

# **Framework on Climate Change and Environment**



## **Scope of the climate framework**

This document sets out the parameters for Danish Refugee Council, DRC's response to the growing, global climate and environmental crisis. It provides a common framework for DRC's actions and approach under three core pillars of action: Climate Adaptation in Programmatic Responses; Mitigation to reduce DRC environmental and climate footprint; and Advocacy for displaced persons in the context of climate change.

Priorities and needs in the framework have been identified through field-based needs and capacity assessment, experiences from the field, priorities of the humanitarian sector, existing and future donor compliance demands, as well as relevant international and national conventions, policies and strategies including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 (UNSCAP), the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as UNHCR's framework for Climate Action and UNHCR's Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters.

The crisis of the climate and of the environment have key societal and economic consequences. In this framework, therefore, climate and environment are seen as both interlinked and with impact on vulnerable target groups. The framework's point of departure is to strengthen the full spectrum of our response from planning and designing to build-back-better in order to strengthen climate and environmental resilience by reducing the negative impact of shocks and stresses and thereby the protection and livelihoods of conflict and displacement affected persons.

The framework goes hand in hand with the DRC 2025 Strategy setting more concrete targets for "Go Green" as a strategic and organisational principle, as well as it is accompanied by an internal action plan defining roll out within the strategic period of 2021-2025.



# Introduction

With this framework, DRC is defining its ambitions to respond to climate change and environmental degradation to meet the displacement challenges already being amplified by climate change, and to mitigate and prepare for those to come.

Climate change and environmental degradation can be threat multipliers as climate-related risks may exacerbate conflict dynamics and increase the impact of other drivers of conflict and fragility. Through this framework, DRC is underlining the importance of addressing displacement in the context of climate change as we work to ensure protection of forcibly displaced people.

Climate change is a global phenomenon that “increasingly interacts with the drivers of refugee movements”<sup>1</sup> and disproportionately affects developing countries, which today host 80% of the world’s refugees and displaced persons. People affected by displacement, therefore, need a strong advocate to ensure protection and empowerment of the most marginalised and that they will not be left behind in global climate action. However, more research is needed to clarify the relationship between climate change on human mobility and forced displacement, as well as the effects of conflict on climate and environment.<sup>2</sup>

Across several of the contexts where DRC works, the global climate crisis poses extreme challenges to the people DRC aims to assist, which DRC naturally must reflect on in its overall strategies and response work. Climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies requires a localized perspective, capacity and expertise, which is also in line with DRC’s Policy Statement on Partnerships 2019. DRC’s donors and partners demand systems and programmes to mitigate the effects of climate change and environmental degradation and are rapidly moving from soft to hard compliance requirements on par with already established accountability areas. In consequence, the continued “license to operate” for humanitarian organizations will increasingly depend on their ability to embrace the “green” agenda and do so in a proactive and transformative manner.

DRC staff and volunteers have consistently voiced expectations for a more sustainable organization, one that better responds to climatic challenges and ensures environment-related rights of the displacement affected, and one where bold “green” commitments become an integral part of DRC’s way of working.

Climate change and environment are central tenants of DRC’s 2025 strategy, and as such signify an unfaltering urgency for sector response and integrated programming and advocacy, as well as our internal organizational conduct. This framework represents a first-generation organizational climate and environment lens to DRC’s displacement response.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Compact For Refugees: [https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR\\_English.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam (2019): Forced from Home – Climate-fuelled displacement.  
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/forced-home-climate-fuelled-displacement>

### Displacement at the centre

DRC has more than 60 years' experience in responding to displacement crises and in supporting and advocating for protection and durable solutions for displaced persons. This expertise has evolved over decades on a backdrop where conflicts have become more complex, laced with larger socio-economic and governance issues of chronic poverty and state fragility. During this time displacement numbers have risen to yet another unbearable high. And even with conservative estimates, displacement forecasts suggest that the human impact of climate change could intensify the convoluted protection issues to unprecedented levels.

The current exploitation of the earth by humans is 'bringing about unprecedented global change to the environment as a result of human activity and specifically as a result of the warming produced by the emission of greenhouse gases by human societies'<sup>3</sup>. Deforestation, unsustainable ways of industrial production and conversion of land for highly intensive and unsustainable agriculture and livestock production, are destroying ecosystems<sup>4</sup>. The rapid loss of nature, ecosystems and biodiversity is not only threatening the natural environment but also further fuelling global inequality and widespread violations of human rights.

Displacement related to unpredictable long-term weather patterns or sudden damaging weather events is the most prevalent human face of climate change. While acknowledging the challenge of accurate and dependable scenario forecasting, there's consensus that climate change either as a sole driver or as a multiplier, will increase the number of displaced people. In fact, numbers relating to disaster displacement have already exceeded that of conflict-induced displacement figures.<sup>5</sup> Whereas everyone around the world can feel the effects of climate change, the most vulnerable are people living in the world's poorest countries, many of which are recognized as so called climate change hotspots - areas, which are strongly impacted by the physical and ecological effects of climate change come together with large numbers of vulnerable and poor people and communities with little resilience and little capacities to adapt.

