FROM CRISIS TO ACTION

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the environmental, economic, and health impacts of climate change already being felt by vulnerable countries. It features personal stories from local pastoralists, peasant farmers, youth activists, and vulnerable workers worldwide, highlighting the human side of climate change. The book presents the work that the Climate Vulnerability Forum (CVF) and its V20 Finance Ministers (CVF-V20) have done to push for urgent global cooperation on the climate crisis. Detailed case studies from many CVF-V20 countries illustrate the need for adaptation and resilience and offer a blueprint for action that can be followed by others. The book offers invaluable insight for students of environmental studies and economics, Earth sciences, human and political geography, and political science, as well as for activists, policymakers, and concerned citizens. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Abena Takyiwaa Asamoah-Okyere is a Technical Advisor (Sustainability) to the Finance Minister in Ghana. She leads initiatives on the Sustainable Development Goals and on climate finance. She has served as a Climate Finance Advisor supporting the CVF-V20 Secretariat and advocates for development-positive climate-resilient growth for developing countries. Abena coordinated the development of Ghana's Climate Prosperity Plan.

Christina Natalia Widjaja is a dedicated researcher focused on climate change impacts at the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security. She is working on various international projects to provide in-depth

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms.
https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960

qualitative and quantitative analysis and insights on climate-related disaster risks and ways to adapt/mitigate the impacts. Christina is passionate about translating science into accessible narratives to inspire action.

Tim Smedley is a book author, journalist, and ghostwriter, writing about environmental and social justice. His first book *Clearing the Air: The Beginning and the End of Air Pollution* (Bloomsbury, 2019) was shortlisted for the Royal Society Science Book Prize. His second book *The Last Drop: Solving the World's Water Crisis* (Pan Macmillan, 2023) was a Times Book of the Year.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960

'*From Crisis to Action* takes you straight to the front line of the climate crisis. It brings home in vivid detail the impact climate change is already having on people and communities around the world and paints a picture of what is at stake across 70 climate-vulnerable countries. It's also a call to action: to remind us that we have an opportunity to avert the worst impacts and build a resilient world for everyone. This is not just their crisis, but a shared challenge for the entire world that requires our collective action.'

Steve Howard, Vice Chair of Sustainability Temasek;
Founding Chair of the We Mean Business Coalition;
Founder of the Climate Group

'Ultimately, climate disasters morph into economic disasters, impoverishing our planet as each new natural disaster hits us. In-depth examples in the book – from different countries on the frontline of climate change – prove that austerity measures caused by the "mounting debt in climate-vulnerable developing countries" exacerbate the challenges of dealing with climate change. The authors challenge the mindset of wealthy nations to change from seeing climate financing as an "aid for poverty reduction" to instead seeing it as an investment into climate adaptation and resilience measures: suddenly opening up whole new avenues of action, including leveraging debt innovatively. This book is an excellent and essential read for all, giving us real routes to real action to deal with climate change, in collaboration with the very people who can take the action to mitigate its impact, if resourced well.'

Minni Jain, author of *The Language of Water*, and Director,
The Flow Partnership UK

'*From Crisis to Action* is a much-needed call for active hope in the face of the growing impacts of climate change. The authors repeatedly shatter lazy paradigms and always put people at the heart of their narrative, filling the book with specific examples of communities already suffering from climate impacts and illustrating positive responses with

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms.
https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960

specific examples of adaptive innovations. The three climate scenarios presented should be enough to jolt the most jaded reader – even the (now likely unachievable) 1.5-degree scenario makes for sombre reading, but at 2 degrees, and much worse at 3.6 degrees, the mathematics of climate disaster ratchets up exponentially across heat, health, and hunger impacts. Crucially, the authors make the case for rejecting any sense of victim narrative, instead promoting the idea of climate positive development, and explaining impacts and solutions primarily in economic terms. Voices from the front line remind us that the countries most vulnerable to climate impacts do not require a transition from high to low carbon but a human development pathway centred on access to energy and more equitable global financial dynamics. There also needs to be an acknowledgement that developed countries will not be immune from their own climate damages and from the implications of economic and human shocks around the world. We need to embrace pragmatic, active hope, and recognise that only respectful collaboration rather than aid will provide the most robust response.'

Nigel Topping, Founder of Ambition Loop,
and UN Climate Champion, COP26

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms.
https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960

From Crisis to Action

Climate Change Through the Eyes of the Most Vulnerable

ABENA TAKYIWAA ASAMOAH-OKYERE

Ministry of Finance, Ghana

CHRISTINA NATALIA WIDJAJA

United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security

TIM SMEDLEY

Freelance writer

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009605946

DOI: 10.1017/9781009605960

© United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security 2025

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, with the exception of the Creative Commons version the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960 under a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes providing appropriate credit to the original work is given, any changes made are indicated, and the new work is published under the same licence terms. When the licensor is an intergovernmental organisation, disputes will be resolved by mediation and arbitration where possible. To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009605960

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-1-009-60594-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For EU product safety concerns, contact us at Calle de José Abascal, 56, 1°, 28003 Madrid, Spain, or email eugpsr@cambridge.org

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 16 Nov 2026 at 20:44:36, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009605960