverine ecosystems — was widely recognised.
- ❖ Did Sri Lanka’s economic and social crises trigger migration back from cities to rural areas?
- ❖ There has been limited large-scale re-migration. Sri Lanka’s small geography and strong infrastructure connectivity (most areas within 4–5 hours’ reach) allow commuting without relocation. However, peripheral areas around cities are becoming denser as people move out of congested cores. Population growth is slow (7% census rise), and urbanisation is more functional than demographic — people live semi-urban lifestyles even outside municipal boundaries.
- ❖ Would it be more sustainable to focus on climate-smart villages rather than cities, which keep attracting migrants and consuming resources?
- ❖ The question reflects a critical tension in South Asia. However, focusing only on villages ignores the socio-political realities that drive migration. The challenge is not to halt urbanisation but to make it humane, equitable, and climate-resilient — while parallel efforts strengthen rural livelihoods to reduce distress migration. Cities and villages are ecologically and economically interconnected, and climate-smart planning must integrate both.
- ❖ How are indigenous knowledge systems and informal sector contributions being integrated into modern resilience planning? How do we ensure private sector accountability in urban adaptation?
- ❖ Many adaptation programmes are now documenting and embedding traditional wisdom, such as indigenous flood management, housing materials, and early warning practices. These are being blended with digital tools and modern engineering to create context-specific resilience solutions. Further, there is growing dialogue on responsible business conduct, linking corporate accountability to urban labour rights, circular economy, and just transitions.
- ❖ How are city-level climate action plans, such as the Kolkata Climate Action Plan, being institutionalised and owned by governments? Can these models be replicated elsewhere?
- ❖ The Kolkata Climate Action Plan (KCAP) is now under review for political approval and budget integration with the West Bengal State Climate Plan. Once ratified, it will serve as a demonstration model for replication in Delhi, Mumbai, and other Indian cities. CANSA and



partners continue to push for mainstreaming local climate plans within formal urban governance systems — so that they become state-backed and resource-supported, not just civil society pilots.

- Human-centred and inclusive urbanism must drive resilience, balancing infrastructure with empathy and social justice.
- Cultural identity, traditional wisdom, and social equity are as vital as technology in climate adaptation.
- Migration and informality are defining realities of South Asian urbanisation—planning must integrate them, not erase them.
- Regional collaboration on transboundary waste, climate finance, and urban policy is urgently needed.
- Political ownership and fiscal commitment are key to scaling successful models like the Kolkata Climate Action Plan.
- Finally, resilience is not a technical destination—it's a collective process of inclusion, learning, and transformation across rural and urban boundaries.

### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ Civil society's role is to bridge government and communities, turning plans into public movements.
- ❖ Integrating plastic waste, carbon credits, and NDCs can unlock new finance streams.
- ❖ Convene a South Asia Urban Resilience Forum to coordinate policies, data sharing, and financing mechanisms that can turn fragmented national efforts into a collective strength.

## THEMATIC SESSION – MITIGATION- LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT IN CITIES OF SOUTH ASIA

**Moderator:** Mr. Arjuna Seneviratne, GMSL

**Presenter:** Ms. Dulari Parmar, YUVA; Mr. Harjeet Singh, Satat Sampada; Mr. Biraj Gautam, PEEDA; Ms. Shanjia Shams, CPRD; Ms. Zainab, SDPI (online); Dr. Ravi Hansa



### **Ms. Dulari Parmar, YUVA - Presentation on Urban Inequality, Informality, and Community-Led Climate Action**



Urbanisation in South Asia is rapidly expanding beyond mega-cities to second- and third-tier cities, exposing populations — especially informal settlements — to severe climate risks like heat, floods, and coastal vulnerability. Many of these populations are invisible in official data, perpetuating exclusion and inequality, with forced evictions worsening vulnerability.

Local initiatives, such as YUVA in Mumbai, demonstrate practical climate justice by using community-driven data to improve infrastructure (e.g., stormwater drainage) and implement nature-based solutions like green space restoration and collective land management. The region's urban future depends on inclusive, participatory planning that empowers marginalised communities as active partners in building climate resilience.

### **Mr. Biraj Gautam, PEEDA – Presentation on Transitioning to Electric Cooking for Climate and Health**

Clean cooking in Nepal is a critical public health and climate challenge. Around 26,000 premature deaths annually are linked to indoor smoke from biomass stoves, which also emit black carbon and PM2.5 that accelerate Himalayan glacier melt. Despite a hydropower-dominated electricity system, 54% of households still rely on firewood and 44% on LPG.

