



Empowering National Human Rights Institutions to Advance Rights-Based Climate Action

Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis of the National
Human Rights Institutions in South Asia



The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI)

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**RAOUL
WALLENBERG
INSTITUTE**
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN LAW



**Asia Pacific
Forum**



Executive Summary

Climate change presents a profound global human rights challenge that destabilises food security, natural resources, and migration patterns. Island nations and less developed countries are particularly vulnerable, facing existential threats to fundamental rights like life, health, housing, and access to water. South Asia, with over 200 million people at risk from rising sea levels and melting glaciers, is especially vulnerable. The region's "new climate normal" includes extreme weather events that could worsen living conditions for up to 800 million people, with projected economic losses of USD 160 billion annually by 2030 and 40 million climate migrants by 2050.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation (CCMA) initiatives aim to address the causes and effects of climate change. Mitigation focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon capture, driven by international agreements like the Paris Agreement. Adaptation focuses on preparing for climate impacts through infrastructure development, resilient agriculture, and early warning systems, crucial for vulnerable regions like small island nations.

South Asian countries, recognising their vulnerability, have adopted various CCMA policies. Bangladesh has implemented the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and the Delta Plan 2100, as well as the National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management (2021). India promotes clean energy through the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), Rehabilitation and Relocation of Persons Displaced due to Climate Change Act, 2022, and Climate Migrants (Protection and Rehabilitation) Act, (2022) and other relevant policies. The Maldives has the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2021-2025) and a focus on coastal protection and reducing the impact of climate change on the population. Nepal's policies include the National Adaptation Plan (2021-2050) and a net-zero emissions target by 2045. Sri Lanka's plans include the National Climate Change Policy and a focus on disaster risk management. Pakistan's policies emphasise energy efficiency and hydropower expansion.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a vital role in integrating human rights principles into CCMA initiatives. Their involvement ensures that climate actions respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, particularly for vulnerable communities. NHRIs advocate for a human rights-based approach to climate justice, promoting equitable and participatory decision-making, and supporting a just transition to a zero-carbon economy. Key roles of NHRIs at the national level include advising governments on human rights-based climate policies, promoting environmental and social impact assessments, supporting communities affected by climate change, and protecting environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs).

At the international level, NHRIs act as intermediaries between stakeholders and contribute to global climate processes, advocating for human rights-based climate action. NHRIs in South Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, have engaged in CCMA initiatives at different levels, although they all face challenges related to capacity gaps and emerging opportunities.

The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis aims to gather primary data from NHRIs in South Asia to evaluate their existing programmes, challenges, and opportunities in the context of CCMA projects and policies, in particular in relation to human mobility. This assessment employs the Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE), created by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) and partners, which emphasises the integration of gender equality and human rights into climate action. It seeks to identify the obstacles NHRIs encounter, including limited capacity, lack of resources, insufficient political will, security concerns, and fragmented efforts, particularly regarding human mobility.

This Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis conducted by the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF), in partnership with RWI, targets six NHRIs in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, utilising a combination of surveys, interviews, and desk-based reviews, following gender-sensitive and participatory methodologies.

Findings of the Needs Assessment

Findings of the needs assessment are organised under the seven thematic areas as follows:

Monitoring, Investigation, Reporting, and Advising

All NHRIs in the assessment recognise the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, although their integration of climate considerations into investigations varies significantly. India and Bangladesh actively report on and advice regarding CCMA initiatives, while other NHRIs engage in this area more sporadically. Key challenges hindering effective action include insufficient staff expertise, a lack of credible data, restricted access to affected areas, and resistance from governments.

Advocating and Promoting Inclusive Policies

Advocacy efforts among NHRIs show significant variation, with NHRIs of Bangladesh and India being the most proactive in promoting inclusive climate policies, while the NHRIs of Maldives and Sri Lanka exhibit minimal engagement.

Key barriers to effective advocacy include a lack of data on affected communities, insufficient community engagement, and resource constraints. Despite these challenges, NHRIs of Bangladesh and India reported that they play a significant role in shaping climate policy within their respective countries.

● **Risks, Political Will, and Security**

Political support for NHRIs varies significantly, with the NHRI of India reporting that they enjoy strong backing, while the NHRI of Maldives reported limited government interest in partnering in this area. Security concerns, including government interference and the risk of retaliation, negatively impact the advocacy capabilities of some NHRIs. Additionally, NHRIs in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan experience moderate political support but encounter challenges in collaboration that hinder their effectiveness.

● **Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Access to Remedies**

Four NHRIs actively support environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs), with the NHRI of Bangladesh collaborating with law enforcement to address threats to EHRDs, while the NHRI of India providing various resources and assistance. However, despite recognising the importance of protecting EHRDs, there are inconsistencies in the support and protection mechanisms across different NHRIs, which hampers their overall effectiveness in safeguarding these advocates.

● **Human Rights and Gender Considerations**

All NHRIs acknowledge the significance of addressing vulnerable groups in CCMA initiatives, yet the integration of gender considerations is still limited in NHRI practice in this area. The NHRI of Bangladesh emphasises gender-sensitive monitoring, and NHRI of India actively promotes gender equity, while other NHRIs exhibit varying degrees of commitment to gender integration in their climate-related efforts.

● **Coordinated Approaches and Collaboration**

There is a recognised need for coordination among NHRIs, but engagement levels differ widely, with only two NHRIs fully collaborating with relevant stakeholders. Effective collaboration is crucial for adequately addressing human rights issues associated with climate change.

● Capacity and Resource Gaps and Future Needs

NHRIs face significant resource constraints, including financial, human, and technical limitations, which hinder their engagement in CCMA initiatives. There is a pressing need for specialised training, monitoring tools, and international support to enhance their capacities. The identified gaps, such as a lack of specialised expertise, frameworks, and financial resources, impede effective monitoring and reporting of climate-related human rights issues.

Gap Analysis Overview

All NHRIs covered in the analysis reported varying degrees of challenges in effectively monitoring, investigating, and reporting on climate-related human rights issues, including the human mobility dimension, due to a lack of specialised expertise, resources, and frameworks, as well as security barriers, and lack of political support. This results in insufficient integration of climate impacts into human rights monitoring, weak investigative capabilities, and a lack of coordinated reporting mechanisms. Additionally, financial constraints further hinder NHRIs' ability to conduct comprehensive climate-related promotional functions, including essential training and capacity-building efforts.

Gaps in Practice

NHRIs face noteworthy challenges in effectively engaging with diverse stakeholders, particularly vulnerable communities such as tribal and displaced populations. Their limited collaboration with EHRDs and the absence of climate change experts weakens proactive engagement. Additionally, all NHRIs reported that they lack mechanisms to monitor and assess the human rights impacts of climate change on marginalised groups, resulting in insufficient capacity to connect climate change to human rights violations and limiting public participation. The inadequate engagement with climate-focused civil society organisations (CSOs) as well as bureaucratic barriers further restrict partnerships that could enhance joint monitoring and advocacy efforts. Moreover, minimal NHRIs involvement in international climate forums leads to missed opportunities for contributing to global discussions and integrating human rights into national and international climate frameworks.

Gaps in Impact

NHRIs face challenges in effectively monitoring and reporting on climate-related human rights issues, which hinders their ability to provide comprehensive, rights-based recommendations for climate adaptation and mitigation measures. While they acknowledge the importance of gender considerations, NHRIs do not adequately integrate these issues into their climate initiatives, limiting their effectiveness in addressing the vulnerabilities of marginalised communities and groups. Additionally, NHRIs lack the capacity to protect EHRDs, and

contribute to the overall impact on national climate policies. Furthermore, their limited ability to advise governments on the human rights implications of climate policies undermines their influence in climate decision-making, leaving systemic issues inadequately addressed.

Implications

NHRIs covered in the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis reported that they face challenges mainly due to a lack of expertise and engagement, as insufficient training in climate change and human rights, along with weak connections to affected communities, limits their information-gathering and advocacy efforts. The absence of clear internal policy frameworks further diminishes their effectiveness in integrating human rights into climate policies and disaster management strategies. Additionally, limited participation in international climate forums weakens NHRIs' exposure and ability to influence global climate strategies from a human rights perspective.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis focus on improving NHRI engagement with climate change and human rights issues across five key themes: (i) training and capacity development; (ii) technical tools and resources; (iii) internal policies and guidelines; (iv) stakeholder engagement; and (v) coordination with international mechanisms.

● Training and Capacity Development

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a training programme for NHRIs in the region on climate change, human rights and gender intersectionality, with a focus on mobility risks and considerations, targeted to frontline staff who are engaged in human rights monitoring, investigation and advocacy at all six NHRIs (*High priority; Short-term*).

Recommendation 2: Establish a medium-term ongoing professional development plan to train NHRIs staff on climate litigation, gender-responsive climate action, and human rights-based climate advocacy (*Medium priority; Medium-term*).

● Technical Tools and Resources

Recommendation 3: Develop a set of guidelines and/or manuals on monitoring, investigating and advocacy related to climate change impact on human rights, which align with the broad NHRI mandates (*High priority; Short-term*).

Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a long-term data-sharing platform and protocol between NHRIs and other government bodies for real-time climate change and human rights monitoring (*Medium priority; Long-term*).

● Internal Policies and Guidelines

Recommendation 5: Develop specific NHRIs policy guidelines for addressing climate change-related human rights issues, including gender and marginalised community considerations in climate disaster response (*High priority; Short-term*).

Recommendation 6: Include climate change and human rights strategies and actions in the NHRI Strategic Plan and Action Plan, which are aligned with the national context (*Medium priority; Medium-term*).

● Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

Recommendation 7: Establish immediate consultation processes with EHRDs, CSOs, and local communities to incorporate their inputs into NHRIs climate monitoring and advocacy work (*High priority; Short-term*).

Recommendation 8: Develop long-term partnerships with private sector entities, particularly those in extractive and tourism industries, to promote human rights due diligence in climate change mitigation and adaptation practices (*Medium priority; Long-term*).

● Coordination with International Mechanisms

Recommendation 9: Strengthen NHRIs participation in international climate forums, such as COP meetings, and establish formal coordination mechanisms with global environmental bodies (*High priority; Short-term*).

Recommendation 10: Build a long-term strategy for NHRIs reporting to international bodies, like the UNFCCC, on the human rights implications of national climate actions (*Medium priority, Long-term*).

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List of Abbreviations

APF	Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
BRDR	Building Resilience through Inclusive and Climate-Adaptive Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia-Pacific Programme
CCMA	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
CCPF	Climate Change Policy Framework
CFNHRI	Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EHRDs	Environmental Human Rights Defenders
ESCR	Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ESDP	Energy Sector Development Plan
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
FIRE	Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GRID	Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development
HRCM	Human Rights Commission of Maldives
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
LAPA	Local Adaptation Plans for Action
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+
NAFCC	National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NAPCC	National Action Plan on Climate Change
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NCAP	National Clean Air Programme
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NCHR Pakistan	National Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NEECP	National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy

NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
NHRC Bangladesh	National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh
NHRC India	National Human Rights Commission, India
NHRC Nepal	National Human Rights Commission, Nepal
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NSAP	National Strategic Action Plan on Climate Change
NWP	National Water Policy
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PHRA	Protection of Human Rights Act
RWI	Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SAU	South Asian University
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1 Introduction and Background

The world has never faced a human rights challenge as profound as climate change. The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in 2021 emphasised that climate change acts as a “crisis multiplier,” with serious implications for international peace and stability, affecting food security, natural resources, and migration patterns.¹ For many communities, particularly those in island nations and less developed countries, the climate crisis is already an existential threat. Many of the fundamental rights, such as the rights to life, self-determination, development, food, health, housing, and access to water and sanitation, are facing serious threats.

Similar to the rest of the world, countries in South Asia faces severe economic, social, and environmental challenges due to climate change. More than 200 million people in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are at risk from melting Himalayan snow and rising sea levels.² Climate uncertainty, combined with South Asia’s diverse geography, rich biodiversity, and complex socio-economic conditions, creates a web of interconnected risks for the region, including water scarcity, ecosystem degradation, non-economic loss and damage, and human migration.³

South Asia is also one of the most vulnerable regions to climate shocks, experiencing a “new climate normal” with intensifying heat waves, cyclones, droughts, and floods.⁴ Over the past two decades, more than half of South Asia’s population—about 750 million people across eight countries—has been affected by climate-related disasters.⁵ This shifting climate could drastically worsen living conditions for up to 800 million people in a region already home to some of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable populations.⁶ South Asia also ranks among the most climate-vulnerable regions globally, with nearly 29 million people

¹ United Nations, ‘Climate Change “Biggest Threat Modern Humans Have Ever Faced”, World-Renowned Naturalist Tells Security Council, Calls for Greater Global Cooperation’, *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases* (2021) <<https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14445.doc.htm>>.

² Asian Development Bank, ‘Climate Change in South Asia: 12 Things to Know’ (2014) <<https://www.adb.org/features/climate-change-south-asia-12-things-know>>.

³ Relief Web, *Building a Climate for Peace: Climate Security in South Asia, June 2024* (2024) <<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/building-climate-peace-climate-security-south-asia-june-2024>>.

⁴ The World Bank, ‘Climate and Development in South Asia’ (2024) <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/brief/integrating-climate-and-development-in-south-asia/integrating-climate-and-development-in-south-asia-region>>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

displaced internally by weather-related disasters in the last five years.⁷ According to World Bank estimates, the annual economic losses from climate change in region will average USD 160 billion by 2030, and South Asia could see climate migrants totalling 40 million by 2050.⁸

1.1. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Initiatives

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation (CCMA) refer to strategies aimed at addressing the causes and effects of climate change.⁹ Mitigation focuses on reducing or preventing greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming.¹⁰ This includes transitioning to renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and implementing carbon capture technologies. International frameworks like the Paris Agreement drive global mitigation efforts, setting targets to keep global temperature increases below 2°C.¹¹ On the other hand, adaptation involves adjusting systems, communities, and economies to cope with the current and anticipated impacts of climate change.¹² This includes infrastructure development for flood protection, drought-resistant agriculture, and early warning systems for extreme weather events. Adaptation initiatives are particularly crucial for vulnerable regions such as small island nations, where rising sea levels and extreme weather pose existential threats.

Throughout all regions of the world, the most common approaches to climate change mitigation include reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy (solar, wind, hydro), enhancing energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable land use practices like reforestation.¹³ Adaptation strategies, on the other hand, focus on increasing resilience to climate impacts by building climate-resilient infrastructure, improving water management, developing drought-resistant crops, and creating early warning systems for disasters.¹⁴ Integrating both approaches, many initiatives now adopt nature-based solutions, such as restoring ecosystems that provide natural protection against climate risks while also sequestering carbon.

⁷ Raoul Wallenberg Institute, *A Bibliometric Analysis of Research at the Nexus of Climate Change, Human Mobility, and Human Rights* (2023) <<https://rwi.lu.se/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/64828d9890605746195582.pdf>>.

⁸ The World Bank, 'South Asia Climate Roadmap' (2021) <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/publication/south-asia-climate-roadmap>>.

⁹ United Nations Development Programme, 'What Is Climate Change Mitigation and Why Is It Urgent?' (2024) <<https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-climate-change-mitigation-and-why-it-urgent>>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ NRDC, 'Paris Climate Agreement: Everything You Need to Know' (2024) <<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/paris-climate-agreement-everything-you-need-know>>.

¹² United Nations Development Programme (n 9).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) targets to limit and adapt to climate change.¹⁵ To combat climate change and enhance resilience, five key targets under this goal include developing community-based adaptation initiatives that engage vulnerable populations, investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, and strengthening early warning systems and disaster preparedness.¹⁶ These targets emphasise a combination of mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building, with a strong focus on inclusivity and engaging the most vulnerable groups in climate action.

Countries in the South Asian region, given their vulnerability to climate change, have adopted a number of policy actions and programmes at the national level to address the climate risks and to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including efforts to integrate human mobility consideration into climate policies. These actions include the development of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), promoting renewable energy, and enhancing disaster risk management systems. Some of those policies and measures adopted by the six countries covered in this document, which are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, are summarised here. The key documents listed here serve as a sample of policies and relevant strategies that are currently or most recently in force in these countries, and not a comprehensive mapping of the policy environment.



Bangladesh

To build climate resilience, Bangladesh has implemented key policies such as the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (2005, updated 2009),¹⁷ Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009),¹⁸ and Delta Plan 2100.¹⁹ Recent policies include the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2023-2050),²⁰ National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management (2021)²¹, and the National Environment Policy (2018),²² focusing on climate-resilient development, biodiversity conservation, and green livelihoods.

¹⁵ Global Goals, 'The Global Goals - 13 Climate Action' (2024) <<https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/13-climate-action/>>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Government of Bangladesh, *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)* (2009) <<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Country Documents/Parties/ban02.pdf>>.

¹⁸ Government of Bangladesh, 'Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009)' (2009) <<https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009.pdf>>.

¹⁹ Government of Bangladesh, 'Delta Plan 2100' (2018) <<https://oldweb.lged.gov.bd/UploadedDocument/UnitPublication/1/756/BDP 2100 Abridged Version English.pdf>>.

²⁰ Government of Bangladesh, 'National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2023-2050)', (2023) <https://unfccc.int/documents/637588?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwrp-3BhDgARIsAEWJ6SyineGu0t5Y4iQ_L-Ws8Cf1SGYoB2Uo9G4rPVLb9GqFvVioZyBrtuAaAk9XEALw_wcB>.

²¹ Government of Bangladesh, 'National Strategy on Internal Displacement Management' (2021) <[https://modmr.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/modmr.portal.gov.bd/publications/d05820e8_b72f_43a1_8cfe_4b4bd34a2560/NSIDM Publication\(Size 6.5 X 9.5 in\).pdf](https://modmr.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/modmr.portal.gov.bd/publications/d05820e8_b72f_43a1_8cfe_4b4bd34a2560/NSIDM Publication(Size 6.5 X 9.5 in).pdf)>.

