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LOSS AND DAMAGE

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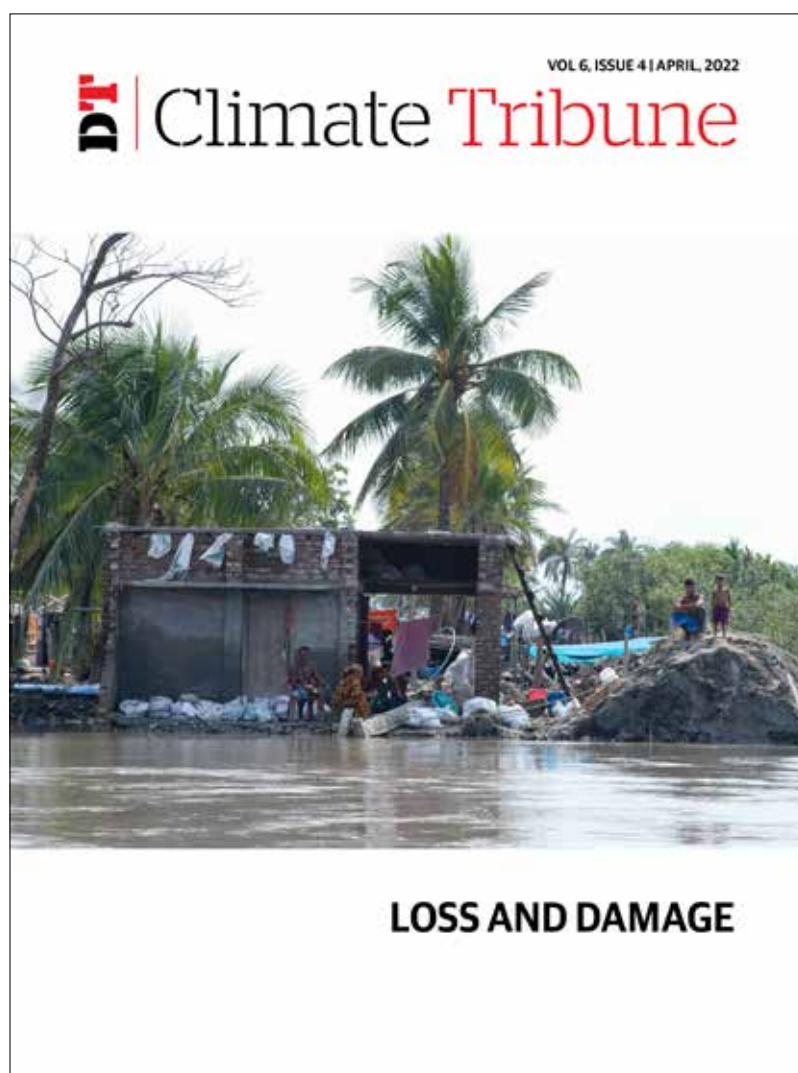
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COVER: MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

LOSS AND DAMAGE, WHAT'S NEXT FROM SCOTLAND?



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Nicola Sturgeon

For too long the issue of addressing Loss and Damage has remained in the margins of climate negotiations. The Warsaw International Mechanism and the Santiago Network have begun to assist with knowledge exchange and capacity building, yet distinct finance for addressing Loss and Damage has remained largely off the table while progress was made at COP26 with the establishment of the Glasgow Dialogues, many countries and activists had hoped for more through the creation of a finance facility.

If the world is to tackle the worst impacts of climate change then progress must be made at a much quicker pace - a fact driven home by the recent Working Group II IPCC report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. It is clear now that the effects of climate change faced by human society and nature are even worse than previously thought. Projected impacts and related losses and damages are likely to escalate with

every increment of warming.

Scotland has sought to lead by example and at COP26 became the first developed nation to dedicate finance to addressing Loss and Damage. Our £2 million commitment was followed by €1 million from the Government of Wallonia and \$3 million from philanthropic foundations. These pledges are small given the scale of the challenge, but I hope they prove an important first step in unlocking further finance and ambition. They also demonstrate the role that governments of all levels as well as non-state actors hold in addressing the climate crisis -- a role we hope to maximise by mobilising within our own networks, including through the Under2 Coalition.

Looking beyond COP26, in order to make progress on Loss and Damage it is important to focus on expanding the global evidence base and capacity for addressing both economic and non-economic losses and damages, through projects, research, knowledge exchange and crucially by hearing from and centring the voices of communities facing such impacts.

Demonstrating practical progress and tangible results could inform the establishment of a global finance facility which I hope might be an outcome of the Glasgow Dialogues.

Scotland can also draw upon this global evidence base. Climate change impacts such as sea level rise and coastal erosion present a real danger to coastal communities and heritage sites around the world, including here in Scotland. This is why we invested in research as part of the Dynamic Coast project to better understand Scotland's coast and have committed £12m over this parliament in coastal change adaptation. However, we recognise that we also have a lot to learn from coastal and island partners across the world too.

“ Scotland has committed to playing a convening role on loss and damage, creating space for shared learning, collaboration and setting a common agenda ”

We know the impacts of climate change are and will be unequally distributed across the globe, which is why we must look at the ways we can stand in solidarity with the most affected communities in the Global South. As a first step, the Scottish Government has partnered with the Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF) to directly support some of the world's most vulnerable communities to recover from climate-induced losses and damages, to tackle structural inequalities and to build resilience to further climate impacts. Through this programme we can help address the needs of communities suffering the acutest impacts, yet who have done the least to cause this climate crisis. At the same time, we can generate new considerations of how the global community can best support measures to address loss and damage by demonstrating what to fund and how. Vitaly, this is not just a partnership with Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF) but also with beneficiaries. Their views and needs will

shape our work if we hope to establish solutions that are both context-specific and long-lasting. This approach to involving communities and people affected by the crisis must be a key part of all loss and damage work. Progress cannot be made without centring the voices, experience and evidence of those most vulnerable to climate change impacts and ensuring that they help design solutions.

Within the Scottish Government's Climate Justice Fund programme, which includes our work on loss and damage, we have committed to embedding the three pillars of justice. These are: procedural justice, through participation; distributive justice, by reaching the most vulnerable and most impacted; and transformative justice, by enabling local people to actively engage in decision-making and advocacy for their own sustainable development.

To successfully channel funding to where it is most needed we must be able to clearly assess both where economic and non-economic losses and damages have occurred, and what funding will be required to address them. A framework that can comprehensively assess this need, and can be applied across different countries, would evaluate the impact of climate change-induced hazards and could support the rapid deployment of funding. National, subnational and regional ownership will be key: supporting national programming and channelling international funding through local plans and principles could support capacity-building at all levels. Sharing plans, aims and learnings, and using our voices and platforms to advocate for action, will bring this to fruition more quickly.

Scotland has committed to playing a convening role on loss and damage, creating space for shared learning, collaboration and setting a common agenda. In February I chaired a roundtable, alongside the Zambian Minister for Green Economy and Environment the Hon. Collins Nzovu, which brought together leaders and experts, including International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), from governments, civil society, and academia and youth organisations. I was personally hugely energised by the collective expression of commitment to support the progress of the UNFCCC processes, including the Santiago Network and the Glasgow Dialogue, and to mobilising on other fronts to improve the evidence base, research direction and access for the most vulnerable. Key to that mobilisation was the need to draw on existing knowledge, to maximise the role of non-Parties in generating innovation and, most importantly, centring those affected in both dialogue and evidence.

The roundtable was our first step in turning talk into action. As we look to COP27 and beyond, I look forward to working alongside many new and existing allies as the movement against climate injustice grows. ■

Nicola Sturgeon is Scotland's first female First Minister and the first woman to lead any of the devolved UK administrations.

LOSSES AND DAMAGES IN A CLIMATE CHANGED WORLD



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Saleemul Huq, Ian Burton, and Simon Anderson

Loss and damage from anthropogenic climate change is now a rapidly expanding debate on climate justice and injustices. The strong currents of discussion at COP26 in Glasgow last year were mostly below the surface of the formal negotiations.