The government aims for 25% of households using electricity for cooking by 2035, with urban areas offering scalable entry points. Electric cooking is 30–60% cheaper than LPG and can significantly reduce firewood use, LPG consumption, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Nationwide adoption could meaningfully contribute to national carbon mitigation, while improving health and household equity. Electric cooking represents a triple win: cleaner air, lower emissions, and reduced costs, linking energy transition to climate justice.



### **Ms. Zainab Naeem, SDPI – Presentation on Pakistan's Urban Energy Transition and Renewable Integration**

Pakistan's Integrated Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP) envisions a least-cost, renewable-heavy electricity system by 2035, with two-thirds of generation from hydropower, wind, and solar, supported by storage and operational flexibility. The plan emphasises urban demand-side engagement, including e-buses, public transit electrification, efficient cooling, and battery storage pilots.

Energy market reforms under the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market (CTBCM) aim to enable municipalities and large consumers to procure renewable energy directly, though regulatory delays and capacity constraints hinder full implementation. Solar subsidies in 2024–25 spurred rapid installations, but grid and technical challenges persist. City-led mitigation in Lahore, Karachi, and Islamabad — including EV integration, LED lighting, and energy-efficient retrofits — demonstrates how urban action can complement national strategies.

Pakistan's energy transition shows strong ambition and early progress, but financial, governance, and equity challenges must be addressed to realise a fully urban-led renewable energy transformation.

#### **Ms. Shanjia Shams, CPRD – Presentation on Mitigation Potential/Actions in Bangladesh**



Bangladesh, contributing less than 0.5% of global emissions (1.48 t CO<sub>2</sub> per capita), aims to improve energy efficiency by 19.2% by 2035 across energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and waste sectors. The country has deployed over 6 million solar home systems and 1 million biogas digesters, expanded rooftop solar, energy-efficient appliances, LED lighting, and invested in combined-cycle gas plants, with pilots for offshore wind and additional biogas projects.

Transport initiatives include electric/hybrid public transit, solar EV charging, non-motorised transport, and student fare incentives. Urban and building interventions involve solar rooftops, green building retrofits, rainwater harvesting, district cooling, and urban greening.

Industries adopt cleaner production technologies (zigzag brick kilns, low-carbon materials), and the cooling sector is shifting to natural refrigerants. Waste management focuses on composting, biomethane, Material Recovery Facilities, and upgraded landfills.

Nature-based solutions — including urban ecosystem restoration, afforestation, wetland protection, and projects like Gulshan Lake Restoration — address pollution, flooding, carbon sequestration, and livelihood enhancement.

#### **Dr. Ravi Hansa – Presentation on Sri Lanka's mitigation efforts**

Sri Lanka, a low per-capita emitter, aims for 70% renewable energy by 2030, currently achieving ~50% via hydropower and ~1,250 MW of solar. Integration of variable solar and wind is limited by grid constraints, prompting plans for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Renewables are now cheaper than peak fossil power, and private investment interest is growing despite high costs.

The transport and industry sectors target 25% electric vehicle adoption by 2030, complementing broader mitigation efforts across the service-dominated economy. Decentralised solar and net metering face challenges due to high upfront costs and limited local manufacturing. Sri Lanka's energy transition relies on grid modernisation, storage, e-mobility, and ensuring equity and accountability in global climate action.



#### **Mr. Harjeet Singh, Satat Sampada - Presentation on Rethinking South Asia's Climate Path**

South Asia's mitigation efforts remain fragmented and insufficient, with cities like Dhaka, Kolkata, Kathmandu, and Karachi highlighting structural challenges — urban stress, inequitable growth, and environmental degradation — that cannot be solved by technical fixes alone. Sustainable urban development requires integrated urban–rural linkages, combining mitigation, adaptation, and loss & damage planning.



Current responses are largely reactive and internationally driven (e.g., NDCs) rather than based on coherent national visions, and city plans are overly techno-managerial, neglecting social systems, inclusion, and institutional reform. Civil society must focus on structural transformation and people-centred solutions, with only a fraction of effort devoted to compliance. Regional collaboration is essential given ecological interdependence, and development narratives must be reshaped to prioritise sustainability, justice, and resilience over unchecked urbanisation and industrial expansion.

