

# MITIGATING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

While addressing climate change will require multi-faceted policy solutions, there is consensus that extreme weather and disruption from drought, flooding, and conflicts over natural resources disproportionately impact the developing world, particularly the poor and most vulnerable including women and children. USGLC's [Roadmap for U.S. Global Leadership: Report on Reports](#) identified several areas of consensus for mitigating some of the most severe impacts in a review of recommendations by over 120 think tanks across the political spectrum ahead of the 2020 presidential election:

- Invest in building climate resilience around the world;
- Focus on climate-driven crises such as famine and migration; and
- Engage China on the climate crisis.

## BY THE NUMBERS:

- **By 2030:** The World Bank estimates that the effects of climate change could push an additional [100 million people](#) below the poverty line.
- **By 2050:** More than [143 million people](#) could be driven from their homes by conflict over food and water insecurity and climate-driven natural disasters according to the World Bank.
- **By 2070:** Almost [20% of the planet](#) could be too hot to be habitable.

## INVEST IN BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AROUND THE WORLD

Resilience is [defined](#) as the ability of communities and countries to “mitigate, adapt to and recover” from shocks, natural disasters, and conflict including climate change by investing in early warning systems, climate-resilient agriculture and infrastructure, and reforestation.

### Key Facts:

- The UN estimates an annual gap of [\\$70 billion](#) to meet the needs of climate adaptation finance in low-income countries alone.
- Investments of \$1.8 trillion in climate adaptation by 2030 could yield [\\$7.1 trillion](#) in avoided costs and other benefits – a four-fold return on investment.
- Servir, a partnership between NASA and USAID, helped provide earlier flood warnings in Bangladesh, reduce Kenya's crop losses from frost by 40%, and improve Laos's flood response efforts following a burst dam.

## FOCUS ON CLIMATE-DRIVEN CRISES

Climate change is accelerating and driving crises around the world by exacerbating global hunger and famine, water insecurity, and forced migration. Of the 124 million people worldwide who faced “crisis levels” of acute food insecurity in 2018, [76% were affected by climate shocks and extremes](#).

**Key Facts:**

- Nearly [25 million people](#) were displaced in 2019 alone as a result of natural disasters, placing significant stress on governments.
- A [quarter of the world's population](#), across 17 countries, face extremely high water stress and are close to running out of water.
- Hurricanes Eta and Iota displaced hundreds of thousands across Central America in November 2020, driving a new wave of migration to the United States.

## ENGAGE CHINA ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

China has become the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, and the country has allowed an extra 250 gigawatts of domestic coal-fired power plants in the last three years and funded one quarter of the world's new coal-fired power plants in other countries.

**Key Facts:**

- The United States and China noted their commitment to “cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis” in a joint statement in April 2021, although Special Climate Envoy John Kerry cautioned “we all need to see what happens” when it comes to backing up words with actions.

## BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS:

- **Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD):** “The United States cannot tackle climate change on our own. This is a global crisis, and we must enlist the support of others around the world by using the tools of diplomacy and development to meaningfully address this challenge.”
- **Senator Mike Braun (R-IN):** “Addressing our changing climate is a global problem that warrants global solutions. As policymakers in Washington, we must remember that costs incurred on just the American people will not make meaningful progress towards solving our changing climate. Instead, we must continually cooperate with allies to ensure that our emission reduction efforts in the United States are matched globally.”
- **Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA):** “Climate change is worsening public health epidemics and is leading to drought, hunger, and increased disease. Conflict and displacement due to climate change has led to violence and sexual exploitation against women, as well as increased health risks and mortality rates.”
- **Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA):** “In the lead up to [COP26], the United States has the opportunity to lead a global effort toward multilateral cooperation.”