The loss and damage debate has moved on and holds that there is no longer room for any serious doubt that anthropogenic climate change has been occurring for some time, and that the richer and more industrialised countries are largely responsible.¹ Climate change has been, is, and will be, very much differentiated in terms of responsibilities for action. Nevertheless, the responsibilities are “common”, so what to do?

The truth is that we are living in a climate changed world. The recent IPCC Working Group 1 Report² makes the case with unequivocal evidence that climate change impacts can be attributed to current global average temperature increases of 1.1oC. Hence, every single extreme weather event from now on can reasonably be considered to be worse than they otherwise would have been in the absence of human-induced global average temperature rise. We are dealing with the impacts of a 1.1oC rise that has already happened and this fact takes over in importance from efforts to stay below 1.5 oC (although that remains important).

The IPCC AR6 Working Group II report³ provides a powerful synthesis of evidence of the plethora of losses and damages due to climate change. Extreme weather events are

¹ This is the case if we focus on total emissions now; or emissions per capita, or cumulative emissions over time (beginning in 1800).

² Sixth Assessment Report (ipcc.ch)

³ WG2AR6_FD_TS_FINAL (ipcc.ch)

direct and indirect drivers of migration and displacement. Climate change has influenced changes in temporary, seasonal or permanent migration causing economic losses that undermine household resources and savings, limit mobility and compound exposure and vulnerability. Larger economic losses are observed in sectors with high direct climate exposure (including agriculture, forestry, fishery, energy and tourism). Climate change is estimated to have slowed trends of decreasing economic inequality. With even low levels of global warming hundreds of millions of people in regions with high exposure and vulnerability face losses and damages to lives and livelihoods. These losses and damages will be concentrated among the poorest vulnerable populations.

The use of the term 'loss and damage' (which we strongly support) has been highly politicised. However, the term is immaterial in dealing with climate change impacts, where the engagement of all major stakeholders is needed. We need a mapping of all these key stakeholders, and to identify where they are on a spectrum from investigation to action.

Thinking back to the days when we were concerned with 'dangerous climate change' and particularly Stephen Schneider's work on acknowledging low frequency, high impact events, it appears that what is now recognised as climate loss and damage has a basis in decision-makers acceptance of likely collateral damage of climate impacts. And probably an under-estimation of how high the related costs would be.

The ways that loss and damage is framed currently for the purposes of UNFCCC based negotiations and for advocating ways to address loss and damage does not meet many stakeholders' expectations. Researchers will need to help find a more coherent and accessible replacement framing. There needs to be greater clarity on the distinctions of economic and non-economic impacts, the linkages and cumulative/residual impacts of sudden-onset with slow-onset climate. Plus, boundaries between climate adaptation activities and measures to address loss and damage are needed to convince stakeholders that these two are not conflated.

The conceptual/analytical framework we use for working on loss and damage needs to include distributional elements across class, age, gender, livelihood categories, different cultural heritages, etc. A Climate Justice Resilience Fund supported work has established, a given climate change impact may be easily adaptable for one set of people but cause irrevocable losses for another, even within a given geography or community.

Researchers and actors in the policy discourse need to recognize how personal and traumatic loss and damage is in many cases. This is important when we are looking from global, nationally and local levels. Top-down funding streams

to address loss and damage are unlikely to be able to address these aspects adequately.

Some people express doubts that climate adaptation and loss and damage are different. But this is symptomatic of taking a normative (populist) approach to climate action, whereby adaptation is naively seen as a tide that will lift all boats above rising climate risks and impacts. This year's scientific papers from Siri Eriksen et al.⁴, and Lisa Schipper et al.⁵ adaptation failure and mal-adaptation respectively have started to question the value of the normative approach. Addressing loss and damage needs to be different, with a focus on the marginalised and not accepting people being left behind.

“ The conceptual/analytical framework we use for working on loss and damage needs to include distributional elements across class, age, gender, livelihood categories, different cultural heritages, etc ”

Then we get to the need for pragmatic action for addressing L&D. To simplify what is a complicated interaction we can use a temporal rule of thumb approach to distinguish addressing loss and damage from adaptation. Put simply, addressing L&D is ex-post, and adaptation ex-ante. But is addressing loss and damage really just a question of safety nets that kick in to get people back to a position (in terms of livelihoods, assets and resources) similar to where they were prior to the event that caused the loss and damage? And pragmatically can we do this using tried and tested disaster risk management approaches?

⁴ Adaptation interventions and their effect on vulnerability in developing countries: Help, hindrance or irrelevance? - ScienceDirect

⁵ Maladaptation: When Adaptation to Climate Change Goes Very Wrong: One Earth (cell.com)

Climate adaptation is a broad, wide and encompassing term. In dealing with floods decades ago we used to call it “human adjustment”. It included actions and policies both before and after the flood events. The level of mortality and morbidity, and economic damage (tangible and intangible) and socio-cultural depend upon the anticipatory choices made or neglected. These “impacts” are therefore largely the result of human actions or choices. We advocate for the abolition of the term “natural disaster” because while, for example, the flood event can be seen as largely natural, the causes of damage were human actions, choices, policies. Responses to climate-related disaster events are a form of adaptation (human adjustment) because the amount and

“ Nations are retreating into their own narrow and short-sighted interests. How can this be turned around? ”

the kind of the post-disaster relief and rehabilitation, and reconstruction, greatly affect the impacts that would be felt from the next disaster. “Build back better” is too simple if it implies that it is always right to build back. There should always be consideration of building back differently or of relocation i.e. moving elsewhere to safer and less risky or exposed locations. The fact that this is not done or not even considered sometimes (perhaps often) leads to an increase in the damage potential from future events in the same location. Thus, disaster risk reduction by anticipatory adaptation often takes the form of incidentally increasing risk.

A disaster risk reduction approach that conceals actions and decisions that add to risks is termed disaster risk creation.

The disaster research community is investigating DRC in terms of its causes and explanations. An early conclusion is that disaster risk creation is a deep-seated problem driven by the standard and conventional approaches to development. It is a systemic problem and needs to be addressed as such.

From a climate justice perspective, if we dedicate ourselves to endless attempts to define, measure, and attribute impacts (losses and damages) we risk missing the point that it is the political and economic system that is wrong and misguided by ideological allegiance to neo-liberal, unbridled and under-regulated capitalism.

We do not suggest giving up on the processes of thinking through and attempting to develop effective ways of dealing with loss and damage (the normative approach), but we do think this has to be combined and linked with a broader systemic rethinking. This can include a focus on the marginalized and not accepting people being left behind. But it also needs to ask fundamental questions about the international and global system.

Climate change (and associated extreme events) is one of an increasing number of global issues that cannot be solved by each country adopting actions and policies directed to its own short-term self-interests leading us to a global tragedy of the commons.


Look at the response to the Covid pandemic. The countries (and the private sector corporations) that created and had access to the vaccines, protected their own populations (and corporate profits) at the expense of addressing the global problem. The result has been the emergence of new variants which have come back to adversely impact the privileged. Climate and Covid are two leading examples (for the moment) of a general process. There are and will be others and more. The international system of “governance” is going in the wrong direction.

Nations are retreating into their own narrow and short-sighted interests. How can this be turned around? There are signs (like the green new deal) that this is slowly gaining recognition. But the magnitude of the problem is huge. Surely a transformation is coming. Will it be the apocalypse or can something constructive emerge? We need to design climate adaptation and ways to address losses and damages, while not deflecting attention away from the underlying systemic and roots causes of the ‘global bads’ that currently pollute and litter our planet. ■

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CLIMATE VULNERABLE NATIONS STAND UP TO MOBILIZE FUNDING FACILITIES FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE

MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Md Abul Kalam Azad

Loss and damage from human induced climate change has been around as early as 1991, when the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) called for a mechanism that would help to compensate countries affected by the rise in sea levels. Despite its long lingering history, why does the issue of L&D stand out in today's climate scenario?

Heavy rains swept across western Germany in July 2021, and had given rise to horrendous flash floods. Dams threatened to break while electricity and cellphone networks were shut down in what became one of the region's worst natural catastrophes in recent generations. What happens if developed countries don't put their money for such losses and damages? If we raise our voice for L&D, will it take share from adaptation?

