Institute for
Law and Policy on Climate Mobility

Climate resilient governance

Safeguarding habitability across the Commonwealth

1 · WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Climate mobility is a predictable policy challenge. For the Commonwealth, it is immediate.

Climate and weather extremes are increasingly driving displacement in every region, and small island States are disproportionately affected. Most movement takes place within countries, and many of the people most exposed cannot move at all. No country can respond alone, yet climate mobility remains marginal in international dialogue, and finance for it has been bilateral and ad hoc. The summit's theme, partnerships and investment, is the right frame for the response.

Over half
of the Commonwealth's 56 members are small states, on the front line of sea-level rise and storms

US$310bn+
a year in adaptation needs by 2035, against around US$26bn in international public finance

2–10×
the typical return on investing in resilience, compared with its cost

2 · OUR APPROACH

Help people stay safely where they can, and move safely and lawfully where they can't.

Habitability is our lens: whether a place can support safe and dignified life and livelihoods, from water, food and shelter to income and safety from climate events. Choice is the measure of success.

Stay safely

Sustain habitability in place: resilience infrastructure, early warning and anticipatory finance, housing and planning, social protection after shocks.

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Move safely and lawfully

Safe, lawful pathways: labour mobility, regional free movement, humanitarian visas, and planned relocation with communities as a last resort.

Climate resilient governance: both pillars planned together, now
one definition at the centre of government · one lead · one finance line · a floor of rights

Sources: Commonwealth Secretariat; UNEP, Adaptation Gap Report 2025; Global Commission on Adaptation

3 · WHO WE ARE

The specialists in law and policy on climate mobility

The Institute for Law and Policy on Climate Mobility brings together world-leading experts to research, inform and advise on rights-based responses to climate mobility. Hosted by the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford, it combines expertise in international human rights and public law, climate adaptation and climate finance, and has developed evidence-based policy briefs for national government ministries.

We seek to mainstream climate mobility in legal and policy frameworks as the centrepiece of climate resilient governance.

Sangeetha Iengar

FOUNDING DIRECTOR

Award-winning international human rights barrister at Garden Court Chambers, part-time Immigration Judge and non-resident Senior Scholar on climate-related migration at Yale University. Sangeetha is a global thought leader on human rights law, migration, rule of law and climate issues.

4 · WHAT WE DO

We advise governments and organisations on climate mobility

We help governments, regional bodies, funders and international organisations turn climate mobility into practical, rights-based policy.

Defining the agenda

A working definition of climate mobility held at the centre of government, with responsibility assigned across departments

Law and policy

Legal analysis and model policies for both pillars, grounded in human rights and international law

Finance

Advice on financing both pillars, from resilience investment to lawful pathways

Capacity and dialogue

Climate mobility bootcamps for officials, and support for positions in international and regional dialogue

5 · GET IN TOUCH

Let's talk about climate mobility in your country or organisation

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Scan for the Institute's website

Read more: Governing for Climate Mobility (2026); Habitability, Position Statement (2026)

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