

## STRUCTURED SUMMARY

# BEARING THE BURDEN

Climate change-attributable losses and damages in the Sahel and Greater Horn of Africa

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### Motivation

COP28 established a new Loss and Damage Fund to compensate those harmed by climate change. Compared with other countries, in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS), far less information exists on climate history, climate impacts and their attribution to global heating. This makes it hard to assess loss and damage from climate change. FCAS — which need finance more than most — could lose out on finance for loss and damage

### Purpose

We assess loss and damage in the Sahel and the Greater Horn of Africa (SGHA) to help governments quantify climate change impacts and access loss and damage finance. We focus on agriculture and livestock — major economic pillars of the region.

### Approach and methods

We estimate direct economic loss and damage attributable to climate change. Drawing on event attribution studies, we measure the probability of extreme weather events with and without climate change. From this, we calculate the share of economic losses from droughts and floods attributable to climate change.

We do not compute indirect losses — for example those arising from higher food prices after a harvest loss. Nor do we estimate losses to slower onset consequences of global heating, such as rising temperature, changed rainfall, higher sea levels and ocean acidification which arise over the medium to long term. Finally we do not quantify non-economic losses, such as ill health resulting from climate change. For these damages, we summarise available evidence from secondary literature.

### Findings

Loss and damage from climate change in the SGHA are already significant. Between 2000 and 2022, 39% of deaths from droughts and floods in the region can be attributed to climate change. Across the region, extreme weather with a possible climate change signal affected seven million people every year.

Attributable economic impacts exceeded 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) in half the countries in the region, while attributable agriculture loss and damage cost nearly \$500 million a year.

## Policy implications

More finance is needed to help the people of the SGHA deal with climate change.

Policymakers should:

- speed up the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund and ensure access for vulnerable countries in the SGHA
- in addition to finance for loss and damage, increase adaptation spending to avert and minimise the disproportionately high human cost of climate change in the region.

Researchers should:

- collect more comprehensive loss and damage data in fragile and conflict affected states
- develop methods to quantify indirect, non-economic and slow-onset impacts
- prioritise understanding how loss and damage affect marginalised groups.

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