²² Government of Bangladesh, 'National Environment Policy (2018)' (2018) <<https://bangladeshbiosafety.org/bangladesh-doc/national-environment-policy-2018/>>.

**India**

India has adopted the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) (2011)²³, National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC),²⁴ and Mission for a Green India (2014)²⁵. India also promotes clean energy through policies like the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP),²⁶ and several key policies related to Green Energy, and Energy Conservation. India's Rehabilitation and Relocation of Persons Displaced due to Climate Change Act (2022)²⁷ and Climate Migrants (Protection and Rehabilitation) Act (2022)²⁸ are crucial legal instruments which indicates the commitment of the government to mitigate the effects of climate change.

**Maldives**

Key policies in the Maldives include the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (2021-2025),²⁹ which outlines immediate adaptation needs, and the Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework (CCPF 2015-2025),³⁰ which focuses on achieving a climate-resilient and low-emission economy. The National Strategic Action Plan on Climate Change (NSAP) (2010-2020),³¹ which is the world's first strategic national action plan integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation,³² and Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023)³³ also integrates climate resilience into national development, emphasising coastal protection, renewable energy, and sustainable tourism.

²³ Government of India, 'National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) (2011)' (2011) <<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2021/dec/doc202112101.pdf>>.

²⁴ Government of India, 'National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC)' <<https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/National-Adaptation-Fund-for-Climate-Change-India.pdf>>.

²⁵ Government of India, 'Mission for a Green India' (2014) <<https://www.indiascienceandtechnology.gov.in/st-visions/national-mission/national-mission-green-india-gim>>.

²⁶ Government of India, 'National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)' (2022) <https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/New_Reference_Notes/English/15072022_173626_102120463.pdf>.

²⁷ *Rehabilitation and Relocation of Persons Displaced Due to Climate Change Act 2022*.

²⁸ *Climate Migrants (Protection and Rehabilitation) Act 2022*.

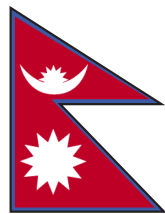
²⁹ Government of Maldives, 'National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)' (2021) <<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/mdv01.pdf>>.

³⁰ Government of Maldives, 'Maldives Climate Change Policy Framework (2015-2025)' (2015) <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mdv172920.pdf>>.

³¹ Government of Maldives, 'Maldives: Strategic National Action Plan (SNAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation 2010-2020' (2010) <<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/maldives-strategic-national-action-plan-snap-disaster-risk-reduction-and-climate-change>>.

³² United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 'Maldives Government Endorses World's First Strategic National Action Plan Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation' (2011) <<https://www.undrr.org/news/maldives-government-endorses-worlds-first-strategic-national-action-plan-integrating-disaster>>.

³³ Government of Maldives, 'Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023)' (2019) <<https://presidency.gov.mv/SAP/>>.



Nepal

Nepal has implemented several policies to address climate change, starting with the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (2010)³⁴ and Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA) (2011).³⁵ Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (2021-2050)³⁶ outlines long-term adaptation goals. It has also adopted a net-zero emissions target by 2045 and the Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) initiative, emphasising green growth and resilience. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules, 2076 (2019)³⁷ establishes guidelines for relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement of populations affected by climate-related disasters.



Sri Lanka

Existing policies include the National Climate Change Policy (2012),³⁸ the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2016-2025)³⁹ which outlines strategies for climate adaptation in key sectors like agriculture, water, health, and coastal areas. The Sri Lanka Climate Resilience Improvement Project (2014)⁴⁰ focuses on disaster risk management and infrastructure resilience. The Sri Lanka Energy Sector Development Plan (ESDP 2015-2025)⁴¹ promotes renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions.

³⁴ Government of Nepal, 'National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA)'

<<https://www.climatenepal.org.np/project/national-adaptation-programme-action-napa>>.

³⁵ Government of Nepal, 'Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA)' (2011)

<https://climate.mohp.gov.np/downloads/National_Framework_Local_Adaptation_Plan.pdf>.

³⁶ Government of Nepal, 'Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (2021-2050)' (2021)

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NAP_Nepal_2021.pdf>.

³⁷ Government of Nepal, 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2074 and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules, 2076 (2019)' (2019) <https://bipad.gov.np/uploads/publication_pdf/DRRM_Act_and_Regulation_english.pdf>.

³⁸ Government of Sri Lanka, 'National Climate Change Policy (2012)' (2021)

<https://www.climatechange.lk/CCS_Policy/Climate_Change_Policy_English.pdf>.

³⁹ Government of Sri Lanka, 'National Adaptation Plan (NAP) (2016-2025)' (2016) <https://www.climatechange.lk/Index_NAP.html>.

⁴⁰ Government of Sri Lanka, 'Sri Lanka Climate Resilience Improvement Project (2014)' (2014)

<https://www.nbrc.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=130:crip&catid=2&Itemid=161&lang=en>.

⁴¹ Government of Sri Lanka, 'Sri Lanka Energy Sector Development Plan (2015-2025)' (2015)

<https://www.pucsl.gov.lk/legal_documents/sri-lanka-energy-sector-development-plan-for-a-knowledge-based-economy-2015-2025/>.

**Pakistan**

Policies such as the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy (NEECP 2023),⁴² National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) (2021),⁴³ and National Water Policy (NWP 2018)⁴⁴ aim to build climate resilience by promoting energy efficiency, sustainable development, and hydropower expansion.

1.2. National Human Rights Institutions' Monitoring and Advisory Role in CCMA Initiatives

NHRIs play a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights within climate action, particularly in CCMA initiatives. The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has identified that one of the primary objectives of NHRI engagement in climate action is to ensure that CCMA measures align with human rights principles. NHRIs have also collectively pledged to take human rights-based action on climate change to support communities and protect the environment.⁴⁵ NHRIs advocate for climate justice, emphasising that climate action must leave no one behind. This involves addressing the climate crisis through a human rights-based approach, ensuring a just transition to a zero-carbon economy, promoting participatory and equitable decision-making, and providing effective remedies, including financial support, for those most affected by climate change.

How do NHRIs promote climate justice?

- **Monitor and report** on the human rights impacts of climate change
- **Advise the State** and others on human rights-based approaches to climate action
- **Support communities** to participate in decision-making on climate strategies
- **Assist victims** to seek justice and redress
- **Provide education** on the human rights impacts of climate change and policies
- **Engage business** and others on their roles and responsibilities
- Work through GANHRI to **advance human rights-based policies** and approaches

Figure 1. NHRIs and climate justice
(Source: GANHRI)

⁴² Government of Pakistan, 'National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy (2023)' (2023) <<https://neeca.gov.pk/TopStoryDetail>>.

⁴³ Government of Pakistan, 'National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) (2021)' (2021) <[https://mocc.gov.pk/SiteImage/Policy/NCCP Report.pdf](https://mocc.gov.pk/SiteImage/Policy/NCCP%20Report.pdf)>.

⁴⁴ Government of Pakistan, 'National Water Policy (2018)' (<https://mowr.gov.pk/SiteImage/Misc/files/National%20Water%20Policy.pdf>, 2018).

⁴⁵ Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, 'Climate Change and Human Rights' (2024) <<https://ganhri.org/climate-change-and-hr/>>.

In the statement adopted at the GANHRI Annual Conference on Climate Change: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions held on 4 December 2020, NHRIs committed to integrating human rights principles into climate action at both national and international levels. Nationally, they pledged to advise governments on human rights-based climate policies, promote and monitor environmental and social impact assessments, and ensure the inclusion of local communities and indigenous knowledge in climate actions. They also committed to integrating climate perspectives into complaint investigations and supporting affected individuals. Internationally, NHRIs committed to act as bridges between stakeholders, engage in global climate processes, and advocate for enhanced climate action as a human rights obligation. They also undertook to monitor and report on human rights implications of climate measures, promote inclusive data collection, and collaborate with global and regional initiatives, including through GANHRI and the United Nations (UN) system, to strengthen their capacities and impact.⁴⁶

In December 2023, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising the crucial role of NHRIs in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), particularly in combating climate change.⁴⁷ The resolution underscores NHRIs' roles in monitoring, advising governments, and promoting human rights obligations related to climate mitigation and adaptation.⁴⁸ NHRIs can engage with various stakeholders, including CSOs and EHRDs, to ensure their perspectives inform government decisions. Through GANHRI, NHRIs can also contribute to regional and global climate processes and have been officially admitted as an observer organisation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.⁴⁹ In addition, the United Nations' Multi-Stakeholder Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection, and Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (GP20)⁵⁰ also acknowledges NHRIs as key stakeholders with the mandate and potential to advance national action on internal displacement issues, including those related to CCMA.

NHRIs play a crucial role in CCMA initiatives by integrating human rights considerations into climate policies and actions. They can help ensure that climate strategies respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities who are often disproportionately affected by climate change. NHRIs advocate for the inclusion of human rights principles in national and local climate plans, monitor the implementation of climate

⁴⁶ Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, 'GANHRI Statement Adopted at the GANHRI ANNUAL CONFERENCE on Climate Change: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions Held on 4 December 2020' (2020) <https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/EN_AC_Statement_for_consultation.pdf>.

⁴⁷ United Nations General Assembly, 'United Nations General Assembly Resolution on National Human Rights Institutions (Res. A/C.3/78/L.27)' (United Nations, 2023) <<https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/A-C.3-L.27-issued-English-version.pdf>>.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ United Nations, 'Multi-Stakeholder Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (GP20)' (2018) <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-internally-displaced-persons/multi-stakeholder-plan-action-advancing-prevention-protection-and-solutions-internally-displaced#:~:text=The objectives of the Plan,policy on internal displacement%2C data>>.

policies, and hold governments accountable for their commitments. Their work often involves monitoring and raising awareness about the human rights impacts of climate change and fostering dialogue between stakeholders to address these concerns effectively.

Additionally, NHRIs support climate adaptation efforts by providing a human rights perspective on climate-related challenges. They facilitate access to justice for individuals and communities impacted by climate change, ensuring that their rights are upheld in the face of environmental and social disruptions. By offering guidance on integrating human rights into climate action and promoting participatory approaches, NHRIs contribute to more equitable and effective climate responses. Their role is pivotal in ensuring that climate change measures are not only environmentally sustainable but also socially just and rights-respecting.

GANHRI identifies some of the core roles NHRIs can play at the national and international level in relation to CCMA.⁵¹ At the national level, NHRIs play several key roles in relation to climate change:

- 1. Reporting and advising:**
NHRIs report to and advise governments and stakeholders on applying a human rights-based approach to climate mitigation and adaptation.
- 2. Promoting policy measures:**
NHRIs promote effective climate and environmental policies.
- 3. Monitoring risks:**
NHRIs ensure environmental, social, and human rights risk assessments are conducted before project initiation.
- 4. Advocating for inclusive policies:**
NHRIs advocate for climate policies that incorporate local communities' expertise and indigenous knowledge.
- 5. Incorporating climate perspectives:**
NHRIs integrate climate change and environmental perspectives into investigations and base advocacy and policy advice on their findings.
- 6. Supporting affected individuals:**
NHRIs assist individuals adversely affected by climate change or mitigation measures in accessing remedies.
- 7. Protecting human rights defenders:**
NHRIs advocate for the protection of environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs) who may face violence or prosecution.

⁵¹ Global Alliance of Human Rights Institutions, 'Practical Guidance for NHRIs on Addressing Human Rights and Climate Change' (2020) <https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Practical-Guidance-for-NHRIs-on-Addressing-Climate-Change_EN.pdf>.

At the international level, NHRIs act as a bridge to facilitate the exchange of information between policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders, including those most affected by climate change. They also participate in national, regional, and international processes to advocate for human rights-based approaches to climate action, including influencing NDCs under the Paris Agreement.

GANHRI also identifies a number of key actions NHRIs can take to monitor and report on CCMA.⁵² Those include:

1. **Reporting findings:**
NHRIs report the human rights implications of climate change, including mitigation and adaptation measures, to national, international, and regional human rights mechanisms.
2. **Public disclosure:**
NHRIs make monitoring results publicly available, including to climate action processes.
3. **Data collection:**
NHRIs collect disaggregated data and ensure the participation of at-risk groups, such as women and girls, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples.
4. **Cooperation:**
NHRIs work cooperatively with existing environmental and climate initiatives that uphold human rights standards, including with other NHRIs in the region, and working with the UN system (GANHRI, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP, etc.).

NHRIs are essential in ensuring that climate change and development-induced displacement efforts comply with international and national human rights standards. Their responsibilities include investigating and monitoring compliance, resolving complaints, advising and assisting governments, and conducting awareness campaigns and national inquiries related to human rights issues in CCMA policies and programmes. Additionally, NHRIs can leverage tools like NDCs and NAPs to monitor state progress toward the Paris Agreement's objectives, which often incorporate key human rights principles such as participation, access to information, and inclusion.⁵³ By engaging with diverse stakeholders, including civil society, businesses, and EHRDs, NHRIs can ensure that these perspectives inform their recommendations to governments and other decision-makers.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

1.3. Background on the Targeted NHRIs in South Asia

In the South Asian region – composing the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), there are currently six functioning NHRIs – in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.⁵⁴ These six NHRIs are the target NHRIs for the current Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis.

A preliminary review of news items and NHRI reports shows that all targeted NHRIs have some form of engagement in the area of CCMA initiatives, as illustrated below. The subsequent analysis of Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis further confirmed their engagement in these areas, with more in-depth understanding of their scope and magnitude.

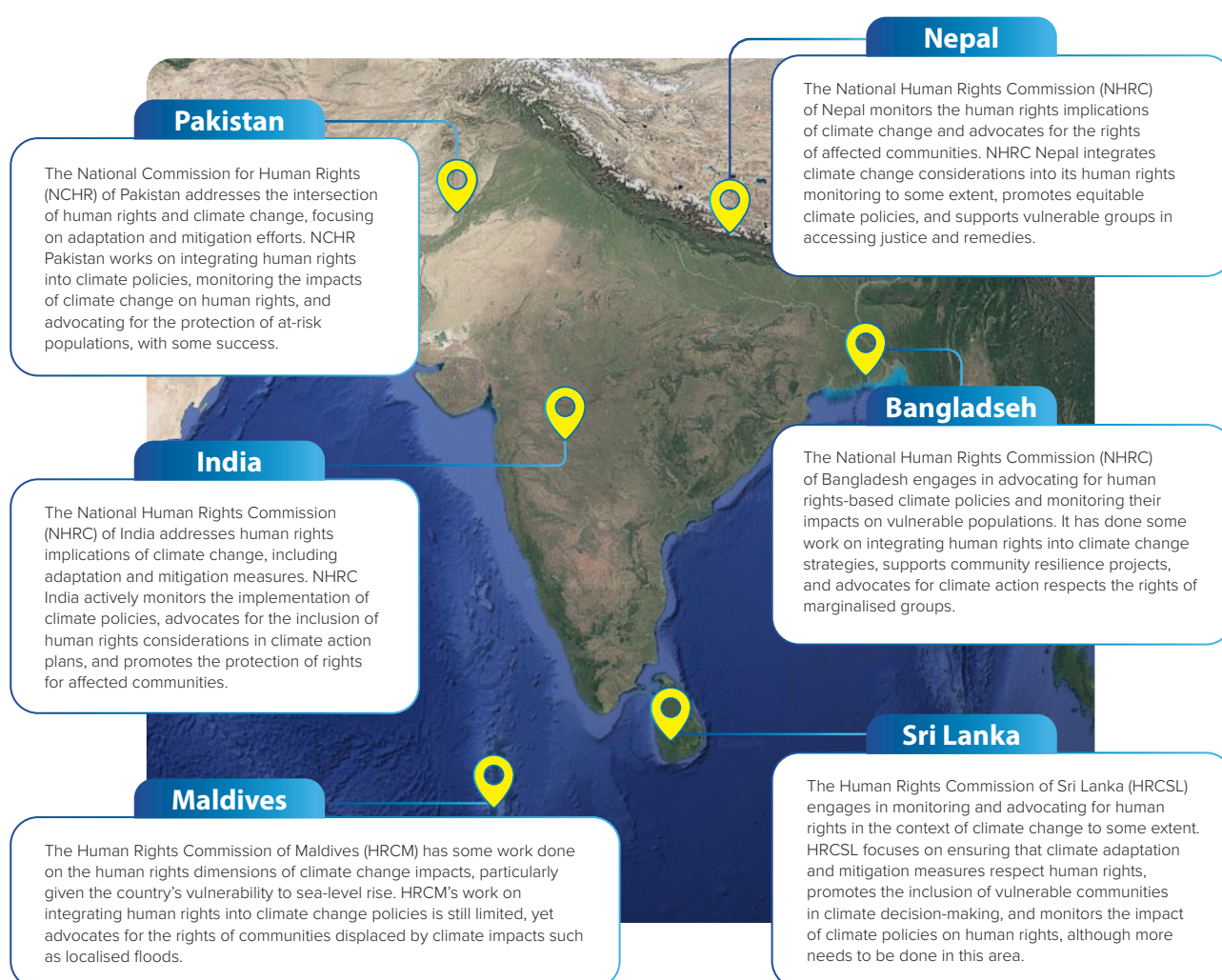


Figure 2. NHRIs engagement with CCMA, including climate mobility issues (Map: Google Earth)

⁵⁴ Afghanistan had a functioning NHRI — Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) — from 2001 to 2021, which was dissolved by the Taliban government on 15 August 2021, following their takeover of Kabul. Bhutan is yet to establish a National Human Rights Institution.

