



Climate & Sustainability Interventions

BRAZIL

JUNE 2026

Climate change is increasingly shaping displacement patterns and protection needs in Brazil and across the Americas. As extreme weather related events intensify in frequency and scale, they act as powerful risk multipliers, exacerbating inequalities and compounding vulnerabilities for forcibly displaced people and their host communities. Globally, nearly three out of four refugees and other forcibly displaced people live in countries highly exposed to extreme weather related hazards, despite having contributed the least to their causes.¹

The Americas are now the second most disaster-prone region worldwide², with Brazil at the center of this trend. In 2024 alone, more than one million disaster related internal displacements were recorded in the country — the highest figure ever documented — driven primarily by floods, landslides, droughts, and wildfires. Building on these unprecedented levels, repeated flooding and hydrometeorological events in 2025 and early 2026 further illustrated the persistence of climate-related displacement risks and highlighted the country's continued exposure to increasingly frequent and severe climate shocks.³ The extreme flooding in Rio Grande do Sul in mid 2024 displaced nearly 775,000 people and affected millions more, highlighting the growing scale and impact of extreme weather related crises.

Climate risks vary significantly across Brazil's regions. In the Amazon, prolonged droughts, deforestation and ecosystem degradation are undermining livelihoods and access to services, while Roraima hosts nearly 14,000 Indigenous refugees from Venezuela facing compounded protection challenges. Coastal areas and the Northeast are increasingly affected by sea level rise, extreme heat and semi arid conditions, heightening longstanding vulnerabilities, and the risk of repeated displacement.

These dynamics underscore that extreme weather related disasters not only trigger new displacement but also prolong existing situations and increase onward movements. Refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and other people in need of international protection are often forced to flee repeatedly when extreme weather affects areas of settlement, further eroding resilience and deepening protection risks.⁴

In response, UNHCR strengthened its global engagement on climate action, recognizing climate change as a core protection and solutions issue. Since 2020, UNHCR advanced an agenda focused on integrating climate resilience into humanitarian and protection responses, promoting inclusive adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and reducing the environmental footprint of its operations⁵, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and [UNHCR's Strategic Plan for Climate Action 2024-2030](#).

In Brazil, UNHCR's climate and sustainability interventions operate at the intersection of humanitarian response, protection, development and climate action. Working closely with government institutions, civil society, academia, refugee led and Indigenous organizations, the private sector and international partners, UNHCR supports climate action that strengthens protection outcomes, builds resilience and ensures that no one is left behind.



1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Key Facts and Figures on Climate Change, Conflict and Displacement" (2026). Available at: <https://www.acnur.org/br/sites/br/files/2026-03/202601-key-facts-figures-on-climate-change-conflict-displacement.pdf>

2 United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Overview of disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean 2000-2022" (2023). Available at: <https://www.undrr.org/media/89900/download?startDownload=20241205>

3 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), "Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2026)" (2026). Available at: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2026/>

4 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "No Escape II: The Way Forward" (2025). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/no-escape-ii-way-forward>

5 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "No Escape II: The Way Forward" (2025). Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/no-escape-ii-way-forward>

UNHCR'S CLIMATE ACTION IN BRAZIL



OPERATIONS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CLIMATE-RELATED RESPONSE

Strengthening preparedness and response to extreme weather related emergencies — particularly floods and extreme weather affecting urban and peri urban areas — is a key operational priority. In Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Minas Gerais and Amazonas, following requests from the government, UNHCR provided targeted technical support to national and local authorities, including protection sensitive shelter management, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) guidance, rapid needs assessments and assistance in the establishment, reorganization and safe demobilization of emergency shelters. On the onset of these emergencies, these interventions enhanced registration systems, internal workflows, coordination and communication with affected populations, while improving access to services and ensuring that refugees and other forcibly displaced people were systematically included in municipal emergency response mechanisms. UNHCR is also enhancing cooperation with the Social Assistance System Task Force (FORSUAS) led by the Ministry of Social Development, focusing on strengthening CCCM and emergency capacities of local networks in regions more prone to extreme weather-related events.