Evidently, people lacking financial, social, political or physical assets, as a direct or indirect consequence of environmental stressors, may not have the means to migrate or move despite a desire to do so. Thus, while environmental change is likely to make displacement more probable, at the same time, it could also curb movements. Recent research<sup>6</sup> suggests a framework where people affected by climate change falls into four categories according to their intentions and capacity: Involuntarily immobile: those without ability and capacity to move; Voluntarily immobile: those not wanting to move and those who are practicing climatic coping and resilience strategies; Involuntarily (forcibly) displaced: resembling displacement as we know it and Voluntarily mobile people: with both aspiration and capacity to move in an 'orderly manner', could be supported migrants.

Projection trends suggest a strong likelihood for involuntary immobility to increase significantly because of climate change – suggesting an alternative causality between environment and mobility<sup>7</sup>. Such involuntary immobile people, it is argued, represent an equally important policy concerns as those who are able to migrate, not least due to the humanitarian crises this may cause. Finetuning these distinctions and adding emphasis to the concept of involuntary immobility will help inform future trends of the impact of climate change on people in risk-prone environments.

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<sup>3</sup> MMC (2019): Mixed Migration Review. <http://www.mixedmigration.org/resource/mixed-migration-review-2019/>

<sup>4</sup> DRC Trends Analysis, Climate Change and Displacement (internal document)

<sup>5</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2018): Disaster Displacement. A Global Review 2008-2018. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201905-disaster-displacement-global-review-2008-2018.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> MMC (2020): Weak Links. <http://www.mixedmigration.org/resource/challenging-the-climate-and-migration-paradigm/>

<sup>7</sup> MMC (2019): Mixed Migration Review. <http://www.mixedmigration.org/resource/mixed-migration-review-2019/>

### Integrating climate change and environment

The successful integration of climate change and environment as fundamental elements of prevention of displacement as well as responding to displacement will require additional analysis, resources and new technologies, integration of science, interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships in the years to come. Currently, however, a few core fundamentals ground DRC's engagement, namely:<sup>8</sup>

- **Climate change is a driver of displacement** forcing people to leave their homes. At the same time, climate change can impede or prevent human mobility, sustainable development, and access to rights and thereby have an impact on displacement dynamics.
- **Climate change is a threat multiplier and climate-related risks may exacerbate conflict dynamics and increase the impact of other drivers of conflict and fragility.** Resilience to climate shocks, environmental degradation and displacement is often lowest in fragile and conflict-affected contexts and is affecting the world's most vulnerable the hardest.
- **The relationship between climate change, conflict, and poverty greatly increases the complexity** of displacement as well as in protracted situations, as planning and financing remain short-term. Initiatives intended to secure a relevant and strong climate focus must place the rights of people at the centre and ensure that already vulnerable groups and their hosting environments are not left to carry the burden of climate change.
- **The price of doing nothing will be insurmountable** and if we fail to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change now, the protection challenges ahead of us will be felt most by those furthest behind. Without ambitious climate action, climate-related rapid as well as slow-onset disasters could double the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance to over 200 million each year by 2050<sup>9</sup>.

#### A few select displacement forecasts

- Since 2008, an average of 21.7 million people a year are estimated to have been displaced due to climate change, 95% of this taking place in developing countries (The Environmental Justice Foundation, 2017).
- In 2019, weather-related hazards induced some 24.9 million displacements in 140 countries (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2020).
- By 2050, 140 million people are at risk of having to move within their countries as the world witnesses the worsening impacts of climate change in three densely populated regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South Asia (World Bank: Groundswell – Preparing for Internal Climate Migration, 2018).
- And by 2050, 300 million people will be vulnerable to annual flooding, potentially increasing to 480 million by 2100. 110 million people today live on land that is below the high tide line, and by 2050, more than 150 million people's homes could be permanently below it (Climate Central: Flooded Future: Global vulnerability to sea level

### Adaptation and mitigation throughout the displacement cycle

The 1992 UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main global and frame-setting convention when it comes to addressing the problem of climate change. The Paris Agreement signed in 2015 builds upon the UNFCCC by bringing in all nations and setting an operational course for member states. These frameworks, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

<sup>8</sup> DRC Key Messages, The Nexus between Climate, Conflict and Displacement (under final revision)

<sup>9</sup> This estimation dates back to Oxford environmental scientist Professor Norman Myers (2005). Numbers are disputed with some estimates being lower and other considerably higher.

## DRC Climate Change and Environment Framework

2015-2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the UN Secretariat Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 (UNSCAP), function as a backdrop to international pledges and commitments that are closer to DRC's mandate of protection of displaced persons, including the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, as well as the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change.

The two main pillars of the Paris Agreement are adaptation and mitigation.

