Conceptual Launch
of the
GOBESHONA NETWORK ON ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE (GNAR)

Report from the COP 30 Event
Under the Project 'Scaling the Nexus Approach — Adaptation and Loss & Damage

Venue: Radission Belém, Brazil;

Date: 17th November, 2025;

Time: 2 PM – 6 PM

CONTEXT

As climate impacts intensify, communities are increasingly confronting the limits of adaptation, underscoring the need to better connect local experiences with national evidence and global climate policy processes. The Gobeshona Network on Adaptation and Resilience (GNAR) emerges as a strategic evolution of ICCCAD's long-standing Gobeshona initiative, envisioned as a "network of networks" linking researchers, policymakers, and practitioners across the Global South to advance locally grounded adaptation and resilience solutions. GNAR is designed to bridge these levels by strengthening South–South collaboration, amplifying community-driven knowledge, and supporting the next generation of climate leaders. It seeks to ensure that the priorities, evidence, and lived realities of vulnerable communities meaningfully inform adaptation strategies while enhancing coherence and equity in climate action.

The convening was organized to lay the conceptual groundwork for GNAR's launch by examining the persistent challenges in translating local and national adaptation knowledge into coordinated regional and global action. Discussions highlighted gaps in coordination, opportunities for regional collaboration, and the need for stronger policy integration. The youth fireside chat further emphasized the perspectives and capacity needs of emerging climate leaders. Together, these exchanges reinforced the importance of a structured, integrated platform like GNAR to strengthen collaboration, knowledge exchange, and evidence-informed adaptation across scales.

FIRST SESSION

Youth Fireside Chat: Voices of the Next Generation in Negotiation

The 'Youth Fireside Chat' convened climate advocates, youth negotiators and community representatives, particularly from Global South countries, to reflect on the gap between high-level climate negotiations and the lived realities of those on the front lines of climate crisis. The discussion made it clear that many systems collapse during climate disasters; despite this, international climate processes often remain disconnected from what communities actually suffer. The event argued for stronger adaptation mechanisms, more inclusive decision-making, and a just transition that centers affected communities.

Ground realities of community members and why they should be heard

One of the most powerful parts of the chat was the real-life testimonies that illustrated how climate change is not abstract, it destroys lives, disrupts livelihoods, and aggravates trauma. Participants recounted experiences such as: During a flood, transportation collapsed: what normally took 20 minutes by car became a six-hour walk. The national energy grid was shut down to avoid electrocution risks, leaving entire communities in darkness, with only mobile phones' light as the only source. A man with a broken shoulder had to travel hours to get to hospital he feared he might not survive. Another participant shared, in rural areas (for example, in a sub-district called Tala), people must walk long distances over a kilometer at times to fetch drinking water. Local infrastructure meant to ensure safe water (like Pond Sand Filters) often do not function properly. Then, the concept of "non-economic loss and damage" refers to psychological trauma, disrupted lives, loss of heritage, emotional scars and this statement was raised by a participant from Malawi, recalling the suffering of women and girls after a cyclone. This highlights that climate impacts go far beyond economic losses, affecting mental health, dignity, social stability, and identity. Three stories underscore that for many communities especially in the Global South believe that climate change is not a future risk but a brutal, present reality. They also show that disasters trigger systemic breakdowns, from power and transport to healthcare and water supply.

Structural Barriers of climate justice

During the Chat, participants identified several systemic, structural and practical barriers that limit the effectiveness of existing climate negotiations and mechanisms. The discussion illuminated major obstacles limiting real progress: Lack of accessible knowledge and tools: Local communities, especially in their languages, rarely get climate-education resources. Without data, digital access, or relevant technology, they can't effectively engage in climate decision-making or planning. Weak financial mechanisms: While global funds and pledges exist (e.g. for "loss and damage"), they often fall far short of actual needs. There's an urgent call for proactive adaptation funding ensuring resilience before disasters strike, rather than reactive relief. Disconnect between negotiations and communities: Formal negotiation tracks still avoid critical issues. Definitions around climate justice remain politically loaded. Young and frontline negotiators face a steep learning curve, slow institutional processes, and limited real influence.

Demand for justice, inclusion and implementation echoed

Across the discussion, there was a recurring insistence on the imperative for meaningful participation, not just mere representation and justice-centered approaches. Following key demands were included:

1. Create permanent spaces for youth, indigenous people, marginalized communities, and people with disabilities in negotiation processes (not just occasional speaking slots). Young people argued that they are not asking for charity or symbolism but rights: the right to speak, to influence, to decide.
2. Ensure that "just transition" policies genuinely address the needs of affected workers and communities especially those losing jobs or livelihoods due to climate mitigation measures. Such policies should include legislative backing, green budgeting, and mechanisms for social protection.
3. Strengthen linkages between international commitments and national-level implementation. After global negotiations conclude, national parliaments, ministries, and local authorities must be engaged to translate pledges into action. A climate justice agenda must go beyond declarations and embed into everyday governance.