These questions lead us to ask further whether we could define loss and damage yet. Loss and damage is simply

the adverse impact of climate change. Climate change has an impact when adaptation to it, and mitigation of it, are unable to avoid negative consequences. The UNFCCC has not precisely defined the term "loss and damage," mainly because it was negotiated in the 1990s when the impact of climate change was more a hypothesis. Now, of course, it is a reality that affects billions of people worldwide.

L&D is now generally understood to encompass both sudden-onset impacts -- the results of extreme weather events like cyclones, droughts and heatwaves -- as well as slow-onset impacts -- such as the repercussions of sea-level rise, desertification, glacial retreat, land degradation, ocean acidification, and salinization. According to UN climate negotiations, the term "loss and damage" is used to refer to the aftermaths of climate change that are beyond the ability of people to adapt to, or when solutions exist but a community lacks the resources to take advantage of them.

Even though a formal L&D mechanism has been

“ Let 2022 be the year when the issue of L&D from human-induced climate change is recognized with utmost urgency and importance ”

established with the Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage (WIM), unclear language leaves considerable leeway to its interpretation -- some countries frame L&D as residual risk when mitigation is insufficient and when the full potential of adaptation is not met, while others frame it as the residual losses and damages after mitigation and adaptation choices have been made. Nevertheless, L&D has secured its place in Article 8 of the Paris Agreement, where it is clearly indicated to be a standalone pillar of the climate change arena, separate from adaptation and mitigation. The \$100 billion per year finance commitment under the Paris Agreement is specific to adaptation and mitigation and does not include L&D.

The latest IPCC Working Group II report highlights large gaps between adaptation action taken and what is actually needed in many regions, and considering the scope of climate change impacts, actions on implementing adaptation are insufficient. In this context, and in addition to a lack of funding, political commitment, reliable information, and a sense of urgency, the most vulnerable people and ecosystems are being hit hardest by climate change.

Vulnerable communities are disproportionately exposed to experience losses and damages due to a lack of finance for climate adaptation efforts, or because they may live in areas that are experiencing climate impacts beyond what adaptation can offer protection from. Instead of labeling L&D to liability and compensation, it is important to tackle the issue and shift the paradigm towards solidarity, where the scientific community can best prove the case by giving uncompromising evidence of attribution of human-induced climate change resulting in losses beyond adaptation efforts.

Therefore, it has become clear that L&D is not the same as adaptation and requires its own funding stream. Adaptation finance can reduce losses and damages but does not cover all funding needs. Financial support for L&D is, therefore, additional to adaptation funding, and also differently structured. For example, for responding to damage caused by extreme weather events, finance needs to be available at short notice.

L&D financing needs to be discussed and tackled at a political, rather than negotiating, level. In this regard, the Government of Bangladesh has an important role to play as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the current chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), which is a high-level political forum of 55 of the most vulnerable developing countries, where the agenda of L&D is a priority.

The CVF was launched over 10 years ago, by then-President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives, and has been operating since then with a different head of government in charge of it for a two-year tenure. The current chair of CVF is Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, whose term is scheduled in the next 2 months this year, and the president of Ghana will take over the position. However, Bangladesh's involvement with the CVF will continue for two more terms as a member of the governing Troika of past chairs who continue to support the current head of the forum.

Climate vulnerable countries have been adversely affected by a series of most extreme climate disasters during this pandemic; therefore, L&D has emerged as a significant concern for the CVF countries, and we need to take substantial result-oriented steps urgently to address this subject.

Under the current Presidency of the CVF, several initiatives and dialogues have taken place. The Expert Advisory Group of the CVF had convened an Expert Consultation on the L&D agenda in August 2021, where eminent speakers put forth their ideas of how to mobilize action on the way to COP26.

“ One of the most recent and applaudable developments under the CVF and V20 Joint Multi-Donor Fund has been the set up of a new funding window to support the communities suffering the climate impacts in CVF countries, and get support to address the impacts of climate change after they have occurred ”

Subsequently, a number of Regional Dialogues followed through, the result of which was used to formulate the Dhaka-Glasgow-Declaration, which outlined the key asks of the CVF member countries from COP26.

Another important group of actors is the Vulnerable 20 Group which now consists of the finance ministers of all 55 CVF countries, chaired by the Finance Minister of Bangladesh. One of the highly innovative actions taken by the CVF finance ministers was the creation of the CVF and V20 Joint Multi-Donor Fund, with an initial funding from the CVF countries themselves, and then further contributions from international foundations. The fund is managed by the United Nations on behalf of the CVF and V20.

One of the most recent and applaudable developments under the CVF and V20 Joint Multi-Donor Fund has been the set up of a new funding window to support the communities suffering the climate impacts in CVF countries, and get support to address the impacts of climate change after they have occurred. As the world has now entered the new era of losses and damages, the CVF and V20 fund is now the first UN fund to explicitly work on climate-related L&D, which will serve as a programme of assistance to the victims of climate change that welcomes contributions from others in the spirit of solidarity, and without invoking any liability or compensation.

V20 finance ministries are already allocating significant and growing proportions of our public budgets to fund L&D in our affected communities. Thus, to further strengthen efforts, a study to build evidence on existing public expenditure in V20 countries is a welcome step. We believe this will support the channeling of funds from the V20 Loss and Damage Financing Facility, as well as inform the Global Shield initiated by the G7 Presidency of Germany.

It is expected that this L&D fund and other programmes of the CVF and V20 can kick-start both funding and actions to address L&D from climate change, which might have a positive influence on the upcoming discussions on setting up a facility for financing L&D at COP27. In the absence of international support to help communities recover from climate disasters, the facility aims to practically demonstrate why it is needed and how it can help affected communities.

The V20 is expecting to present its facility design at COP27 climate talks in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt in November. By then, it hopes that some of the funds would have been disbursed to communities hit by climate impacts in V20 countries as part of pilot projects, taking the idea forward to stand as the center of discussions during the mandated Glasgow Dialogue and COP27 and beyond.

Let 2022 be the year when the issue of L&D from human-induced climate change is recognized with utmost urgency and importance, and governments and civil societies around the world rise to the occasion for the victims of climate change. ■

Md Abul Kalam Azad is the Special Envoy of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Presidency of the Government of Bangladesh and Commissioner of the Global Commission on BiodiverCities by 2030 of the World Economic Forum (WEF).



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

ADDRESSING LOSS AND DAMAGE IS AN EQUITY AND JUSTICE ISSUE

Harjeet Singh, Sindra Sharma, Dharini Parthasarathy

As the third pillar of action under the Paris Agreement, efforts to address Loss and Damage have been primarily framed as a politically divisive yet technically focused domain in the climate regime. In reality, it is the very essence of climate justice based on the economic and non-economic damages disproportionately suffered by communities, particularly in poor and vulnerable countries and Small Island States -- communities who did the least to create the climate crisis in the first place.

As the global carbon budget shrinks and the planet continues to warm, the 2022 IPCC Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability report points out that both developed and developing countries will experience significant climate-induced devastation in the near future. However, the report also shows that poorer nations, made more vulnerable by geopolitics and their economic condition, have a significantly

reduced ability to withstand these devastating impacts. Addressing Loss & Damage is, at its heart, an equity and justice issue.

The weight of historical responsibility for climate change lingers over developed countries. Despite this, they still refuse finance to address Loss & Damage and, when they do, it is via the inadequate market-based instruments such as insurance, which can further deepen indebtedness of the most vulnerable communities and countries. We see, instead, a preference by developed countries to conflate the quite different ideas of Loss & Damage with Adaptation. Ironically, the latter's finance is chronically insufficient and delayed, driving up the cost of Loss & Damage even further.