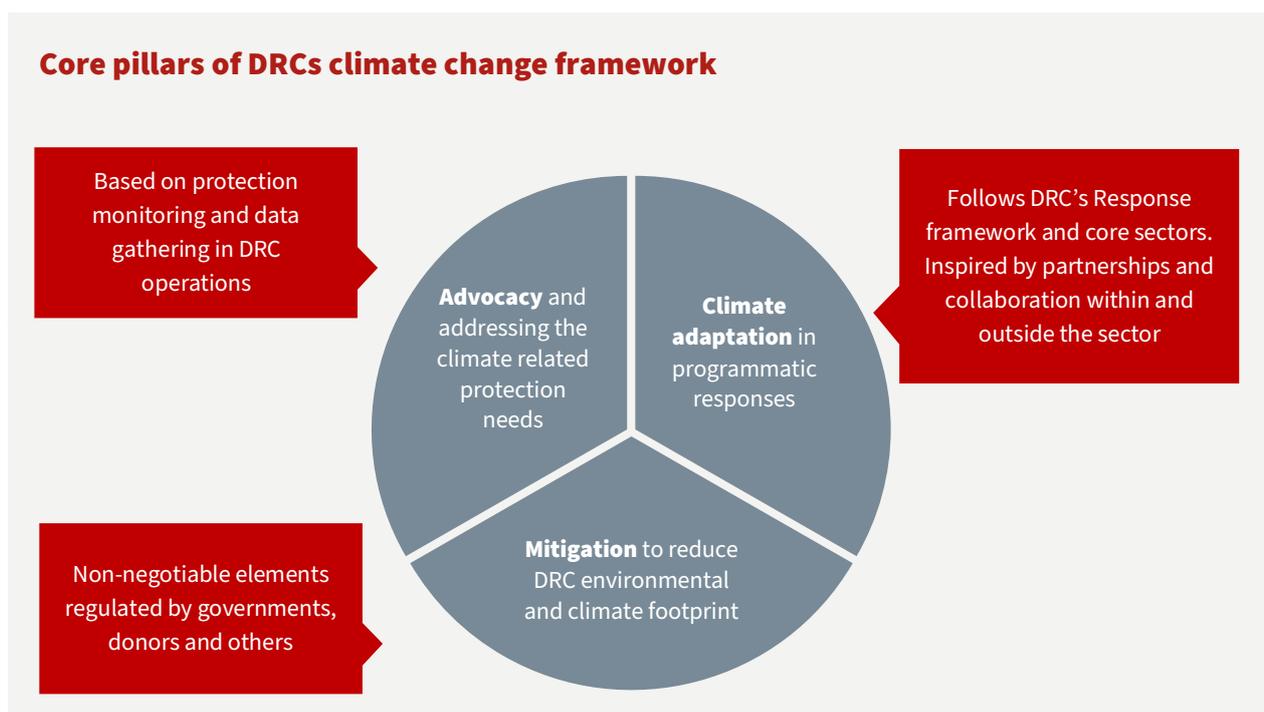
- **Adaptation** seeks to change behavior, consumption and production patterns, thereby enhancing the capacity to increase resilience to climate change. Adaptation responds to the risks and at the same time builds future resilience.

Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.

- **Mitigation** focuses on bringing down greenhouse gases so as to ensure sustainable behavior by all actors in the humanitarian aid sector including the people of concern.

Mitigation refers to the reduction of the rate of climate change via the management of its causal factors i.e. the emission of greenhouse gases from fossil fuel combustion, agriculture, land use changes, cement production, etc. (UNFCCC). UNEP defines mitigation as using new technologies and renewable energy, making older equipment more energy efficient, or changing management practices or consumer behaviour.

