

## Climate Change Loss and Damage

9<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
Online event

Event report

# Climate Change Loss and Damage

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3<sup>rd</sup> Deliberative Dialogue Report

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## About the event

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## Contents

<b>Session 1. Localised delivery capacity</b>	<b>3</b>
Challenges	3
Priority solutions co-identified by participants	4
<b>Session 2. Enabling agile and flexible action</b>	<b>5</b>
Challenges	5
Priority solutions co-identified by participants	5
<b>Session 3. Enabling mobility and livelihood shifts</b>	<b>6</b>
Challenges	6
Priority solutions co-identified by participants	7

# Climate Change Loss and Damage:

## 3rd Deliberative Dialogue Report

The Loss and Damage (L&D) discourse was initiated three decades ago, became institutionalised under the UNFCCC process through the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) in 2013 and was given formal recognition in the Paris Agreement in 2015. Since then, while L&D has been considered as an issue needing resolution in solidarity with the climate vulnerable and poorer countries under the international climate regime, there has been a significant gap in the understanding on the actions and support (technology, capacity and finance) needed to tackle L&D at national, local and community levels. This in turn is impeding constructive, concrete action on the ground in terms of appropriate policies, delivery mechanisms to provide finance and support.

Through a series of deliberative dialogues IIED and ICCCAD aim to support Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Development States (SIDS) and other actors from vulnerable developing countries address this issue by jointly exploring solutions to four critical questions: (i) Where and what type of action and support is needed?; (ii) What works and in which contexts?; (iii) How such action and support can be delivered?; and (iv) How it can be financed?. Through these deliberative dialogues, we hope collectively to:

- Create space for vulnerable developing countries and community members to tell their stories about L&D, communicate their priorities for action, share their solutions, and propose policy recommendations.
- Co-generate a shared narrative and collective vision for L&D action that is based on evidence and build a global coalition of allies committed to communicating that vision in formal and informal spaces.
- Establish a process that builds confidence between vulnerable developing countries (LDCs, SIDS), climate activists and developed countries on how to work differently together.

This process will culminate with the launch of a joint 'Political Roadmap' for action to avert, minimise and address L&D risks by 2030.

The [first deliberative dialogue](#) in this series was concluded on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021, considering the question of 'What are the realities of Climate Change Loss and Damage and what should we consider in responding?'. The [second deliberative dialogue](#) concluded on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021, looking at the kinds of action and support needed to tackle Loss and Damage.



The third deliberative dialogue in this series was held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021, following a meeting with an Advisors and Friends Group on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 where the issues and approach for the wider deliberative dialogue were consolidated. The third deliberative dialogue had participation from a range of stakeholders including vulnerable developing countries, CSOs, NGOs, developed countries and multilateral agencies.

## How can action and support be delivered to tackle Climate Change Loss and Damage?

To tackle Loss and Damage (L&D), it is important to understand how to deliver action and support to adequately address the dynamic and differentiated risks of L&D over time, and in diverse contexts. This is because the approach to delivery will differ depending on the context - in terms of underlying vulnerabilities and development deficits, which impacts the ability of individuals, community, and countries to respond to Loss and Damage. This deliberative dialogue will explore this through the following thematic areas:

### Session 1. Localised delivery capacity

#### Challenges

Loss and Damage impacts all layers of society, but those impacts will differ depending on the capabilities of that individual or community to respond to L&D threats or impacts. People of different genders, ages, ethnicities may be excluded from existing delivery and response mechanisms depending on their existing state of marginalisation and inequity. At the local level, responses which prioritise the following may better address the needs of these different groups in addressing L&D:

- *Inclusive, participatory institutions:* Decision making at the local level would ideally be supportive of the differentiated needs of different vulnerable groups. Institutions which allow for vulnerable groups to participate, and express their needs and concerns are better able to prepare for and address L&D impacts.
- *Access to information, technologies and tools:* Localised delivery of actions that address L&D will be most impactful when supported by access to context-specific information to support decision making, as well as technologies and tools to help generate that knowledge locally.

- *Devolved climate finance*: Localised delivery should be properly supported by access to devolved finance, which channels funds to implement the decisions made using that local-level information through adequately resourced inclusive participatory forums.
- *Support and guidance from local government, CSOs, and the private sector*: A ‘whole of society’ approach is often cited as crucial to ensuring that localised initiatives are fully supported in their delivery. Approaches that both draw on and enable local NGOs, CSOs, local government and private sector actors, can bolster local level efforts to address L&D impacts.