1.4. Framework for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality

Climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities, disproportionately affecting women and marginalised groups by increasing their vulnerability to environmental hazards, reducing access to resources, and limiting their participation in decision-making processes. In view of this reality, incorporating human rights and gender equality in the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis will ensure that the most vulnerable populations are protected, and their voices are included in decision-making processes. This approach promotes equitable solutions, addressing both the environmental and social impacts of climate change, while fostering resilience and justice for marginalised communities. Therefore, in order to fully incorporate human rights and gender equality in the assessment and analytical process, and to use a gender lens in particular in assessing NHRI practices, Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE) is used as the analytical framework in this document.

FIRE is a comprehensive tool that consolidates gender equality principles and key international human rights standards relevant to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation.⁵⁵ Developed through a partnership between the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI), the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, FIRE aims to ensure that DRR and climate adaptation efforts are inclusive and aligned with human rights and gender equality.⁵⁶

FIRE consists of six dimensions, which provide a structured approach to integrating human rights and gender equality into DRR and climate change adaptation. It has been successfully piloted in initiatives such as risk assessment, land use planning, and emergency preparedness, proving its effectiveness as a tool for research, legal and policy analysis, training, and education.

⁵⁵ Raoul Wallenberg Institute, 'Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE)' (2024) <<https://rwi.lu.se/fire/>>.

⁵⁶ Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, 'Integrating Rights and Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience Key International Standards and Guidelines' (2022) <<https://rwi.lu.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FIRE-international-standards-and-guidelines-FINAL.pdf>>.

Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE)

Multi-level & multi-sectoral



Examining and transforming perceptions, attitudes, norms & practices that produce inequality & vulnerability, privilege & marginalization

Building agency, capacities & leadership
Collective learning and activities
Self-determination



Legal & policy framework that promotes fundamental rights & equality, non discrimination & participation
Institutionalized platforms created for or by civil society
Budgets, resources & capacity
Data & monitoring
Accountability, transparency & access to justice



Respect

Duty bearers & rights holders



Active & meaningful participation & addressing social barriers to participation Gender-equal, socially inclusive access to information.

Addressing patterns & practices of discrimination, and respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights with regard to

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- & other social & physical characteristics



Civil & political rights including:

- Right to life
- Right to participation
- Right to safety and security
- Right to family unity
- Right to privacy



Right to equality
Economic, social & cultural rights, including

- Access to resources
- Right to food
- Right to shelter
- Right to health

Protect

Fulfill

Figure 3. Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (Source: RWI)

2. The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Despite the recognised role of NHRIs in relation to monitoring and advising the government in the context of CCMA, most of the NHRIs face significant challenges in effectively monitoring related aspects, especially when collaborating with other national and international actors. In many countries, comprehensive systems to track all human rights obligations and recommendations in the context of CCMA are lacking.⁵⁷ NHRIs encounter obstacles such as limited capacity, access, security, resources, and political will from national authorities. Moreover, NHRIs often operate in isolation, lacking a coordinated approach to monitoring and investigating the human rights impacts of CCMA projects and policies, particularly in relation to human mobility.

NHRIs face significant challenges in handling displacement caused by disasters, which increases their already heavy workloads. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, NHRIs express concerns about their ability to monitor human rights during emergencies and emphasise the need for more funding, capacity, and staffing to effectively address these issues.⁵⁸ Many NHRIs struggle with inadequate resources, limiting their ability to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs). While some NHRIs have developed the capacity to respond to displacement, others must quickly adapt to these new challenges, requiring long-term staffing solutions. Despite these difficulties, NHRIs are well-positioned to work with governments, civil society, and international partners to prevent displacement and support solutions for IDPs.⁵⁹

This Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis aims to identify challenges faced by NHRIs in South Asia regarding their monitoring and advisory roles in CCMA initiatives.⁶⁰ For this purpose, CCMA refers to two complementary approaches to addressing the impacts of climate change – mitigation and adaptation. Climate change mitigation refers to efforts to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gases to limit the severity of climate change, while climate change adaptation involves adjusting systems and practices to minimise

⁵⁷ Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, 'Request for Proposals and TOR to Conduct the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis in Relation to CCMA' (2023).

⁵⁸ Human Rights Council, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of IDPs Re: Internal Displacement and the Role of NHRIs (A/HRC/41/40)' (2019) <[https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/109/19/pdf/g1910919.pdf](https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/109/19/pdf/g1910919.pdf?)>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (n 58).

the damage from current and future climate impacts. Both are crucial in managing the consequences of climate change, which include extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and changing ecosystems. Therefore, CCMA encompasses a wide range of policies and actions, from global initiatives like the Paris Agreement to local adaptation projects aimed at protecting vulnerable communities. Both approaches are essential to tackling climate change and require coordinated efforts across sectors, from government policy and international cooperation to private sector investments and community-level action.

2.1. Scope and Objectives

The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis is conducted to understand the challenges faced by selected NHRIs in South Asia regarding their monitoring and advisory roles in CCMA initiatives. The assessment covers APF member NHRIs in South Asia, including NHRIs of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

This assessment is expected to lay the groundwork for developing a toolkit to monitor human rights compliance in CCMA initiatives, with a particular focus on the mobility aspect. This focus is justified in view of the evidence that climate change can trigger involuntary migration, displacement, and relocation, disrupting livelihoods and exacerbating vulnerabilities for a large number of people. Addressing these risks ensures that adaptation and mitigation efforts protect affected populations, promote resilience, and avoid creating new human rights challenges. Although climate-related human mobility is increasingly seen as a human rights issue, it has often been overlooked in climate change discourse, despite the clear impact on basic human rights protected under UN conventions and treaties.⁶¹

In addition, given that climate change impacts men and women differently, often exacerbating existing gender inequalities, this Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis also integrates gender considerations to ensure that gender equality is addressed in the resources and programmes developed.

⁶¹ Raoul Wallenberg Institute (n 7).

3. Methodology of the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

The methodology for the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis is designed to identify challenges faced by NHRIs in South Asia related to their monitoring and advisory roles in CCMA initiatives, with a specific focus on human mobility issues. The assessment integrates human rights and gender considerations using RWI's FIRE tool to ensure that gender equality is addressed in the resulting resources and programmes.

3.1. Analytical Framework and Techniques

In developing the data tools and data analysis of the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis, two broad frameworks were used: first, the GANHRI's Practical Guidance for NHRIs on Addressing Human Rights and Climate Change, to understand the NHRI roles and functions in relation to CCMA related activities; and second, the six dimensions of the FIRE to analyse the human rights and gender equality.

The following nine elements of the NHRI commitments in relation to CCMA, based on GANHRI's guidance for NHRIs in relation to CCMA initiatives are thus considered for the purpose of this document:⁶²



⁶² Global Alliance of Human Rights Institutions (n 51).

In addition, the six dimensions of the FIRE were applied to understand the gender equality dimension of NHRIs practice. Some of the relevant operationalisations of those dimensions are explained below.

Dimensions of FIRE



Governance Systems and Structures

This dimension focuses on improving systems related to laws, policies, and procedures for DRR and resilience building. It emphasises ensuring that these systems are based on international gender equality and human rights standards, creating institutions that allow marginalised groups to exercise their rights, and establishing diverse platforms for civil society to advocate for rights. It also addresses institutionalised exclusion based on social status. The survey questionnaire and the interview guide included specific questions related to the governance dimensions within the NHRIs as well as the national legal and regulatory environment.



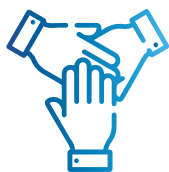
Fundamental Rights and Equality

This dimension is dedicated to realising fundamental rights as outlined in international standards and treaties. It emphasises the influence of gendered social and political structures on rights access and aims to achieve equality both as a right and as a societal goal. It stresses the importance of participation in realising these rights and holding duty bearers accountable. The survey questionnaire and interview were guided by the international human rights norms and standards, with special emphasis on the obligations of the State.



Non-Discrimination

This dimension focuses on tackling discrimination and inequality based on identities and socio-economic characteristics, such as gender, age, caste, and ethnicity. It recognises that these factors intersect in various ways, affecting the enjoyment of rights. Intersectionality of various forms of discrimination recognising and addressing the complex and overlapping forms of discrimination that individuals may face based on multiple aspects of their identity will be captured through the analysis.



Participation and Access to Information

This dimension promotes inclusive, gender-sensitive participation in decision-making processes. It ensures equal access to information, respects free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), and addresses barriers to participation, such as social norms and stereotypes. It also highlights the importance of recognising whose knowledge and voices are valued in decision-making.



Agency and Empowerment

This dimension aims to enhance the ability of marginalised groups to exercise their rights and influence policies. It focuses on recognising and strengthening individual and collective agency, capacities, and leadership, and promoting collective learning and action. When considering agency and empowerment in data analysis, the focus was placed on understanding how individuals and groups, particularly those who are marginalised or disadvantaged, exercise their ability to make decisions, take actions, and influence the conditions that affect their lives.



Social Norms and Context

This dimension seeks to transform social and gender norms that contribute to inequality and vulnerability. It examines how inequality and privilege are produced within social groups and works to change perceptions, attitudes, and practices that perpetuate these inequalities. It also recognises the social norms that support the enjoyment of fundamental rights. The social and cultural norms in each of the NHRI's countries were considered in data collection, analysis and reporting.

The data analysis employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques to identify patterns and trends related to key challenges, gaps, and needs. Thematic analysis of interview and focus group data were also used to identify most common themes among the NHRIs.

3.2. Development of Data Collection Tools

The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis adopts a methodology of systematically identifying and evaluating the present practices of six NHRIs in South Asia region in relation to their engagement with monitoring and advocacy in the area of CCMA. As such, the process involved collecting quantitative and qualitative data from NHRIs through a survey and online interviews. In addition to the primary data, desk-based document review was also used to capture the NHRIs practice in the domain, especially, to discern the existing capabilities, resources, and challenges of the targeted NHRIs within their respective country contexts.

The survey questionnaire was designed to capture specific details of NHRI activities (current and past) in relation to CCMA, along with other relevant details with regard to the internal monitoring arrangements, capacity issues and challenges. The questionnaire included 37 questions (28 Likert scale and nine open questions) under seven sections, as below:



A semi-structured interview guide was also developed to collect additional and in-depth qualitative data through targeted questions to capture insights in relation to NHRI practice in the area of CCMA. The interview questions were also based on the seven broad areas.

Both the questionnaire and the interview guides were designed with adequate attention to include gender-dimensions (especially through the application of the FIRE), and aligned with the principles of inclusion and participation.

3.3. Data Sources and Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with the focal points from all six NHRIs. The semi-structured interviews included questions which covered the current practices of NHRIs in monitoring, investigation, reporting, and advising on CCMA initiatives, inclusive policies, political will and risks, protection of human rights defenders (HRDs), gender considerations, coordination and collaboration, and capacity gaps and future capacity needs.

A desk review was also used to capture and map out the existing data, particularly in relation to current climate change and mitigation and adaptation policies, strategies and guidelines used in the targeted countries, NHRIs practices in relation to CCMA-related monitoring, investigation, and advising. References were made to national websites related to climate change policies as well as NHRIs reports relevant to the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis.

4. Findings of the Needs Assessment

4.1. NHRIs Profiles and CCMA-related Practices

Based on the three sources of data for this Needs Assessment – online survey, interviews, and desk review – individual profiles of NHRIs practice in the area of monitoring, investigating, reporting and advising in relation to CCMA initiatives have been developed as below. The profiles provide the context of the NHRIs and their current practices, challenges and capacity needs in relation to CCMA initiatives. They also highlight the extent to which NHRIs are integrating human rights, gender equality, as well as environmental and human mobility considerations into their work. Additionally, these profiles offer insight into potential areas for capacity-building and collaborative approaches to enhance NHRIs' effectiveness in monitoring and advising relevant government agencies in the area of CCMA and the impacts on human rights.



National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Bangladesh was established in 2008 and later reconstituted in 2009 under the National Human Rights Commission Act.⁶³ The NHRC is tasked with investigating allegations of human rights violations, advising the government on legal and policy reforms, and promoting awareness and education on human rights issues. Its role includes addressing a wide range of human rights concerns, such as violence against women, freedom of speech, the rights of minorities, and issues related to climate change and human mobility.⁶⁴

Despite its contributions in many areas of human rights promotion and protection, the Commission has faced challenges, including limited resources, organisational capacity constraints, and staffing. Currently, NHRC Bangladesh is accredited as a “B” status NHRI by GANHRI.⁶⁵

⁶³ *National Human Rights Commission Act - Bangladesh (53/2009) 2009.*

⁶⁴ National Human Rights Commission - Bangladesh, 'Introduction: Establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRCB)' (2024) <<https://nhrc.org.bd/site/page/1c65dfa1-f9c2-48e9-a66b-eab8de75d9b1/->>.

⁶⁵ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Accreditation Status as of 16 September 2024' (2024) <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/nhri/StatusAccreditationChartNHRIs.pdf>>.

In the area of climate change and human rights initiatives, NHRC Bangladesh has established a Committee on Climate Change Environment and Disaster Management. They monitor various climate-related displacement and relocation issues, including in the context of flooding, deforestation, and air pollution. The Commission visits affected areas, gathers information, and reports to the government about challenges faced by local communities. They publish findings in their annual report and send letters to government advisors on specific issues like river protection and affected communities.

The NHRC advocates for environmental protection and human rights in climate change contexts. They engage with local administrations and inform the central government about challenges faced by communities affected by severe weather conditions and other climate-related impacts. The Commission also addresses issues like illegal deforestation and the expansion of industries into indigenous lands. They push for the enforcement of environmental regulations and advocate for the protection of vulnerable populations affected by climate change.

The Commission faces challenges due to limited political will on climate change issues. Some politicians oppose environmental protection measures for economic reasons. However, there are also supportive political leaders. The NHRC engages with relevant local stakeholders and tries to motivate leaders through seminars and workshops to understand the importance of these issues.

While NHRC staff have not faced direct security threats, human rights defenders (HRDs) and journalists reporting on environmental issues have encountered difficulties and attacks. The Commission takes these reports seriously, investigating cases and directing law enforcement agencies to take action against perpetrators. The NHRC recognises that women, children, and elderly individuals are often most affected by climate change and disasters. They address gender-based violence that often escalates during disasters and work against issues like child marriage, that arise from climate-related poverty. In particular, displaced communities are often at risk of being exploited by human traffickers. NHRC indicated that they put a special emphasis in their work to address such risks faced by displaced communities. The Commission ensures that gender needs are considered in their complaint mechanisms and advocacy efforts.

The NHRC collaborates with international organisations like World Vision and Article 19. They participate in global forums such as GANHRI and APF meetings, raising issues related to climate change and human rights. The Commission is also a member of the GANHRI Climate Caucus and the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI)'s environmental rights steering committee.

The NHRC acknowledges limitations in their capacity to fully engage in climate change issues. They have about five capable individuals focused on this area but need more support to develop their team's skills. The Commission expresses a need for more highly educated staff and training to improve their ability to organise seminars, workshops, and write effectively. They also highlight the importance of participating in international forums like COP to enhance their understanding and capacity and to be up to date in this critical field.



National Human Rights Commission of India

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India was established on October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA) of 1993.⁶⁶ The NHRC was set up as an independent statutory body to promote and protect human rights in India, in accordance with the country's Constitution and the international human rights instruments to which India is a party. NHRC's mandate includes investigating human rights violations, providing recommendations to the government on strengthening laws, and promoting human rights awareness and education. It is empowered to take *suo moto* cognisance of human rights violations, conduct inquiries, and intervene in judicial proceedings. The Commission also has the authority to review policies and laws and advise the government on reforms to ensure better protection of human rights.⁶⁷ NHRC India is currently accredited as an "A" status NHRI by GANHRI.⁶⁸

In the area of climate change related work, NHRC India has established a core group of experts from government and civil society to monitor climate change mitigation related work of the government. They conduct regular meetings and share recommendations with relevant government bodies. The NHRC also commissions research studies with affected communities on specific areas like internal displacement caused by large projects – such as hydropower dams and other infrastructure development projects.

The NHRC takes *suo moto* action on issues like internal displacement due to severe weather events and large projects. They engage with government organisations to ensure the rights of affected people are upheld, including proper rehabilitation and provision of necessary facilities for their resettlement and reintegration.

So far, NHRC has not faced any significant challenges or threats in their work. While occasional pressures from business groups and other actors have been experienced, generally, the government listens to NHRC's concerns and takes necessary measures to protect rights, especially of tribal communities. The NHRC has a core group focused on HRDs. They have established a 24/7 focal point for assistance whenever it is needed.

Special monitors are appointed for various subjects, including climate change and environmental issues. The NHRC acknowledges that women, vulnerable and marginalised groups, including tribal populations, are most affected by climate change. They organise national conferences involving rural community members to discuss climate change issues.

⁶⁶ Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), India 1993.

⁶⁷ National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India, 'About the Organisation' (2024) <<https://nhrc.nic.in/about-us/about-the-Organisation>>.

⁶⁸ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (n 66).

The NHRC collaborates with CSOs and NGOs. They plan to improve coordination with international organisations on climate change issues. The Commission also mentions India's leadership in implementing the Paris Agreement and increasing renewable energy capacity.

The main capacity gap at NHRC India in relation to monitoring, investigating, reporting and advising on CCMA initiatives is in training staff on climate change mitigation and adaptation techniques. The NHRC suggests including environmental knowledge in their recruitment criteria. They also propose nominating senior officers to be part of a working group on climate change issues. The Commission does not face financial constraints but recognises the need for expertise in environmental and climate change areas.



Human Rights Commission of the Maldives

The Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM) was established in 2003 as an independent statutory body to promote and protect human rights in the Maldives.⁶⁹ Initially formed by presidential decree, it was later institutionalised through the Human Rights Commission Act of 2006,⁷⁰ and later recognised under the Constitution of Maldives (2008).⁷¹ The mandate of the HRCM includes investigating human rights violations, monitoring the state's compliance with human rights standards, and advising the government on laws and policies to strengthen human rights protections. The Commission also focuses on promoting awareness and education on human rights issues within the country.⁷² HRCM is currently accredited as a "B" status NHRI by GANHRI.⁷³

In the area of climate change and human rights, HRCM is involved in monitoring and investigating climate change-related cases. They have worked on issues like land erosion and flooding, collaborating with local councils in different parts of the country. HRCM also monitors situations where people have been affected by natural disasters, including displacement due to storms, storm surges and flooding. However, at the moment, there is no clearly outlined climate change related programme at HRCM, and thus, climate mobility risks are not addressed systematically.