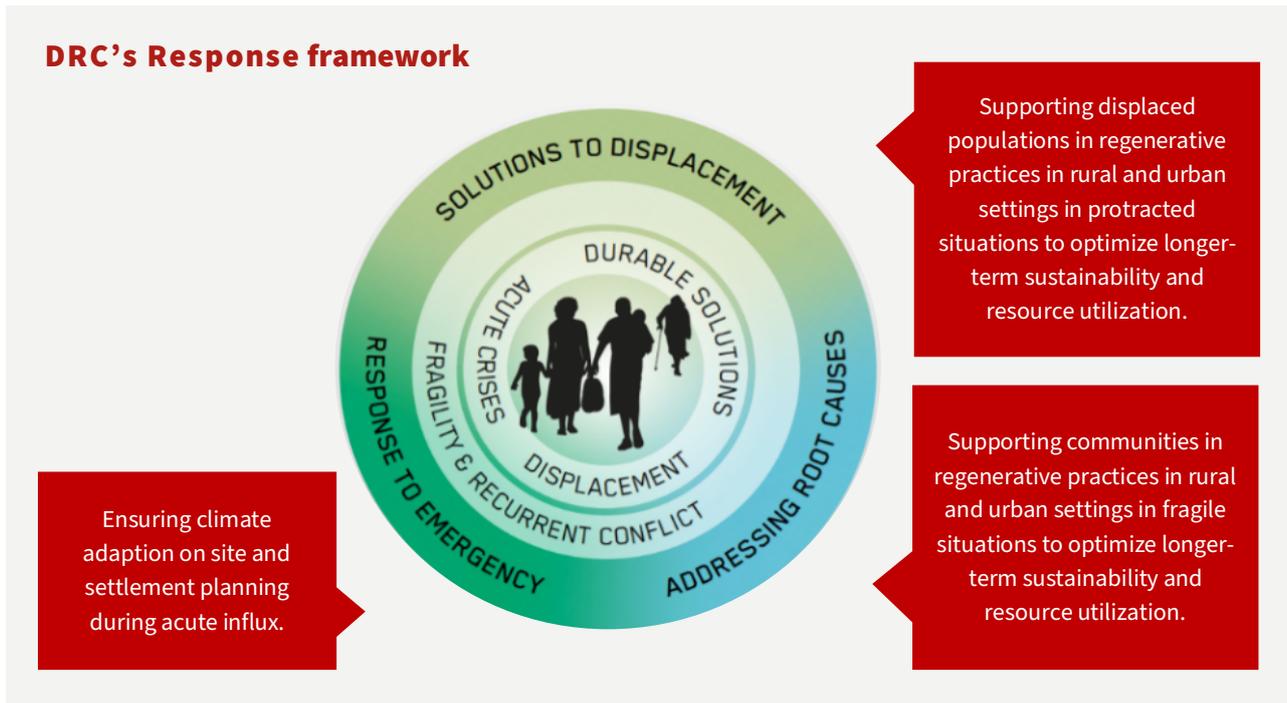
Guided by the frameworks above, including the definitions of adaptation and mitigation, DRC seeks to support and strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by pursuing efforts consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions as well as climate-resilient economic development. Based on consultations and research three central pillars are comprised in the DRC's Climate Framework:



## DRC Climate Change and Environment Framework

For DRC it remains second nature to respond to displacement throughout the displacement cycle. It is imperative for DRC to be able to pursue these triple objectives in its response framework to protect and save lives during an acute emergency, to promote and facilitate durable solutions to displacement and to address the root causes of displacement.

Importantly, DRC's work with adaption, mitigation and advocacy remains relevant to interventions across the different displacement scenarios, with variations in emphasis. Objectives of the climate and environment work should be adapted by programme staff to the specific context. Examples below:



# The three central pillars

## 1. Climate adaptation in programmatic responses

**Objective:** Strengthen the resilience of displacement-affected communities to the impact of climate change and environmental degradation.

Parties to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement recognize that adaptation is a global concern faced by all with local, national, regional and international dimensions. The adaptive and mitigating capacity of communities to cope with the negative effects of climate change is essential to include in the programmatic response and a key component of the long-term response aimed to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems, thus this objective will be reached through a community-driven approach.

DRC acknowledges that adaptation and mitigation initiatives should follow a context-driven, local, gender/age/diversity-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach based on needs and risk assessments, considering vulnerable and marginalized groups, communities and ecosystems.

To fulfill our role and remain relevant to the people we serve, DRC's field operations are adapting programmatic responses to these realities. Within the scope of DRC's mandate and response framework, DRC's core competencies lie within five core sectors. It is within the scope of these sectors as well as multi sector programming that climate adaptation work is materialized. The present climate framework will be implemented both through mainstreaming of climate and environment elements into the sectors and programming as well as through new specific climate and environment projects (flagship projects) that will tackle the challenges caused by climate change and environmental degradation head on.

### DRC Core Sectors

- 1. Protection** is central to identify rights and protection risks affecting displaced persons and communities in the wake of climate change or environmental degradation and will be a natural extension of the data gathering and protection risk registers that DRC conducts in its operations. DRC's protection staff respond to risks with capacity building and awareness raising, advocacy, case referrals, direct household interventions, psycho-social assistance, and legal aid. In 2019, weather-related hazards induced some 24.9 million displacements in 140 countries (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2020).
- 2. Economic recovery** strengthens resilience to climate change and environmental degradation. Within this sector, regenerative practices, circular economy, sustainable agriculture sustaining food security and green jobs are some of the core initiatives undertaken.
- 3. Shelter & Settlements** is a sector where a strong understanding of the natural environment can improve the planning of physical structures and sustainable settlement design.
- 4. Camp Coordination & Camp Management** is a sector where access to WASH and other basics services or general infrastructure must be conducted with mitigation and adaptive considerations.
- 5. Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding** as a sector, focuses increasingly on natural resource management, and conflict mitigation in relation to natural resource scarcity.

## DRC Climate Change and Environment Framework

DRC has engaged in the elaboration of a mainstreaming tool<sup>10</sup> intended as a sector-wide tool to self-assess the level of mainstreaming of climate and environmental action at both organisational, local partnership and intervention level. DRC is committed to the following:

- Revision of the DRC Programme Handbook including elaborating on sector-specific guidelines.
- Incorporation of climate change and environment related risks into existing reporting mechanisms including consideration of risk management guidelines by country operations.
- Systematic integration of climate risks in risk and impact assessments, including environmental screenings and assessments, which several donors have articulated as a pre-requisite for funding programs/projects.

