



*Faridpur, Bangladesh*

## REPORT

# Linking Women's Land Rights, Climate Action, and the UN Women Peace and Security Framework

A Conceptual Model and Case Studies from South Asia

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Table of Contents .....	ii
About this Report .....	iii
Introduction .....	1
Conceptual Model Linking WLR, Climate Action, and WPS .....	3
Case Studies.....	9
Bangladesh: Increasing Community Participation and Strengthening Union Disaster Management Committees .....	10
Nepal: Building the Capacity of Women on Policy Advocacy for WLR and Climate Action at Local and National Levels .....	13
Maldives: Women-led Shoreline Restoration to Grow Women’s Governance Potential .....	16
Conclusion .....	19

## About this Report

Landesa's [Women-Led Collective Advocacy for Climate Action Project](#) supported grassroots women through capacity-strengthening and collective action to undertake effective leadership, advocacy, and resilience to climate change in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives. The project leveraged the organizational strengths and partnership of Landesa, International Land Coalition (ILC), Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), National Land Rights Forum-Nepal (NLRF), and Land Sea Maldives (LSM).

The importance of women's land rights (WLR)—a central theme of Landesa's work—was recognized as a core component of the project as well as several project activities related to training and advocacy around WLR. The project had been supported by the US Department of State's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, which had encouraged our attention to the further important connections between WLR, effective climate action, and the global Women, Peace & Security (WPS) agenda.<sup>1</sup> By drawing upon relevant (primarily grey) literature and resources, this report seeks to better understand and articulate the nexus between WLR, climate action, and WPS. The report ultimately illuminates how these interconnected agendas influence and support one another through a visual conceptual model and case studies captured through focused learning sessions with our partners in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives.

We developed this report and the conceptual model for illustrative purposes; we intend the model to serve as a tool to think about how the three themes of WLR, climate action, and WPS link to one another and could influence one another. The conceptual model is not meant to display firm, evidence-driven relationships.

It is our aspiration that the lessons learned can be leveraged and taken up by project partners to further strengthen local, national, regional, and international awareness and action at the intersection of WLR, climate action, and WPS beyond the project cycle. Additionally, we hope that through sharing these findings, a wider network of relevant stakeholders, such as members of the [Stand for Her Land](#) Campaign and other development partners, might also find inspiration that can inform subsequent efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> For the development of the conceptual model, case study research and learning, and preparation of this report, Landesa allocated internal funds from the MacKenzie Scott Grant channeled through Landesa's Enhancing Project Learning Fund. The purpose was to benefit the project as well as the broader work of Landesa and its wider network of partners on WLR. Project funds from the US Department of State were not used in this line of work; rather, the lessons learned from the project were leveraged in this separately funded endeavor.

## Introduction

Land rights are foundational to women's empowerment, both economically and socially.<sup>2</sup> Economically, land rights grant women livelihood development options, economic independence, and security. Socially, land rights grant women dignity and agency and empower women to assert themselves in household and community decision-making. This empowerment can lead to greater mobility as well as opportunities for expanded local leadership and civic engagement for women. These economic and social benefits of land rights have been long recognized.<sup>3</sup> More recently, land rights for women have been recognized as strongly supporting effective climate action because women with secure land rights can invest in sustainable farming practices and adopt climate-resilient techniques.<sup>4</sup> These practices safeguard their livelihoods and blunt the worst impacts of climate change.

It has become clear that there is also a strong connection between WLR, effective climate action, *and* the global Women, Peace & Security agenda.

In 2000, the UN officially recognized "Women, Peace & Security" (WPS) as an important global objective through the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.<sup>5</sup> WPS recognizes that the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all civic life, including peacebuilding, is essential to sustainable peace and human security.

Since the adoption of the UN Resolution, the US and 106 other countries have embraced WPS as a key policy implemented through National Action Plans (NAPs). While each country frames its approach to WPS slightly differently, four key pillars flow from the original UN Resolution and frame important aspects of WPS programming:

1. The importance of women's **participation** in civic and political leadership, including in peacemaking and peacebuilding.
2. The key role of women in conflict **prevention**.
3. The need to focus on the **protection** of women's rights during and after conflict or disaster.
4. Consideration of women's specific needs in **recovery**, including during repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction.

The WPS agenda supports women's meaningful and full inclusion not only in peace negotiations and conflict resolution but also more broadly in their meaningful participation in all civic and political life. It supports women's leadership and comprehensive involvement in local, national, and global decision-making as a positive stabilizing force and recognizes that women's full and meaningful inclusion creates better societies.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., [USAID. \(2016\). Land Tenure and Women's Empowerment](#) and footnotes 17 through 20 therein.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Bina Agarwal's seminal book from 1994, "A Field of One's Own."

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Landesa (2023). [Links between Women's Land Tenure Security and Climate Action: An Evidence Brief and Landesa. \(2022\). Women and Dirt: Conflict the Climate Crisis, Uproot Gender Inequality.](#)

<sup>5</sup> The UN's official adoption was through [Security Council Resolution \(SCR\) 1325 \(2000\)](#).