4. Invest in accessible, community-grounded climate education and technology. Tools such as data driven early warning systems, and community-based adaptation planning are essential for local empowerment and resilience. This Fireside Chat was not just a talk-show. It embodied a growing frustration among youth and frontline communities. A conviction that climate negotiations as they stand often sideline the people who suffer most. The issues highlighted system collapse during disasters, lack of water, broken infrastructure, emotional trauma, weak financial mechanisms which are not remote statistics. They are everyday realities for millions. By giving voice to these lived experiences, the youth negotiators challenged the assumption that climate action can be effective if it remains top-down, technocratic, and disconnected from those most impacted. They argued that unless climate justice is rooted in community experiences and unless youth, indigenous and marginalized groups are meaningfully included and their voice are not heard, any agreement will remain hollow. This Fireside Chat underscored young people today, especially from climate vulnerable regions, are not waiting for change, they are demanding it. And without their meaningful inclusion, climate action risks remaining symbolic, not transformative.

SECOND SESSION

Panel Discussion: Building Collective Resilience

The panel discussion brought together climate scientists, policymakers, community representatives, and researchers from all over the world particularly with a focus on South Asia to explore a central problem, the deep disconnect between global/national-level climate planning like creating hazard maps, long-term risk assessments and how ordinary communities in vulnerable regions actually experience climate change in their day-to-day lives. The event argued that for climate action to be real and effective, there needs to be a bridge between immediate survival thinking at the ground level, and abstract, risk-based planning at higher policy levels. This session aimed to discuss resilience towards disasters, climate shocks, or long-term environmental shifts and it must be shaped by both rigorous science and lived community realities. A major theme throughout the discussion was the disconnect between local experiences of climate impacts and national or global strategies. Panelists highlighted how communities often think in short term, survival oriented terms, while governments operate with long-term risk maps and planning frameworks. Bridging this gap requires two way communication: empowering communities to understand risk and helping policymakers translate technical plans into meaningful local context. The Role of Scientific Evidence and Regional Knowledge were another topic of discussion during the event. Robust scientific data from the region was repeatedly emphasized as a critical tool for influencing global climate policy. Speakers stressed that evidence generated locally and regionally strengthens contributions to the IPCC and reinforces negotiating positions at international forums like UNFCCC. This underlines the need for more published, locally grounded research that reflects vulnerability patterns, ecosystem dynamics, and practical adaptation strategies.

The panel strongly underscored the importance of Co-Creation and Inclusivity in Knowledge Generation during the workshop. The discussion made clear that top-down approaches are insufficient without deep engagement with communities. True resilience emerges when research and planning are co-created with local actors from problem definition to solution design ensuring that work is both relevant and operationalizable. This means integrating community insights, indigenous knowledge, and local adaptation practices into formal evidence generation and policymaking processes. The discussion concluded with a strong focus on the next generation and capacity building. Panelists emphasized that building collective resilience requires long-term investment in young researchers, practitioners, and community leaders. Capacity building should not be limited to academic training, but should include practical engagement with real-world climate challenges, access to tools such as data analytics and GIS, and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. By nurturing a diverse and locally rooted climate workforce, societies can better prepare for escalating climate risks. Overall, the Panel Discussion on Building Collective Resilience reinforced the idea that resilience is not an individual or sector specific outcome, but a shared responsibility. It requires evidence that reflects local realities, governance systems that enable action, financing that prioritizes vulnerability, and inclusive processes that recognize community knowledge. Without collective approaches that bridge science, policy, and lived experience, resilience efforts risk remaining fragmented and ineffective. The panel made it clear that resilience, to be meaningful, must be built together. Panelists noted several structural barriers, including limited financial resources, fragmented governance, and a lack of alignment between planning scales. Governments often possess funding mechanisms and frameworks, but whose impact is weakened without strong evidence and community engagement. To shift policy and financing toward practical resilience, the discussion called for improved national frameworks that uplift local adaptation needs and evidence led priorities.

