

## Big global win for climate, heatwave disaster in Kashmir, and supporting innovation for lasting change



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued a [landmark opinion](#) this past Wednesday, stating that **countries have a legal duty to protect people and ecosystems from the "urgent and existential threat" posed by climate change.** It's true that the ruling is an advisory opinion with no legal mechanism for enforcement. However, it represents **important precedent that will have weight in other courts** as litigation continues.

For example, it means that the **countries most impacted by rising temperatures** – typically poorer countries who've contributed least to the problem in the first place - may be **entitled to reparations from the world's top emitters.** “This ruling is a powerful tool we can use to **demand that those most responsible for this climate crisis be held accountable,**” [said](#) Flora Vano, Vanuatu country manager for the non-profit ActionAid. “As the planet’s weather becomes more chaotic, this ruling paves the way for the protections and reparations we desperately need to **rebuild our lives and secure a just future.**”

The litigation was dreamed up by law students from the **Pacific island nation of Tonga in 2019**. One of those students, Siosuia Veikune, was at the ICJ in the Hague this week to hear the opinion, telling the [BBC](#), "I'm lost for words. This is so exciting. **This is a win we take proudly back home to our communities.**" And I agree: **this ruling is yet more proof that ordinary people, when they use their voices, can change the world.**