Over the years, civil society organizations have been working diligently to put Loss & Damage in the forefront and centre of the climate agenda. As one of the oldest and largest global networks focused on fighting the climate emergency, for years, CAN has worked through the Adaptation and Loss & Damage working group with members and allies

“Our political leaders can no longer ignore that we live in the era of Loss & Damage and extreme climate impacts”

to ensure that Loss & Damage is viewed within the lens of rights, justice, and equity. CAN allies and members such as La Ruta Del Clima, CIEL, ActionAid, and SEI have applied equity and rights-based approaches to demonstrate the wide reaching impacts of climate damages (including on race, gender, class, age, and economic well-being) and built the case for the moral obligation for new and additional finance to address Loss & Damage. Notably in 2019, CAN laid out a set of key asks for Parties to address at COP25 in Madrid which included a “financing facility” under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to deliver new and additional finance to address this core issue.

Through 2020 and 2021, with this vast background of work and with Covid-19 further exposing significant global inequality and wealthy nations again lagging behind on their climate commitments, CAN as a network came together to declare that delivering on Loss and Damage finance would be the litmus test for success of COP26.

Although the UK Presidency refused to put Loss & Damage finance high on the COP26 agenda, relegating it to a side

event and some informal discussions, through a sustained campaign from CAN and other partners it was forced into the mainstream narrative and became the issue of COP26.

From political advocacy work, to media outreach, social media campaigns and the World We Want campaign, CAN and partners fore-fronted voices of the impacted communities, and galvanized support for a finance facility for Loss & Damage. A narrative grounded in justice and equity was delivered to the world. This resulted in Loss & Damage trending on social media platforms and was picked up by prominent news outlets and ultimately seen as the make or break deal for COP26 “Pay Up for Loss and Damage” became the rallying cry for justice through the streets of Glasgow, and found new support among local activists who called on rich polluting countries to pay up for climate damages.

Within the negotiations developed countries blocked a proposal, first put forward by Fiji and AOSIS, for COP26 to have an outcome on Loss & Damage finance. With pressure mounting on the outside, ultimately the biggest negotiation block of G77 + China supported the proposal to establish the “Glasgow Loss and Damage Facility” as a standalone facility under the financial mechanism of the convention.

Between these two large country blocs, nearly 5 billion people of the developing world demanded support for the unavoidable climate impacts that they are least resourced to cope with.

Political momentum was further galvanized by the government of the host of COP26, Scotland, committing two million pounds towards addressing Loss & Damage. This was a remarkable display of moral clarity in stark contrast to other developed countries such as the USA, the EU, UK, Australia who consistently blocked discussions on such support.

Whilst COP26 failed to deliver the Facility and settled on the Glasgow Dialogue as a compromise, it has changed the landscape of the climate agenda. Our political leaders can no longer ignore that we live in the era of Loss & Damage and extreme climate impacts. Together with efforts on mitigation, support for those facing unavoidable climate impacts cannot be reduced to a footnote.

The scale of mobilization and the push for finance for Loss & Damage from civil society at COP26 was a resounding success and has opened a clear path to the delivery of finance after 30 long years when the call was first raised by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in 1991.

CAN, along with our civil society allies, will continue to advocate for establishing the Loss and Damage Finance Facility at COP27 to demand justice for the communities facing the climate crisis. ■

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EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS TO REDUCE LOSS AND DAMAGE IN RIVERINE CHAR COMMUNITIES IN BANGLADESH

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS AND THEIR TRANSFORMATIONAL
APPROACH TO SAVING LIVES.



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

“If households could get advance warning of any upcoming flood, they could adapt their cropping systems to avoid major losses”

Tamanna Rahman and Colin McQuistan

Practical Action has been working on flood risk management for many years and is interested to explore with local people what can be done to reduce the losses and damages as a result of flooding hitting the poorest, and the most vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. In 2018, we started working with the flood vulnerable communities of Faridpur in south-central Bangladesh. Faridpur district falls under the lower Ganges river floodplain and is bounded by four major rivers, the Padma, Madhumati, Arial Khan, and Kumar. Our work with the flood prone communities in the four Unions of Decree Char and North Channel under Sadar Upazila; Char Nasirpur, and Dheukhali under Sadarpur Upazila revealed that these communities are recurrently flooded during the monsoon and are exposed to high flood risk.

To support these communities and build their resilience to these frequent flood events, Practical Action is using the “Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities” (FRMC)

tool, developed by “Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance” (ZFRA) to undertake holistic assessments of the resilience of these communities in real time. Based on the information collected, we then engaged in participatory action planning efforts to strengthen their resilience. From our initial data and working with these communities throughout the pandemic, it is clear that building flood resilience is about more than just protecting these communities from the flood waters. It is about reducing the risk of flood occurrence, being prepared for future floods and being able to respond to and recover from floods as quickly as possible. Increasing flood resilience therefore requires a holistic approach that improves the social, human, natural, and financial as well as physical capacities of these communities.

Based on the results of the FRMC rolled out in 8 communities, we found that the most vulnerable groups are the elderly, farmers, women, and person with disabilities. In terms of flood impacts, crop losses are the biggest losses experienced. The flood directly impacts the field, washing away young seedlings, waterlogging fields and preventing the harvest of crops. The flood waters often disrupt access to markets, preventing farmers from accessing external inputs and selling assets in markets where they can obtain better prices. One of the biggest impacts reported by many households was that they were forced to sell assets, livestock, tools, and equipment to their neighbours to survive, thus being forced to take lower prices than they could get at nearby markets. This is an erosive coping strategy, as this sale of equipment or livestock would need to be replaced and often took households at least 2-3 years to recoup their losses.

“We face loss of crops mainly during flood and if we receive early warnings of possible flood before the seasons it will be more helpful to effectively plan for the right crop for cultivation.” - voices from Farmer group

If households could get advance warning of any upcoming flood, they could adapt their cropping systems to avoid major losses. For example, they could delay seeding if a flood was expected late in the season and instead create nursery beds on floating platforms to allow them to rapidly plant out their seedlings when the flood water recedes. But these floating beds are time consuming to produce and are an additional burden to the family, so farmers would like to know when they are needed, thus optimising their time, energy and resources to maximise their productivity.

The flood early warning in Bangladesh is generated and provided by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and is also shared by the Department of Disaster Management (DDM). In many instances, these warnings don’t reach the vulnerable communities living in the remotest areas. While the present cyclone Early Warning Systems (EWS) employs signal-based warning processes, there is no similar forms of

“As a consequence of changing climate, floods are becoming more frequent, lasting longer and becoming more difficult to predict”

mechanisms in place for floods. There is also a lack of location-specific impact-based EWS that reaches local stakeholders.

Practical Action has collaborated with FFWC in disseminating the early warning to the most vulnerable communities. During an impending disaster, we obtain information from FFWC via their website or email. We then convert the warning into a comprehensible, contextualized voice messages and disseminate it in the communities where we work. Despite the Flood Early Warning System (EWS) being an important component to reduce flood risk in Bangladesh, the EWS itself is not a holistic solution. As our study indicates, it is not adequate to just provide communities with the warning message, it is vital to also provide them with actionable information, informing them what they need to do to respond to the flood in the best way to minimise their losses and damages. In response to this, we have also installed Digital Weather Boards for early warning and weather Information at the Union Parishad's digital centre, which is maintained by local entrepreneurs. As a result, local communities become aware of an impending

flood and take precautionary measures. Additionally, our pool of trained local resilience agents assists in disseminating the warning by visiting households, sharing warning through public announcement via mic in each local area, and advising people on flood preparedness and response.

“Earlier, we were unable to prepare for floods since we rarely received flood early warnings in the Char areas. But now, the early warning message helps us immensely, as every member of my family is safe this year, despite the pandemic and flood.”-voice from community

As a consequence of changing climate, floods are becoming more frequent, lasting longer and becoming more difficult to predict. There are limitations to what the local communities can do with only early warning information. These communities are approaching the practical limits to adaptation and for many, they are already facing the difficult choice of changing livelihoods, and for some relocating to live elsewhere. To minimise flood-related losses and damages, we must enhance the lead time and forecast accuracy. Further collaborative research, deeper scientific knowledge, and collaborative efforts from the National level stakeholders is required in this regard.