Beyond mainstreaming initiatives, a number of ‘flagship’ projects are emerging and refining the DRC approach and building DRC’s competency. These are organically and contextually developed and are primarily driven by field specialists but can lay the grounds for developing stronger global level expertise.

Examples of Flagships are:

### **Regenerative Practices in rural and urban displacement affected settlements**

With the aim of strengthening resilience to climate change and environmental degradation of the poor and vulnerable, and inspired by circular bio-economy approaches, DRC is working in Burundi, Somalia, Uganda, Yemen, Tanzania amongst others with permaculture. Permaculture integrates localized and holistic ways of rural and urban farming to support biodiversity, rebuild and rejuvenate soils, reduce and reuse waste, improve water management and build resilience to climatic shocks and stressors.

The use of permaculture and agroecosystem restoration to inform resilience programming aims to transform and improve the lives and livelihoods of affected populations long-term, whilst simultaneously increasing the adaptive capacity of communities’ agroecosystems, and thereby reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change impacts.

Other more tentative examples are reforestation, seed banks, solarization and water management, landscape restoration, supporting green jobs, early warning systems, access to climate information services and forecast based financing<sup>11</sup>. DRC is further a member of the multi-stakeholder network EHAN<sup>12</sup>, which is a network bringing the humanitarian and environmental communities together to support environmentally sustainable disaster management. Moreover, DRC joined the Clean Energy Challenge<sup>13</sup> in 2020, established to provide cleaner and safer energy to forcibly displaced populations.

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<sup>10</sup> The Mainstreaming tool has been elaborated in a process led by Globalt Fokus (<https://www.globaltfokus.dk/>), a Danish NGO coalition

<sup>11</sup> Identified by the UNFCCC’s task force on displacement, forecast-based financing approaches are using scientific and historical data to indicate elevated risks and release humanitarian funding for actions before a potential disaster, in several high-risk pilot countries in cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the World Food Programme and the Welthungerhilfe. These types of financing models represent an opportunity for reducing displacement related to climate change which DRC also aspires to explore. Furthermore, this methodology underlines the necessary shift and way how governments, donors and NGOs respond to disasters in the humanitarian aid, putting anticipatory actions, prevention and preparedness in the center.

<sup>12</sup> <https://ehaconnect.org>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/clean-energy-challenge>

## **DRC Climate Change and Environment Framework**

Core to the approach, and in line with DRC's Policy Statement on Partnerships 2019, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation requires thorough understanding of local contexts, as well as building on and strengthening localized, capacities and expertise. Through DRC's presence in countries affected by climate change, we achieve part of that undertaking; however, DRC can maximize its capacities by becoming a stronger partner-orientation," particularly by increasing systematic and intentional collaboration with authorities, research institutions, private sector partners and civil society organizations. As an expert organization in displacement issues, DRC has the opportunity and position to build a network of effective local partners in tune with local dynamics to design, coordinate and implement adaptation and behaviour change strategies that make local societies, communities, families and individuals more resilient to climate change and environmental degradation.

DRC hopes to contribute the furthering of existing mobilization efforts on the agenda, ensuring that programme responses and advocacy draws on broader partnerships and the engagement of displacement-affected communities at both national and global levels. A strong and recent example of broader partnership mobilization is the DRC Global Event 2020<sup>14</sup> which harnessed a broad 'extra-sectorial' engagement from private sector, think tanks and academia to inspire DRC. Another example is the ongoing collaboration with Denmark's Technical University engaging its students in hacking data driven and digital solutions for assessment of adaptive and environmental impact measures.

## **2. Mitigation to reduce DRC's environmental and climate footprint**

**Objective: Improve the climate and environment footprint of DRC's practices by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing the negative impacts on the environment**

The Paris Agreement affirms a global aim of strengthening the response to the threats of climate change. It does so by striving to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2.0 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C, finding that limiting global warming to 1.5°C would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. In November 2019, more than 11,000 scientists in 153 nations endorsed a statement on climate change, declaring that "the climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected. We declare clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency. To secure a sustainable future, we must change how we live."<sup>15</sup>

Inspired by these global commitments, DRC aims to reduce its own greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and minimize any negative environmental impacts associated with our conduct and operations. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing harm to the environment contributes to global climate action ambitions and protects the natural resource-based livelihoods, health and security of displaced populations and host communities.