There are examples of localised delivery of measures that might be used to prepare for or respond to Loss and Damage. These include Bhutan’s Department of Local Governance (under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs) which is mandated to promote and strengthen local governance to coordinate development of the Local Government’s capacities and to bolster the inter-governmental coordination. From a civil society perspective, in Kibera, Nairobi, communities prepare for weather changes through [local community-led interpretations of the official weather forecasts](#) shared by text message and radio. Community reports explain the amount of expected rain, duration and whether a storage system for the water is needed. Medium-term weather reports are used to plan to clear open drainage lines in readiness for floods.

## Priority solutions co-identified by participants

**Integration of local with scientific knowledge on L&D can improve delivery of support to the most contextually relevant actions.** Communities are best able to identify their own risks and needs, when adequately supported by local government or community based organisations. For instance, some community based organisations associated with Slum Dwellers International are undertaking risk mapping with strong methodologies which are then used to contest the maps and databases held by the government. Integrating social and institutional vulnerabilities – not just climate – can also support decisions on what kind of action is needed, whether it would be appropriate in a given situation, and what kind of intuitions would be needed to engage for the delivery of that action.

*“The main starting point is ‘How can we recognize L&D at the community level?’”*

**The differentiated needs of vulnerable communities must be taken into account.** When taking on issues of capacity amongst vulnerable groups to understand, react to and plan for L&D events, the differentiated needs of groups that are particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. For instance, women’s groups may request better access to information and inclusion in decision making process, while youth groups that are more digitally connected may request decision support tools. Moreover, some marginalised groups may not have access to capacity building, planning and implementation of L&D efforts at the local level.

*“Organised groups of marginalised people are not just working for their own groups and own interests”*

**Formally connecting locally led organisations to the international decision making process** such as Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) could be one way of institutionalising the role of CBOs. This would enable CBOs and other forms of local organisation to represent their views, needs and priorities in various forums discussing the issues that impact them. This will also require institutional mechanisms and processes that give primacy to citizen participation in addressing Loss and Damage.

**Decentralising decision making power can foster more adaptive approaches.** Devolved decision making allows for more agility, adaptability, and flexibility on the ground in response to changing conditions. If communities are too distant from decision makers in planning processes, this weakens the flexibility of planning as it delays back-and-forth communication. However, if local governments or communities have autonomy, decision making capacity, and power, this increases their ability to operate in a way that is responsive and

*“Decision-makers go to communities, take information, go away and take decisions...but by the time they took their decisions, the communities are already facing other problems, as a result, these decisions are not in line with people’s needs”*

flexible to evolving needs. A network approach can also successfully distribute decision making power so that planning and operations are flexible to changing circumstances in different contexts and so that actions are context specific.

## Session 2. Enabling agile and flexible action

### Challenges

There is inherent uncertainty when planning in a context of climate change. Future risks are uncertain not only because climate hazards are evolving rapidly, but also due to the dynamic nature of vulnerability and exposure to climate risks, based on changes in society, economy, politics, ecosystems and development deficits. Making decisions to address L&D both now and under uncertain futures requires being agile and flexible in our planning and action, in order to deal with evolving risks.

One approach to integrating agility and flexibility into planning and action is to adopt a dynamic pathway decision approach. Traditionally planners develop a static plan that is based either on a single 'most likely' future, or is robust to most plausible future scenarios. However, such an approach is not equipped to manage change - if the future is different from the planner's expectations. Dynamic adaptive policy pathways<sup>1</sup> enable decision makers to evolve plans over time, based on new experience and insights. This approach maximises flexibility and attempts to keep options open and avoid 'lock-in'.

Adopting a dynamic adaptive pathway approach allows policymakers to make sequential decisions at specific decision points in time. The process involves developing several pathways that lay out sequences of possible actions and the triggers/tipping points that denote the conditions where an action is no longer adequate and must be changed. These pathways show when actions should be taken, and whether they should be postponed. Once the pathways are developed, an adaptive plan is then designed based on evaluating these pathways. This plan includes committing to short-term actions, keeping options open for the future, and establishing a monitoring system with contingency plans to keep to the preferred pathway under changing climate and socioeconomic conditions.