## Reflections, Questions and Answers



- ❖ Why not decentralise energy production (allowing consumer-producers to feed directly into the grid) instead of relying on large centralised systems?
- ❖ Decentralised solar and net-metering are allowed, especially in rural areas. Barriers include high upfront costs, limited private-sector financing, and weak government incentives. Local manufacturing of solar equipment is still underdeveloped, though proposals exist for future domestic production.
- ❖ How can we better connect the rural and urban systems beyond theory? Also, cities often overlook the ecological subsidies they receive from rural areas — water, food, labour, and ecosystem services. How can this be leveraged for climate action?
- ❖ Urban–rural interdependence is structurally overlooked in policy, rooted in 1960s–70s planning that prioritised cities as “growth engines” while underfunding rural areas. Reforming investment priorities — treating rural areas as integral to urban systems — can yield broader benefits, as exemplified by the idea that “the cost of one city bridge can reform many villages.” Transformation should be gradual and evidence-based, improving rural infrastructure and livelihoods to reduce migration, leveraging demonstrations and best practices rather than confrontational approaches.
- ❖ How can we talk about nature-based solutions in cities when urban areas seem to have lost their “nature”? How do these differ from rural contexts?
- ❖ Clarified that urban nature still exists, though degraded. The goal is to rejuvenate and reintegrate it with urban systems. Their approach links green (nature-based) and grey (infrastructure) solutions, e.g., tree planting coupled with stormwater drainage to reduce flooding and create community spaces. Climate planning is also a rights-based tool:

- communities use climate language and vulnerability assessments to demand access to basic services (e.g., drainage, sanitation). Ward offices *do* have limited mandates through line departments (water, maintenance, stormwater) — these can be leveraged for implementing small-scale NBS in informal settlements.
- ❖ Urban ecosystems are destroyed, not absent — wetlands, open spaces, and recharge zones have been replaced by impermeable surfaces. Urban planning must now focus on “recreating lost ecological functions”, not just beautification.
  - ❖ Many mitigation discussions in Bangladesh focus on the garment industry. With over 4 million women workers and thousands of small enterprises, are these sustainability measures genuine or just greenwashing (e.g., plastics-to-energy)?
  - ❖ There is a risk of greenwashing, but responsibility starts at the individual and institutional level. Urged individuals to assess their own carbon footprints and adopt behavioural changes at home and work. Noted that while strong policies exist, implementation lags — so a collaborative, transparent approach is key to avoid superficial compliance.
  - ❖ Local governments often lack legal authority to provide services in informal settlements. How can they still engage in slum upgrading and climate actions?
  - ❖ Confirmed that while informal settlements may lack formal recognition, ward offices and their line departments (maintenance, water, stormwater) can still deliver small but impactful services. Climate vulnerability assessments and community-led action plans can legitimise local demands, helping officials allocate limited resources under climate-linked budgets.

#### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ The current policy bias toward cities needs correction through rural investment and circular economy thinking.
- ❖ Civil society must move from reactive compliance to proactive narrative building, defining a South Asian model of sustainable, equitable development.

### THEMATIC SESSION – SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR JUST TRANSITION IN SOUTH ASIA

**Moderator:** Mr. Palash Kanti Das, CANSA

**Presenters:** Ms. Anabella Rosemberg, CAN I; Dr. Sanjay Vashist, CAN South Asia; Ms. Tenzin Wangmo (online); Dr. Srestha Banerjee, iForest (online); Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, CPRD; Dr. Arosha Hemali



### **Ms. Anabella Rosemberg, CAN-I – Presentation on Belem Action Mechanism for Just Transition. Why is it needed?**

Just transition must connect local and national efforts to the global climate conversation, enabling mutual learning and collective pressure for systemic change. Regional cooperation in South Asia can amplify the region's voice and use mechanisms to address structural barriers like unfair trade rules, debt constraints, and limited access to technology and finance.

Transition planning should extend beyond energy and mitigation, integrating adaptation across food systems, infrastructure, and urban development. A people-centred, justice-driven approach is essential to safeguard workers, farmers, and vulnerable communities while implementing climate adaptation and transition policies.

### **Dr. Sanjay Vashist, CANSA - Presentation on SCP and Circular Economy for Climate Ambition in South Asia**



Dr. Sanjay Vashist built on Anna Rosemberg's points, cautioning against viewing transition as a purely technological shift (from fossil fuels to renewables). He stressed the "justice element" — the transition must address inequality, livelihoods, and fairness, especially for workers and vulnerable populations. He further highlighted that technological substitution alone cannot deliver a "just" transition; it must be socially and economically inclusive.

South Asia's climate strategy must pursue an inclusive, just, and gender-responsive transition that uplifts marginalised communities. Clean energy access, sustainable consumption, and circular economy approaches are key to deep emission reductions and long-term systemic transformation across energy, agriculture, urban systems, and adaptation.

Just Transition encompasses both mitigation and adaptation, recognising that changes in livelihoods, infrastructure, and behaviour are essential for survival in a warming world. Distinguishing "survival" vs. "luxury" emissions is critical, with circular economy strategies — recovery, reuse, recycling, and product longevity — able to reduce global emissions by up to 45%, complementing energy-focused mitigation.

