Roundtable Report

Indo-Afro Lessons on Extreme Heat, Health, and Livelihood Actions: Pathways for Community-Centred Resilience

1. Introduction

The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC), Ghana, organised a virtual roundtable on **"Indo-Afro Lessons on Extreme Heat, Health, and Livelihood Action"** on June 11, 2026.

The roundtable brought together six speakers and 100 participants from India and Africa to exchange practical lessons on building resilience to extreme heat. The discussion focused on public health, livelihoods, informal workers, women workers, small businesses, early warning to early action, climate data, technology, community-led adaptation, and South–South cooperation.

The session highlighted that extreme heat is no longer only a seasonal weather issue. It is a growing risk to health, labour productivity, food systems, water security, urban infrastructure, livestock, ecosystems, and local economies in India and Ghana. It is especially severe for outdoor workers, informal workers, women workers, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and low-income urban communities.

2. Roundtable at a Glance

Date: June 11, 2026
Time: 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM IST
Format: Virtual roundtable
Organisers: All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) and Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC), Ghana
Participants: Six speakers and 100 participants from India and Africa
Theme: Indo-Afro learning on extreme heat, health, livelihoods, early warning to early action, community-led adaptation, data, technology, climate finance, and South–South cooperation.

3. Key Insights from Speakers

Safi Ahsan Rizvi, Former Advisor, National Disaster Management Authority of India, reflected on shared climate vulnerabilities between India and Africa. He highlighted the growing impacts of extreme heat on health, agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, and livelihoods. He stressed that early warning systems must move beyond meteorology and include hyperlocal mapping, vulnerability-based alerts, and last-mile action. He also noted India's innovative and expanding experience with Heat Action Plans, disaster risk finance, and parametric insurance.

"We are living with a serious catastrophe, a slow-moving catastrophe on our hands," he said.

Dr. Elvis Kyere-Gyeabour, Breathe Cities Portfolio Manager, Clean Air Fund, Ghana, focused on data, technology, and informed decision-making. He highlighted the need for local heat data, indoor and outdoor heat monitoring, public health linkages, heat risk maps, mobile alerts, community reporting, and language-sensitive communication. He emphasised that reliable heat data is essential for protecting vulnerable communities and planning practical heat interventions.

"Without the needed data, we cannot make decisions that address the extreme heat impacts people are experiencing," he said.

Rehanaben Riyawala, SEWA / Grassroot Trading Network for Women (GTNfW), India, shared grassroots experience of informal women workers in India. She explained how extreme heat affects women's health, livelihoods, income, productivity, food security, savings, and well-being. SEWA's responses include

building a cadre of community health ambassadors, early warning support, cool roofs, insulated water jugs, parametric climate insurance, climate welfare facilities, building resilience at source through Swachh Aakash Campaign, developing a Hariyali (Green) village / Chawl, Green skilling, and livelihood risk reduction funds. She underlined that heat is an economic, health, and justice issue for women workers. She talked about facilitation and the importance of scaling such initiatives under South-South cooperation.

"Heat is not just a weather event, but an economic crisis, a health emergency, and a justice issue for women workers," she said.

Baliqees Salaudeen-Ibrahim, Climate Director, Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO), presented youth-led heat resilience work in Accra. She shared the Heat Awareness and Market Shade Infrastructure (HERA) project, which supports informal workers and women traders through heat vulnerability assessments, awareness campaigns, training, cold rooms, shaded spaces, and climate-resilient market infrastructure. She stressed that heat adaptation must be community-led and collectively owned.

"Heat adaptation must be community-led. It cannot be an individual effort; it has to be a collective effort", she said.

Mihir R. Bhatt, AIDMI, reflected on the common learning emerging from India and Africa. He noted that the presentations showed strong links between national-level action, grassroots experience, technical knowledge, and youth leadership. He identified three promising areas for future Indo-Afro collaboration: urban cooling and Heat Action Plans, agriculture and food security protection from extreme heat, and heat early warning systems. He observed that India and Africa have much in common in these areas and that the roundtable created a useful foundation for further work.

"The lessons shared by India and Africa must not remain only as discussion; they should become a basis for practical cooperation on extreme heat, health, and livelihoods work between the two," he said.

Dr. Denis Nkala, Expert, South-South Cooperation, gave the concluding remarks and focused on South–South cooperation. He observed that the roundtable showed a useful balance between policy-level discussion and community-level action. He encouraged the development of a practical India–Africa cooperation proposal on heat resilience, including data, finance, technology, community solutions, early warning systems, livelihoods, and a focus on women.

"Extreme heat is no longer a single-sector issue. It affects public health, livelihoods, food security, water systems, infrastructure, and ecosystems," he said.

4. Key Themes Emerging from the Roundtable

The roundtable identified five key themes.