Dynamic adaptive pathway approaches and investments should also consider asset management methodologies, whereby the integrity of systems is assessed to understand how well they will withstand anticipated climate impacts. This overall resilience of systems to anticipated L&D is closely related to existing development deficits and structural vulnerabilities. There are several examples of this approach being applied in practice, including the [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan](#), which uses an adaptive pathways approach to manage tidal flood risk, and the pathways approach for climate change adaptation planning used by Trinidad & Tobago.

### Priority solutions co-identified by participants

**Cross sectoral coordination and policy harmonisation is crucial.** Adopting a dynamic pathways approach requires coordinating across sectors and overcoming pre-existing siloes. For example, developing an adaptive 5-year plan on water requires inputs from several sectors and actors. This implies continuous coordination across government agencies and departments, as well as with other actors. This coordinated approach enables these collaborative groups to revisit strategic plans over time to understand what has or has not worked, in order to improve upon them (as well as enabling them to mainstream climate actions across ministries). Such coordination between sectors should include links between scientists and governments, so that governments remain abreast of evolving scientific understanding of L&D risks.

*"We need to identify the cross sectoral nuances and linkages, the integration across divisions, and policy harmonization"*

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<sup>1</sup> Haasnoot et al (2013) Dynamic adaptive policy pathways: A method for crafting robust decisions for a deeply uncertain world <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S095937801200146X>

**Long-term asset management should incorporate risk of**

**L&D.** It is important to understand how investments (such as infrastructure) stand up to extreme events over time in terms of resilience. This means anticipating potential L&D and understanding how both existing and planned assets will withstand these anticipated risks. Considering investments and risks on long-term timescales allows for more flexible approaches to be taken now. Increasing the longevity of infrastructure is important, and such an approach to asset management can go beyond physical assets alone. The sustainable livelihoods framework identifies five types of livelihood asset: (1) physical capital; (2) financial capital; (3) natural capital; (4) social capital; (5) human capital. By applying an asset management approach that values all of these types of asset, non-economic L&D can be incorporated and a fuller understanding of the capacity to withstand anticipated risks in the long-term can be developed.

*“Infrastructure investment has to be seen as 100 year investments”*

**Risk information is vital for communities.** Developing plans that are agile and flexible to evolving risks requires knowledge of the risks themselves. Access to risk information should be available to people at all levels, including local actors. While scientific analyses may be available at national levels, they are not always provided at lower scales for affected communities. Ensuring communities are informed of potential risks can be achieved by data sharing and communication, by developing local capacity for risk analysis, or by training citizen scientists to observe and record data themselves to inform their decisions. People in affected communities are well-placed to recognise evolving problems and understand what needs to be done as they are experiencing them over time.

*“It seems that a dynamic process requires a high level of adaptive thinking, and swift actions, and a very risk informed community”*

**Flexibility in planning requires flexibility in financial management.**

There is a need for governments to repurpose finance and resources where needs arise unexpectedly, as was observed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to do so, governments must be open to flexible and agile approaches and retain some flexibility in financial management. This can be achieved by creating contingency funds targeted towards climate action, or by integrating decision pathways that allow them to modify the existing budget allocations to respond to crises and enable timely responses to changing circumstances.

*“The institutional inertia in the government.. institutions seem to struggle to adapt to reality”*

## Session 3. Enabling mobility and livelihood shifts

### Challenges

One mechanism that may be used to address L&D from climate change hazards (rapid and slow onset) is the relocation of households and communities. This can happen in different forms: government-planned relocation to move households out of harm's way, government-driven relocation as a post-disaster response strategy, involuntary migration or displacement of households in response to a disaster, or voluntary migration by households or individuals as an adaption or risk minimisation strategy.

Although planned relocation may be used to address L&D, it can lead to both economic and noneconomic (NELD) L&D. Communities may experience loss of place and identity, loss of culture, loss of social cohesion, and loss of vital social networks. Additionally, if communities get displaced or forced to migrate it may result in a loss of livelihood and require them to learn new skills for different livelihood options at destination sites. When communities have to stay in camps or shelters during climate hazards they have limited access to health services, clean water and sanitation, electricity, and livelihoods options, leading to further distress.