This story of loss and damage avoided by EWS is a transformational approach, with the EWS being a critical component that allows an informed response. But transformational adaptation must not be seen as a silver bullet; we must avoid the mistake of the resilience movement, a movement that offered solutions but failed to be clear on what these solutions involved, who benefited and who ended up paying for them. Transformational adaptation is about people giving something up, losing some aspect of their home, their community, their culture, or livelihood; it is imposed on them by the climate emergency and is therefore no longer a choice. Transformational adaptation must learn from the resilience backlash, it is about climate justice, it is about developed countries and polluting economies taking responsibility for their actions and using the “polluter pays principle” to compensate those who are currently paying the price for climate inaction. ■

Tamanna Rahman is the Project Manager for the Zurich Flood Resilience Project in Bangladesh. As part of the global alliance she is managing the planning, implementation and advocacy works in light of building resilience of the flood vulnerable communities in Bangladesh. Tamanna is interested in resilience thinking, sustainability, international and local dynamics of development interventions. Tamanna can be reached at tamanna.rahman@practicalaction.org.bd. Colin McQuistan is the Head of Climate and Resilience at Practical Action, providing technical support and oversight to development programmes in climate vulnerable developing countries, in South Asia, Latin America and Africa. Colin's interests are in systems approaches, natural capital, sustainability and development and Colin has been following loss and damage in the climate negotiations since 2015. Colin can be reached at colin.mcquistan@practicalaction.org.uk

PHOTO STORY



After losing their land to river erosion, Khan (80) and his wife have to camp out in the open with the materials to rebuild their house. Hashail, Munshiganj District.



It rains after six months during monsoon, a woman tries to cover herself from rain while grazing cattle in a field at Shayamnagar, Sathkhira.



Shahebanu (18) stands inside her straw made flood affected house. She got married recently and her husband is a farmer. The family is here trapped in the flood water for more than twelve days and couldn't move to any dry place or cyclone shelter. Food, drinking water and shelter are always difficult to get during the flood time. They also haven't received any relief from anybody yet. The family informed the photographer that- You are the one who came first to see us on this remote island.' Chimari, Kurigram.



Bangladesh cyclone affected people return home after receiving relief goods in Haringhata, and Patharghata, Bangladesh 23 November 2007. Millions have been suffering in remote areas for food and drinking water shortage while extensive relief works are yet to be started. The death count by non-government aid workers is around 3,900, with reports of more bodies floating in the marshes.



A Bangladeshi cyclone victim in front of her makeshift house near the sea shore at Padma after surviving from the cyclone Sidr, Patharghata, Bangladesh 22 November 2007.



Bangladeshi boys carry television and a radio to a shelter center after they lost their house due to cyclone Sidr that hit at Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh, 19 November 2007. Cyclone Sidr, which struck late on Thursday, brought winds of up to 240km/h (150mph) and a tidal surge of several metres. It destroyed or damaged tens of thousands of homes, brought down power lines and wiped out vital crops.



Villagers fishing in a canal after most of the ponds were submerged in floodwaters. Sariakandi, Bogra District.



Muslims attend noon prayer inside a flooded mosque. Gaibandha District.



Ablutions before prayers: Abu Bakkor (62) inside his flooded home. This is the water that he can use for ablution. Dakatpara, Sariakandi, Bogra District.



A Bangladeshi family travels to a safer location amid flood waters as water enters new areas after the cyclone Aila hit in the south-west parts at Harinagar, Satkhira, Bangladesh 28 May 2009. More than 100 people including children and women died and thousands were injured during the cyclone, according to the local reports.

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GENDER INEQUALITIES

ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES OF LOSSES AND DAMAGES

GENDER IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF DISCUSSIONS OVER CLIMATE ACTION



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Simon Anderson

In the parlance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “losses and damages” refer broadly to harm from observed climate change impacts (past and current) and projected risks (future). The recent IPCC AR6 WGII report states that “observed mortality and losses due to floods and droughts are much greater for regions with high vulnerability and vulnerable populations such as the poor, women, children, Indigenous Peoples, and the elderly due to historical, political, and socio-economic inequities.”

Further, “the intersection of gender with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, Indigenous identity, age, disability, income, migrant status, and geographical location often compound vulnerability to climate change impacts, exacerbate inequity and create further injustice.” So scientific evidence confirms what we know from lived experience that

losses and damages from climate change exacerbates gender inequalities.

Challenging the dominant narrative

Construction of climate action discourse and policy, including ways of addressing losses and damages, is often done in gender-neutral terms but is dominated by largely masculine norms. So, the discourse tends to focus on technocratic and managerial approaches that are gender “neutral” (often gender-blind) assuming that all people can be affected by or benefit from policies and strategies in the same way. But people who face losses and damages due to exposure and vulnerability are heterogeneous and in distinct positions with regard to power relations. Gender-neutral policies and approaches can end up in outcomes that discriminate against disadvantaged groups such as women.

Seeing women as inherently climate vulnerable is actually part of the gender-blind discourse. It ignores the context-

specific aspect of the gender relations and climate change linkages. When this informs policies and interventions to address losses and damages, without a nuanced understanding of context-specific underlying factors and gender power imbalances, it is problematic.

Focusing on “women” instead of gender relations disconnects the analysis and intervention from the gendered socio-economic, cultural and institutional ground upon which women’s marginalisation is generated and sustained. It also puts to one side the need for men’s agency and changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours in achieving greater gender equality.

We know that women and girls are disadvantaged by gender inequalities in many ways and circumstances. That is why we have SDG5 (gender equality). A result of these prevalent disadvantages is that the distribution of climate vulnerability is often gender inequitable. In addition, the recognition of women and girls’ specific climate vulnerability is often poor, and their participation in climate resilience response decision making is deliberately or inadvertently avoided. Most importantly the redistributive actions necessary to address climate vulnerability and losses and damages often do not reach women and girls effectively.

If gendered losses and damages are symptoms, what is the treatment?

Addressing losses and damages in gender-responsive ways should include actions to correct the gender inequality and stereotyping which pervade climate action interventions and that are likely to affect mechanisms to address losses and damages. Also, we need to develop strategies that enable women to inform, shape, and lead ways to address losses and damages.

A recent study for the Adaptation Fund¹ concluded that analyses of multi-dimensional and intersecting gendered vulnerabilities to climate change is essential for effective risk management for marginalized and vulnerable groups. The authors conclude that intersectional approaches help move from a singular focus on risk management towards more gender-responsive and transformative approaches.

A gender-responsive approach to addressing losses and damages should focus on three interdependent domains² :

- Redistribution through policies and programmes that enable women and girls to reduce their dependence upon climate vulnerable livelihood activities
- Institutional changes that recognize that local level implementation of ways to address loss and damage require progressive gender policies and mechanisms to tackle gender inequalities. Ensuring implementation may require legislation
- Empowering men and women to challenge and alter gendered institutions and leadership that cause greater climate vulnerability
- Address gender gaps by considering how losses and

“Construction of climate action discourse and policy, including ways of addressing losses and damages, is often done in gender-neutral terms but is dominated by largely masculine norms”

damages can be addressed and delivered in ways that reflect men and women’s different priorities and needs

- Ensure that women’s voices and concerns are considered and progress to the political and leadership changes necessary to institutionalize gender-responsive processes of inclusive governance

Addressing losses and damages in these ways can move us beyond gender-sensitive climate action and bring a focus on opportunities for increased equality and empowerment. Addressing losses and damages must take deliberate and measurable steps that identify, respond to and transform unequal gender relations and power structures.

A transformative approach to addressing losses and damages shifts the focus of action from making good on inequalities suffered to contesting the underlying social, political, and economic structures that impose marginalization and inequalities and result in gender differentiated losses and damages. ■

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1 Adaptation Fund (2022) A study on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming in adaptation-relevant interventions. AFB/B.37-38/Inf.1

2 This approach is informed by the conclusions of PhD research work by Azeb Assefa Mersha. See: Azeb Assefa Mersha (2017) Unpacking the Nexus Between Gender and Climate Change Adaptation: The case of Smallholder Agriculture in North-eastern Ethiopia. PhD Thesis.