Material production (iron, steel, cement, plastics, aluminium) has doubled since 1995, highlighting the need to decouple economic growth from material consumption. Currently, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and circular economy approaches are weakly integrated into South Asian climate and adaptation policies, with limited awareness, incentives, and coordination between climate and resource efficiency frameworks. Private



sector interest is growing, presenting an opportunity to align policy, business, and climate goals.

### Opportunities for Integration and Financing

- Integrating SCP into adaptation and mitigation plans can make projects eligible for climate finance (e.g., Green Climate Fund).
- Current financial mechanisms largely ignore SCP, but aligning them could unlock new investment streams.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration — across governments, private sector, and civil society — is essential to operationalise this agenda.

Energy transition alone is insufficient—South Asia must embed circularity, SCP, and just, adaptive approaches into holistic climate and development planning.

### Dr. Srestha Banerjee, iForest (online) - Presentation on Just Transition in Coal Regions

India's **Just Transition (JT)** must extend beyond coal-power to include **industry, MSMEs, brick kilns, boilers, transport, and livelihoods**, ensuring a balanced 30-year shift that protects jobs, supports regional economies, and meets climate goals.

Coal use is expected to **grow for 5–7 years and peak by the early/mid-2030s**, making early planning essential in coal regions. The upcoming **2025 Mine Closure Guidelines** will, for the first time, embed people-centric JT principles — mandating livelihood transitions, land repurposing, and environmental safeguards. Around **147 coal mines** are slated for closure or repurposing in the next 3–5 years, with PSUs tasked to design local economic diversification plans.



Downstream sectors — **coal-dependent MSMEs, auto component industries, and informal brick kilns** — also require tailored support through cleaner technologies, finance, retraining, and social protection.

### What good JT plans should include (India focus)

India's **Just Transition (JT)** roadmap emphasises district-level, people-centred transformation through seven pillars:

- ✓ **Economic diversification** — promote clean industries, renewables, agro-processing, and nature-based jobs.
- ✓ **Mine land repurposing** — convert closed mines into renewable energy parks, storage sites, or restored ecosystems.
- ✓ **Worker transition** — provide reskilling, re-employment, pensions, and safety nets for informal labour.
- ✓ **MSME decarbonisation** — enable clean fuels, energy efficiency, and concessional finance for small enterprises.
- ✓ **Social and gender inclusion** — safeguard vulnerable and informal workers, especially in brick and seasonal sectors.

- ✓ **Finance architecture** — mobilise state JT funds, green bonds, and blended finance linked to climate windows.
- ✓ **Accountability** — ensure progress through targets, district dashboards, and stakeholder councils.

India's just transition must be **multi-sectoral, inclusive, and regionally grounded**, aligning energy security with equitable, low-carbon development. India's policy milestone—embedding JT in mine-closure guidance—marks progress, but success hinges on **state-level execution, MSME inclusion, and livelihood-first planning** integrated into climate-resilient development.

### Ms. Tenzin Wangmo, (online) - Presentation on Integrating Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption into Bhutan's Climate Vision

Bhutan exemplifies how Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and the Circular Economy (CE) can drive climate-resilient, inclusive growth. These system-wide approaches aim to decouple growth from environmental harm, enhance resource efficiency, and improve quality of life. Bhutan remains carbon negative, with 71% forest cover and a constitutional mandate to maintain at least 60%. Despite this, it faces economic vulnerability and aims for rapid growth — doubling GDP by 2029 and tripling by 2034 — while safeguarding ecological integrity.

The country is integrating SCP and CE into its Third NDC and Long-Term Strategy, aligning climate goals with economic transformation. However, implementation barriers persist: limited awareness, weak data systems, and lack of capacity on metrics and cross-sector linkages.

Bhutan's experience highlights a powerful model for linking circular economy principles with carbon neutrality and sustainable prosperity, offering lessons for other developing nations.

### Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, CPRD - Presentation on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the construction and textile sectors of Bangladesh



Just Transition can drive both emission reduction and fairness in the global climate response — but only if supported by finance, technology, capacity building, and equitable trade access. Without fair market conditions, low-carbon shifts in export-dependent sectors like Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments (RMG) industry risk becoming *unjust transitions* that harm workers and competitiveness.

The discussion emphasised balancing Just Transition and Just Adaptation: while global debates focus on mitigation, countries like Bangladesh need equal attention to adaptation, since climate impacts shape livelihoods and migration.

The RMG sector plays a dual role — it is not just an emissions source but also an adaptation mechanism, providing jobs to climate-affected rural migrants. Strengthening its sustainability and labour standards therefore supports both resilience and decarbonisation.

A *Just Transition* must also be a *Just Adaptation* — ensuring that climate action strengthens livelihoods, protects vulnerable workers, and promotes fair global trade, rather than imposing new inequities on developing economies.