HRCM recognises the importance of raising awareness about human rights linked to environmental issues, especially climate change, given the vulnerability of the country to the adverse effects of climate change. HRCM plans to hold forums on environmental rights, although the focus on climate change is still developing. HRCM has also faced challenges in receiving timely information from the government regarding climate change issues.

⁶⁹ Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, 'About HRCM' (2024) <<https://hrcm.org.mv/en>>.

⁷⁰ *Human Rights Commission Act (6/2006) 2006*.

⁷¹ *Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008*.

⁷² Human Rights Commission of the Maldives (n 70).

⁷³ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (n 66).

There is a perceived lack of political will to adopt a human rights-based approach to climate change. HRCM has not been regularly consulted on national policies related to climate adaptation and mitigation, indicating a disconnect between climate policy and human rights considerations.

While there is an ongoing engagement with HRDs in general, HRCM has not specifically engaged with individual EHRDs focused on climate change. However, they receive complaints from CSOs about environmental issues.

HRCM has made efforts to incorporate gender considerations into reports regarding climate change impacts, recognising that women and marginalised groups are particularly vulnerable to effects of climate change and its consequences. HRCM has also established partnerships with various stakeholders, including CSOs and businesses, focusing on human rights and environmental advocacy.

HRCM acknowledges significant capacity gaps in knowledge and resources related to climate change and environmental rights. They express a need for more training and support in this area, emphasising the importance of building staff knowledge and capacity to better understand the intersection of climate change and human rights, especially in the context of the country.



National Human Rights Commission, Nepal

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal was established in 2000 as an independent constitutional body and is empowered under the National Human Rights Commission Act.⁷⁴ Its primary mandate is to protect, promote, and ensure the respect of human rights across the country, in alignment with the Constitution of Nepal and the international human rights treaties to which Nepal is a party. The NHRC investigates allegations of human rights violations, provides recommendations to the government, monitors the state's compliance with human rights obligations, and promotes human rights awareness through education and advocacy. NHRC Nepal is currently accredited as an "A" status NHRI by GANHRI.⁷⁵

In the area of climate change mitigation and adaptation, NHRC of Nepal monitors disasters, including climate-related events like floods. NHRC focuses on air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley and mobility issues, particularly displacement, caused by disasters throughout the country. However, they face challenges in directly linking these issues to climate change due to capacity limitations.

⁷⁴ *National Human Rights Commission Act, 2068 (Nepal) 2012.*

⁷⁵ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (n 66).

NHRC monitors the human rights situations of those affected by climate change in both Terai (lowlands in the southernmost regions) and hilly regions. The Commission advocates for indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and women, providing feedback from their perspectives during international forums like COP28. The government shows commitment to incorporating human rights into climate change efforts. However, there is a capacity gap among government officials in understanding how to link climate change actions with human rights. The NHRC has not faced any threats or harassment related to their work on climate issues. However, for other HRDs, there are observable and reported threats and harassments. NHRC has developed a bill for the protection of HRDs and recognise and support EHRDs, focusing on human rights education and protection. If defenders face threats, NHRC takes action and informs the government to ensure their protection.

NHRC recognises that women, children, and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by climate change related adverse conditions. NHRC incorporates gender perspectives in monitoring efforts and advocate for gender-sensitive approaches in local governments' adaptation plans. The Commission collaborates with UN Women to enhance understanding of climate change impacts on women and children.

NHRC also collaborates with FHI 360 on air pollution projects. They work with local governments on Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA) and engage with the Ministry of Forests and Environment. They also emphasise the importance of collaborating with CSOs, EHRDs, and affected communities.

NHRC faces significant challenges in technical knowledge, financial resources, and human capacity. Their staff lacks expertise in both climate change and human rights, hampering their ability to link the two effectively. They recommend enhancing NHRIs' capacity in relation to climate change and its human rights implications for more effective engagement.



National Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan

The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) of Pakistan was established in 2015 under the NCHR Act of 2012 as an independent statutory body.⁷⁶ Its mandate is to protect, promote, and enforce human rights across Pakistan, in accordance with the country's Constitution and international human rights treaties to which Pakistan is a signatory. The NCHR is empowered to investigate allegations of human rights violations, either on its own initiative (*suo moto*) or based on complaints from individuals or groups. It can also monitor government actions, advise on legislation, and promote human rights awareness through education and advocacy programmes. The Commission's areas of focus include women's rights, minority rights, freedom of expression, and addressing issues related to forced

⁷⁶ National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan Act, 2012 2012.

disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Despite being a relatively new institution, the NCHR has played an important role in highlighting human rights issues in Pakistan.⁷⁷ NCHR Pakistan is currently accredited as an “A” status NHRI by GANHRI.⁷⁸

In the area of climate change and human rights, NCHR monitors human rights situations related to climate change, investigates citizen complaints, and advises the government on policy updates, although no specific CCMA related programme is incorporated into its plans. As of the current practice, NCHR faces challenges in making effective recommendations due to lack of technical expertise and resources in the area of climate change and mitigation related activities.

The NCHR plays a central role in promoting and protecting human rights through its advocacy programmes. The commission aims to ensure that government policies are human rights-friendly and non-discriminatory. In recent years, large-scale climate-related disasters in Pakistan, like the 2022 floods, have overwhelmed the country’s disaster management system. The government’s response at both provincial and federal levels is often slow, though they generally respond to NCHR recommendations eventually.

The NCHR acts as a bridge between CSOs and the government, facilitating communication and support during such crises. NCHR receives complaints from individuals unable to access government assistance during the times of disasters, especially in remote and inaccessible areas. NCHR acknowledges that marginalised groups, especially women and children, are most affected by climate change. The NCHR emphasises the need for financial support and microfinancing initiatives to aid recovery for the vulnerable communities affected by climate-related disasters.

The NCHR collaborates with CSOs, HRDs, and international partners, including in the area of climate change mitigation related monitoring and reporting. At the same time, NCHR also seeks to strengthen these partnerships to address climate change impacts more effectively.

The NCHR acknowledges its need for enhanced expertise, resources, and logistics. The commission seeks technical support for capacity building, logistical support for field visits, and stronger international collaborations to better address climate change-related human rights issues in the future.

⁷⁷ NCHR- Pakistan, ‘About Us - The National Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan’ (2024) <<https://nchr.gov.pk/>>.

⁷⁸ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (n 66).



Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) was established in 1996 under the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act, No. 21 of 1996.⁷⁹ It was formed as an independent statutory body with the mandate to promote and protect human rights in Sri Lanka, in accordance with the country's Constitution and international human rights commitments. HRCSL is empowered to investigate complaints of human rights violations, provide recommendations to the government on legal and policy reforms, monitor the state's compliance with human rights standards, and conduct awareness and educational programmes on human rights issues. HRCSL is currently accredited as an "A" status NHRI by GANHRI.⁸⁰

The HRCSL conducts site monitoring during climate-related events like flooding, coordinating with government authorities. They investigate complaints and monitor issues such as livelihoods and temporary shelters. However, HRCSL lacks deep expertise in climate change and human rights intersections. The HRCSL is not currently involved in advising on national climate change policies or strategies. The HRCSL recognises the importance of ensuring government interventions are free from discriminatory practices. However, HRCSL currently does not have the opportunity to provide input on national climate change policies and strategies. There is potential for the HRCSL to approach relevant ministries to ensure human rights standards are incorporated into these policies. The HRCSL faces challenges in addressing climate-related issues, particularly in relocating affected communities due to land availability problems.

The Commission itself does not face significant security challenges, but HRDs encounter threats, especially when dealing with environmental issues involving powerful economic interests. The HRCSL supports HRDs, including those working on environmental issues. They can initiate inquiries based on complaints or *suo moto* cases. The Commission is preparing guidelines for HRDs, which will include provisions for EHRDs.

In disaster response, the HRCSL ensures their staff are trained to be sensitive to gender issues, addressing the needs of women, children, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ communities. They focus on vulnerable groups, particularly in the plantation sector, during natural disasters. The HRCSL also collaborates with international partners like the Norwegian Human Rights Institution and the CFNHRI. They participate in awareness and training programmes through these partnerships. However, they lack local coordination specifically on climate change issues.

⁷⁹ Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act 1996.

⁸⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (n 66).

The HRCSL identifies several capacity gaps, which include the need for comprehensive training for all staff levels on climate change and human rights, technical support for reporting to international bodies, and financial resources for special investigations or national inquiries. In addition, exposure to best practices from other institutions, and development of monitoring and advocacy tools are also identified.

The above NHRIs profiles reveal that most of them have included mobility considerations, primarily focusing on disaster-related displacement and relocation in their monitoring, reporting, and advisory roles in general, but not necessarily addressing mobility risks related to CCMA initiatives at either the policy or project implementation levels. This gap reflects the current limitations in their capacity to comprehensively engage with mobility issues specifically linked to CCMA, highlighting the need for further capacity-building to effectively integrate these risks into their work.

4.2. Needs Assessment

The data analysis was based on the seven thematic areas identified during the inception stage. The survey data was used to measure the perceived capacity of NHRIs based on self-ranking, while the interview data provided further insights into their current practice and perceived gaps.

A. Monitoring, Investigation, Reporting, and Advising on CCMA initiatives

The monitoring, investigation, advising, and reporting on CCMA initiatives across six NHRIs of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka reveal common thematic issues while also showcasing unique experiences from each institution. All NHRIs indicated their recognition of the significant impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, underscoring the need for NHRIs to effectively address these challenges from a human rights perspective in their respective countries.

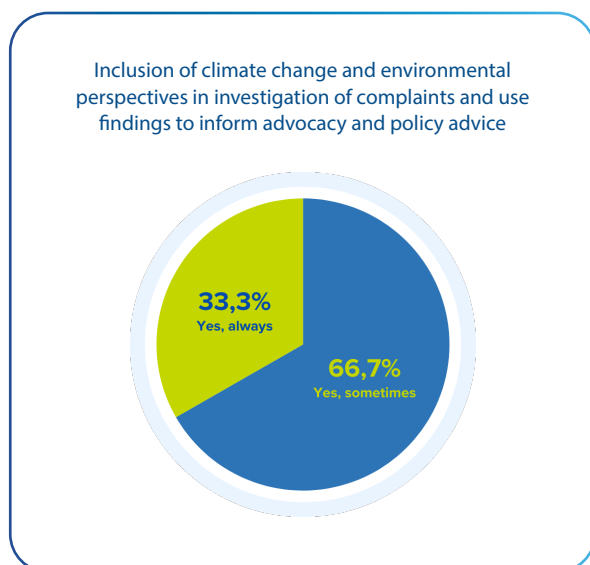


Figure 4. Inclusion of climate change perspectives in investigations

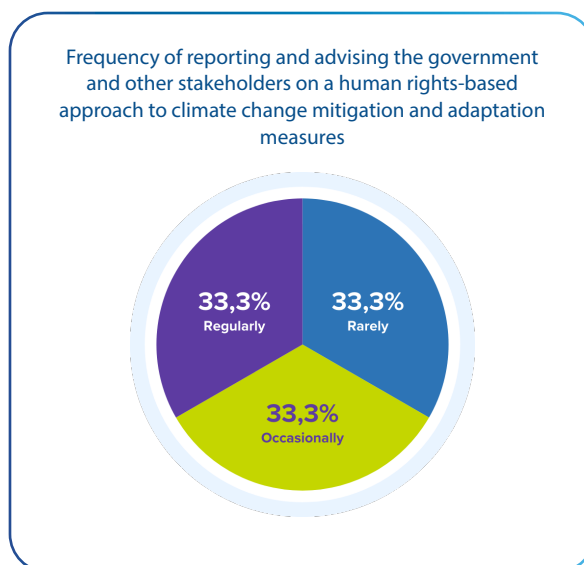


Figure 5. Frequency of reporting and advising

When asked about the current practice of including climate change perspectives in their investigation, two NHRIs (Maldives, India) said they always include these considerations, while the rest of the NHRIs said that they do sometimes (Figure 4). On the question of how often the NHRI report and advise the government and other stakeholders on a human rights-based approach to CCMA measures, two NHRIs (India, Bangladesh) indicated they do this regularly, while another two (Nepal, Pakistan) reported occasionally, and the remainder (Maldives, Sri Lanka) reported they rarely do (Figure 5).

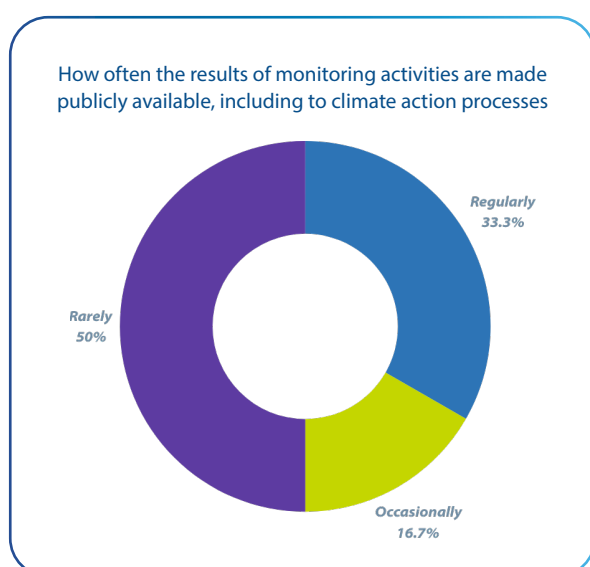


Figure 6. Frequency of results made publicly available

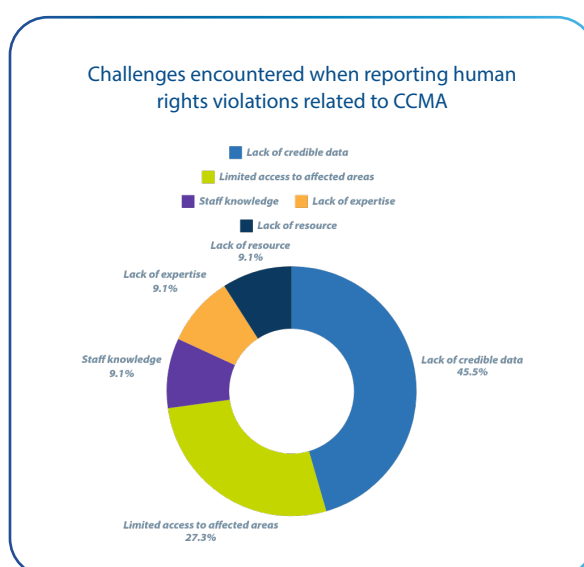


Figure 7. Challenges encountered when reporting human rights violations

NHRIs were also asked about their current practices of publicising the results of monitoring activities which includes climate-related actions, two NHRIs (India, Bangladesh) indicated that they do it regularly, while one NHRI (Nepal) indicated occasionally, and the remaining three NHRIs (Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) indicated that they rarely do this (Figure 6). When asked about the challenges they encounter when reporting on human rights violations related to CCMA, a number of challenges were identified. The most common challenge reported was lack of credible data, followed by limited access to affected areas. In addition, lack of staff knowledge, lack of expertise in CCMA, lack of resources and government censorship and pushback are also reported as challenges facing the NHRIs (Figure 7).

At the individual NHRI level, NHRC Bangladesh actively monitors the severe flooding exacerbated by climate change, particularly affecting marginalised communities. The NHRC's Committee on Climate Change, Environment, and Disaster Management plays a critical role in advocacy and advising the government on environmental issues. Despite its commitment, the NHRC Bangladesh faces limitations in investigative capacities and struggles with illegal activities affecting indigenous territories. Nonetheless, the NHRC's continuous communication with high-level officials illustrates its proactive stance in integrating human rights into climate change discussions.

NHRC India has established a core group comprising government and civil society experts focused on climate change. This body discusses actionable recommendations and proactively monitors climate-related issues, such as displacement from large projects. The NHRC's ability to take *suo moto* actions demonstrates a responsive approach to upholding human rights. However, challenges persist in tribal areas where constitutional protections exist for indigenous populations, indicating the complex interplay of development and human rights in the context of climate change.

In the Maldives, HRCM reported that the Commission currently lacks a dedicated focus on climate change-related monitoring and investigation. Although there have been some efforts to assess environmental rights, direct activities evaluating climate change's human rights and human mobility impacts remain limited. The HRCM has engaged with the government to address specific environmental issues, such as flooding in different parts of the country. This highlights the need for a more structured approach to climate change monitoring and its implications on human rights, particularly concerning displacement and property damage.

NHRC Nepal primarily monitors disaster response to climate-related events like floods. However, the Commission faces challenges in linking climate change to human rights due to insufficient knowledge and financial constraints. The NHRC's efforts to monitor air pollution and disaster impacts indicate an awareness of the broader implications of environmental factors,

yet their capacity to connect these issues to human rights remains limited. The Commission recognises the need for enhanced training and resources to improve its monitoring and reporting capabilities.

NCHR Pakistan indicated their commitment to addressing human rights violations linked to climate change and broader environmental issues. The NCHR actively monitors pollution and has been vocal about the human rights implications of recent devastating floods. While the Commission advocates for renewable energy adoption policies, it encounters challenges with governmental responsiveness and resource constraints. These factors impede the NCHR's ability to effectively address the scale of climate-related disasters and ensure the protection of fundamental rights. In particular, there is currently inadequate capacity to address the human rights and human mobility issues that could arise out of new policies.