First, **extreme heat is an intersectional multi-sector risk**. It affects public health, livelihoods, labour productivity, water systems, food security, infrastructure, livestock, ecosystems, and urban settlements.

Second, **early warning must lead to early action and anticipatory finance**. Heat alerts must reach vulnerable people through trusted local channels, community organisations, health workers, radio, mobile messaging, and local languages. These alerts should trigger practical measures such as water access, shade, health outreach, safe work guidance, cooling spaces, emergency support, and timely finance for those most exposed.

Third, **data must support local decision-making**. Heat action requires reliable local data, indoor and outdoor heat monitoring, heat risk maps, community reporting, and stronger links between climate data and health data.

Fourth, **women workers and informal workers must be central to heat resilience**. The discussion showed that women workers face income loss, health risks, sleep disruption, increased care burdens, and limited access to finance and protection.

Fifth, **community-led adaptation is essential to upscaling**. Solutions such as health ambassadors, community welfare facilities, cold rooms, shaded markets, rooftop gardens, cool roofs, green villages / chawls and local awareness campaigns must be planned with communities, not only for them.

5. Question–Answer Discussion

Pranav Prashad, International Labour Organization, reflected on insurance, occupational safety, and heat stress. He highlighted the role of parametric insurance for human health and dairy animals and noted the importance of recognising heat as an occupational safety and health concern.

The discussion included questions on the role of health institutions, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and the groups that should be covered through heat-related training.

One participant asked about the role of the World Health Organization in addressing extreme heat. Speakers noted that heat is increasingly a public health concern and that WHO and other health agencies should be included in future discussions on heat, well-being, mental health, and public health preparedness.

Another question focused on whether separate studies or consultations have been conducted with persons with disabilities in Ghana to understand heat impacts. Baliqees noted that data is still limited, but ongoing initiatives such as the HERA project aim to document heat impacts and work with government stakeholders to identify available information and resources.

A further question asked which groups should be included in heat-related training workshops. Baliqees explained that trainings should include informal workers, professionals, advocates, community members, and all those working on or affected by extreme heat, with special attention to market workers and vulnerable communities.

The discussion showed that future heat resilience work must include health institutions, labour organisations, disability groups, informal worker networks, women's groups, youth organisations, and local governments.

6. Concluding Reflection

The roundtable showed that extreme heat is a slow-moving but serious climate risk. It is already affecting lives, work, incomes, health systems, markets, food security, and urban settlements in India and Africa.

A key message was that heat action must be practical, inclusive, and locally grounded. It must move from warnings to action, from data to decisions, from policy to communities, and from isolated efforts to sustained cooperation.

The discussion also showed that many solutions already exist. These include Heat Action Plans, local heat data, health ambassadors, cool roofs, climate welfare facilities, parametric insurance, emergency credit, green villages / chawls, cold rooms, shaded markets, radio outreach, and community-led training. These solutions need to be documented, strengthened, financed, and scaled.

As highlighted by Mr. Safi Ahsan Rizvi during his final reflections before the closing remarks, extreme heat is no longer a single-sector issue. It is a public health, livelihood, infrastructure, finance, gender, and governance issue. He also observed that there is strong common ground between India and Africa on urban cooling, Heat Action Plans, agriculture and food security, and heat early warning systems. These areas offer a practical basis for further Indo-Afro cooperation.

Dr. Denis Nkala further emphasised that the way forward is not to start from zero, but to build on existing knowledge and continue structured dialogue. “A lot is already happening, and we do not have to reinvent the wheel. We have to continue this dialogue,” he said, referring to the need to turn shared learning into practical South–South cooperation on extreme heat, health, and livelihoods.

7. Way Ahead

The roundtable identified the following follow-up actions:

1. Prepare a short India–Africa action report on common priorities for heat resilience.
2. Develop a South–South cooperation proposal on heat, health, livelihoods, early warning, data, finance, and community action.
3. Strengthen knowledge and learning exchange between Indian and African organisations working on heat resilience.
4. Improve last-mile early warning systems for women workers, informal workers, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and at-risk communities.
5. Document community-level heat impacts, especially on health, income, productivity, sleep, care burden, and local adaptation.
6. Promote gender-responsive climate finance, microinsurance, emergency credit, building resilience at source, and community welfare facilities.
7. Recognise heat as a workplace hazard in labour, health, and disaster risk policies.
8. Continue regular Indo-Afro learning platforms on urban cooling, Heat Action Plans, agriculture and food security, heat-health systems, and community-led adaptation.

The roundtable concluded that India and Africa can directly learn from each other and act together. Stronger South–South cooperation can help turn community experience, technical knowledge, and policy learning into practical heat-resilience action to cool India, Africa, and the planet.