## Dr. Arosha Hemali - Presentation on Sri Lanka's Integration of SCP and Circular Economy into NDC 3.0



Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circular Economy (CE) are now core components of Sri Lanka's NDC 3.0, integrated across industry, urban development, waste management, and loss and damage. With only 40% of global raw materials converted into useful products, Sri Lanka's shift toward circular systems aims to boost resource efficiency, waste reduction, and economic resilience.

### Key features include:

Life-cycle analysis, industrial symbiosis, and eco-industrial park development with national guidelines and rating systems.

A model symbiosis cluster in the North Western Province links power, cement, agriculture, and brick industries in closed-loop systems.

Waste-sector priorities: decentralised management, composting, waste-to-energy, pyrolysis, and material recovery.

On-ground successes: Colombo's waste-to-energy plant, pyrolysis for tire waste, RDF co-processing in cement, and resource recovery centres.

Sri Lanka's approach demonstrates how circular economy principles can drive low-carbon, resource-efficient growth. Future success hinges on scaling industrial symbiosis, mobilising green finance, and embedding SCP/CE across all sectors.

### Innovative Circular Economy Practices (Industry Examples)

- Industrial waste into bricks: Reuse of industrial sludge and fly ash for brick production.
- Pyrolysis for waste tires and plastics: Produces high-calorific-value oils used in energy industries.
- Plastic-to-textile recycling: PET bottles converted into fibers and fabrics (TetraCycle and textile sector).

## Reflections, Questions and Answers

- ❖ The brick kiln industry is a major emitter and a large employer in South Asia. After Nepal's earthquake, the country rebuilt its brick kilns with zig-zag and cleaner technologies. Could India (and the region) learn from that experience? How can labour standards (SDG 8) and climate action (SDG 13) be integrated into a socially and environmentally compliant brick-kiln framework?
- ❖ Acknowledged the importance of cross-country learning on brick-kiln reform. It was highlighted that the informal, seasonal labour nature of the sector makes regulation and compliance challenging. Agreed that lessons from Nepal's cleaner kiln technologies and India's national framework on socially and environmentally compliant kilns can together inform a regional approach — addressing both air-quality and worker-welfare dimensions under a Just Transition lens.
- ❖ When we speak of *Just Transition*, it's not yet truly 'just'. There will be winners and losers— not only *between countries*, but *within* them. In India, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha may *lose* revenue and jobs as coal declines, while Gujarat and Tamil Nadu *gain* through



renewable-energy investments. The resistance from coal-producing states is driven more by revenue and employment fears than by energy security. So far, we are conceptually discussing diversification, but not implementing it at scale to replace lost incomes and fiscal revenues.

- ❖ Fully agreed: *the revenue gap* is the biggest driver of political resistance to transition. Noted that the new Mine-Closure Guidelines (2025) mark a step forward, but financial mechanisms for state-level diversification and *sub-national Just Transition Funds* are still missing. Urged that *economic-diversification planning* in coal regions be *scaled up* with state-centre coordination, to ensure both *jobs and fiscal replacement mechanisms*.
- ❖ Across South Asia, energy sovereignty is driving decisions as much as climate logic. Example: in Bangladesh, gas remains central not just for energy supply but for *national security and sovereignty*. While the global narrative rejects gas as a “transition fuel,” policymakers in South Asia see it differently — a short-term necessity for stability. The debate also ties into critical-minerals dependence — with China controlling nearly 70% of the market, countries fear over-dependence in new green-tech supply chains. These realities shape how each country defines a “*just*” and “*secure*” transition.
- ❖ Affirmed that these tensions between *energy sovereignty* and *climate ambition* are real. The conversation must move beyond carbon metrics to include *security, industrial policy, and economic justice*. It was suggested to frame regional cooperation around resilient supply chains, critical-minerals governance, and fair trade rules as part of the *Just Transition* agenda.
- ❖ Despite common geography and shared challenges, regional cooperation in South Asia remains weak. India, being the largest economy, has a critical role — sometimes by acting, and sometimes by *stepping back* to allow regional platforms to flourish. It is essential that countries engage through shared supply-chain strategies — both for renewable energy components and industrial diversification—so that benefits and opportunities are more evenly distributed.
- ❖ Can the *circular economy* be effectively connected with *local economies and employment* in South Asia? If circularity focuses only on industrial or global-scale solutions, it might disconnect from grassroots livelihoods. Example: *Waste pickers, street vendors, construction workers*, and other informal workers — if policies aim for “zero waste” or bans on plastics, what happens to their income sources? Many urban informal workers (e.g., 200,000 waste pickers in Delhi) depend on materials and systems the circular economy seeks to eliminate or regulate.
- ❖ Energy transition is inevitable, but planning must anticipate *livelihood impacts* before full-scale implementation. Communities dependent on coal or informal recycling must be integrated into alternative livelihoods early on.
- ❖ Waste pickers remain *vital actors* in Sri Lanka’s recycling value chain — around 360+ registered waste collectors directly support industrial recycling and RDF (Refuse Derived Fuel) systems. In Sri Lanka’s context, “zero waste” doesn’t mean *no waste workers* — it means *organised, safe, and recognised work* in waste segregation and recycling.
- ❖ How can circular economy initiatives access *climate finance*? Should they be categorised under *mitigation, adaptation, or cross-cutting*? Global funds and mechanisms (e.g., GCF, LDCF) are not yet structured to finance circular economy projects directly. How can South Asian countries position these efforts within climate finance frameworks?
- ❖ The *Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector* demonstrates how *mitigation and adaptation overlap*. It contributes ~15% of national emissions and employs ~4.5 million workers (mostly women migrating from climate-affected rural areas). Energy efficiency and modernisation reduce emissions (mitigation) but also secure livelihoods for climate migrants (adaptation). Therefore, *just transition financing* should be cross-cutting—