REPARATION

THE YOUTH WANTS REPARATIONS, NOT CHARITY OR DEBT

WHAT THE CLIMATE CRISIS REQUIRES IS ACTION, NOT MORE WORDS



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Sohanur Rahman

In September last year, my organization YouthNet for Climate Justice, facilitated a joint oversight visit with parliamentarians and youth groups in the climate-affected areas of Bangladesh to observe the ground realities. As part of this field visit, we hosted some climate dialogues and heard the voices on the frontlines. Among many of the community people who faced the negative consequences of the climate crisis, 35-year-old Sonali Sardar was one of them -- a housewife from the Kanainagar village of Mongla in Khulna district.

“Our fishes are out. The vegetable fields are ruined by salt. We’re under a lot of distress. Make a strong embankment for us, please,” she said, further adding, “we’re poor, we’re hungry, and thirsty. Our lives are all but gone, please take steps and supportive measures so that our children can live like human beings.”

Coastal women like Sonali are on the frontlines who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis as innocent victims. The climate crisis cannot be tackled leaving the vulnerable communities behind.

Another woman on the frontline is Misti (39), a rental boat driver in Barishal City. Like numerous people in her community, Misti’s entire life has been affected by extreme weather events. In 2007, her family’s houseboat was destroyed during the devastating cyclone Sidr, and she has since been made homeless three times. As a climate migrant, currently she’s living in the Rasulpur slum. According to Misti, she migrated from Bhola to Barishal with her family to look for a livelihood. As a negative coping strategy, her family married her off at an early age. She now has a family of her own consisting of four kids.

They are suffering from poverty, malnutrition, water, hygiene, and sanitation-related problems -- including various water-borne diseases. “We have no house, no land. Where

should I go, what should I do?” she pleaded. One of the core elements of climate justice is reparations. When will polluters, corporations, and developed nations really listen to the voices of vulnerable people like Misty and move to deliver reparations and not just empty words on loss and damage? They are morally liable to compensate for the loss and damage caused by their already produced emissions.

My fellow SM Shahin Alom (22), a resident of Patakhali village in Satkhira’s Shyamnagar -- which was inundated by salty river water during Cyclone Amphan -- has witnessed numerous cyclones in his lifetime. He is in the leading position to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and build youth-led movements to achieve climate justice in his own community. Because the loss and damage issue is a matter of survival for him and his community, they cannot adapt to regular and intensified weather events with limited adaptive capacity. “Amphan was

“The Global North is responsible for 92% of global emissions. Without listening to the science, developed nations have broken climate promises. It’s a historical responsibility and crime against humanity, biodiversity, and nature”

more powerful than previous cyclones. The water in the rivers rose quickly -- something I had never seen before in my life. Despite all our efforts to save the embankment, it did not take long for it to collapse.”

The stories and testimonies mentioned have underpinned the grim picture of loss and damage and discussions have been carried out on the latest Gobeshona Global Conference 2, creating opportunities to make progress before the Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh of Egypt later in 2022.

According to the latest UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its sixth assessment report, it is clear now that the adverse impacts of irreversible climate change have become more intensified and more frequent, which brings loss and damage to our livelihood, food security, health security, economy, shelter, culture, education, etc. Like Bangladesh, Most Affected People and Areas (MAPA) are facing the worst consequences of climate change already.

The Global North is responsible for 92% of global emissions

(Source: The Lancet Planetary Health, Volume 4, Issue 9, September 2020). Without listening to the science, developed nations have broken climate promises. It’s a historical responsibility and crime against humanity, biodiversity, and nature. It is their emission which has brought us this planetary crisis. So it is high time that we take action to have an effective mechanism to tackle the loss and damage caused by climate change.

Demanding these issues, millions of schoolchildren joined the global climate strike hosted by Fridays for Future (FFF) on March 25 under the theme #PeopleNotProfit. Expressing solidarity with this global movement, we organized the global climate strike simultaneously in 25 districts of our country including the capital Dhaka City. Expressing strong solidarity with the global youth movement led by Greta Thunberg, the Bangladeshi youth demanded climate justice and urged developed nations to formulate and implement a fast-track strategy for delivering loss and damage finance to climate-hit countries and provide adequate funds for adaptation on a priority basis.

As part of this strike, school kids around the world from the FFF movement have taken the initiative to run a crowd-funding campaign aiming to raise money for the victims of climatic disasters. They will be offering their own lunch money to kickstart fundraising out of solidarity with our most vulnerable communities. The amount generated would be shared with various fund management entities to deliver them in an effective and transparent manner.

This is going to be a powerful sign from young people as it is they who are going to bear even worse adverse impacts of the climate crisis in the future. This is a challenge for the failed global leaders who fear discussing loss and damage issues for financing their part of liable compensation.

Today, losses and damages are being faced by the poor as well as the rich countries all around the globe. Effectively addressing losses and damages caused by human-induced climate change is now an intersectional and intergenerational climate justice issue. Even though global leaders keep saying “we are in the same boat” the sad reality is that they are abandoning the most affected communities of the poorest countries.

How is this climate justice?

We the young people will hold the global leaders accountable by fueling movements to acknowledge and accept their own responsibility in the climate crisis. We are not demanding charity or debt. Rather, our urge for paying up climate reparations is a dutiful obligation of the Global North. Developed countries owe the loss and damage finance to us without any delay. Now, delay only means death. ■

Sohanur Rahman is a Founding Member of the Fridays for Future Bangladesh and Executive Coordinator of the YouthNet for Climate Justice.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

STATISTICS CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE OFTEN CONCEAL REAL PEOPLE WITH REAL LIVES AND REAL LOSSES

Dr Joanne Jordan

Despite loss and damage from human-induced climate change getting attention at COP26, there has been little action to avert, minimize, and address the loss and damage experienced by those bearing the brunt of climate change.

Climate change impacts everyone, but people will not all face this challenge in the same way, as its impacts are unevenly distributed. We need to make sure that the voices of those living on the front lines of climate change are heard, are listened to, and are acted on by world “leaders,” because these communities have contributed the least to climate change but are dealing with its catastrophic effects right now. They deserve more than empty words and promises.

Listening to those on the frontline

We met Rohima in May 2018 outside her house in Duaripara informal settlement in North-west Dhaka where four out of five informal dwellers experience severe heat stress and almost two out of five face severe flooding, waterlogging, or drainage congestion. But these statistics conceal real people with real lives and real losses. The stories of their daily lives on the frontline of climate change need to be heard and considered.

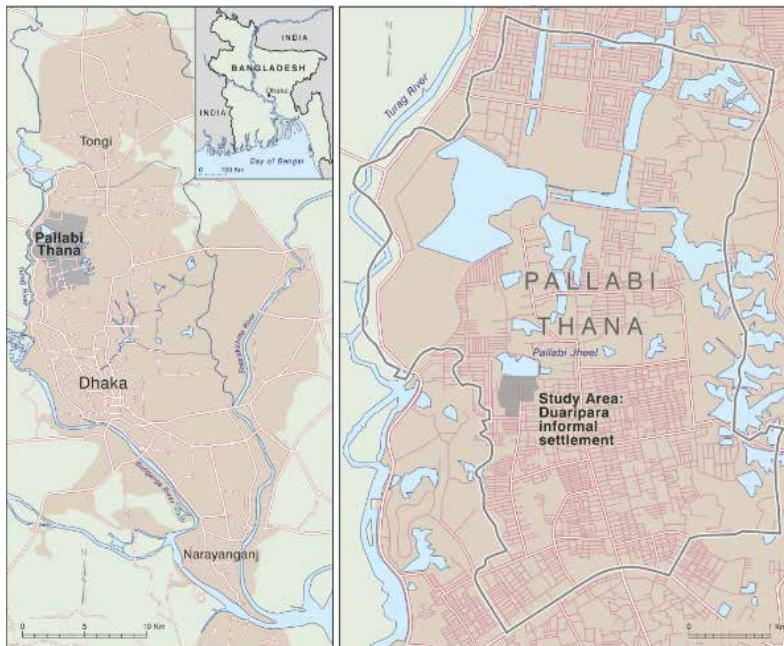
In 2016, Rohima’s family lost everything in the floods -- her house and crops were destroyed. With their livelihood at stake, they left Hossainpur, a village in Kishoreganj district where she had lived all her life, and moved over 100 km away to live in Dhaka. Their life is very different now She told me:

“Who would have thought life would be like this? Circumstances have forced us to live this way. Lack of money is [...] what worries me the most. It is very hard for us to pay the rent for even a house like this. The heat is unbearable inside in the summer, I find it difficult to sleep. [...] In the monsoon season, waterlogging makes life very tough. We cannot get out. We [managed to] raise the foundation of the house, but all our efforts were in vain. Water [still] comes into the house, it brings in snakes, leeches, and other insects, it is a dangerous situation. The bed gets drenched and infested, leaving us sleepless throughout the night. We had to put bricks under the bed to somehow deal with the situation. We try to avoid getting soaked in the filthy water by spending the day on the bed that we have raised. My husband stocks up on dry food, we somehow try to manage with this.”