More recently, the UN and others globally have recognized the important links between the WPS agenda and climate action. Climate change-fueled disasters, such as more frequent cyclones, flooding, and drought, coupled with the exacerbated risks in coastal regions posed by sea-level rise, disrupt communities and can lead to increased instability and conflict. Knowing this, the WPS agenda recognizes that women must be included in climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience work, as well as in climate change negotiations and decision-making and in disaster-related planning and relief.<sup>6</sup>

To explore and understand these links more clearly, we created a conceptual model mapping the connections between WLR, climate action, and WPS. This conceptual model draws on relevant (primarily grey) literature, with inputs and collaboration from our partners in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives as part of the [Women-Led Collective Advocacy for Climate Action Project](#) (hereinafter “project”). Background information on this project is provided in the [“About this Report”](#) section above.

After Landesa developed the draft conceptual model, we then conducted a series of individual learning sessions and a collective group learning session with representatives from each of our country-based partners to document case studies on the ways in which the project’s efforts were successfully advancing the intersecting aims of strengthening WLR, enhancing climate action, and sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security. We intend that the conceptual model and the case studies in this report will help individuals, organizations, and governments understand how WLR are foundational to supporting women’s social and economic equity and agency, which in turn put women in a prime position to implement effective climate action activities and to fully participate in climate, disaster, and conflict processes and decisions as meaningful participants and leaders.

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<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., [UN Women et al. \(2020\). Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change and US Department of State. \(2023\). United States Strategy to Respond to the Effects of Climate Change on Women 2023.](#)

## Conceptual Model Linking WLR, Climate Action, and WPS

There are many connections that can be drawn between WLR, climate action, and WPS. Successful interventions or changes in one area can have positive impacts on other areas. That said, we see a strong flow *from* the enabling conditions provided by WLR to both climate action and WPS objectives. The box on “Climate Action” unpacks in greater detail how we use that term referring to both climate mitigation and adaptation. Our model, as presented in Figure 1 below, highlights this flow from WLR to women’s decision-making and leadership and into climate action and WPS. At the same time, evidence shows that when women participate fully in political and civic life, a country is more likely to pass laws that strengthen WLR.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, interventions to strengthen women’s political and civic participation can support strengthened WLR. Hence, when studying the model, the “starting point” may begin at either “Strengthening women’s land rights” at the bottom, which may be read as a foundation or base—or in the central gear of the model, “Women’s meaningful participation in governance, decision-making & leadership,” which may be interpreted as the gear of a wheel and focal point to propelling forward movement.

### Climate Action

The term “climate action” used in this report and conceptual model refers to both climate mitigation and adaptation. According to UNDP’s 2023 *The Climate Dictionary*,<sup>8</sup> which provides a glossary of key climate terms, climate change mitigation “refers to any action taken by governments, businesses, or people to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions, or to enhance carbon sinks that remove these gases from the atmosphere.” Climate change adaptation “refers to actions that help reduce vulnerability to the current or expected impacts of climate change like weather extremes and natural disasters, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss, or food and water insecurity.”