accessible from both *mitigation* and *adaptation* windows. Countries like Bangladesh should push this framing in upcoming climate negotiations (e.g., COP30 in Baku, Dubai meetings).

- ❖ Circular economy and just transitions must go beyond the energy sector—covering *industrial*, *agricultural*, and *service* transitions. Renewable energy growth alone cannot absorb displaced workers; therefore, industrial policy and economic diversification must accompany climate action. Unions and worker organisations are *missing voices* in South Asia's climate debate. Civil society should actively collaborate with unions to integrate worker perspectives into climate policies.
- ❖ Social protection systems are crucial for both *Adaptation resilience* (e.g., income during floods, heatwaves), and *Transition fairness* (e.g., compensation for job loss or retraining). These safety nets should be framed as dual-purpose climate solutions — serving both *mitigation* and *adaptation* needs.
- ❖ A Just Transition in South Asia must go beyond climate policy to encompass economic justice, fair revenue sharing, labour protection, energy sovereignty, and regional cooperation for equitable low-carbon industrialisation.

### SESSION OUTCOME

- ❖ Strengthen sector-specific understanding of the circular economy and resource efficiency.
- ❖ Establish a regional cooperation framework with a time-bound roadmap for knowledge sharing, joint investment, and common standards.
- ❖ South Asia must push for integrated financing approaches that address employment, adaptation, and mitigation interlinkages.



## CLOSING REFLECTIONS ON THE TWO-DAY CONFERENCE

- ❖ The struggles at COPs and global forums are inseparable from domestic struggles for justice and participation. Building community voices and local representation strengthens advocacy at international platforms.
- ❖ Despite political tensions, participants expressed confidence that South Asian people-to-people and community-to-community connections will endure and outlast current geopolitics. The region must invest in shared learning, collaboration, and trust-building as a long-term foundation for climate justice.
- ❖ Legally binding local-level climate plans (NAPs, SAPs, LTPs, etc.) are needed to ensure implementation and accountability. Participants urged country networks to act as pressure groups within their own systems to translate national commitments into ground-level action. The conversation should now focus on implementation frameworks, not just policy rhetoric.
- ❖ The two-day dialogue helped identify major gaps in regional approaches, even if not all solutions emerged. Continuous engagement was proposed through regular exchanges rather than annual meetings to sustain learning and cooperation.
- ❖ Sustainable, simple lifestyles rooted in local traditions can counter over-consumption and ecological strain. Participants emphasised promoting behavioural change and awareness alongside technical interventions.
- ❖ A reminder that water management, identified as a priority at COP-27, has faded from discourse. Suggested that CANSA and partners revive water-centred adaptation discussions, as 80% of adaptation actions are linked to water systems.
- ❖ Appreciation for CANSA's convening role in keeping civil society connected despite shrinking civic space. The dialogue was praised for reviving cross-border relationships and reaffirming the value of independent, people-driven engagement.

**The learnings from the two-day deliberation helped converge into South Asia positions/ demands for COP30.**





**CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK SOUTH ASIA (CANSA)  
DEMANDS TO THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES  
AT THE 30TH UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE  
(COP30)  
Belém, Brazil, from 10 to 21 November 2025.**

South Asia faces disproportionate and escalating climate impacts, including intensified floods, extreme heatwaves, water scarcity, and ecosystem degradation, that threaten millions of lives and livelihoods. The latest iterations of **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** after the **Global Stocktake (GST)** reveal a devastating ambition gap placing the world on a trajectory for catastrophic levels of warming.