Lastly, in Sri Lanka, the HRCSL recognises the urgent need for training and capacity-building initiatives focused on climate change and human rights. Although there are ongoing inquiries into climate-related flooding, the Commission acknowledges its lack of expertise in this area and less strategic focus in this area. Coordination with government authorities is ongoing, but challenges remain in land availability for relocation after disasters. The complexity of negotiating with private landowners complicates efforts to provide concrete solutions for affected populations, revealing the intricate challenges faced in implementing effective human rights-based climate adaptation strategies.

Overall, all six NHRIs demonstrated varying levels of engagement in monitoring, investigating, advising, and reporting on CCMA initiatives. While common challenges include resource constraints, knowledge gaps, and the need for enhanced collaboration, each country highlights unique experiences and responses to the human rights implications of climate change. Strengthening the capacity of these NHRIs remains crucial for effectively addressing the intersection of human rights and climate change, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the protection and support they require in the face of environmental challenges.

B. Advocating and Promoting Inclusive Policies

The advocacy efforts of all six NHRIs reflect a critical intersection of human rights and climate change. Common themes emerge from their approaches, particularly in promoting inclusive policies related to CCMA initiatives. Responses to the survey questionnaire and the interviews show that these institutions face various challenges, but they are increasingly recognising the importance of integrating human rights perspectives into national climate policies and practices.

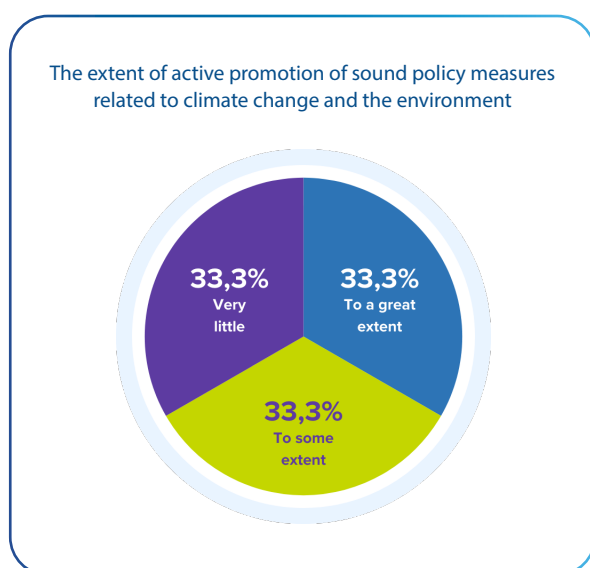


Figure 8. Extent of active promotion of sound policy

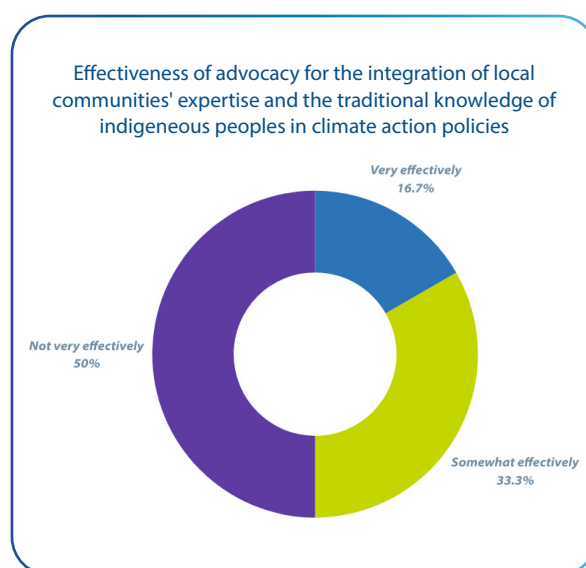


Figure 9. Effectiveness of advocacy for the integration of local expertise

When asked about their current practice of advocating and promoting sound policy measures from a human rights perspective, the six NHRIs are evenly split into three categories – to a great extent (Bangladesh, India), to some extent (Nepal, Pakistan), and very little (Maldives, Sri Lanka) (Figure 8). There is a recognition that current NHRIs practice does not give adequate attention to advocate for the integration of local communities' expertise and traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples on climate action policies. Half of the six NHRIs (Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) indicated that they do not do it very effectively, while only one (India) said they do it effectively (Figure 9).

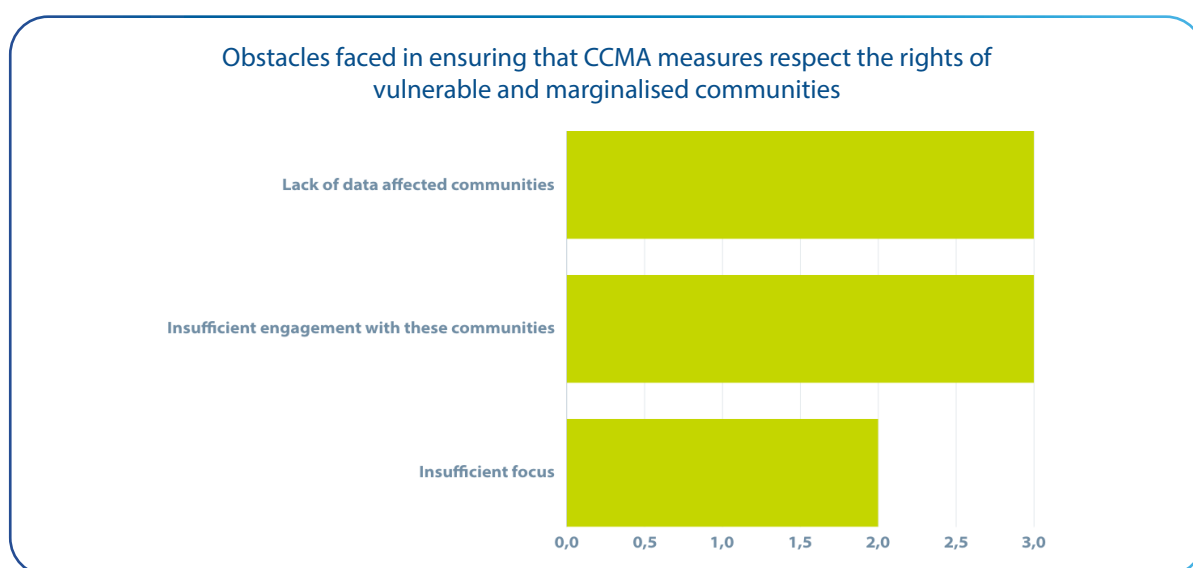


Figure 10. Obstacles in ensuring CCMA measures respect the vulnerable and marginalised communities

NHRIs identified their main obstacles in ensuring strong and effective advocacy engagements to ensure that national level CCMA initiatives give due consideration and respect the rights of the vulnerable and marginalised communities in their countries. Most cited challenges are the lack of data on affected communities and insufficient engagement with the communities. Insufficient strategic focus of the NHRIs in this particular area is also identified as a challenge. In providing additional details, some NHRIs indicated resource constraints and staff capacity as hindrances to NHRIs being more effective in this area (Figure 10).

At the individual NHRI level, NHRC Bangladesh indicated active participation in shaping national climate policies like the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. While initially not involved in the creation of such documents, in recent years, the NHRC Bangladesh has become more proactive, providing feedback and conducting studies to inform future advocacy. Their advocacy efforts focus on disaster management, deforestation, and crop loss, emphasising the need to integrate human rights perspectives into climate change initiatives. Collaborating with HRDs, the NHRC Bangladesh monitors environmental degradation and raises awareness of illegal land occupation, advocating for policies that protect vulnerable communities, including in relation to resettlement issues.

The NHRC India emphasises the role of its internal independent expert committees in overseeing human rights impacts of large-scale development and infrastructure projects. While the NHRC India has opportunities to contribute human rights perspectives, their direct involvement in early project development stages is limited. Despite these constraints, NHRC India focuses on ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and advocating for the rights of those affected by large-scale projects, such as dams and mining initiatives. The NHRC's engagement with the government agencies underscores the necessity of integrating human rights considerations into the planning and execution of development projects.

In the Maldives, HRCM reported that they face challenges in monitoring and advocating for climate-related issues due to a lack of timely information from the government and the public's limited understanding of the intersection between environmental and human rights issues. Although the Commission has engaged in activities related to environmental rights, it has not prioritised climate change specifically in its advocacy. Recognising the human rights implications of environmental issues for vulnerable communities, the HRCM seeks to enhance its capacity to address climate change more effectively, highlighting the need for a comprehensive strategy and public awareness.

NHRC Nepal actively advocates for marginalised communities affected by climate change, particularly indigenous peoples and those displaced by environmental impacts. While their advocacy is not always directly tied to climate action, NHRC Nepal has engaged

in monitoring initiatives and participated in global forums, such as COP28, to highlight the concerns of vulnerable populations. Their efforts aim to ensure that the voices of marginalised groups are included in government climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives, emphasising the importance of inclusivity in policy-making processes.

NCHR Pakistan explores the potential for collaboration with the government on national climate policies, although their current involvement in policy development is limited. The NCHR Pakistan emphasises the need for dialogue with the government to address human rights issues within climate-related policies. They advocate for increased public participation in the policy-making process, calling for consultations that incorporate feedback from human rights organisations. This approach aims to ensure that policies respect the rights of all citizens, particularly marginalised communities affected by climate change.

In Sri Lanka, the HRCSL expresses a desire for greater engagement with the government regarding national climate policies and strategies. Despite existing policies at the national level, the Commission has not been invited to provide input during policy-making processes, limiting their ability to contribute expertise in human rights. Recognising the potential for collaboration, the Commission seeks to approach relevant authorities to express their interest in participating in policy discussions. They emphasise the need for capacity building to strengthen their understanding of climate change issues, which is essential for effectively contributing to climate mitigation and adaptation efforts alongside the government.

Overall, the advocacy practices of all six NHRIs highlight a pressing need for collaboration between human rights bodies and governments to address climate change comprehensively, especially in relation to the mobility impacts of affected communities, particularly displacement and resettlement. As they navigate challenges related to capacity, knowledge, and public awareness, NHRIs play a vital role in promoting inclusive policies that safeguard human rights amidst the growing impacts of climate change. Their efforts underscore the importance of integrating human rights considerations into climate action, ensuring that vulnerable populations are heard and supported in the face of environmental challenges.

C. Risks, Political Will, and Security

The engagement of the six NHRIs in the region reflects a complex interplay of political will, risks, and security concerns related to CCMA. Common themes emerged across these NHRIs in their survey responses and interviews, highlighting the challenges they face in promoting human rights-based approaches to climate action and the varying levels of political support they receive from their respective governments.

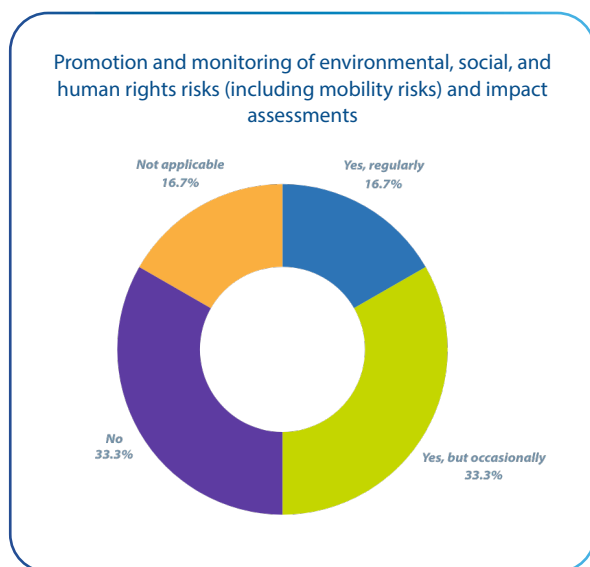


Figure 11. Promotion and monitoring of risks and impact assessment

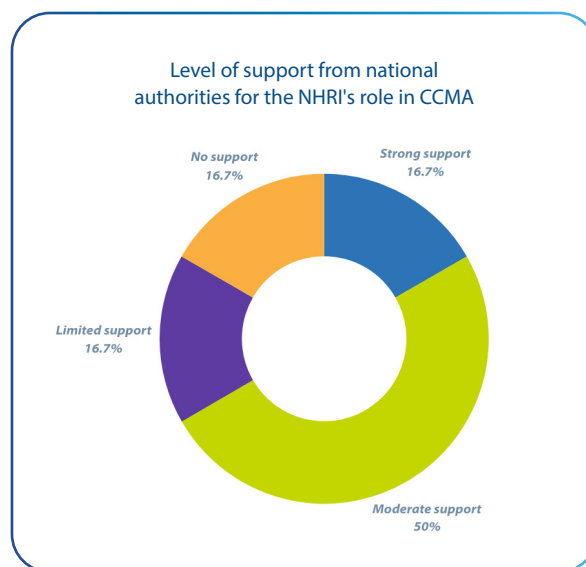


Figure 12. Level of political support

NHRIs indicated their current engagement in monitoring environmental, social and human rights risks impact assessments on climate-related projects, one NHRI (India) indicated that they do this regularly, while another two (Nepal, Bangladesh) indicated that they do this occasionally (Figure 11). In relation to the level of political support to NHRIs in their engagement with national authorities, one NHRI (India) reported strong support while three (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan) indicated moderate support (Figure 12).

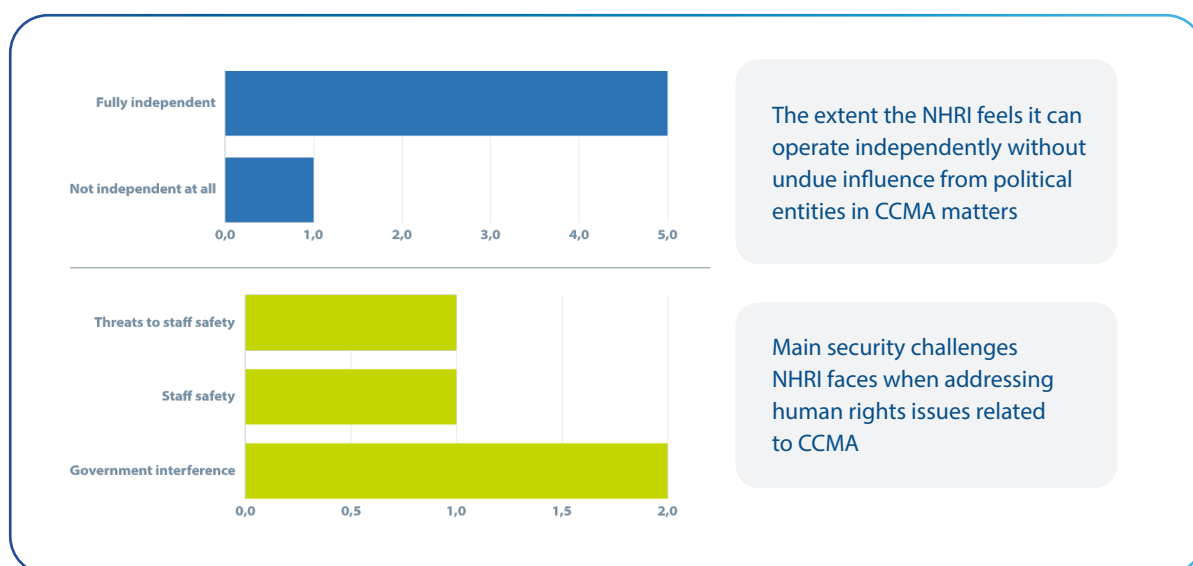


Figure 13. Operational independence and security challenges

All but one NHRI (HRCM) indicated that they can operate independently without undue influence from political entities in relation to their monitoring and reporting of CCMA initiatives. As for the main security challenges they face in the specific context of CCMA related work, government interference is identified as the most common (Figure 13).

When it comes to individual NHRI experience in the area of political will, risks and security issues, NHRC Bangladesh indicated that the institution experiences a mixed level of political support regarding climate change advocacy. While some political leaders recognise the importance of aligning climate initiatives with human rights frameworks, resistance exists, particularly from key departments like the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The NHRC Bangladesh organises seminars to raise awareness among political leaders about climate-related human rights issues, but their limited capacity hampers these efforts. Although the NHRC has not so far faced any direct threats, HRDs in sensitive areas report retaliation when they expose illegal activities, posing risks to those advocating for climate justice.

NHRC India reported that the institution operates in a relatively secure environment, as indicated by the absence of systemic threats or harassment related to climate change work. This independence allows the NHRC India to engage in climate initiatives without fear of government pressure. The NHRC's experience suggests that a supportive political climate can facilitate the integration of human rights perspectives into climate action, highlighting the importance of an enabling environment for NHRIs.

In the Maldives, HRCM indicated that the country faces significant challenges due to its vulnerability to climate change, yet the political will to adopt a human rights-based approach to climate change related initiatives remains uncertain. HRCM has not been adequately consulted in the development of national adaptation policies and programmes, leading to scepticism about the government's commitment to human rights in climate policy. Despite the pressing need for awareness and citizen participation in environmental policies, the lack of genuine political interest from authorities undermines the potential for meaningful engagement.

NHRC Nepal shows some promise in its engagement with government climate initiatives, although challenges persist. While the government has demonstrated a willingness to incorporate human rights into climate policies, capacity gaps among officials hinder effective collaboration. The NHRC's involvement in the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) is limited, and concerns about pressure from the government on NHRC Nepal staff regarding climate change activities remain. These factors highlight the need for stronger political will and capacity-building initiatives to foster effective partnerships between NHRIs and the government.

NCHR Pakistan emphasises the importance of public participation in policymaking, especially regarding climate issues that affect marginalised communities. The NCHR's proactive stance involves providing policy inputs to the federal government, particularly in relation to the Juvenile Justice Act and discrimination concerns. By focusing on systemic reforms rather than individual complaints, the NCHR aims to create more inclusive policies. However, their effectiveness relies on ongoing engagement with the government to ensure that human rights considerations are integrated into climate-related policies.