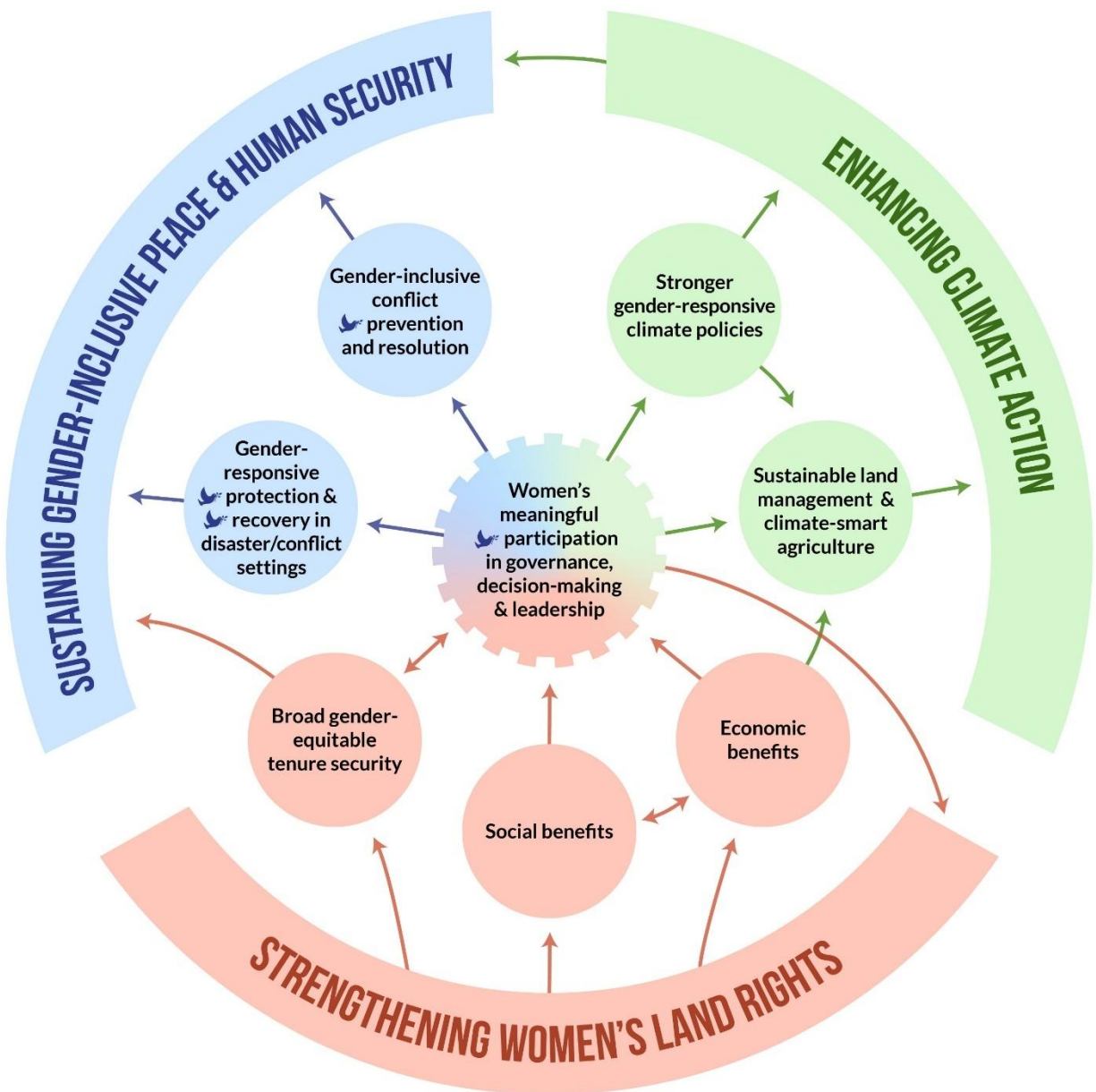
The key provided with Figure 1 explains these connections briefly. The narrative following the model explains the connections in greater depth.





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<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., [USAID and IUCN. \(2020\). \*Advancing Gender in the Environment the Triple Nexus of Gender Inequality, State Fragility, and Climate Vulnerability\* at pp. 22-23.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [UNDP. \(2023\). \*The Climate Dictionary: Speak climate fluently.\*](#)

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model “Women’s Land Rights, Enhancing Climate Action, and Peace & Human Security”



-  A pillar of Women, Peace, & Security. The four WPS pillars are prevention, participation, protection, and recovery.
-  Strengthened WLR lead to social and economic benefits that empower women's meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership. Broad gender-equitable rules on land tenure and governance stabilize communities and sustain gender-inclusive peace and human security. Finally, women's meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership supports strengthened WLR (reinforcing cycle).
-  WLR support better climate mitigation and adaptation through (1) better climate policies created by the inclusion of both genders in decision-making and (2) land-based investments in sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture lead to climate resilience and allow for adaptation and mitigation. Women's participation in climate policies and land-based solutions is strengthened through well-networked gender- and climate-focused civil society, which supports enhanced climate risk management.
-  Politically active women meaningfully participate (WPS pillar on participation) in governance and decision-making, leading to (1) gender-inclusive conflict prevention (WPS pillar on prevention) and (2) better protection and recovery (WPS pillars on protection and recovery) in climate-related disaster settings, which sustain gender-inclusive peace and human security.



**Strengthening women’s land rights can create fundamental change.**<sup>9</sup> WLR are a cornerstone of gender equality. Women with land rights gain both economic security and social standing. In terms of economic security (the rightmost pink circle, “Economic benefits”), women with land have an asset that can be used to establish and build their livelihoods, an asset that provides security in case of widowhood or family break up, an asset that they can invest in for long-term improvements, and an asset that allows them to access credit and services, such as extension support, insurance, and agricultural programs available only to landowners. The economic security benefits of WLR are strongly supported by evidence<sup>10</sup> and can help to shift women into a position of stronger economic equality.

In addition, WLR create important social changes for women, their households, and communities (the middle pink circle, “Social benefits”). Women with land gain leverage in terms of household and community decision-making<sup>11</sup> and from that they also gain agency, mobility, and social standing. Securing WLR shifts power dynamics within homes and communities; this transformation is key to achieving women’s social and political equality, catalyzing women’s ability to fully and meaningfully participate in household, community, and national negotiations and decision-making including in the climate and peace and security sectors, where their voices and inputs are so sorely needed.