SUSTAINABILITY CENTRES AND SHELTER INNOVATIONS

To align humanitarian response with environmental stewardship and climate resilience, UNHCR Brazil began integrating sustainability into its operations in 2023. Central to this effort are the **Sustainability Centres in Boa Vista and Belém**, which serve as community centred operational platforms that integrate environmental sustainability, protection and solutions oriented programming. Together, the Centres reflect UNHCR's commitment to embedding environmental sustainability within humanitarian operations, particularly in regions most exposed to climate and environmental risks.



2,200 participants engaged in 2025 for longer-term resilience and socioeconomic integration

The Centre in *Boa Vista*, since 2025, has transitioned into a hub for co-creating sustainable solutions with affected populations, bridging emergency response with longer-term resilience and socioeconomic integration. The Centre engaged more than 8,400 people since its establishment, including over 2,200 participants in 2025 alone, while producing and distributing more than 10,600 seedlings to shelters, Indigenous communities, schools and local institutions. Complementing this approach, the Centre in *Belém*, inaugurated in 2025, is strategically located in the Amazon region and supports similar objectives in a context hosting more than 800 Warao Indigenous refugees, reinforcing UNHCR's climate-responsive operational presence in highly vulnerable areas.⁶



10,600 seedlings produced for reforestation, reducing the carbon footprint and mitigating local environmental impact



The Centres played a critical role in **community based construction, skills development and capacity building** related to sustainable shelter solutions. Wood construction and self construction training programmes implemented in Belém, Roraima and Amazonas combine theoretical instruction with extensive hands on practice, enabling participants from Indigenous and non Indigenous shelters — including women and persons with disabilities — to jointly build shelter units and housing structures. These initiatives strengthen local technical capacity, promote occupational safety and support pathways to livelihoods in climate sensitive construction and maintenance sectors, while reinforcing autonomy and ownership over shelter solutions.

The Centres also function as hubs for **integrating shelter, livelihoods and environmental sustainability**. Through partnerships such as the LONGi project, eco friendly housing construction is linked to renewable energy solutions, community based tourism and income generation initiatives, ensuring that environmental investments deliver protection and socioeconomic co-benefits. In Belém and Outeiro, six photovoltaic systems were installed in schools, health facilities and community spaces serving refugees and other people in need of international protection. These systems help stabilize

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Sustainability Centre - Belém, Pará" (2025). Available at: <https://www.acnur.org/br/media/sustainability-centre-Belém-para-october-2025>

electricity supply during power outages, reduce reliance on diesel generators and safeguard the continuity of education and healthcare services, which is particularly relevant in the region where energy insecurity and extreme weather frequently disrupt service delivery during emergencies. Beyond infrastructure, these installations created platforms for practical learning, combining clean-energy deployment with training, environmental education and community engagement. Participatory governance mechanisms and community committees guide design and implementation, ensuring that solutions respond to local needs, cultural practices and environmental conditions.



In parallel, the Centres provide a structured space for **innovation and evidence generation**. Initiatives such as shelter length-of-stay analysis and market assessments for locally sourced materials support evidence-based operational planning and help identify scalable solutions. Innovation cycles supported through UNHCR's Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund enabled the testing of new materials, construction techniques and project designs, with lessons documented for potential replication in other contexts. Training sessions delivered at schools and university facilities equipped with solar-panels in Belém focused on renewable-energy operation and basic energy management, while also fostering dialogue on climate change, displacement and social inequality. These engagements strengthened environmental literacy, supported youth leadership and reinforced preventive approaches by linking climate action with protection and inclusion from an early stage.

Through collaboration with Better Shelter, private-sector partners and UNHCR's innovation mechanisms, a range of **climate-responsive shelter solutions** were designed, assembled, and tested to bridge emergency response with longer-term sustainability. These include Transitional Shelter Units (TSUs), modular emergency shelters using timber structures, tarpaulin systems, OSB panels and soil-cement blocks, as well as the RHU 3x5 system, a lightweight and rapidly deployable shelter designed for progressive upgrading with locally available materials. These solutions are developed and tested in close collaboration with displaced and host communities, who actively participate in design, construction, adaptation and feedback processes. Iterative testing generated practical evidence on durability, ventilation, construction time and ease of assembly, while advancing applied research on localization and construction techniques.