In Sri Lanka, HRCSL acknowledges a need for internal capacity development in climate change and human rights. While they possess strong expertise in human rights, their limited knowledge of climate issues restricts their effectiveness in advocating for human rights in climate-related policies. The commission recognises the importance of engaging with government agencies to ensure that human rights principles are integrated into climate action, yet support and resources are required to strengthen their capacity in these areas.

Across these countries, the effectiveness of NHRIs in advocating for inclusive policies related to climate change is often contingent upon the political will of their governments. Where political support is strong, NHRIs can effectively integrate human rights considerations into climate initiatives. However, when political will is lacking, as seen in the Maldives and Bangladesh, NHRIs face significant challenges in fulfilling their mandates. Furthermore, the experiences of the six NHRIs underscore the importance of fostering political will and addressing security concerns to effectively advocate for human rights-based climate policies. Continuous engagement with governments, capacity-building efforts, and raising awareness among political leaders are crucial steps in ensuring that CCMA efforts are inclusive and respect fundamental human rights.

D. Protection of Defenders and Access to Remedies

The role of NHRIs in protecting HRDs and ensuring access to remedies in relation to CCMA varies across the six NHRIs. While common challenges exist, each NHRI's experience sheds light on distinct approaches and contexts affecting defenders' safety and effectiveness.

Four out of the six NHRIs (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) indicated that they do support individuals negatively impacted by CCMA measures and help them in getting effective remedies. Similarly, five NHRIs reported that they actively advocate for the protection of environmental human rights defenders, especially those working in the area of climate change related areas. When such HRDs face violence or prosecution, NHRIs work closely with them and relevant state agencies to protect the HRDs from such intimidation and violence (Figure 14).

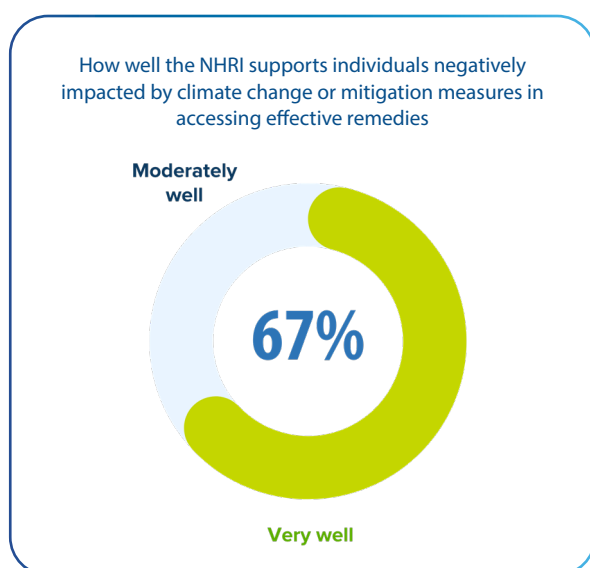


Figure 14. Support to individuals impacted by climate change

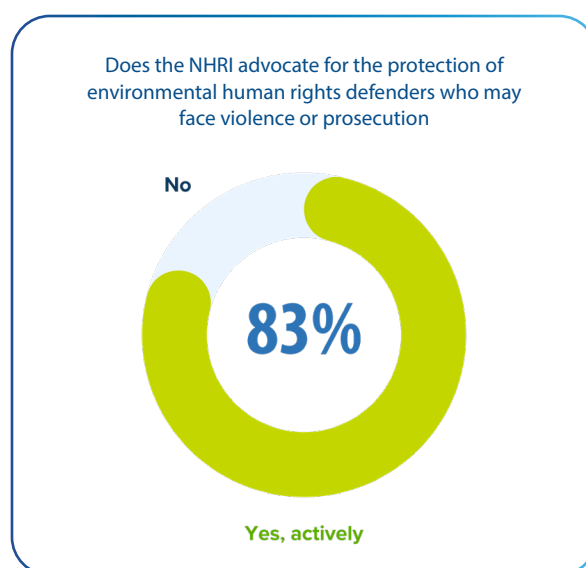


Figure 15. Advocacy for the protection of EHRDs

In general, NHRIs are aware of the need to advocate the protection of HRDs, including EHRDs, as part of their work. They are also cognisant of the nature of challenges EHRDs face (Figure 15), while the specific dimensions of such challenges faced by HRDs working in more targeted climate change related areas requires more clarity.

NHRC Bangladesh takes threats against HRDs seriously, often treating them as *suo moto* investigation cases. The NHRC investigates these incidents and collaborates with the Ministry of Home Affairs and law enforcement to ensure accountability for perpetrators. Despite this proactive stance, challenges remain in providing robust protection, as many HRDs face harassment and retaliation, particularly in sensitive areas concerning environmental advocacy. The NHRC's commitment to addressing these issues highlights the ongoing struggle for human rights defenders working in climate-related contexts.

NHRC India actively supports human rights defenders by collaborating with civil society organisations and NGOs, particularly on sensitive climate change issues. The establishment of a dedicated core group for HRDs has empowered them to engage with authorities and report violations effectively. The NHRC enhances defenders' credibility and safety by providing 24/7 assistance through designated officials. This commitment to protecting HRDs reflects a supportive environment, enabling effective collaboration and advocacy for human rights in climate action.

In the Maldives, HRCM has yet to specifically engage with HRDs focused specifically on climate change, nonetheless, there is an active engagement with human rights defenders in general. Although HRCM receives complaints related to environmental matters, these are often about government's development and infrastructure projects rather than direct

climate action issues. Despite HRCM having established a network for NGOs/CSOs and is developing a policy strategy for enhancing engagement with civil society and HRDs, there is no formal support or remedies mechanism for individual defenders working on climate-related concerns. This lack of recognition and low support poses challenges for defenders striving to advocate for their communities in the face of climate threats.

NHRC Nepal has made strides in supporting HRDs, particularly those engaged in environmental issues. The NHRC has proposed a bill aimed at protecting the rights of defenders and is increasingly advocating for the recognition and safety of EHRDs. By providing human rights education and responding to threats, the NHRC demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding those who champion climate-related causes. However, ongoing challenges remain, including the need for better engagement with government entities and resources to effectively protect these individuals.

NCHR Pakistan serves as a bridge between civil society organisations and the government, facilitating collaboration on climate-related issues. While HRDs face threats globally, those working in Pakistan, particularly on climate issues, report relatively few significant restrictions or pressures. Local CSOs often operate without serious threats, while those reliant on international funding navigate a complex registration process that may involve security concerns. This relative safety for defenders allows for ongoing advocacy and collaboration during climate-related crises.

In Sri Lanka, HRCSL recognises the importance of collaborating with HRDs, especially in environmental contexts. Following an environmental disaster, the Commission conducted inquiries involving defenders, reinforcing their role in addressing environmental issues. However, EHRDs in Sri Lanka encounter threats and political pressures, particularly from powerful individuals linked to law enforcement. HRCSL has mechanisms to provide support and legal remedies to defenders, indicating a commitment to addressing the challenges they face.

Across all these NHRIs, common themes include the necessity for protective measures for HRDs, including EHRDs, and the need for effective channels to address violations. While some NHRIs, like those in India and Nepal, actively engage and support EHRDs, others, like the Maldives, face challenges in recognition and support. This inconsistency highlights the importance of fostering an environment that promotes the safety and effectiveness of defenders engaged in climate advocacy. In aggregate, the experience of all six NHRIs illustrate the critical role these institutions play in protecting EHRDs and ensuring access to remedies. Strengthening the mechanisms for safeguarding defenders, recognising their contributions, and enhancing collaboration with civil society are essential steps to uphold human rights in the context of CCMA efforts.

E. Human Rights and Gender Considerations

The focus on human rights and gender considerations in CCMA-related engagements across all six NHRIs reveals both common thematic issues and unique approaches adopted by each. All NHRIs recognise the necessity of addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and marginalised groups, who are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

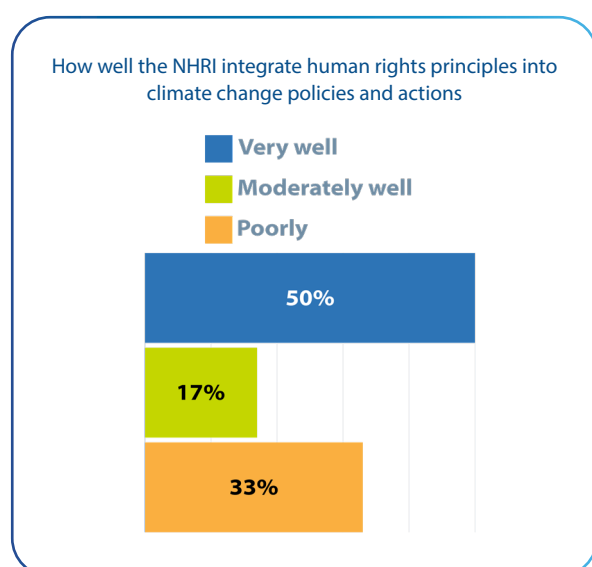


Figure 16. Integration of human rights principles into climate change policies and actions

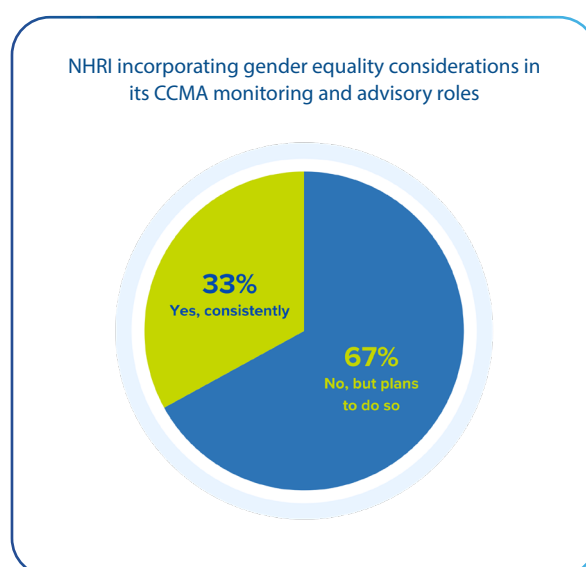


Figure 17. Incorporation of gender considerations into CCMA activities

Half of the NHRIs indicated that they integrate human rights principles into climate change related work they undertake (Figure 16). Two thirds of the South Asian NHRIs incorporate gender equality considerations into their CCMA related monitoring and advisory roles (Figure 17).

Two out of the six NHRIs (Bangladesh, India) indicated that they collect comprehensive disaggregated data and promote the participation of at-risk groups, such as women, girls, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, in climate-related activities, while one other NHRI (Nepal) indicated that they do this with

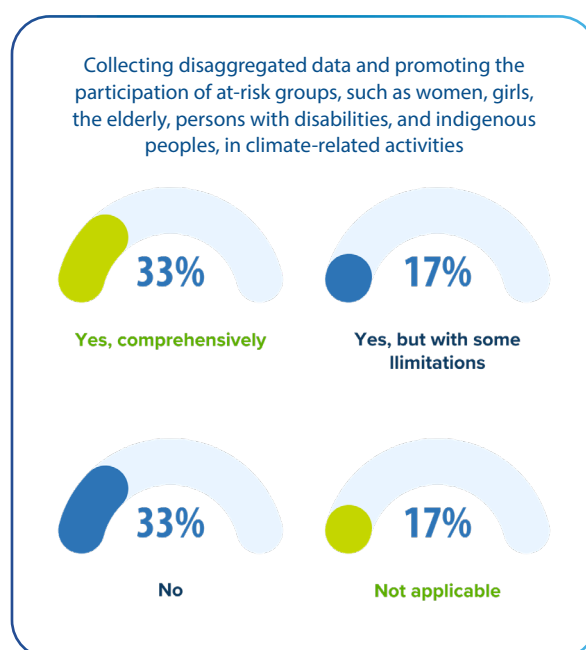


Figure 18. Collection of disaggregated data

some limitations. Some NHRIs specifically highlighted the need to focus more participating in the government's CCMA policy development to better influence them with human rights and gender perspectives (Figure 18).

NHRC Bangladesh has made gender-related issues a priority during climate events and natural disasters. Through dedicated committees, NHRC Bangladesh actively intervenes in cases of gender-based violence and discrimination, recognising how these issues are exacerbated by climate-related crises. Their work includes efforts to combat child marriage, which can increase during times of poverty and distress, and to monitor government relief efforts to ensure they are gender sensitive. This highlights the NHRC's commitment to integrating gender considerations as a critical dimension in understanding the broader impacts of climate change.

NHRC India has also taken significant steps to incorporate gender considerations into its climate change initiatives. By organising national conferences that engage rural communities, including local leaders, NHRC India encourages discussions about the specific climate-related challenges faced by vulnerable groups. This proactive approach aims to foster greater awareness and support for marginalised populations affected by climate change, underlining the NHRC's commitment to gender equity in its operations.

In the Maldives, HRCM has integrated gender equality into its reports related to international human rights frameworks, emphasising the unique vulnerabilities faced by women, children, and other marginalised groups, although the specific reference to climate change related disasters and risks is not comprehensively reported. The HRCM's upcoming environmental survey will analyse the impacts of climate-related disasters and advocate for the specific needs of these populations. While progress is being made, the focus on gender considerations in relation to CCMA initiatives still requires further development and implementation.

NHRC Nepal acknowledges the importance of gender dimensions but admits to limited progress in integrating these aspects into its climate action initiatives. Despite recognising the significance of gender considerations, NHRC has not prioritised specific initiatives targeting vulnerable groups in the context of climate change. This highlights a gap in action and research, with a clear need for both the NHRC and the government to prioritise gender inclusiveness in their climate-related policies and practices to better serve marginalised communities.

In NCHR Pakistan, discussions surrounding gender considerations in disaster management reveal that women and children are often the most affected by climate-related disasters. The need for improved government policies that address these gender-specific vulnerabilities has been highlighted, as well as the importance of economic support mechanisms, such

as microfinancing and loans, to help affected individuals recover. While the government has policies for disaster management, stronger interventions and funding are necessary to address the growing challenges posed by climate change effectively.

In Sri Lanka, HRCSL emphasises gender equality in its disaster response efforts. By training staff to be sensitive to gender issues, the commission seeks to ensure that the needs of women, children, and individuals with disabilities are adequately addressed during natural disasters. Their recognition of the LGBTQ+ community further demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity in their climate change response efforts. This highlights the importance of integrating diverse perspectives into the planning and implementation of CCMA initiatives.

Common thematic issues across these six NHRIs include the urgent need for more robust gender-sensitive policies and practices that address the specific vulnerabilities of marginalised groups in the context of climate change. All NHRIs recognise the importance of incorporating gender considerations into their work, yet there remains a considerable gap in translating this recognition into effective action. Overall, while each NHRI demonstrates varying levels of commitment and progress in addressing human rights and gender considerations related to climate change, the collective experiences indicate a pressing need for enhanced action, especially to strengthen agency and empowerment, while addressing social norms and contexts which perpetuates inequality and vulnerability. Strengthening gender inclusivity within CCMA efforts is essential for promoting the rights of vulnerable populations and ensuring that their voices are heard in climate action strategies.

F. Coordinated Approaches and Collaboration

The theme of coordinated approaches and collaboration in CCMA initiatives across the six NHRIs reveals a growing recognition among all of the NHRIs of the need to work collectively to address the intersection of human rights and climate change. Each NHRI highlighted different levels of engagement with local, national, and international stakeholders, indicating varying capacities and commitments to tackle climate-related challenges.

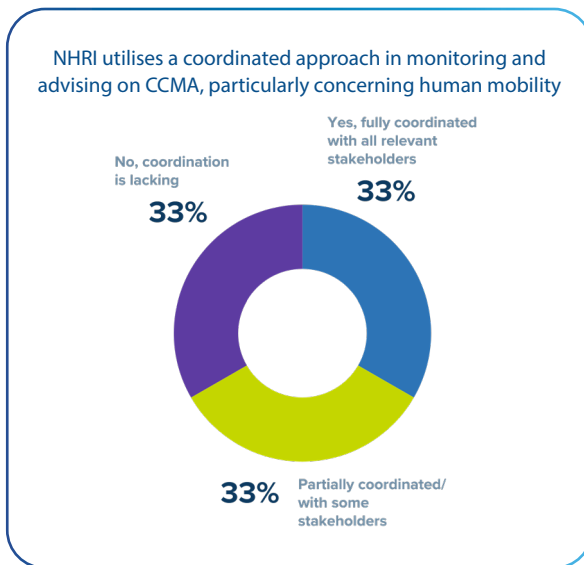


Figure 19. Utilisation of a coordinated approach

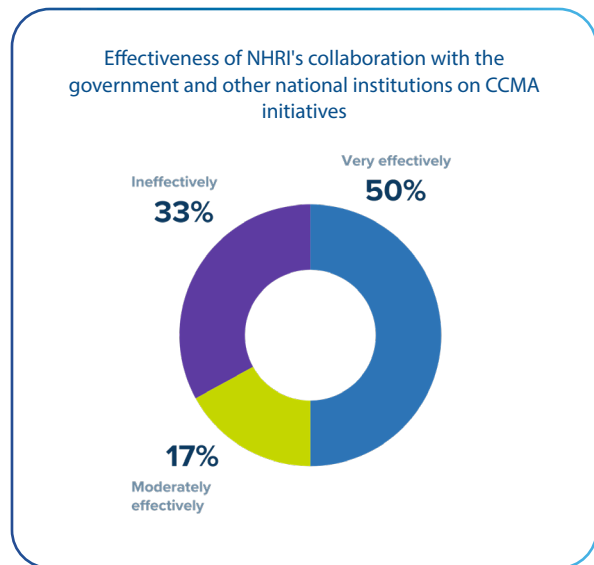


Figure 20. Effectiveness in collaboration with the government

While two NHRIs (India, Bangladesh) reported that they fully coordinate with relevant stakeholders in monitoring and advising in CCMA related work, two others indicated that they do partially coordinate (Nepal, Pakistan) (Figure 19). When asked about the effectiveness in collaborating with the government and other national institutions in relation to CCMA initiatives, half of the NHRIs (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan) indicated that their engagement is very effective, while one NHRI (Nepal) indicated moderate effectiveness and the remaining two NHRIs (Maldives, Sri Lanka) as ineffective (Figure 20).