DRC is committed to changing its existing way of operating to reduce emissions and work toward the global commitment to limit global warming to below 1.5 degrees, and to do so in a clear, ambitious and transparent and accountable fashion that over time may be implemented across all operations. In pursuit of this, DRC seeks to harness best practice from the GHG protocol<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://drc.ngo/campaigns/global-event/>

<sup>15</sup> BioScience: World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency. <https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/article/70/1/8/5610806>

<sup>16</sup> <https://ghgprotocol.org/>

as well as the inspirational UN Greening the Blue strategy<sup>17</sup>/Strategy for Sustainability Management 2020-3018. Finally, an extensive analysis<sup>19</sup> of donor compliance demands has been undertaken to understand expectations and requirements towards DRC. As a result, four critical initiatives have been identified.

The four initiatives represent the areas of large environmental impact of DRCs operations including procurement, facility services, operations and human resources, as well as the establishment of a climate accounting tool.

- 1. Sustainable Supply chains** are expected to be the biggest contributors to the DRC carbon and environmental footprint and in many organizations and companies account for more than 80% of greenhouse gas emissions<sup>20</sup>. DRC annually purchases goods for well above 1 billion Danish Kroner and is committed to rethink its procurement strategy. Requirements to supply chain will be identified including looking at: use of materials; local purchases, energy use and source, CO2 emissions, water use and waste handling, and circularity potential. A greener procurement policy, the development of which was initiated mid-year 2020, will allow for DRC to use its purchasing power to choose environmentally friendly goods, services and works.
- 2. Sustainable transportation and Logistics Policy** is an essential feature of DRC's work, which naturally contributes to emissions. DRC will look at the following elements as part of a future green travel policy, among others: alternative transportation modes, ways to reduce/focus the number of flights, factoring in policies of airline companies where possible, promote alternatives to travel including virtual tools for conferences and workshops, and carbon offsetting mechanisms.
- 3. Responsible Office conduct and in-house operations** comprises a range of activities that contributes to DRC carbon and environmental footprint. Several actions that could potentially affect the environment are identified, including:
  - A. energy management exploring opportunities to transition to alternative and renewable energy sources,
  - B. enhancement of recycling practices and ways to limit waste including plastics, paper usage, non-chemical cleaning products, recyclable containers for food and beverages in canteens etc.,
  - C. improved water management in sanitary facilities, kitchens etc., and
  - D. reduction of ICT related emissions (energy use of streaming and downloads).
  - E. Utilization of regional and seasonal food in the kitchens

Finally, and in support of the above:

- 4. Transparent climate and environment reporting** will give an overview of DRC's footprint; which is the estimated sum of all emissions of CO2 which are induced by our activities. This exercise has been started and will take place throughout 2021 and gradually be developed in scope and granularity over the coming years. All parts of the organization will be engaged in order to get an overview of the situation and to prioritize mitigative actions with the highest impact.

### Partnerships on Climate Accounting for NGOs

Together with four peer NGOs in Denmark, DRC has entered a partnership to strengthen the capacity to strategically work with climate accounting, setting emission targets and implementation. The partnership kicks off in early 2021 with funding from Global Focus, the Danish Coalition of NGOs.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://greeningtheblue.org/>

<sup>18</sup> [https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/INF\\_3\\_Strategy-for-Sustainability-Management-in-the-UN-System.pdf](https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/INF_3_Strategy-for-Sustainability-Management-in-the-UN-System.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Please see, Analysis of Donor Demands with regards to Environment and Climate Change

<sup>20</sup> McKinsey: [Starting at the source: Sustainability in supply chains](#). November 2016

As DRC is ready to take on the challenge of reducing the climate footprint of the organization, management realizes that it may be unrealistic to eliminate all emissions due to the nature of DRCs work and will look into possibilities for compensation opportunities where full reduction is not possible.

### 3. Advocacy for displaced persons in the context of climate change

**Objective: Support the rights of displaced persons affected by climate change addressing climate related protection needs**

DRC seeks to ensure that advocacy interventions and campaigns are integrating the risks and needs arising from climate change, environmental degradation, and climate-related displacement when ever relevant and that

- DRC is a vocal advocate and collaborator to global climate experts and the wider humanitarian system and development actors, and
- DRC's displacement responses stand on solid evidence of linkages between climate change, environment, and displacement in anticipation of future dynamics

Significant voices among legal practitioners are campaigning to include displacement in the context of climate change into the international agenda. However, so far, people who are forced to flee due to climate change does not have an obvious legal home. Governments are not accepting climate refugees as a legal term nor are they convinced about a political impetus for extending international (refugee) protection arrangements, and only most recently UNHCR has issued legal considerations regarding claims for international protection have been made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters.<sup>21</sup>

A recent UN Human Rights Committee ruling adds a new perspective that could set new precedents for the asylum space for displacement in the context of climate change: “the effects of climate change in receiving states may expose individuals to a violation of their rights ... thereby triggering the non-refoulement obligations of sending states”<sup>22</sup>. The ruling found it unlawful for governments to return people to countries where their lives might be threatened by the climate crisis, which could open a whole new claims paradigm for displacement originating from climate change.