ADVANCING CARBON FINANCE IN INDIGENOUS DISPLACEMENT CONTEXTS

UNHCR concluded a feasibility study on refugee-led reforestation linked to carbon credit markets within the São Marcos Indigenous Territory in Roraima, an area where Brazilian Indigenous communities have long hosted Indigenous refugees from Venezuela. The study confirmed the technical, legal and financial viability of a high-integrity reforestation project designed to generate verified carbon credits, with revenues reinvested into ecosystem restoration, conservation and sustainable livelihood opportunities for both refugee and host communities.

The analysis also identified key risk mitigation measures, governance considerations and implementation pathways, with specific recommendations to ensure environmental integrity, respect for Indigenous territorial rights, Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and equitable benefit sharing. The proposed model prioritizes transparency, community participation, and long-term sustainability, while maximizing potential financial returns in compliance with internationally recognized carbon standards.

This initiative is part of the [Refugee Environmental Protection \(REP\) Fund](#), UNHCR's global financing mechanism supporting large-scale reforestation and clean cooking solutions in climate-vulnerable displacement contexts via innovative financing. By connecting refugees and host communities to high integrity carbon markets, the REP Fund seeks to enable their active participation in global climate action efforts while strengthening protection outcomes, environmental stewardship and self-reliance.



COMMUNITY-BASED SUSTAINABILITY

UNHCR strengthened **community based protection (CBP) approaches** in climate-affected contexts, by positioning displaced populations at the center of diagnosis, decision

displaced populations at the center of diagnosis, decision making and solution building. Participatory engagements with relocated and flood-affected refugee communities in Porto Alegre and surrounding flood-affected areas generated evidence-based inputs on priority protection risks, housing insecurity, access to services and livelihood barriers. These consultations supported closer coordination with municipal authorities and contributed to more inclusive recovery and local integration processes in climate-affected neighborhoods.

Across all operations, UNHCR integrates **participation, accountability and inclusion** as core principles. Engagements with Indigenous and non-indigenous refugee communities — including Free, Prior and Informed Consultation (FPIC) processes linked to environmental, shelter and livelihood initiatives — ensure that operational decisions respect territorial rights, cultural specificities and local social dynamics. Continuous community engagement, feedback mechanisms and coordination with refugee-led organizations strengthen trust, transparency and sustainability across climate-responsive interventions.

JUST TRANSITION, GREEN JOBS AND SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

UNHCR advanced **livelihoods and economic inclusion in climate-sensitive sectors**, working with government institutions, UN agencies, the private sector and development partners. Engagements with partners such as the Manaus Free-Trade Zone Superintendence (SUFRAMA), the Center of Industry of the State of Amazonas (CIEAM) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) focused on promoting green jobs, skills development and socio-bioeconomy opportunities, particularly in the Amazon region. Operational dialogue emphasized the importance of avoiding precarious employment, ensuring compliance with labor rights standards and aligning training initiatives with realistic, territorially grounded labor market opportunities for refugees and host communities.

At the strategic level, UNHCR contributes to **just transition and green-jobs agendas** in Brazil by promoting the inclusion of refugees and other displaced populations in climate-responsive labor markets and economic-transformation processes. UNHCR is a strategic partner of the Global Compact's Center for Collective Actions in Defense of Climate Justice and Just Transition and the UNICEF-led Green Alliance for Employment and Green Skills, supporting inclusive access to emerging green labor markets for vulnerable populations.

In parallel, UNHCR strengthened sustainable refugee entrepreneurship through the [Refugee Entrepreneurs Platform](#). Results show that 47 per cent of refugee entrepreneurs have prior knowledge of sustainable businesses or the SDGs, while 98 per cent of them adopted at least one sustainable practice — such as recycling, energy or water savings, or sourcing from local and sustainable producers — highlighting the strong potential of refugee-led enterprises to contribute to inclusive and climate-responsive local economies.