Despite the impacts of climate change that Rohima has experienced in Hossainpur, which has left her with no land, no shelter, and no savings, she longs to return home. Though moving to Dhaka helped her family to survive, it is unable to replace those aspects of identity and attachment -- that sense of belonging, quality of life, and familial and kin connections -- that are associated with her life back in Hossainpur.

“The distress does not seem to end at all [...]. We have practically nothing left in our village, [but] I long for my birthplace. I would like to go back to my village and to my relatives. It would bring me peace. Sadly, I have lost my house and there is no hope for me to go back.”

We all will encounter loss and grief at some point in our lives, but rarely do we consider the intense feelings of loss of place and identity that people, like Rohima, experience in the aftermath of extreme floods -- the cognitive-emotional bonds she has to Hossainpur, that makes her who she is. There is an urgent need to recognize the profound impact climate change has on psychological, symbolic, cultural, and emotional aspects of place attachment and place identities, which are often overlooked





MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

“ I would like to go back to my village, it would bring me peace ”

in assessments of climate impacts and risks.

But Rohima has hopes and dreams for something different, a better future:

“I have lived my life fighting poverty and now I am old and tired. Unfortunate circumstances forced us to live like this and we are somehow coping with the situation, but my grandchildren cannot. I would never want them to live like we do now. They have their whole life ahead of them. As they grow up, times will be different. I hope they live happy, healthy, and prosperous lives.”

If we are to address the urgent threat of climate change, for people like Rohima, we cannot continue with business-as-usual solutions. COP27 must hold world “leaders” to account to agree on more ambitious action to set us on a pathway towards transformational change that answers Rohima’s call for a better, more just world -- where rights protect all girls, boys, and their families’ needs. ■

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FINANCING LOSS AND DAMAGE: A PATH TO BUILDING THE BRIDGE



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Preety M Bhandari and Nataniel Warszawski

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's premier body for climate science, released two crucial reports in early 2022 under its 6th Assessment Report that confirm what we already know: The climate crisis is an issue of the present and its impacts are already being felt across the world, with the hardest-hitting impacts disproportionately affecting the more than 3 billion people living in vulnerable developing countries and communities. The report provided a grim prediction for the future estimating that in the next decade alone, climate change will drive between 32 - 132 million more people into extreme poverty.

While it has been heartening to see the elevation of climate adaptation over the past few years, such efforts will not be enough even if the world were to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global average temperature increases to

1.5 degrees Celsius, regardless of the fact that funding for adaptation action is far from sufficient, representing a measly 25% of total international climate finance. Even with the commitment to double adaptation finance to \$40 billion by 2025, that amount is a pittance compared to what is needed and will lead to an adaptation deficit and higher losses and damages.

Evidenced by the fires in the United States and Greece, the flooding in Germany and Sudan, the life-threatening heat waves in India and across Sub-Saharan Africa, the rising sea-levels threatening the existence of island nations in the Pacific and Caribbean, and so on, climate impacts are already happening and necessitate action to address the losses and damages that result.

Bangladesh suffered 185 extreme events due to climate change between 2000-2019 resulting in economic losses to the tune of \$3.72 billion. Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the Philippines in 2013, caused devastation resulting in \$864m in damages. During the 2009-2011 drought in Kenya, GDP

“ The Global North is responsible for 92% of global emissions. Without listening to the science, developed nations have broken climate promises. It’s a historical responsibility and crime against humanity, biodiversity, and nature ”

decreased by 2.8% per year. According to UNDRR., losses from natural hazards in 2020 alone were on the order of US\$210bn, which was over 25% higher than in the previous year.

In contrast the international funding for disaster risk reduction compared poorly against the economic losses experienced by countries. A 2018 study estimated that total damages in developing countries could reach \$290-580bn by 2030 and \$1.1-1.7 trillion by 2050 .

Action to address loss and damage is urgent and represents an issue of solidarity and justice as vulnerable communities suffer the greatest losses and damages with the lowest access to resources to address them.

While COP26 in Glasgow saw some critical breakthroughs with unprecedented unity Group of 77 and China -- on the need for a loss and damage finance facility to support action on loss and damage, the outcomes from the conference were insufficient. Instead, countries agreed to set up the Glasgow Dialogue on Loss & Damage Finance, but more efforts are needed to make sure that this results in a tangible outcome and

does not lead to another talk-shop with nothing to show for it.

To ensure success in mobilizing loss & damage finance at COP27 in Egypt, three key pillars must be pursued:

- (1) Maintaining unity in the Global South
- (2) Building a bridge of solidarity from the Global North on this issue
- (3) Providing robust scoping for a loss & damage finance facility.

Pillar 1: Maintaining unity in the Global South

At COP26, there was unprecedented unity among countries from the Global South as the Group of 77 and China came together in one voice to demand the establishment of a loss & damage finance facility. Driven by the clear and present dangers presented by the climate crisis, the countries of the Global South were able to elevate loss & damage, a topic historically side-lined especially by developed countries, to be front and centre in the negotiations.

While efforts to establish a loss & damage finance facility at COP26 were ultimately thwarted by developed countries, the significant rise in prominence of conversation around loss & damage since COP26 demonstrates the power of developing countries to collectively lobby as long as they remain in that collective.

The Glasgow Dialogue on Loss & Damage Finance presents a hook that the Global South must capitalize upon. Looking to the UN climate meetings in Bonn, Germany in June and COP27 in Egypt in November and throughout the Glasgow Dialogue, efforts need to continue to maintain this unity among Global South countries by supporting coordination between countries and country blocs and by supporting the development of concrete messaging for developing country negotiators with clear asks.

Doing so will help to keep the breakthrough unity witnessed at COP26 to drive more ambitious outcomes from the Glasgow Dialogue and ensure that it produces tangible results in mobilizing finance for vulnerable countries and communities to address climate change-induced losses & damages.

Pillar 2: Building a bridge of solidarity from the Global North on this issue

With the IPCC 6th Assessment Reports, the science of the impacts of climate change and its disproportionate impacts on developing countries are indisputable. As drivers of the climate crisis and as a sign of solidarity, the Global North needs to recognize the issue of loss & damage and engage the Global South proactively and in good faith to find a solution for mobilizing the necessary funds to address loss & damage.

To demonstrate good faith efforts, such engagement needs to be anchored in the needs of developing countries and safeguard the agency of vulnerable countries and communities to respond when disaster strikes as a result of the climate crisis. Engagement efforts can and should target coalitions like

the Vulnerable 20 Group (V20), a group of finance ministers from countries that are part of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, to make sure the needs of vulnerable countries are at the core.

Scotland served as a pioneer by committing £2 million to loss and damage finance at COP26 (similar commitments were made by the government of Wallonia and a group of philanthropies) and should inspire similar action from other developed countries. The IMF has established the Resilience and Sustainability Trust fund (RST) and the extent to which it will support the climate risk and loss and damage agenda remains to be seen.