The foundational economic and social changes that WLR support lead to “Women’s meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership,” which is the central gear of our conceptual model. The transformational impact of WLR positions women as members of societies who can fully and meaningfully participate in governance, decision-making, and leadership. WLR fundamentally shift norms around social expectations for women and open new opportunities and vistas into a more equitable future. Land socially and economically empowers women, which also boosts their participation, as highlighted in the most recent US WPS strategy: “Research demonstrates that advancing women’s economic security improves their ability to meaningfully participate at all levels of society, thus strengthening democracy and peace and security processes.”<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, WLR are a stabilizing force. Broad gender-equitable tenure security (leftmost pink circle) leads directly to “sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security” (the outer blue ring). Evidence shows that clear and enforced rules on tenure that are gender-equitable and that support broad land tenure security can serve to stabilize communities and prevent or resolve conflict.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a deeper review of the type and strength of evidence on benefits attributed to WLR see [Ruth Meinzen-Dick et al., \(2019\). Women’s land rights as a pathway to poverty reduction: Framework and review of available evidence. Agricultural Systems vol. 172.](#)

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., [USAID. \(2023\). Women’s Land & Property Rights and Economic Security.](#)

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., [USAID. \(2016\). Land Tenure and Women’s Empowerment](#) and footnotes 17 through 20 therein.

<sup>12</sup> [White House. \(2023\). U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.](#)

<sup>13</sup> Most literature on land and conflict centers on land policy in the post-conflict environment. Several sources do indicate that tenure security and land-related interventions can serve to prevent conflict, e.g., [John W. Bruce and Sally Holt. \(2011\). Land and Conflict Prevention.](#) This discussion focuses on land rights and land tenure security more generally and not on WLR specifically. For a source that discusses land and conflict and that links WLR to women’s empowerment and broader participation in civic life to prevent conflict, see [USAID. \(2022\). Land and Conflict: A Toolkit for Intervention 2.0.](#)

Finally, the model has a self-reinforcing path. “Women’s meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership” (the central gear) leads back to further “strengthening WLR.” Research has shown that when women’s participation in policymaking at the national level is over 20 percent, there is a significant positive effect on the adoption of laws that support equal property rights for women.<sup>14</sup> Empowering women thus becomes a self-reinforcing cycle as women in decision-making positions lead to more equitable societies.

The box below contains more insight into the types of pathways and interventions that can lead to achieving WLR.

### Realizing WLR

Depending on the country and local context, there are a range of means to strengthen WLR. Possible interventions include amending legislation to recognize wives’ and daughters’ inheritance rights, formalizing land rights in joint names of wives and husbands, providing legal land literacy training for women, and distributing government land to women.<sup>15</sup> When considering land-related interventions to address WLR, the full diversity of women in a community should be considered, including young and elderly women, Indigenous women, widows, married women, single women, and racially and ethnically diverse women.

**Women’s participation leads to enhanced climate action.** Moving from the central gear and proceeding through the green portion of the model, which depicts climate action, we see how WLR support effective climate progress through two parallel paths. First, moving through the bottom green circle (“Sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture”), when women own land, they have a secure asset that they are able to make long-term investments in for sustainability and resilience, such as terracing, tree planting, and adopting soil conservation measures. People with secure land rights are more likely to implement sustainable land management techniques and adopt climate-smart agricultural practices.<sup>16</sup> Land rights also enable women to have direct control over climate shock buffers, such as insurance, bank loans, and access to extension services and technologies. When women have land, they have the decision-making freedom and agency to take action to both mitigate and adapt to climate change, and also to weather climate-related shocks and disasters. Women have a critical role to play in land protection and restoration, and women with land rights are positioned to be deeply

<sup>14</sup> [Hallward-Driemeier et al. \(2013\). Women’s Legal Rights over 50 Years: Progress, Stagnation or Regression? World Bank Policy Research Paper](#) at pp. 27. Further, the study finds that the presence of women in parliament also positively impacts women’s agency and mobility.

<sup>15</sup> To better understand the scope and breadth of WLR that should be considered in WLR programming, see [Cheryl Doss and Ruth Meinzen-Dick. \(2020\). Land tenure security for women: A conceptual framework. Land Use Policy vol. 99.](#) For more information on how to realize WLR see [UN Women. \(2020\). Realizing Women’s Rights to Land and Other Productive Resources. Second Ed.](#) For information on how the Stand for Her Land Campaign is working to realize WLR by bridging the gap between written law and implementation on the ground, visit [Stand for Her Land.](#)

<sup>16</sup> See [Landesa. \(2023\). Links between Women’s Land Tenure Security and Climate Action: An Evidence Brief.](#) The FAO defines climate-smart agriculture as “agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, enhances resilience, reduces greenhouse gases and enhances achievement of national food security and development goals.” See [Climate Smart Agriculture Sourcebook | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.](#)

involved in community-based sustainable land use planning. Securing women’s land rights while also providing them with climate-smart strategies and tools is critical to climate resilience.<sup>17</sup>

Second, moving through the top right-hand green circle (“Stronger gender-responsive climate policies”), when women are able to meaningfully participate in governance, decision-making, and leadership, they are positioned to engage more fully in climate negotiations and decision-making both locally and nationally. The inclusion of both women and men in land governance and climate decisions leads to stronger natural resource management and better climate policies.<sup>18</sup>

Both paths lead to more effective climate action. Enhanced climate action (the outer green ring) leads to sustained gender-inclusive peace and human security (the outer blue ring). When effective climate action is undertaken—such as through adaptation, mitigation, or targeted disaster management—communities and societies are stabilized, disasters can be managed safely, and conflicts are avoided or minimized.