DRC aims to act as a voice of displaced people with a focus on supporting and encouraging duty-bearers to protect displaced people's rights. The vision of this pillar is to ensure that the humanitarian impacts of climate change on displaced persons and host communities are both well understood and reflected upon in policy and practice including in budgetary allocations and that climate financing is proportional to the challenge – and that DRC is proactively contributing to on generating evidence of the nexus between climate change, conflict, environmental degradation and displacement.

Going forward, DRC intends to deliver strong contributions to the understanding of the protection concerns of the displaced in the face of climate change via continued advocacy, networking, events, data generating projects and research. To this end, DRC

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<sup>21</sup> UNHCR's Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters <https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=5f75f2734&skip=0&query=climate%20change%20international%20protection%20considerations>

<sup>22</sup> UN Human Rights Committee: Views adopted by the Committee under article 5 (4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 2728/2016, September 2020

seeks to inform strategies and policies of core strategic donors, including UNHCR, ECHO and Danida, and interagency platforms or coalitions<sup>23</sup>, as well as via relevant NGO networks such as ICVA and VOICE.

DRC is still in its infancy when it comes to learning about the risks and vulnerabilities affecting people as a result of the interplay between climate, conflict, and displacement. The ability to understand how climate change as a prevalent risk multiplier interplays with other drivers of displacement, is increasingly important in legal debates, definitions, needs assessments, advocacy and programme design.

DRC is already engaged in a variety of research/assessment and data projects, including forecasting related to the nexus between displacement and climate change, not least in collaboration with IDMC, IBM and other institutions and finally DRC is also supporting the wider UN system via its Humanitarian Response Roster<sup>24</sup> which also contains a designated specialists resource with regards to climate change and environment.

### Committed actions

- Continued elaboration of positions, messaging and common narrative promoting the understanding of protection concerns for displaced persons affected by climate change, including exploring options at national, regional and global level to promote detailed messaging.
- Provide support to and participate in events related to promoting the above.
- Research agenda developed on the nexus between climate change, conflict, environmental degradation and forced displacement with a starting point on DRC's protection response.
- Continued engagement in predictive analytics projects, which DRC is currently pursuing globally (Foresight) and regionally in East and West Africa with a broad range of stakeholders, to forecast population movements and vulnerability caused by climate related events.
- Support mobilization of displacement affected, not least the youth, in protracted displacement settings to engage and advocate for climate resilience and climate action.

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<sup>23</sup> An example is the UNGA 75 related call to action to 'Halt and Reverse Biodiversity Loss and Put Nature and Ecosystems on a Path to Recovery by 2030': <https://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CALL-TO-ACTION-DEVELOPMENT-AND-HUMANITARIAN-CIVIL-SOCIETY-160920.pdf>

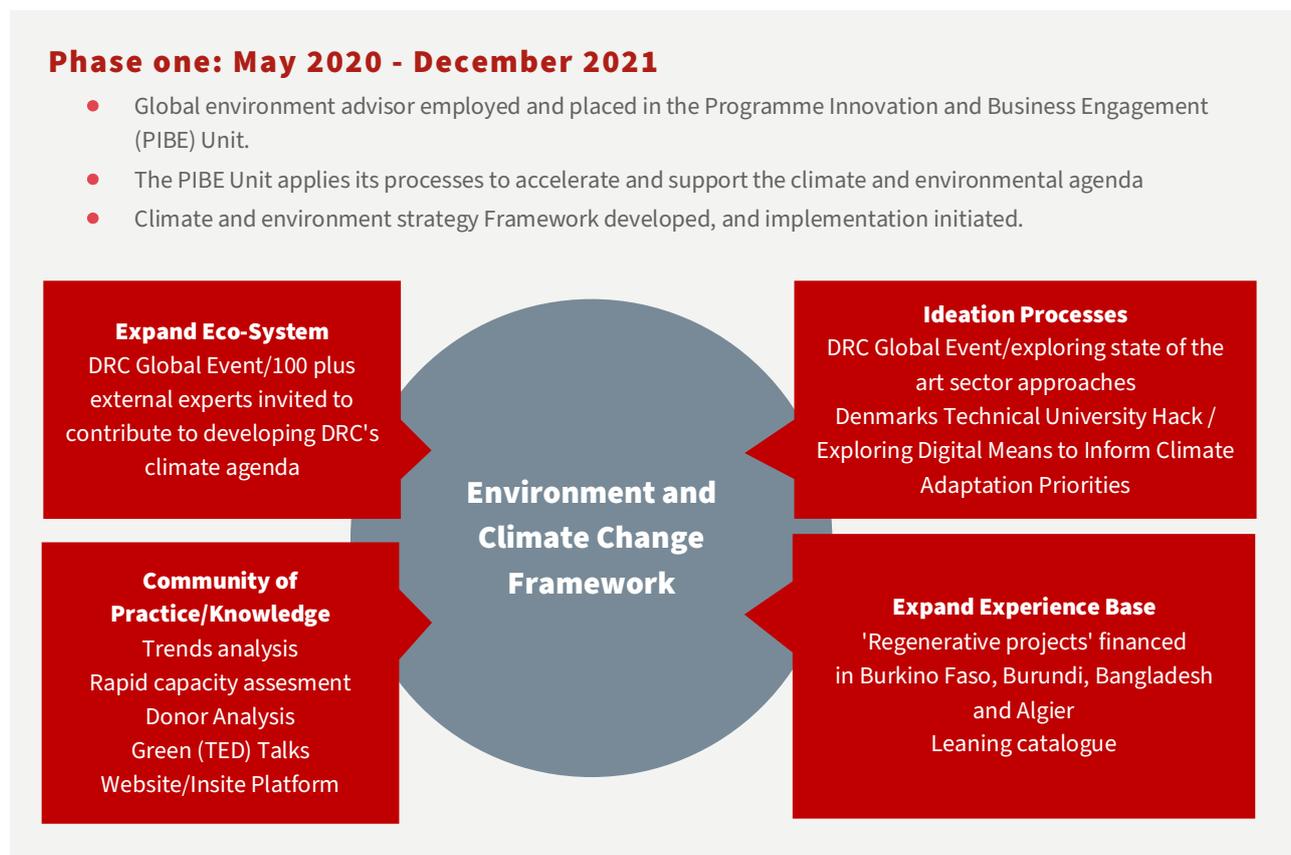
<sup>24</sup> The DRC Humanitarian Response Roster (HRR) is a tool to supply and boost UN organisations with specialised professionals until the UN agency in question has managed to upgrade their own staff capacity to a sufficient level.