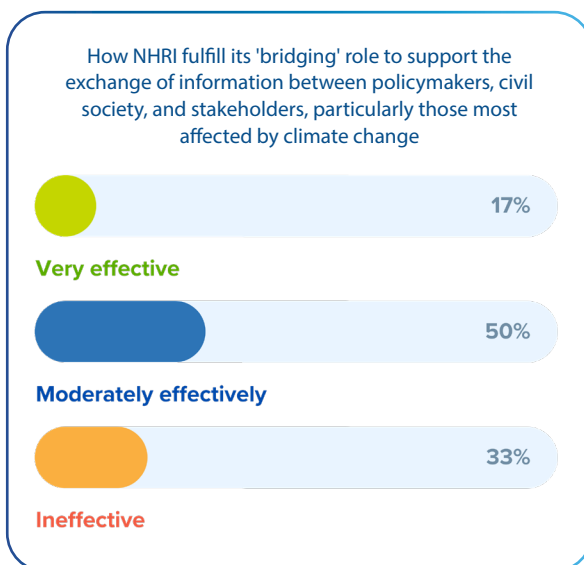


Figure 21. Bridging role of NHRIs

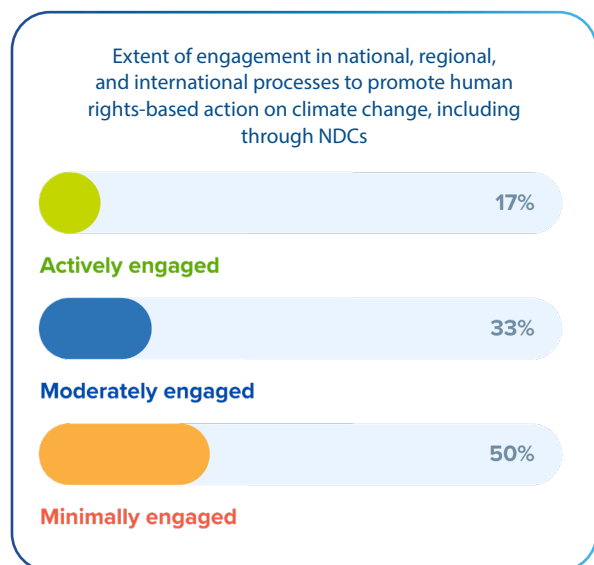


Figure 22. Engagement with national, regional, and international processes

NHRIs' bridging role to support the exchange of information between policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders, particularly those most affected by climate change, is identified as very effective by one NHRI (India), while another three NHRIs (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan) indicated that the role is effectively carried out (Figure 21). In terms of the extent of NHRI engaged in national, regional, and international processes to promote human rights-based action on climate change, including through NDCs under the Paris Agreement, only one NHRI (India) indicated that they actively engage in this regard, while 50% indicated that they minimally engage with national, regional and international stakeholders (Figure 22).

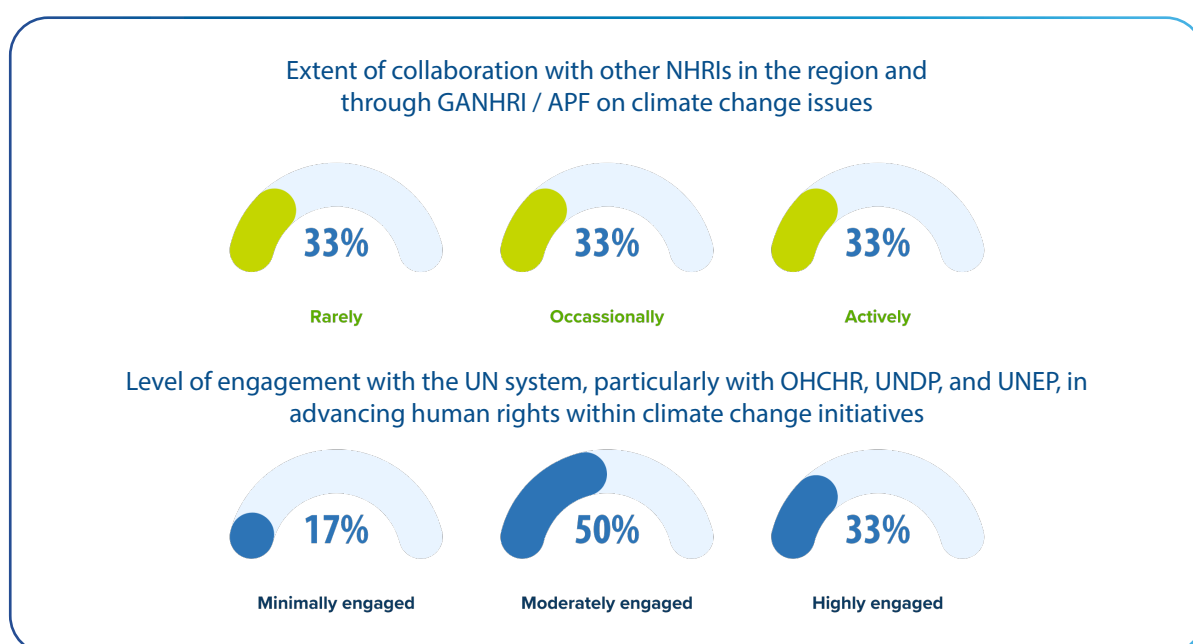


Figure 23. Extent of collaboration with NHRIs in the region and UN system

In the area of the extent of the NHRI collaboration with other NHRIs in the region, two NHRIs indicated they are actively engaged, while another two engage occasionally. As for the engagement with the UN system in advancing human rights within the climate change initiatives, two NHRIs are highly engaged while another three are moderately engaged (Figure 23). In terms of challenges in coordination and collaboration with multiple stakeholders, some NHRIs indicated their limited financial resources as the most significant barrier, while others identified issues in priorities, and the lack of effective communication channels, and limited technical challenges as the biggest obstacles.

At the individual NHRI level, NHRC Bangladesh reports that the institution has actively established collaborations with organisations such as World Vision and Article 19, focusing on CCMA. They emphasise the rights of marginalised individuals displaced by climate change and advocate for their protection in urban settings, addressing discrimination and low wages. The NHRC's participation in international forums, such as a recent GANHRI

meeting in Denmark, reflects their commitment to discussing the intersection of business and human rights concerning climate-related migration. Additionally, they address environmental challenges stemming from the Rohingya refugee influx, advocating for sustainable solutions while navigating complex political landscapes.

NHRC India recognises the challenges but sees potential for advocacy in climate change project assessments to address human rights implications, particularly regarding displacement. While the NHRC has yet to undertake extensive initiatives focused on climate empowerment, they plan to enhance coordination with international organisations. The Indian government's leadership in climate action, including commitments under the Paris Agreement, provides a framework for the NHRC to integrate human rights considerations into climate policies and initiatives effectively.

In the Maldives, HRCM emphasises coordinated approaches with various stakeholders, including government entities, the private sector, and CSOs. Their business and human rights programme seeks to ensure that companies respect human rights, incorporating climate change considerations into their operations. The involvement of HRCM's Vice President in the Asia Pacific Forum Working Group on Environment signifies ongoing collaborative efforts. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives in influencing business practices, particularly in the tourism sector, remains to be seen, indicating a need for further investigation and reporting.

NHRC Nepal focuses on local partnerships with CSOs and NGOs while engaging in international collaborations, such as a project with FHI 360 funded by the USA. This partnership aims to enhance the NHRC's capacity in addressing climate change. Upcoming plans for an international climate conference in Nepal demonstrate a commitment to fostering greater engagement, although the NHRC's international partnerships remain limited. Overall, NHRC Nepal is making strides in building its capacity while exploring avenues for collaboration.

NCHR Pakistan has recently received enhanced recognition from the UN, improving its capacity to engage in climate change discussions. This designation is expected to facilitate international collaboration, allowing the Commission to work on specific climate-related projects. The commission's clear commitment to strengthening coordination with national and international organisations reflects an understanding of the critical role collaborative efforts play in addressing human rights implications of climate change.

In Sri Lanka, HRCSL actively collaborates with national and international organisations, including the Norwegian Human Rights Institution and the CFHNRI, to address climate change. Appointing a focal point officer for coordination demonstrates a structured approach to engagement. However, the lack of local coordination specifically in the climate change

area indicates a need for further development to enhance collaborative efforts at the community level.

Overall, common thematic issues across these six countries include the recognition of the need for coordinated approaches and the importance of collaboration to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. Each NHRI's commitment to enhancing partnerships and fostering engagement underscores the necessity of integrating human rights considerations into climate action. While there are varying degrees of progress and collaboration among the NHRIs, the collective experiences highlight a pressing need for strengthened partnerships. Building effective networks at local, national, and international levels will be crucial for successfully addressing the human rights dimensions of climate change and ensuring that vulnerable populations are adequately protected and empowered in the face of climate challenges.

G. Coordinated Approaches and Collaboration

The survey data and interviews unequivocally indicate the need for all six NHRIs to further develop their knowledge and capacity in the area of human rights dimensions of CCMA initiatives, especially in the area of human mobility (Figure 24). The examination of capacity gaps and future needs across the targeted NHRIs reveals a common recognition of the challenges posed by climate change and its implications for human rights. Each NHRI faces distinct yet interconnected barriers that hinder their ability to effectively engage in CCMA. Addressing these gaps is essential for strengthening their contributions to climate action and safeguarding human rights in vulnerable populations.

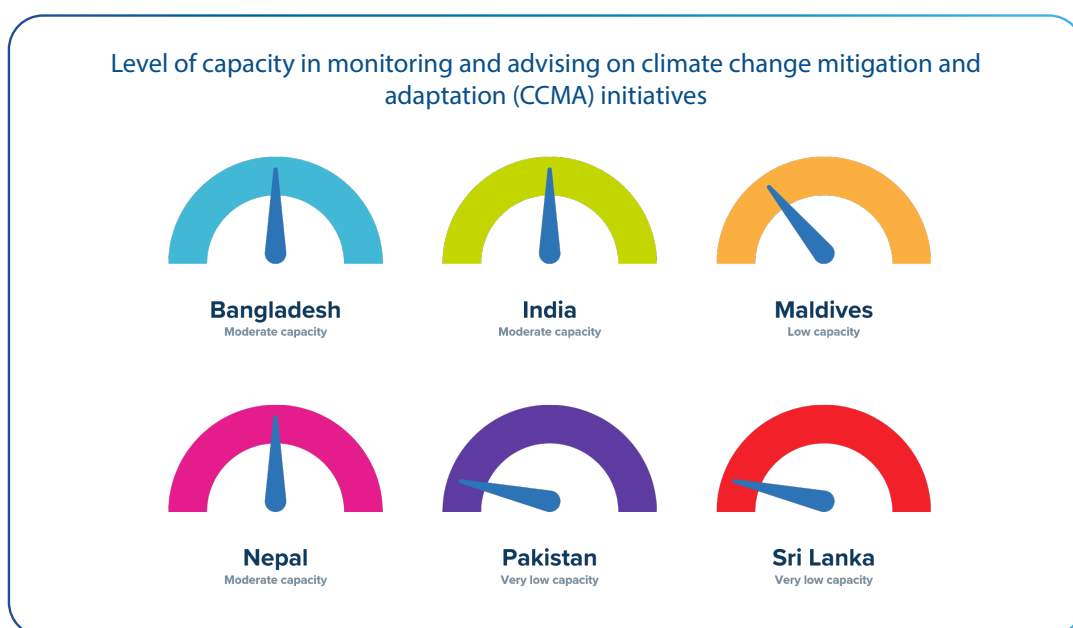


Figure 24. Level of capacity in monitoring and advising on CCMA initiatives

NHRIs identified financial, human resources, access to data as the primary resource limitations they face in effectively engaging in CCMA initiatives. In addition, technical resources such as monitoring and reporting tools and technologies are also identified as significant limitations. NHRIs also identified that they do not have access to specialised training or capacity-building opportunities related to CCMA.

With regard to specific capacity and resource gaps which limit their engagement with CCMA related monitoring and advocacy, finance and trained human resources and lack of expertise are identified as the most pressing challenges. Logistical challenges as well as lack of specialised monitoring tools and methodologies are also identified by some NHRIs.

Based on these challenges, NHRIs generally identified the urgent need to create opportunities for staff training in the area through international expertise, development of monitoring manuals and guidelines specific to CCMA initiatives and engagements, financial and technical support, and sharing of best practices from other NHRIs.

At the individual NHRI level, NHRC Bangladesh acknowledged limited staff capacity, with only five staff members specifically skilled in climate-related issues. Their participation in various forums, including the GANHRI Climate Caucus, illustrates their commitment to learning and engagement. However, they express a need for additional support in skill development and wish to send staff members to COP meetings to enhance their understanding of international negotiations. This capacity-building initiative is crucial for the NHRC to address climate change effectively, and they are seeking sponsorship opportunities to facilitate this effort.

NHRC India faces a different set of challenges despite having adequate financial resources. The primary gap lies in the absence of training for staff on climate change mitigation techniques. There is a notable lack of personnel with environmental expertise, highlighting the need for incorporating climate knowledge into staff development. Recognising the severe impacts of climate change in vulnerable regions, NHRC India underscores the importance of strengthening human rights engagement in these contexts, advocating for training programmes that link climate change and human rights.

In the Maldives, HRCM confronts significant capacity gaps, particularly in knowledge and training related to climate change and environmental rights. Staff members feel underprepared to address these intersections, calling for formal training and increased funding from international partners. They stress the importance of building connections with CSOs to facilitate effective monitoring and advocacy in this area. HRCM emphasised that integrating climate change considerations into existing human rights practices is feasible, but this requires additional resources and support to achieve meaningful outcomes.

NHRC Nepal highlights a lack of expertise among its staff in linking climate change to human rights. With over 250 employees, only a handful possess relevant knowledge, and the funding received from the government does not prioritise climate initiatives. Training programmes are essential to enable NHRC Nepal to effectively advise the government, monitor violations, and report on climate-related human rights issues. NHRC Nepal emphasises that building knowledge and capacity is key to the NHRC's future engagement in climate change initiatives.

NCHR Pakistan stresses the necessity for enhanced technical support and capacity building. They seek targeted training sessions to improve staff skills and advocate for collaboration with external consultants to bolster their expertise. Additionally, the NCHR recognises the need for logistical support to conduct visits to areas affected by climate change, enhancing their understanding of local issues. Strengthening international collaboration is also crucial, as NCHR Pakistan aims to engage more actively in global forums to advocate for support from developed nations.

In Sri Lanka, HRCSL identifies various capacity gaps that impede their engagement in climate initiatives. Comprehensive training for all staff is essential, as well as financial resources for investigations and inquiries. The absence of a national inquiry into climate change underscores the need for funding and expertise. HRCSL emphasises the importance of integrating a human rights perspective into climate action, ensuring that government initiatives uphold principles of non-discrimination and inclusion. By collaborating with stakeholders, HRCSL aims to develop policies aligned with human rights standards.

Across all six NHRIs, a common theme emerges regarding the need for targeted training and capacity-building programmes that enhance understanding of climate change and its human rights implications. Many NHRIs express the importance of collaboration with international and local partners to facilitate this training and resource acquisition. Additionally, the integration of climate change considerations into existing human rights frameworks is consistently highlighted as a priority for enhancing effectiveness.

Future needs across these NHRIs include increased financial support, technical assistance, and enhanced collaboration with civil society and international organisations. By addressing these gaps, the NHRIs can strengthen their capacity to monitor and advocate for human rights in the context of climate change. Each NHRI's experiences highlight the pressing need for tailored training and resources to navigate the complex interplay between climate change and human rights effectively. The collective experiences of the NHRIs in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka accentuate the urgent need for capacity-building efforts to empower them in their climate change initiatives. Strengthening their knowledge and expertise will enable them to fulfil their mandates more effectively and advocate for the rights of vulnerable populations affected by climate change. By fostering collaboration and

enhancing training opportunities, these institutions can play a vital role in addressing the human rights challenges posed by climate change in their respective countries.

4.3. Gap Analysis

The current Gap Analysis also attempted to map out the current practices of the six targeted NHRIs in their current practice of monitoring, investigating, reporting, and advising on CCMA initiatives to identify gaps in practice (*As-Is*) and the desired state (*To-Be*).

This analysis of the six targeted NHRIs in South Asia in their current practice of monitoring, investigating, reporting, and advising on CCMA initiatives reveals significant shortcomings. While many NHRIs have the mandate to monitor human rights, they often lack the specialised expertise, resources, and frameworks necessary to address the complex and evolving challenges and human rights impacts posed by climate change. The most prominent gaps include limited integration of climate-related human rights impacts in monitoring processes, insufficient investigative capabilities to assess climate-related rights violations, and a lack of coordinated reporting mechanisms linking climate action to human rights obligations. Additionally, NHRIs' advisory roles are hindered by inadequate political engagement and insufficient collaboration with climate and environmental stakeholders, resulting in missed opportunities to influence CCMA policies effectively. Bridging these gaps requires capacity building, enhanced interdisciplinary collaboration, and the development of specialised tools and guidelines for integrating human rights considerations into climate action.

A. Gaps in Capacity and Resources

Gaps in NHRIs capacity and resources have been analysed using the broad categories of human resources, knowledge and skills, internal policies, procedures and guidelines, as well as the technical tools and mechanisms that are required for NHRIs to effectively engage in CCMA initiatives as human rights monitoring bodies.