THIRD SESSION

Dr Sai Ravela: Building Collective Resilience

The Building Collective Resilience session coordinated by the key resource person Dr. Sai Ravela offered a deeply thoughtful and critiqual analysis of current climate adaptation practices and proposed a bold re-imagining of how resilience planning must evolve to meet the scale of future climatic shocks. Rather than reuttering familiar adaptation discourse, Dr. Ravela highlighted a central problem of nowadays and that is too many adaptation strategies, even those backed by substantial national or international investment remain anchored in a past climate and fail to prepare communities for an increasingly volatile future. Dr. Ravela began by challenging a foundational assumption in adaptation design, that historical and present climate data provide a sufficient basis for planning. Scientific findings provide a dramatically different picture of what lies ahead. Climate extremes that once seemed rare, high-intensity floods or intense cyclones now are expected to occur far more frequently in the coming decades. The implication, she pointed out, is profound- infrastructure, services, and policies built on outdated standards will likely fail under future conditions, meaning huge investments risk becoming obsolete almost as soon as they are completed. This misalignment between design standards and future risk, she argued, lies at the heart of why many resilience interventions underperform. To provide proof of her statement, one compelling example of Bangladesh’s Coastal Environment Improvement Projects (CIP) was presented.

Despite hundreds of millions of dollars invested in improvement projects, she noted that these interventions remain rooted in present day hazard assessments leaving communities exposed when the next generation of extreme events emerges. Her critique was not meant to dismiss current efforts but to highlight how their underlying assumptions must shift and how climate resilience planning must be future oriented, not backward looking. The session introduced a new adaptation framework that links future climate science directly with planning and decision making. The aim is to move away from reactive responses and ensure that today's investments are designed for tomorrow's climate. A central tool in this framework is the use of future oriented hazard maps, developed for time horizons such as 2050 and 2070. While Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan includes hazard mapping, these are largely based on present climate conditions and do not adequately reflect future risks, limiting their usefulness for long-term resilience planning. To bridge this gap, the framework emphasizes risk simulation as a way to translate scientific projections into practical understanding. Communities and decision-makers engage with simulated sequences of climate events such as cyclones, floods, and heatwaves occurring over successive years to support a shift toward risk-based thinking. This process enables stakeholders to identify realistic and sustainable adaptation options, including managed aquifer recharge, alternative farming practices, insurance pooling, and micro financing mechanisms. The approach is scalable and can be used by communities, local governments, financial institutions, and national authorities alike. However, a key barrier highlighted was the disconnect between national adaptation plans and local realities. National policies often fail to translate into actionable guidance at the community level. Effective adaptation requires a two way planning process: communities must develop local solutions and communicate unmet needs upward, while national planners must understand how policies are experienced and implemented on the ground. Progress depends on connecting these bottom up and top-down processes.

A standout feature of Dr. Ravela's approach is the use of participatory risk simulations and "gamification" as tools for collective decision making. Here, games are not trivial exercises—they are deliberate efforts to turn complex climate projections into accessible, engaging experiences that enable people to explore different strategies together. Through simulated scenarios such as sequential climate shocks hitting a community, participants can see how various adaptation options might play out in real life without bearing the real world consequences. This approach encourages shared learning, fosters democratic dialogue, and reveals hidden social dynamics. She emphasized that resilience is not simply about constructing physical defenses or issuing advisories. True resilience emerges when science, policy, and community knowledge are bridged through participatory processes that respect local agency. Building such bridges requires planning systems that work from both ends: top-down scientific insight must inform local strategies, and bottom-up lived realities must shape national discourse and policy priorities. Only in this two-way engagement, she argued, can adaptation planning become meaningful, durable, and just.

In closing, Dr. Ravela's presentation delivered a message of both urgency and hope. Urgency, because climate risk is intensifying and existing frameworks are increasingly inadequate. Hope, because the tools and frameworks to improve resilience are all built on participatory, forward-looking science. What remains is the political will and institutional flexibility to adopt them and to center community understanding in every step of the planning process. Her vision moves beyond merely coping with change and it seeks to empower communities and institutions to co-create futures that are not only safer but more equitable and sustainable.

CONCLUSION

The convening reflected a crucial gap between community experiences of climate impacts and the technical, policy-driven nature of climate planning. Speakers including both youths and frontline actors highlighted that adaptation and L&D efforts must be grounded in lived realities, not remain top-down or symbolic.

The conceptual launch of the Gobeshona Network on Adaptation and Resilience (GNAR) responds to this need by introducing a “network of networks” across the Global South to connect researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and emerging youth negotiators and leaders. GNAR is positioned to strengthen South–South collaboration, amplify locally-driven knowledge, and improve how local evidence informs national and global climate processes.

Across sessions, participants stressed that resilience needs to be co-created with local communities, drawing from regional lessons, inclusive participation, and sustained collaboration beyond events. GNAR offers a pathway to align evidence, policy, and lived experiences to collectively advance an equitable and effective adaptation action.