The HRR deploys experts to UN emergency and DRC operations around the world. At any given point the DRC HRR has more than 90 people in the field, thus in many countries with DRC country programmes, there will be a presence of deployees on a DRC contract, but working with and for the UN.

## **Framework implementation process**

The Climate framework represents a global DRC strategy on climate and environment, but the process and speed of its implementation through the roll-out of initiatives in different countries and regions will be adapted to reflect the different operational realities, needs and capacities in the respective country operations.

The two main phases of the process are illustrated below; phase one focuses on setting the strategic path for the organisation including the elaboration of the 1. Generation Climate framework and DRC strategy 2025, consultation processes throughout DRC and initial implementation. Phase two will focus on consolidation of the process, learnings from the first phase and continued implementation and integration throughout the organisation.



The Climate framework is accompanied by an Action Plan for implementation, as well as a broad range of more specific guidance tools, e.g. package for environmental impact assessments will be developed throughout phase one. The Action Plan represents an ongoing operational plan, which will develop as the projects evolve, see annex 1.

Main focus areas of phase two:

### **Phase Two: January 2022-2025**

- Global advisory mandated to support implementation in collaboration with various project owners.
- Internal awareness raising / trainings / DRC staff capacity strengthening
- Routine project reporting in place, ongoing implementation and capacity building.
- Revision of Climate framework based on learnings from phase one and broader consultation.
- Pursuit of collaborative action with a broad range of operational and advocacy partners.
- Building alliances and working through transparent, respectful, and mutually beneficial partnerships at global, regional and country levels.
- Broadening engagement with the private sector.
- Investigating and encouraging opportunities for technological innovations.



## **DRC RESOURCES**

- Future External Trends and Signposts around climate action relevant to DRC response thinking. Compiled as primer for the DRC Global Event 2020 (DareDisrupt 2020)
- DRC Event Talks: Nobel Prize Winner, Dr. Adil Najam talks at DRC Global Event on the Area of Adaptation <https://drc.ngo/campaigns/global-event/launch-event/>
- DRC Event Talks: Dr. Britt Wray talks at DRC Global Event on Eco-anxiety <https://drc.ngo/campaigns/global-event/launch-event/>
- Video: Regenerative Practice to support Resilience – Burundi Colline <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtMky-tfCcM&feature=youtu.be>
- Video: Resilience Design for Infrastructure – Uganda <https://drc.ngo/our-work/what-we-do/drc-climate-action/resources-publications-partnerships/>
- Learning Brief: Climate Resilience Burundi <https://drc.ngo/our-work/what-we-do/drc-climate-action/news-stories-from-the-field/drc-burundi-partnering-with-nature-to-find-the-solutions/>

## **FOR INTERNAL REFERENCE ONLY:**

- DRC Trends analysis describing the trends broadly and the understanding of the nexus between forced displacement, climate change and environment. Compiled in advance of the 2025 strategy process
  - A. <https://insite.drc.dk/media/7397397/drc-trends-analysis-2025-final.pdf>
  - B. <https://insite.drc.dk/media/7376631/2-climate-change-and-displacement-drc-trends-2025-one-pager.pdf>
- Analysis of donor trends: Supporting priority decisions around Climate Change and Environment work (DRC 2020)
- Capacity Analysis DRC Light analysis based on interviews/call for documents in field (2019 & 2020) <https://insite.drc.dk/media/7490600/1-summary-id-capabilities-2020-2-19.pdf>