In its 2025 [Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice](#) affirmed that 1.5°C is the consensus goal of the Paris Agreement and that states must base their climate action on the best available science, reflecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), and the historical responsibility of developed countries. The International Court of Justice also made it clear that only submitting an NDC is not enough to comply with the obligations under the Paris Agreement. The content of the NDC is equally relevant to determine compliance and must be capable of making an “adequate contribution” to the achievement of the 1.5°C objective. To determine this contribution, States have limited discretion and must take into account the fairness principles of the Paris Agreement; nevertheless, the NDCs put forward must reflect the highest possible ambition.

Ten years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, developed countries must act decisively on the outcomes of the Global Stocktake by committing to a rapid, equitable phase-out of fossil fuels, and by aligning their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** with a 1.5°C pathway. This requires the **full operationalisation of the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)**, acknowledging the **historical and ongoing responsibilities of developed nations** to lead in reducing emissions.

## **1. Agree on Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) for Just Transition**

At COP30, Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) must be recognised as a critical driver of a Just Transition that advances equity, resilience, and low-emission development pathways. The Conference must formalise an **international Just Transition Mechanism** grounded on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), prioritising social equity and inclusion in South Asia’s transition away from fossil fuels. This mechanism should ensure grant-based, predictable financing to strengthen social protection, skills development, decent work, and alternative livelihoods, especially for workers, women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and marginalised groups. Circular Economy approaches that promote resource efficiency, waste minimisation, and green jobs can serve as key enablers of equitable transformation across energy, agriculture, and industrial sectors.

Just Transition policies must be participatory, rights-based, gender-responsive, and environmentally sound, ensuring that no one is left behind. All Parties should integrate comprehensive Just Transition strategies rooted in Circular Economy and SCP principles into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), thereby supporting long-term resilience, equity, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable development. The financing of Just Transition actions must be acknowledged as a core

priority, with dedicated eligibility under climate finance mechanisms. All climate finance should adhere to the agreed principles and safeguards of Just Transition, ensuring accountability and social justice.

Climate Action Network South Asia further calls on Parties at COP30 to endorse a global energy transition roadmap grounded in CBDR-RC that **enables an equitable and just phase-out of fossil fuels, coupled with accelerated renewable energy deployment and universal energy access**. Such a roadmap must be backed by transparent, grant-based international finance to facilitate technology transfer, capacity building, and to prevent new fossil fuel infrastructure investments. The extraction of transition minerals should comply with human rights and environmental standards, ensuring meaningful participation and benefit-sharing with local and Indigenous communities.

## 2. Focus on Adaptation and Loss & Damage

A COP30 agreement, potentially early on in the session, on the United Arab Emirates–Belém work programme, on the full and final list of 100 indicators, which includes balanced and well-represented Means of Implementation (MoI) is essential for measuring progress achieved towards the targets under the **Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)**.

Parties must agree to establish a new, predictable public-grant-based adaptation finance commitment under the GGA decision at COP30 **that responds to the needs of developing countries, estimated to be over US\$ 300 billion per year**. Developed countries must, at a minimum, be urged to increase provision of adaptation finance by at least six times by 2030 compared to 2019 levels **(this amounts to a tripling of the commitment under the Glasgow Pact to double adaptation finance by 2025)**.

The urgency of this challenge is underscored by the fact that in both 2023 and 2024, developed countries fell far short of the **Adaptation Fund's (AF) resource mobilisation** targets, leaving the Fund unable to meet even its modest annual goals. For 2025, the AF Board has therefore moved from setting an annual target to adopting a minimum resource mobilisation floor of USD 300 million — the bare minimum to keep the Fund operational, but still far below what is required to deliver a meaningful scale-up.

Developed country parties should scale up finance to address loss and damage. A substantial portion of this financing can be channelled through **new pledges to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)**. The resource mobilisation strategy of the new Fund should encompass contributions from developed countries, other Parties in a position to do so, and a share of proceeds from new polluter-pays taxes and levies. **Scaled-up resources for loss and damage should also be delivered through the newly operationalised Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM) with an initial amount of US\$ 250 million.**

The COP30 Presidency and all Parties must make filling the Fund a priority. COP30 should deliver a clear political signal to the Board of the FRLD that the resource mobilisation strategy, to be finalised in 2026, will be commensurate with the scale of loss and damage needs — at least USD 400 billion per year — and provide clarity on the pathways to achieve this scale. Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) demands an ambitious scaling up of climate finance through new and additional public grant-based resources that reflect the principles of equity and CBDR-RC. This includes at least a **tripling of adaptation finance by 2030 and dedicated, predictable funding for loss**

**and damage** to address irreversible harms already faced by the region. Developed countries, particularly the EU and G20, must fulfil their Paris Agreement Article 9 obligations by scaling up finance without resorting to loans or market mechanisms that heighten vulnerabilities. Climate finance must be accessible, gender-responsive, and aligned with national priorities to foster resilience and sustainable development.