LAW AND POLICY

UNHCR supports Brazil's climate and sustainability agenda by strengthening the integration of forced displacement, human mobility and protection considerations into climate law, policy and planning frameworks at both national and subnational levels. These efforts aim to ensure that climate action anticipates and mitigates displacement risks, protects affected populations and advances inclusive, rights based adaptation and disaster risk governance.

MULTILEVEL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE AND COP30 LEGACY

A central focus of UNHCR's engagement was **multilevel climate governance**, particularly in the lead-up to and aftermath of COP30, held in Belém, November 2025. UNHCR actively supported the development of the **Acceleration Plan for Multilevel, Multistakeholder and Participatory Governance Solutions (PAS)**, coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA) and the Ministry of Cities (MCid). As a key COP30 legacy and implementation instrument of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP), the PAS aims to strengthen coordination across federal, state and municipal levels, facilitate access to subnational climate finance and align Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with territorial action. Through technical inputs and participation in national consultations and workshops, UNHCR contributed to shaping governance arrangements that elevate the visibility of displacement-affected populations within climate decision-making and implementation processes. UNHCR's engagement was further strengthened through technical consultancies supporting the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA) in the systematization, operationalization and international communication of Brazil's multilevel governance model for climate adaptation.

On 11 March 2026, a **Workshop on Multilevel Governance and Adaptation** was held as a follow-up to COP30 and a consolidation space for the PAS. The workshop convened around 50 participants from federal, state and municipal governments, international organizations and subnational networks to assess COP30 outcomes, validate governance arrangements for PAS implementation and discuss next steps for delivery and monitoring. The discussions reaffirmed the importance of inclusive, territorially grounded adaptation approaches and the integration of displacement considerations into multilevel climate governance as Brazil advances its climate commitments.



POLICY DEVELOPMENT

UNHCR supported **Brazil's National Adaptation framework (2024–2035)** by advocating for the systematic integration of forced displacement, human mobility and protection considerations within adaptation planning. Engagements with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA), Ministry of Cities (MCid) and partners emphasized early warning systems, disaster risk management, urban resilience, ecosystem-based adaptation and social protection as critical entry points to reduce displacement risks and support durable solutions for populations disproportionately affected by climate impacts. These efforts contributed to the formulation of [Brazil's National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) 2024-2035](#), published in February 2026, which recognized climate-related displacement within a climate-justice framework, while further operationalization through specific targets and policy instruments remain ongoing.

At the national level, UNHCR supported the advancement of inclusive climate-adaptation policy through its engagement in the **AdaptaCidades initiative**, under the Green and Resilient Cities Programme led by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA), in partnership with the Ministry of Cities (MCid), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) and GIZ. During the **Second AdaptaCidades National Meeting**, convening representatives from all 26 states and the Federal District, UNHCR contributed to the launch of the [Action Guide on Forced Displacement and Climate Change \(Roteiro de Ação - Deslocamento forçado e mudança do clima\)](#). The guide serves as a practical technical reference to support states and municipalities in integrating displacement considerations into climate-adaptation planning, aligned with Brazil's Climate Plan and National Adaptation Framework, and reinforces the role of subnational governments in operationalizing inclusive and climate-just responses.

These national-level efforts were complemented by sustained engagement at the subnational level. Through AdaptaCidades, UNHCR contributed and continues to contribute to capacity-building workshops across multiple states — including Rio Grande do Sul, Alagoas, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina, Paraná and Pará — supporting local authorities in incorporating displacement-related risks and protection considerations into municipal and regional adaptation strategies. These engagements promote participatory approaches, strengthened institutional capacity and supported the development of adaptation instruments that are evidence-based, territorially grounded and responsive to local protection risks, particularly in areas highly exposed to floods, droughts and other extreme weather events.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND AWARENESS WITHIN THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY

UNHCR also contributed to **policy dialogue across human rights, climate justice and human mobility-governance spaces**, including national conferences and thematic workshops focused on environmental education, climate justice and the rights of refugees, migrants and stateless persons. These platforms provided opportunities to highlight the climate–displacement nexus, promote rights-based approaches and strengthen coherence between climate policy, disaster response frameworks and humanitarian protection standards. In parallel, UNHCR supported capacity-building and awareness-raising processes in academic and public policy spaces, including university-based dialogues on climate justice and displacement, contributing to a broader societal understanding of climate-related displacement and reinforcing evidence-based policy debate.