**WLR and climate action can sustain gender-inclusive peace and human security.** Moving from the central gear and proceeding through the blue portion of the conceptual model, we see how WLR and effective climate action both support positive WPS outcomes. Note that each of the four WPS pillars is marked with a dove symbol in the conceptual model.

First, the central gear itself highlights women’s participation (WPS pillar on participation). In the WPS agenda, participation means the “meaningful participation of women and girls in civic and political leadership, in informal and formal decision-making processes, and in institutions related to peace and security.”<sup>19</sup> WLR lead to social, economic, and structural changes that support the meaningful participation of women in governance, decision-making, and leadership—thereby successfully advancing the WPS agenda. The effects of women’s participation can include enhanced climate change action, as research shows that countries with a high representation of women in parliament are more likely to ratify international environmental treaties.<sup>20</sup>

Moving from the central gear to the top blue circle (“Gender-inclusive conflict prevention and resolution”), the WPS agenda itself emphasizes that women’s participation has a positive conflict prevention effect (WPS pillar on prevention). In fact, WLR have been observed to help

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<sup>17</sup> For example, [the UNCCD’s #HerLand campaign](#) highlights the critical importance of supporting WLR for effective land restoration and climate change resilience.

<sup>18</sup> Women’s involvement in climate action has been more recently recognized as an important piece of the WPS agenda. Over the last five or so years, there has been greater recognition that climate change-related risks and conflicts have a significant impact on peace and security generally and on the WPS agenda specifically. The UN recognized this in late 2019 when the UN Secretary-General, in his 2019 Annual Report on WPS, stated, “The global threat of climate change and environmental degradation is poised to exacerbate the already increasing number of complex emergencies, which disproportionately affect women and girls. There is therefore an urgent need for better analysis and concrete immediate actions to address the linkages between climate change and conflict from a gender perspective” (as cited in [UN Women \(2020\) Gender, Climate & Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change](#)).

While the US government did not include climate change in its 2019 WPS NAP, it explicitly recognizes this important link in its 2023 WPS NAP and commits programming and funding toward it: “We invest U.S. funds to support local women’s leadership and participation in U.S. government peace and security programming, including activities related to amplifying women’s efforts to build adaptation, mitigation, and resilience to climate change.”

<sup>19</sup> [White House. \(2023\). U.S. Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [UNFCCC. \(2023\). Five Reasons Why Climate Action Needs Women.](#)

prevent conflicts,<sup>21</sup> and women's participation contributes to the prevention of conflict and to sustaining peace.<sup>22</sup> Within the context of climate stressors, which can exacerbate competition over natural resources, strain livelihoods, contribute to displacement, and heighten risks of social tension, inclusive climate action can offer a pathway for strengthening cooperation, rebuilding trust, and mending the social fabric.<sup>23</sup> In short, women's involvement in governance and civic life has a stabilizing influence on societies, resulting in conflict prevention and resolution, which ultimately leads to the outer blue ring, "Sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security."

Additionally, the participation of women in civic life, including decisions made during and after conflict or disaster, has a further positive impact within the WPS agenda. When women participate, the rights of women during and after conflict or disaster are better considered, resulting in their protection (WPS pillar on protection). Similarly, when women participate, women's specific needs during the post-conflict or post-disaster recovery period will be better considered and supported (WPS pillar on recovery). These aspects are highlighted by the lower blue circle ("Gender-responsive protection & recovery in disaster/conflict settings"). In climate-exacerbated disaster contexts, although often faced with disproportionate and unequal impacts,<sup>24</sup> women play a particularly meaningful role in disaster response as first responders and leaders in disaster risk reduction and recovery.<sup>25</sup> Women further support recovery in such settings by addressing community needs and strengthening community building, and women's participation and involvement in community planning and disaster response efforts can build stronger, more resilient communities that are better protected from climate risks in the future.<sup>26</sup>

Ultimately, the above pathways support achieving the outer blue ring of "Sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security."

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<sup>21</sup> [UN-Habitat. \(2021\). Key Messages on Women, Land and Peace.](#)

<sup>22</sup> [UN Women. \(2015\). "Women's Participation and a Better Understanding of the Political" in Global study on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325.](#)

<sup>23</sup> [UNDP. \(2023\). What is climate security and why is it important?](#)

<sup>24</sup> [UN Environment Programme. \(2020\). Gender, climate & security: sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change.](#)

<sup>25</sup> [UNFCCC. \(2023\). Five Reasons Why Climate Action Needs Women.](#)

<sup>26</sup> [UNFCCC. \(2023\). Five Reasons Why Climate Action Needs Women.](#)

## Case Studies

Landesa's work on the [Women-Led Collective Advocacy for Climate Action Project](#) inspired the conceptual model featured in this report. As part of the project, country partners in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Maldives worked in-country on a range of interventions to support WLR, foster women's participation and leadership, and mobilize effective climate action. The interventions were based on context-specific community needs within each country and were designed and implemented by partners. We shared this conceptual model with our country partners and discussed various interventions that they have undertaken that highlight the ways that their work was advancing the intersecting and mutually reinforcing agendas of WLR, climate action, and WPS. Through documenting case studies, this section shares our learnings.