● Knowledge and Skills

All six NHRIs identified that they have significant gaps in knowledge and skills needed to address climate change and its intersection with human rights. In NHRC Nepal and HRCSL, there is a notable lack of expertise in linking climate change to human rights, which hinders effective monitoring and reporting on these issues. The broader understanding of how climate change affects human rights, particularly gender dimensions, is also insufficient. Many NHRIs, such as those in the Maldives and Sri Lanka, indicated that they lack the capacity to identify and

analyse human rights violations caused by climate change impacts. There is also limited training for staff on the technical aspects of CCMA, particularly in the NHRIs of India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, where the institutions need stronger foundational knowledge to link human rights to climate change risks and related challenges effectively.

● **Internal Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**

Many NHRIs do not have specific internal policies and procedures that address the explicit intersection of human rights and climate change. Most of the NHRIs reported that formal policies or guidelines to tackle climate change-related human rights concerns are either not there or not adequately developed. In the HRCM, for instance, there is a need for internal strategies to advocate for human rights within the context of climate action, as well as a requirement to integrate climate change considerations into ongoing human rights monitoring. In NCHR Pakistan, there is a significant gap in policies that integrate gender perspectives into climate change responses. NHRC India also reported that the institution faces challenges, such as the absence of environmental expertise requirements during staff recruitment. These gaps highlight the need for comprehensive, climate-specific policies to guide NHRIs in addressing emerging challenges effectively.

● **Technical Tools and Mechanisms**

A recurring challenge across several NHRIs is the lack of technical tools and mechanisms necessary for effective climate change monitoring and advocacy. NCHR Pakistan, for example, reported that the institution lacks the technical tools required to analyse and respond to human rights issues arising from climate-related disasters. NHRIs also lack adequate mechanisms for reporting climate-related human rights issues to international bodies, such as reported by HRCSL. Additionally, there is a need for specialised monitoring and advocacy tools that can bridge the gap between climate change and human rights, which many countries have yet to develop. Without these technical resources, NHRIs face difficulties in addressing the complexities of climate-related human rights violations.

● **Financial Constraints**

Financial limitations significantly impact NHRIs' ability to fulfil their mandate on climate change-related human rights monitoring, investigation, and reporting. For NHRIs in Nepal and Pakistan, financial constraints are highlighted as a major barrier to conducting comprehensive climate change-related functions, including

disaster response and human rights monitoring. These financial challenges also limit the ability of NHRIs to provide training and build the necessary technical capacity among their staff. In NHRC Nepal, for instance, budgetary restrictions undermine the effectiveness of monitoring and reporting on climate change impacts, leaving NHRIs ill-equipped to handle the scale and complexity of these issues.

Overall, all targeted NHRIs acknowledged that they face multifaceted capacity gaps in human resources, knowledge, internal policies, and technical tools, compounded by financial constraints. Addressing these gaps will require concerted efforts to build staff expertise, develop specific climate-related policies and guidelines, and equip NHRIs with the technical and financial resources needed to integrate human rights into CCMA initiatives effectively.

B. Gaps in Practice

Gaps in NHRIs practice is another critical measure to identify where they currently are and where they should be. In mapping out the gaps in practice, focus was placed in identifying their current engagement with diverse stakeholders, working with affected individuals and communities, engaging with civil society, HRDs, and corporate sector, and coordination with international mechanisms in relation to CCMA initiatives.

● Engagement with Diverse Stakeholders and Affected Individuals and Communities

All six NHRIs indicated that they face different levels of challenges in addressing climate change issues effectively. These challenges include limited engagement with vulnerable communities directly affected by climate change, insufficient collaboration with EHRDs and climate change experts, and exclusion from or limited engagement with national climate policy consultations. NHRIs have to work with weak internal mechanisms for reaching out to affected individuals and communities, often lacking the capacity to link climate change to human rights violations and address the needs of marginalised populations. Gender-related vulnerabilities and the voices of vulnerable groups are frequently overlooked in climate policymaking. Engagement with CSOs and business corporations remains underdeveloped, with limited formal recognition of climate-focused CSOs and bureaucratic hurdles impeding collaboration. NHRIs have not adequately assessed business practices regarding climate change mitigation, and there is a general lack of sustainable relationships between NHRIs, civil society, EHRDs, and the corporate sector, which limits opportunities for joint monitoring and advocacy on climate and human rights issues.

● Coordination with International Mechanisms

All NHRIs show limited engagement with international environmental mechanisms and global climate forums. While some NHRIs indicated their participation in key international climate-related events like COP, overall engagement with the global climate change related initiatives and discourses is minimal, resulting in missed opportunities for these institutions to contribute to global discussions and learn from international best practices. Moreover, there is insufficient coordination between NHRIs and international partners on climate change issues, reducing their capacity to influence international climate policies and integrate human rights considerations into global climate frameworks. The lack of formal documentation of input in international consultations highlights a missed opportunity for NHRIs to shape international climate action from a human rights perspective.

Overall, these gaps in stakeholder engagement, working with affected communities, collaboration with civil society, human rights defenders and the corporate sector, and coordination with international mechanisms significantly hinder NHRIs' capacity to address the human rights implications of climate change effectively. Strengthening these areas is crucial for NHRIs to fulfil their mandates and contribute meaningfully to CCMA efforts.

C. Gaps in Impact

The impact of NHRIs engagement with CCMA initiatives reveals several significant gaps that undermine their effectiveness. Firstly, all six NHRIs often face challenges in monitoring and reporting on climate -related human rights issues, leading to inadequate advocacy for the rights of affected communities. This, in turn, limits their capacity to provide comprehensive recommendations to governments on how to address the intersection of climate change and human rights. Their ability to implement a rights-based approach to climate adaptation and mitigation is also hindered by these monitoring gaps, as well as by difficulties in addressing complex issues such as displacement and relocation caused by climate-related disasters.

Moreover, many NHRIs indicated their current gaps to address intersectional issues, particularly those related to gender, LGBTQ+, and marginalised communities. While all six NHRIs indicated that their general incorporations of gender considerations in monitoring, investigation and advocacy, there is insufficient integration of gender considerations in CCMA efforts in specific, which reduces the effectiveness of their engagement in this regard. This is compounded by challenges in advocating for and ensuring that marginalised communities receive equitable access to resources and support in climate-related disasters, leaving these vulnerable groups inadequately protected.

Another key gap lies in NHRIs' ability to support EHRDs, with limited capacity to protect those advocating for climate justice. Additionally, their engagement with businesses on climate mitigation and adaptation practices is weak, further reducing their impact. Without a strong framework for advocating for climate-vulnerable communities or aligning government climate strategies with human rights standards, all six NHRIs are likely to face obstacles in influencing national climate policies effectively.

The NHRIs in the region also have limited capacity to advise governments on the human rights implications of climate policies. Their influence in national and international climate discussions is often marginal, reducing their ability to ensure that human rights considerations are integrated into climate-related projects and policies. Furthermore, systemic issues related to climate change and human rights remain inadequately addressed due to the challenges in conducting comprehensive investigations or inquiries into the impacts of climate change on human rights. NHRIs' inability to align government strategies with human rights standards, compounded by the inadequate integration of human rights considerations in national climate policies, further weakens their overall impact on CCMA initiatives.

4.4. Implications

The analysis of data collected from all six NHRIs in South Asia illustrate that they face noteworthy challenges in addressing the intersection of climate change and human rights, particularly due to gaps in human resources, technical capacity, and expertise. Many NHRIs lack sufficient staff trained in both climate change and human rights, limiting their ability to effectively monitor, report on, and advocate for and advice the government on climate-related human rights issues. Additionally, there are gaps in linking climate change to gender considerations, further complicating efforts to protect vulnerable groups and integrate gender-sensitive approaches into climate responses.

One critical issue is the lack of engagement with EHRDs and affected communities. In several NHRIs, they are not adequately collaborating with those on the frontlines of climate change, such as EHRDs or marginalised communities who are disproportionately affected by climate disasters. This lack of engagement reduces NHRIs' ability to gather firsthand information, provide comprehensive recommendations to governments, and advocate for equitable climate action.

Another major gap lies in the absence of specific policies and guidelines within NHRIs that address climate change-related human rights issues. Without clear frameworks, NHRIs struggle to integrate human rights considerations into climate policies and disaster management strategies. This is compounded by a gap in collaboration with civil society and

businesses, limiting the ability of NHRIs to ensure that climate actions by both the public and private sectors are aligned with human rights standards.

Coordination with international mechanisms and participation in global climate forums is also lacking across many NHRIs. These institutions often do not have the resources or technical tools to engage in international climate discussions or to contribute to global environmental strategies from a human rights perspective. This lack of participation weakens their influence in shaping climate policies at the national and international levels.

The impact of these gaps is significant, limiting NHRIs' ability to protect the rights of affected communities, advocate for marginalised groups, and contribute to national climate policy development. To address these challenges, NHRIs need enhanced training programmes, better technical support, more financial resources, and improved tools for monitoring and advocacy. Strengthening collaboration with civil society, EHRDs, businesses, and international partners will be essential to improve the overall effectiveness of NHRIs in the context of climate change and human rights.

5. Recommendations and Way Forward

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis, the following general recommendations are made, to provide a clear pathway for addressing the identified gaps in NHRIs engagement with climate change and human rights issues. The recommendations are grouped under five themes that emerged out of the analysis, which focus on: (i) training and capacity development; (ii) technical tools and resources; (iii) internal policies and guidelines; (iv) stakeholder engagement; and (v) coordination with international mechanisms. The recommendations also identify possible timeframes, policy feasibility and impacts.

A. Training and Capacity Development

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a training programme for NHRIs in the region on climate change, human rights and gender intersectionality, with a focus on mobility risks and considerations, targeted to frontline staff who are engaged in human rights monitoring, investigation and advocacy at all six NHRIs.

Priority:	High	Timeframe:	Short-term (1 to 6 months)
Feasibility:	High Partners can develop an online/hybrid learning course, which covers the knowledge, skills and technical guidelines to engage with the state in CCMA initiatives and effectively monitor their impacts and advice the government.		

Policy Context:	While significant differences are identified across the NHRIs in their practice and national contexts, it is essential that the training programme is aligned with the core characteristics of national climate policies in the six countries and human rights strategies to ensure NHRI activities support national goals.		
Expected Impact:	Increased capacity within the six NHRIs to monitor, investigate and address climate change impacts on vulnerable communities, leading to more informed reporting and recommendations at the national and international levels.		
Recommendation 2: Establish a medium-term ongoing professional development plan to train NHRIs staff on climate litigation, gender-responsive climate action, and human rights-based climate advocacy.			
Priority:	Medium	Timeframe:	Medium-term (6 to 12 months)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires partnerships and development of specialised training modules, peer-to-peer learning and exchange programmes across the region (with a regional focus) and outside the region to strengthen technical knowledge and skills.		
Policy Context:	Incorporate training on climate change and human rights into NHRIs strategic planning to ensure alignment with current and future climate and human rights regulatory changes. Developing a clear linkage between the broad mandate of NHRIs and the internal training needs related to climate change and human rights.		
Expected Impact:	Improved ability to engage with state agencies on climate related human rights issues, and create dialogue with national and international climate issues, and to be more effective in collaborating with and representing climate-affected communities in policy dialogues.		

B. Technical Tools and Resources

Recommendation 3: Develop a set of guidelines and/or manuals on monitoring, investigating and advocacy related to climate change impact on human rights, which align with the broad NHRI mandates.

Priority:	High	Timeframe:	Short-term (1 to 6 months)
Feasibility:	High Specialised tools can be developed through an external consultant, in consultation with the NHRIs, and based on the good practices of NHRIs in other regions.		
Policy Context:	Strengthening NHRIs practice in monitoring, investigating, and advocacy related to climate change impact on human rights through standardised guidelines and tools can be useful in aligning them with national level CCMA and disaster management policies and practices. This can also be useful in strengthening data sharing protocols with relevant government agencies.		
Expected Impact:	Enhanced ability to conduct detailed monitoring and assessments of climate impacts, enabling NHRIs to provide evidence-based recommendations to governments.		

Recommendation 4: Develop and implement a long-term data sharing platform and protocol between NHRIs and other government bodies for real-time climate change and human rights monitoring.

Priority:	Medium	Timeframe:	Long-term (1 to 3 years)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires multi-stakeholder collaboration and investment.		
Policy Context:	National digital transformation and open data policies can serve as frameworks to create secure data-sharing protocols. In many countries, real-time data processes related to disaster response are being implemented and NHRIs can be proactive in securing access to such databases.		
Expected Impact:	Increased collaboration and improved response times for climate-related human rights violations, leading to more effective monitoring and policy advice.		

C. Internal Policies and Guidelines

Recommendation 5: Develop specific NHRIs policy guidelines for addressing climate change-related human rights issues, including gender and marginalised community considerations in climate disaster response.

Priority:	High	Timeframe:	Short-term (1 to 6 months)
Feasibility:	High Internal policy drafting can be initiated immediately with expert consultation.		
Policy Context:	Align with National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and international standards such as the Paris Agreement to ensure NHRI actions support wider climate objectives.		
Expected Impact:	Standardised approaches to handling climate-related human rights complaints-handling and monitoring, improving the quality and consistency of NHRI interventions.		

Recommendation 6: Include climate change and human rights strategies and actions in the NHRI Strategic Plan and Action Plan, which are aligned with the national context.

Priority:	Medium	Timeframe:	Medium-term (6 to 12 months)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires the strategies to be incorporated into the next strategic planning cycle.		
Policy Context:	National climate change mitigation and adaptation plans and policies can guide the strategic planning process to ensure alignment with national level climate priorities.		
Expected Impact:	Improved priority and capability to address the intersection of climate change, human rights, and gender issues.		

D. Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

Recommendation 7: Establish immediate consultation processes with EHRDs, CSOs, and local communities to incorporate their inputs into NHRIs climate monitoring and advocacy work.

Priority:	High	Timeframe:	Short-term (1 to 6 months)
Feasibility:	High The initiative can be launched through existing CSOs networks and partnerships that individual NHRIs have established within the country, or through the APF's EHRDs engagement strategies.		
Policy Context:	Consultative mechanisms should align with national climate policy development processes to ensure NHRI inputs are factored into government's planning process related to CCMA.		
Expected Impact:	Strengthened NHRIs advocacy efforts, ensuring the voices of climate-affected individuals and defenders are better represented in national policy formulation and implementation.		

Recommendation 8: Develop long-term partnerships with private sector entities, particularly those in extractive and tourism industries, to promote human rights due diligence in climate change mitigation and adaptation practices.

Priority:	Medium	Timeframe:	Long-term (1 to 3 years)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires long-term engagement strategies and collaboration with industry groups.		
Policy Context:	Align partnerships with national environmental regulations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks to ensure business compliance with human rights standards.		
Expected Impact:	Increased accountability and transparency in corporate climate actions, leading to better protection for environmental and human rights.		

E. Coordination with International Mechanisms

Recommendation 9: Strengthen NHRIs participation in international climate forums such as COP meetings and establish formal coordination mechanisms with global environmental bodies.

Priority:	High	Timeframe:	Short-term (1 to 6 months)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires funding for participation and formal partnership building with relevant stakeholders.		
Policy Context:	National climate policies should facilitate NHRIs participation in global discussions, ensuring their contributions support national and international climate objectives.		
Expected Impact:	Increased visibility and influence of NHRIs in shaping international climate policies, ensuring that human rights are a key consideration in global climate action.		

Recommendation 10: Build a long-term strategy for NHRI reporting to international bodies, like the UNFCCC, on the human rights implications of national climate actions.

Priority:	Medium	Timeframe:	Long-term (1 to 3 years)
Feasibility:	Medium Requires capacity building and coordination with government agencies.		
Policy Context:	Align NHRIs reporting mechanisms with national reporting obligations to international climate agreements to ensure synergy in monitoring and advocacy efforts.		
Expected Impact:	Improved national compliance with international climate and human rights standards, leading to more effective and accountable climate action.		

6. Conclusions

NHRIs play a crucial role in embedding human rights principles into CCMA initiatives, ensuring that climate actions uphold the rights of vulnerable communities. They advocate for a human rights-based approach to climate justice, encouraging equitable decision-making and supporting a just transition to a zero-carbon economy. At the national level, NHRIs advise governments on human rights-centred climate policies, promote environmental and social impact assessments, and protect EHRDs. Internationally, NHRIs act as intermediaries among stakeholders, contributing to global climate processes and advocating for human rights-based climate action. In South Asia, NHRIs in Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka have engaged with CCMA initiatives at different levels, though they encounter challenges related to capacity and resources.

CCMA initiatives have been developed to address both the causes and impacts of climate change. Mitigation efforts focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy, energy efficiency, and carbon capture, guided by international agreements such as the Paris Agreement. Conversely, adaptation strategies aim to prepare communities for climate impacts by enhancing infrastructure, developing resilient agriculture, and establishing early warning systems, especially vital for vulnerable regions like small island nations.

The Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis collected primary data from South Asian NHRIs to evaluate their existing programs and challenges concerning CCMA. Utilising the Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE), developed by the RWI and partners, the assessment aims to identify obstacles NHRIs face, such as limited capacity, resource constraints, and insufficient political will and support. This study specifically targets six NHRIs across Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, employing gender-sensitive and participatory methodologies through surveys, interviews, and desk-based reviews.

The findings reveal several thematic areas of concern. While all NHRIs recognise climate change's impacts on vulnerable communities, their integration of climate considerations into investigations varies significantly. Advocacy efforts also differ, with Bangladesh and India being the most proactive. However, challenges like lack of credible data and insufficient community engagement impede effective action. Political support for NHRIs varies, impacting their ability to advocate effectively. Additionally, while some NHRIs support climate-related human rights defenders, inconsistencies in protection mechanisms persist. Gender considerations remain inadequately addressed, and collaboration among NHRIs is limited, underscoring the need for improved coordination and resources to enhance their capacity to address climate-related human rights issues effectively.

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