### 3. Scale-up up Climate Finance for 1.5°C Alignment

Developed countries must increase their **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with the highest possible ambition** supported by **increased, predictable, and accessible grant-based climate finance** that enables South Asia to undertake transformative mitigation and adaptation without exacerbating debt burdens.

Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSA) calls on COP30 to firmly **embed the polluter pays principle** within the international climate finance architecture, including through fossil fuel extraction and carbon pricing, in line with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). Revenues from such measures should be channelled as grant-based finance to vulnerable regions to support mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and transition costs. **New international tax frameworks and levies** must be developed cooperatively to resource climate action equitably and transparently, reducing the financing burden on developing countries.

Recognising the heterogeneity and vulnerability of South Asia's urban and rural landscapes, COP30 should **prioritise support for subnational actors through grant-based finance aligned with CBDR-RC**. Cities and local governments need resources and capacity to implement climate adaptation and resilience measures focused on urban heat management, water security, sustainable infrastructure, and nature-based solutions. This decentralised action is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing climate impacts that disproportionately affect the region's poorest and most exposed populations.

COP30 must commit to **scaling up gender-responsive, socially just, and intersectional climate finance**, predominantly as grants, that support climate resilience, and sexual and reproductive health rights for women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples in South Asia. The Gender Action Plan should be strongly supported and fully integrated in all finance streams to ensure consistency with CBDR-RC and human rights obligations. Financing mechanisms must prioritise capacity building, data collection, and safeguard against gender-based violence and exclusion in climate policies and programmes. Climate finance must support capacity building for meaningful and inclusive participation at all levels while ensuring transparency, accountability, and combating fossil fuel industry capture.

COP30 is also an important moment to redirect public finance and investments towards agroecology and resilient food systems, with a focus on ensuring access to finance for smallholder food producers. The **Green Climate Fund** is a key mechanism that could play a greater role in supporting agroecology policies and projects. For a Just Transition, ensuring access to land is crucial – through **agrarian reforms** that emphasise recognition, restitution, redistribution, and restoration.

Grant-based funding should **empower marginalised voices and foster democratic climate policymaking aligned with human rights norms**.



#### 4. Protect Forests, Biodiversity, and Ecosystem Integrity

COP30 must advance ecosystem-based adaptation and implement robust global mandates under Rio Conventions, emphasising the intrinsic link between biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in South Asia. Financing for forest and wetland protection should be through grant-based mechanisms that recognise Indigenous Peoples' land rights, traditional ecological knowledge, and community stewardship. Actions must reflect Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) by supporting developing countries in managing ecosystems sustainably, preventing ecosystem collapse, and halting biodiversity loss while delivering social and health co-benefits. Protecting forests, wetlands and other natural GHG sinks and reservoirs – and preventing ecosystem collapse – will be critical to the success of COP30.

The momentum from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP16 decisions on biodiversity–climate synergies, as well as the July 2025 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice affirming obligations under the CBD to protect the climate system, must be reflected in the COP30 outcomes. This could include a joint Rio Convention mandate, actions to implement the GST1 outcome and robust indicators under the Global Goals on Adaptation to capture ecological integrity, while recognising the benefits of ecosystem-based adaptation and the risks of ecosystem collapse.

Urgent measures are needed to meet the collective goal of halting the destruction of forest, wetlands and other natural ecosystems by 2030, and to tackle the primary drivers of ecosystem loss by addressing the current fragmentation of ecosystem-related action across multiple workstreams.

#### 5. Embrace Sustainable Production, Consumption, and Circular Economy for Localised and Subnational Climate Action

COP30 should prioritise sustainable production and consumption patterns as central pillars of climate action, emphasising material efficiency, waste reduction, and circular economy approaches. This includes establishing international cooperation frameworks that provide grant-based technical and financial support for resource-efficient technologies, sustainable agriculture and industry practices, and the reduction of non-essential consumption. Aligning with Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), developed countries must lead in transforming unsustainable global consumption patterns while supporting South Asia's transition to low-carbon, resource-efficient development pathways that foster circularity and ecological sustainability.

For South Asia, just transition, adaptation and resilience are no longer secondary concerns, but top priorities. The 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) must catalyse enhanced global ambition to close the emissions gap and **safeguard the 1.5°C threshold**. Failure in Belém to deliver a response that is perceived as just and effective will further erode trust, undermining the very foundations of multilateralism and discrediting the process in the eyes of the world.