## Bangladesh: Increasing Community Participation and Strengthening Union Disaster Management Committees



*Community members in a cyclone shelter during a preparedness drill in Bangladesh.*

Densely populated and low-lying, Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to climate-fueled disasters such as cyclones and storm surges. Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs) are the lowest tier of the national disaster management framework and have the responsibility to implement disaster risk reduction strategies, conduct rescue operations, and assess loss and damage within communities. The body includes local government representatives, civil society members, as well as representatives of women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and volunteers from the Cyclone Preparedness Program.

UDMCs in project areas previously functioned at a marginal level and focused only on post-disaster relief distribution. Further, they typically did not meaningfully include women or members of vulnerable groups.

To encourage stronger and more inclusive engagement of UDMCs, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) implemented a two-fold strategy. First, they worked with UDMC members to help them understand the many important roles that they have within communities before, during, and after disasters. These include the UDMCs' role in building local climate resilience, such as developing and encouraging disaster-resistant agricultural practices and sustainable land management strategies. Further, noting that UDMCs should include membership of women and Indigenous Peoples, ALRD also worked to ensure proper representation and meaningful engagement from these groups.

Second, ALRD held community meetings with the objectives of (1) introducing and discussing disaster preparedness, climate mitigation, and climate adaptation; (2) enabling women's full involvement and leadership in plans to respond to the adverse impacts of climate-induced disasters; (3) developing community volunteers' conceptual clarity on climate change and its adverse effects on lives and livelihoods; and (4) enhancing the disaster emergency response capacity of community volunteers. The theme of land rights, including WLR, was integrated throughout these trainings. The trainings featured a dynamic and engaging methodology, which included approaches such as flashcards, creative games, lectures, group work, and diagrams—as well as mock drills at the community level. Community volunteers gained a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities in addressing the impacts of climate-induced disasters. ALRD and coalition members held these training sessions in four districts, reaching a total of 80 community participants (52 women and 28 men).

The story of Ashit Munda is a particularly compelling one that speaks to the success of this intervention.<sup>27</sup> Ashit Munda is an Indigenous Munda man from a landless family in a high-risk coastal region of Bangladesh. He participated in capacity-building sessions led by ALRD, which helped to inspire his subsequent action and leadership during and after Cyclone Remal made landfall on 26 May 2024. These trainings empowered him with deeper knowledge of disaster preparedness, early warning signals, shelter management, and WLR. During the storm, Ashit confidently led his community to safety, shared critical updates, and supported recovery efforts. His story reflects the power of knowledge and community-driven leadership in building inclusive resilience to climate change.



*Ashit Munda disseminates early warning messages during Cyclone Remal.*

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<sup>27</sup> See photos and details on Instagram or Facebook: [Landesa Global | Land rights, climate adaptation, and community leadership are transforming lives.](#) [The Munshigonj Union in the Shyamnagar Upazila is one... | Instagram;](#) [Landesa - Land rights, climate adaptation, and community... | Facebook](#)

By working with both the UDMCs and community members, ALRD ultimately encouraged capacity strengthening of the UDMCs and equipped community members to more effectively engage with the UDMCs to better request their services.

Finally, ALRD also tapped into the UDMCs' role as advisors on public land distribution. Because of its work related to post-cyclone disasters, UDMCs can recommend that community members who have lost homes or land be distributed available public land by the land office. Through this role, the UDMCs can assist landless families, and particularly women, to obtain landless certificates and apply for public land in their own names or jointly with their husbands. In line with its two-fold strategy, in addition to teaching UDMCs about their important role in public land distribution, it also taught women the steps necessary to qualify and apply for public land distributions.

### *Links between WLR, climate action, and WPS*

ALRD's interventions are representative of the conceptual model's emphasis on participation (the central gear of the model), helping to drive gender-responsive protection and recovery from natural disasters and sustaining inclusive peace and human security amid a context of heightened climate-exacerbated disasters. The interventions worked to increase the meaningful participation of women as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, in the operation of the UDMCs, including in ensuring gender responsiveness in the safety, participation, and leadership of women in crisis and disaster response as well as in preparedness for such disasters through climate adaptation and resilience (which links to the WPS pillars on participation and on recovery). UDMCs were also encouraged to consider not only their response to climate change-intensified disasters but also what work they could do to better prepare communities to mitigate such disasters through sustainable land management and climate-smart agricultural practices (exemplifying the corresponding flows associated with achieving enhanced climate action in the conceptual model). Further, ALRD worked with UDMCs, local civil society organizations (CSOs), and women to prevent gender-based violence during disasters by ensuring cyclone shelters are women-friendly (which links to the WPS pillar on protection).