Across all engagements, UNHCR's law and policy work in Brazil underscores the importance of **whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches** to climate action. By supporting multilevel governance mechanisms, aligning climate adaptation with protection principles and reinforcing inclusion in national and subnational planning, UNHCR contributes to a policy environment in which climate responses reduce displacement risks, build resilience and ensure that no one is left behind.



COP30 IN BELÉM

As host of COP30, Brazil provided a global platform to strengthen inclusive climate action. UNHCR contributed to key COP30 processes by advocating for the integration of forced displacement, protection and human mobility considerations into adaptation, governance and financing discussions — helping to ensure that climate responses reach those most affected.

Discover UNHCR's COP30 objectives and outcomes: <https://www.acnur.org/br/cop30>



GREENING THE BLUE

UNHCR is advancing efforts in Brazil to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations while strengthening protection, resilience and inclusion for refugees, other forcibly displaced people and host communities. “Greening the Blue” initiatives are embedded across operational delivery, infrastructure investments, innovation pilots and partnerships, ensuring that environmental sustainability generates tangible social, protection and community benefits.



RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY-EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

A key component of these efforts is the transition to renewable energy and energy efficient infrastructure, notably through partnerships with the private sector. Photovoltaic systems were installed in public institutions and community facilities in refugee hosting areas in Belém and Outeiro, including schools, health units and community spaces supporting refugees and other people in need of international protection. These installations are projected to generate more than 500 MWh of clean energy annually, reduce over 500 tons of CO₂ emissions per year and generate significant operational cost savings for public services. These investments are complemented by capacity-building and awareness-raising activities. Training sessions on system operation, monitoring and basic energy-management practices were delivered to teachers, students and service providers at solarized sites, alongside educational activities linking climate change, forced displacement and social inequalities. These actions strengthen local ownership, build

environmental literacy and support the long-term sustainability of renewable energy solutions.



Solarized facilities in Belém aim to generate more than **500 MWh of clean energy** annually, reducing over **500 tons of CO₂ emissions** per year

SUSTAINABLE SHELTER AND GREEN CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS

UNHCR advanced sustainable shelter and construction approaches aligned with climate resilience and circular economy principles. Through UNHCR’s Environment and Climate Action Innovation Fund and partnerships with Better Shelter, climate responsive shelter prototypes and eco-friendly housing models using timber structures and locally-sourced materials were developed and tested. Capacity building initiatives in Belém and Roraima trained Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in sustainable construction techniques, enhancing local skills while reducing reliance on carbon-intensive materials and strengthening pathways to livelihoods.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIVE CLIMATE FINANCING

UNHCR explored nature-based solutions and innovative climate-financing mechanisms while strengthening access to sustainable energy in displacement-affected contexts. The feasibility study on carbon credit-focused reforestation in the São Marcos Indigenous Land demonstrates how ecosystem restoration, climate mitigation and Indigenous rights can generate protection and livelihood co-benefits when grounded in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and transparent benefit sharing principles.

UNHCR partners in Brazil



UNHCR supporters in Brazil



Donor countries of UNHCR in Brazil and global programmes with flexible funding that supports the humanitarian response in the country



UNHCR's private sector donors



UNHCR Brazil is also thankful for the important support of and partnerships with other UN agencies, Brazilian authorities (at federal, state and municipal levels) and civil society organizations working together to deliver the emergency response and in the regular programmes of the Brazilian operation.

Climate & Sustainability Interventions

BRAZIL JUNE 2026



For additional information on UNHCR's Brazil Climate Action, please contact:

- Jose Manuel Caceres, External Relations Officer - caceres@unhcr.org
- Ana Gama Dias, External Relations Associate - gamadias@unhcr.org