The eyes of the world will be particularly focused on the G7, especially the United States, the United Kingdom, and the

“Such efforts to foster unity in the Global South and push for solidarity from the Global North will need to be informed by a robust, evidence-based approach”

European Union, for signals on progress. On its website, the German Presidency of the G7 expressed its desire to “create a global shield against climate risks.” While this is a welcome sign, how this is achieved -- both in terms of the process to design this shield as well as what the final initiative looks like -- will be critical benchmarks.

In the lead up to COP27 and beyond, efforts must be made to jettison historical stand-offs by making the case using the robust evidence base and to elevate the clear asks from the Global South, pushing the Global North to demonstrate solidarity with the Global South on loss & damage finance.

Pillar 3: Robust scoping of the facility

Such efforts to foster unity in the Global South and push for solidarity from the Global North will need to be informed by a robust, evidence-based approach. Loss & damage finance is tricky because losses & damages can occur in a wide range of contexts -- from disasters triggered by extreme events to slow-onset events or from economic to non-economic losses and damages, just to name a few examples.

Further, the actions and investments range from preemptive ones to avert and minimize loss and damage which

interfaces with the adaptation agenda as also the crying need to keep temperature increase in check, to those that need to be addressed due to breach of the hard and soft limits to adaptation.

The latter also includes an interface with the emergency responses from the humanitarian sector. To develop the campaign to push the Global North and to ensure that the Global South has the tools and knowledge necessary to advocate for a fit-for-purpose facility, efforts to build out the evidence base will need to continue, drawing from the ongoing work from initiatives such as the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss & Damage, humanitarian networks, and other civil society organizations. Such research will help to establish why a separate facility is needed and inform what that facility should look like to ensure that any finance provided will be accessible and fit-for-purpose.

However, doing such research will not be enough. This needs to be accompanied by efforts to socialize the research to key decision makers across the world while providing the necessary knowledge and financing technical assistance through the Santiago Network on Loss & Damage. Furthermore, such scoping efforts can be used to hold the countries of the Global North accountable to commitments for loss & damage finance so that such commitments aren't delayed or left unfulfilled, like the \$100bn/year commitment made at COP15 in 2009 that has yet to be met.

Enshrined in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are the values of equity and fairness. In an international climate action regime that seeks to address climate justice, loss & damage finance is a necessary tool and key to rebuilding trust and solidarity in the multilateral system. The best available science shows that even in a 1.5-degree world, we will not be able to buy our way out of the real climate impacts solely with adaptation efforts -- addressing losses & damages will be essential and must be pursued on equal footing with mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Through the three pillars discussed above, COP27 can and should result in agreement on establishing a mechanism that the remaining years of the Glasgow Dialogue will then complete. COP27 is slated to be the “Implementation COP,” the “COP of the Vulnerables,” the “Africa COP.” If that is to hold true, the current UK Presidency of the COP will need to meaningfully collaborate with the incoming Egyptian Presidency to ensure that the Glasgow dialogue is not “blah blah blah,” but rather results in tangible, transformative outcomes that support the resilience and safety of communities around the world. ■

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COP27: THE GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES FOR SANTIAGO NETWORK FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE



MAHMUD HOSSAIN OPU

Hafij Khan, Saleemul Huq, and S M Saify Iqbal

The idea of establishing an implementation arm of Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM), was put forward by the Least Developing Countries (LDCs) at COP25, held in Madrid in 2019. It was quickly accepted by other groups like AOSIS, AGN and AILAC. Hence, G-77 and China moved with the common position to negotiate with the developed country Parties. However, due to the consensus among all the Parties of UNFCCC, negotiations in Madrid resulted in establishing the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD) at COP25/CMA2. SNLD is mandated to catalyse technical assistance to vulnerable developing countries through relevant Organizations, Bodies, Networks and Experts (OBNEs) to implement required approaches to address loss and damage.

The decision of COP25/CMA2 that established SNLD, did not provide required policy guidance on the specific functions and institutional structure of SNLD. Subsequently, COP26 held in Glasgow agreed on the six key functions of SNLD under the overarching functions of WIM. The decision, alongside the establishment of mandate for financing SNLD are significant steps forward in its operationalisation. The same decision, therefore, mandated further the Parties and Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) of UNFCCC to work on designing institutional structures of SNLD and to agree on such structure at COP27/CMA4 in 2022. It also called for submissions from Parties and relevant stakeholders to provide innovative thoughts and ideas on the institutional structures of SNLD to deliver its functions effectively.

Many Parties and other relevant organisations already submitted their views and thoughts on the governance

aspects of SNLD, in response to the call made by COP26/CMA3. Diverse ideas have been offered in these submissions. Some of these innovative thoughts on the governance structure of SNLD predominantly influenced the discussions in the workshop held in Copenhagen from 4 to 6 May 2022. The workshop was organised by the secretariat of UNFCCC, under the guidance of the chairs of SBs, with inputs from the Executive Committee of Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM ExCom) in accordance with the Glasgow decision. The workshop was structured based on the key elements laid down by the call made in Glasgow for the aforesaid submission.

“ The fifth element of the call for submission identified the need for a dedicated and permanent secretariat for SNLD to serve as its convening body ”

In the discussions of the workshop on operational modalities of SNLD, the first element of the call for submission recognised the significant need for mobilising demand-driven technical assistance in responding to the needs of the vulnerable communities. Discussions on need-based approach identified the immediate need for technical assistance to conduct comprehensive need assessments in vulnerable developing countries. Such seed assessments are crucial as they can determine the needs for technical assistance and other support for addressing loss and damage which vulnerable developing countries can communicate to SNLD to access the required assistance.

Some Parties shared their views on operational modalities of SNLD considering it as the implementation arm of WIM and suggested designing it carefully to meet the technical assistance and the associated finance and capacity building needs. It was recognised in the workshop that a financial mechanism for SNLD is needed for accessing finance from the existing funding entities of UNFCCC and other innovative sources of finance. Even though funding for SNLD was not in the workshop agenda, Parties and experts discussed the mandate for financing for SNLD provided by Glasgow Climate Pact and highlighted how to design an innovative financial mechanism for SNLD to operationalize it effectively. Discussion in the workshop identified some lessons learned from similar existing networks including Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN), and suggested to

ensure simplified direct access to technical assistance and its associated support by vulnerable developing countries.

The second element of the call for submission underscored the need for establishing an advisory board under the UNFCCC to oversee the SNLD. Views shared by the workshop participants on structuring such advisory boards can lead to form this body with diverse membership including from Parties, WIM ExCom and Network members, which will be mandated by and accountable to COP/CMA. The workshop discussed the memberships of SNLD and identified the need for diverse memberships of local, national, regional, international, and sectoral organizations including academia, NGOs, private sector, public sector, research organisations and so on.

The fifth element of the call for submission identified the need for a dedicated and permanent secretariat for SNLD to serve as its convening body. It may be housed by a competent UN agency to play a coordinated and integrated role to deliver the functions of SNLD. In case the secretariat is housed at any UN agency other than UNFCCC, there will be the need for a regulatory mechanism between UNFCCC and that UN agency to ensure transparency and accountability of the secretariat. Some Parties suggested UNFCCC to act as the interim secretariat and to explore a competent agency for hosting a permanent secretariat.

The workshop also discussed the third and the fourth elements of the call for submission on the roles of WIM ExCom and its expert groups, the national contact points and other relevant stakeholders. Participants highlighted the role of WIM ExCom in providing policy guidance based on their works and to ensure synergies and coherence between SNLD and WIM ExCom. Some participants suggested placing WIM ExCom members, particularly from LDCs, to the proposed advisory board of SNLD. The discussions also recognised the critical roles of national contact points and other relevant stakeholders from national, regional levels to ensure country driven need-based approach to meet the needs of vulnerable developing countries.

It is worth noting that the workshop was a good opportunity to exchange views among the Parties and other relevant stakeholders. It also helped enhance understanding which led to convergence on some innovative ideas related to the institutional structure of SNLD. Further discussions and negotiations on these crucial issues at SB 56 will lead to some recommendations for adoption at COP27 to be held at the end of this year in Egypt. Therefore, vulnerable developing countries, particularly LDCs, should take clear positions and appropriate strategies to engage effectively at SB 56 to take place in June 2022 for designing a well-structured SNLD. ■

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