Moreover, ALRD worked to directly strengthen WLR through education and capacity-building on WLR, which was incorporated throughout the training sessions. ALRD additionally worked to promote the distribution of public land to landless women through advocacy with the UDMCs. These efforts represent the ways that the foundation of the model ("Strengthening WLR") can be mobilized in practice. It is worth noting that ALRD is a member of the Stand for Her Land campaign and Landesa's partner on the "Equal Stake in the Soil" project, which focuses on promoting WLR. ALRD and the coalition in Bangladesh are, therefore, well-versed and active in advancing WLR.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Equal Stake in the Soil is funded by the US Department of State Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI).



## Nepal: Building the Capacity of Women on Policy Advocacy for WLR and Climate Action at Local and National Levels



*Celebratory group photo from the capacity building training on advocacy by NRLF*

Nepal is impacted by climate-fueled disasters such as flooding and drought. The country is also in the midst of implementing its 2019 National Land Policy, which provides land tenure recognition for people occupying land informally. The country has focused its attention on the important topics of climate change and land rights, including WLR. However, current government policymaking and programming on these key topics are siloed. Further, government work on climate change tends to be reactive to climate-fueled disasters rather than proactively focused on prevention and preparedness. With this context in mind, National Land Rights Forum-Nepal (NRLF) identified a need and opportunity to build the capacity of women and women-driven CSOs to advocate at national and local levels on both climate and WLR topics to promote the adoption and implementation of effective climate policies and to ensure WLR are recognized in land tenure and climate change programming.

NLRF devised an intervention to teach women about core WLR issues, including also sustainable land management and climate resilience strategies. While teaching the technical information, NLRF also strengthened participants' advocacy skills. The dual strategy to teach technical information and advocacy skills increased the meaningful participation of women in local and national policymaking with a goal of deeply influencing the government to holistically plan and implement programming on WLR, sustainable land management, and climate resilience.

At the local level, this capacity strengthening enabled women to engage in dialogue with local governments and local chapters of the National Land Commission on topics of WLR, sustainable land management, and climate resilience, especially as related to local adaptation plans of action. Further, local governments in project areas—located in Gauriganga Municipality, Kailali District, and Pancheswar Municipality, Baitadi District, both in the Sudurpashchim Province in Nepal’s economically marginalized and climate-vulnerable Far-Western Region—committed to including local voices through activities such as land use and management surveys that engaged community members and required their consent and agreement, as well as the meaningful inclusion of local women.



*Identifying land area and type as part of a community training by NRLF on sustainable land use planning.*

Through this work, NRLF observed that women quickly absorbed the technical information and began participating in local meetings; they engaged in local decision-making on disaster risk reduction and climate resiliency. For example, since attending the training series, one woman from Gauriganga advocated to her local administration to construct an embankment that would protect 58 households in her community from flooding. Further evidence of the impact of these trainings comes from a woman from Laljhadi, who is a member of her municipality’s Disaster Risk Reduction Committee and who had previously been scarcely active in her role. Following the trainings, she became a fully contributing member of the Committee, using the knowledge, skills, and confidence she gained.

At the national level, a policy dialogue with relevant government ministries has resulted in an enhanced awareness within these ministries of the importance of a holistic and comprehensive view of WLR, sustainable land management, and climate resilience. For example, in August 2024, NRLF and the women-driven CSO coalition held a National Policy Dialogue on Land and Climate Management with attendees from civil society and government, including

representatives from the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives, and Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Forests and the Environment. The purpose was to identify gaps between land and climate change policies and chart a more holistic path forward. These ministries have since committed to equitable and inclusive land tenure and sustainable land management work as key aspects of their climate change policies. As an initial step, the ministries are pursuing collaborative research on the topic and will continue multi-stakeholder engagements on needed policy revisions, including updating the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). NRLF held follow-up policy dialogue sessions with the government in December 2024 on the outcomes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and government efforts to integrate land issues and to involve gender-inclusive civil society and community representation in climate change decision-making and efforts.

### ***Links between WLR, climate action, and WPS***

Mapping NRLF's intervention against the conceptual model highlights the synergy that can result from interventions starting from the central gear of the model. That is, by directly supporting the strengthening of women's full, meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership, positive strides can be made toward achieving enhanced climate action and sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security. NRLF strengthened women's skills in meaningful participation (the gear) while simultaneously providing technical training on both key land tenure, including WLR issues ("Strengthening women's land rights"), as well as education on climate policies, sustainable land management, and climate resilience strategies ("Enhancing climate action").

This strengthening of effective climate action and increased participation of women leads to sustained gender-inclusive peace and human security within the WPS blue section of the model. The intervention strongly promotes women's meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership through training activities and convening policy dialogue spaces to empower women's involvement in local and national bodies and decision-making on land and climate matters (WPS pillar on participation). This work includes promoting women's increased meaningful involvement in local Disaster Risk Reduction Committees, which leads directly to better recovery and protection plans that focus on the needs of women (WPS pillars of protection and recovery).