Migration and relocation are often viewed as last-resort options to address L&D. Nonetheless, they should receive adequate attention to be planned pre-emptively, with rehabilitation and recovery mechanisms in place that respond to NELD and promote sustainable livelihood shifts. Relocation programmes, rather than being quick-fix options, should be long-term solutions that are made to strengthen livelihoods, build resilience, improve the living standards of those affected, and reinvigorate a community's environment.

## Priority solutions co-identified by participants

**Community participation and involvement is essential.** For relocation programmes to be effective, they must be co-designed with the affected communities. Communities are more likely to be committed to a programme's implementation if their needs and priorities were incorporated in its formulation. The affected communities will therefore need to be included in the design, decision making and implementation of such programmes in order to ensure a sense of ownership. It is imperative that this engagement also includes the most marginalised and vulnerable within communities such as women, youth, disabled, and indigenous peoples. In permanent relocation programmes, it is essential that communities and households have the 'right to choose', rather than being forced as every household may have different circumstances and they should be allowed to exercise it, if they have other option. However, in case of households wanting to stay back under risky conditions where they may be exposed to climate impacts, awareness generation efforts could be organised with local CSOs/ NGOs to make them aware and also provide them all the relevant information they need for decision making.

*"... relocation involves major shifts...it requires co-creation/co-designing exercise where communities work together with governments to design it."*

**International community will need to play a pro-active role.** As loss and damage from climate related impacts continue to worsen, internal relocation will increasingly turn into international migration. Broad international acknowledgement that migration arising from climate change is (and will increasingly become) is important. It is imperative that international discussions take place on burden-sharing, cross-border coordination, and how safe and respectful migration pathways can be provided to climate impacted communities. To do this, the international community does not have to work from a blank slate -process and mechanism already exist for communities displaced due to conflicts, which can be modified, as suitable, to support communities displaced due to climate impacts.

*"...we do need to figure out a way to have organised international migration as it will happen. We need a frank discussion and burden sharing. It is a political issue."*

**Communities need to be taken towards opportunities, not distress.** Relocation can result in loss of place, loss of social networks, and loss of livelihoods. Often, displaced communities migrate towards large urban centres where they believe economic opportunities are most likely to exist (e.g. Dhaka in Bangladesh). However, these cities have limited carrying capacity, in terms of services and infrastructure, which results poor housing, health facilities and access to basic services for the migrants. To ensure that relocated persons and communities can thrive in new locations, they must be able to move towards opportunities and be incentivised to do so beyond the large capital cities. These possibilities and incentives enables individual households to make decisions about 'where they go' and 'why they go'. Young men and women, for example, can be offered education programmes such as scholarships in new locations. Families can be offered housing, training in new skills, economic opportunities, and alternative livelihoods. It is also important to offer portability of social protection

*"It's about the long term, not [the] immediate. The future generation of young girls and boys from climate affected low lying coastal zones – enabling them to be educated to move to these towns and take their parents when they want to go. This isn't forced or planned [relocation] but letting households make their own decisions."*

programmes. Making these available acts as an incentive that works to buffer some of the social and financial burdens of relocation.

**Relocation planning must be undertaken through ‘whole of society’ approach.** Relocation requires extensive planning that cannot be siloed and must be cross government (from national to local government) and cross sectoral (involving local institutional and organisations). The government has a role to play, for example, in effective spatial planning to avoid conflicts. Local NGO’s and CBO’s are ‘on-the-ground’ and often play a crucial role in organising communities and ensuring that the communities needs are taken into consideration—especially when the government or national institutions have capacity-deficits. For example, grassroots women federations and slum dweller network in the Philippines were able to support the relocation process of displaced communities due to flooding damages more effectively; similarly local NGOs in rural Bangladesh have often worked as catalysts in communities, playing a significant role in local-level disaster management.

*“Local institutions and community-based organisations are important to ensure good governance and support the community’s rehabilitation, settlement, and livelihood.”*

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A series of deliberative dialogues have been initiated to co-generate a shared narrative and practical solutions for tackling climate change loss and damages (L&D), with vulnerable developing countries, CSOs, NGOs, developed countries, and other key actors. The third event focused on identifying solutions on how action and support can be delivered to tackle L&D.



Event  
Materials

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## Climate change

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**Keywords:**  
Loss and damage, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDC) voices



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