## Maldives: Women-led Shoreline Restoration to Grow Women's Governance Potential



*The shoreline that women are working to restore on Thinadhoo, Maldives.*

Maldives has a nascent civil society presence with limited opportunities for CSOs to engage with government or for CSOs to promote issues related to women's rights. Land Sea Maldives (LSM) has worked to strategically connect with several like-minded CSOs and also with Women's Development Committees (WDCs), which are an existing part of the local government structure. In one project activity on Thinadhoo Island, LSM brought together CSOs and a local WDC to work together on coastal land management.

On Thinadhoo, women's groups had sought to rehabilitate and manage the western coastline of the island for community picnic and recreation purposes. Shoreline vegetation plays a crucial role in protecting the island against sea level rise and seasonal swells. However, this essential ecological barrier is being reduced, including by some of the previous activities of the women's groups, which had disrupted some areas. Seeing the need, interest, and opportunity, LSM strategically engaged with CSOs and the local WDC to support them in this land governance and management work.

LSM built the capacity of local people and supported coastline restoration through a multi-day training of 13 participants (eight women and five men from the CSOs and local WCD) with several objectives. First, the training aimed to deepen community understanding of the crucial role vegetation plays in climate adaptation by protecting the shoreline from erosion and flooding from increased storm activity and storm surges, in climate mitigation through the carbon storage capacity of vegetation, and in biodiversity through habitat preservation. Second, LSM used the

training as an opportunity to introduce the concept of WLR, which is relatively unconsidered in Maldives. The information shared on WLR highlighted how women owning land shifts social norms, enhances women's economic participation, and creates opportunities for women to take climate action. This was a unique opportunity to expose these groups to core WLR concepts and to expand the CSOs and WDC members' consideration and appreciation of WLR as an agent for positive change. Third, the training sought to encourage women's leadership and active participation in community decision-making. By fostering women's involvement in sustainable land management and governance, this approach aspires to build the capacity for women to take on additional leadership roles in their communities.



*Training sessions with the WDC and CSOs in Thinadhoo, Maldives.*

### **Links between WLR, climate action, and WPS**

The case study described above further exemplifies the conceptual model in practice, underscoring the role of women's participation in driving sustainable land management, climate action, and gender-inclusive peace and human security. Although it is difficult to address WLR issues or women's leadership issues directly in Maldives, the training strategically pushed forward both topics in a socially acceptable manner. Laying the groundwork for restoring a well-loved community recreation area was a socially acceptable means of increasing the involvement of women in land management and governance. The training encouraged women to lead in shoreline restoration, challenging traditional gender roles whereby women would only provide a supportive role (i.e., through cooking or administrative support). The intervention worked to legitimize the WDC as a meaningful participant in island affairs. In addition to enhancing women's roles in land governance and decision-making, the intervention sought ultimately to address climate adaptation and mitigation through shoreline restoration led by women in the CSOs and WDC.

Overall, the Maldives case study illustrates the importance of the central gear of the conceptual model ("Women's meaningful participation in governance, decision-making, and leadership") and the pathway from sustainable land management to enhanced climate action. The shoreline restoration training increased women's meaningful participation in land management in socially

acceptable ways, creating an opportunity for further growth of women's action in local governance in Thinadhoo (which links to the WPS pillar on participation).

LSM plans to use this intervention as an example to inspire similar efforts by CSOs and WDCs in other parts of Maldives. Further, the training sought to increase understanding of WLR, which may eventually support strengthened WLR, though this is a longer-term goal of LSM and is not expected to happen quickly. However, supporting women's meaningful participation in governance in Maldives creates more pathways for forward momentum in achieving WLR, climate action, and sustaining gender-inclusive peace and human security.

## Conclusion

The conceptual model shows how WLR can be both (1) a key lever for achieving effective and equitable climate action through better policies and investments in land and (2) a foundational component of conflict prevention and resolution leading to sustained gender-inclusive peace and human security (connecting to the WPS agenda). This is because WLR foundationally transform women's social standing and economic security, positioning women to fully and meaningfully participate in local and national governance, decision-making, and leadership. WLR strongly reinforce the central gear of our model (participation), causing positive cascading impacts.

The three case studies from the [Women-Led Collective Advocacy for Climate Action Project](#) described in this report suggest that actively supporting women's meaningful participation (the central gear of the model) can be important in driving forward results. In particular, capacity building and advocacy are both interventions that can enable and facilitate the meaningful participation of women in governance, decision-making, and leadership. In turn, women's participation and leadership can drive effective climate action and help sustain gender-inclusive peace and human security. There is also a self-reinforcing element at play, as women's participation can lead to the promotion and adoption of further laws and policies to support WLR.

The case studies highlight that effective programmatic work can foundationally support WLR and women's political and civil participation as a means to enhance climate action and sustain gender-inclusive peace and human security. We hope that this report, including the conceptual model and case studies from our project's interventions, might serve to support further progress in the countries of focus—and may deepen understanding and provide inspiration to other practitioners for developing similar lines of intervention that seek to jointly achieve WLR, climate action, and gender-inclusive peace and human security. We also hope that those actors whose work focuses on one of the three sections of the model—land rights, climate action, or peace and security—can now also see the useful links of their work to the other portions of the model.