

SUBMISSION BY LITHUANIA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS MEMBER STATES

This submission is supported by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

Vilnius, 31 October 2013

Subject: Approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change

1. Introduction

Science is telling us that the climate is changing. The IPCC in its recently released fifth assessment report notes that the oceans may rise 0,5 -1 m until 2081-2100, that the Arctic sea ice cover will continue to shrink, that ocean acidification will continue unless we deviate from current emission trends. Despite these grave scenarios, the IPCC states that if we undertake substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions we can still limit global warming to under 2 degrees.

The EU underscores the need to act with urgency if we are to be able to address climate change and allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. As such we would reduce the risk of loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change.

In the Doha decision (3/CP.18), Parties agreed on the need for comprehensive risk management approaches that not only reduce the risk to the climate system, but manage imminent risks and respond to those risks that, despite our efforts, still materialise. The decision invites countries to undertake some fundamental actions that will prepare and enable them to address loss and damage in the context of their national circumstances and priorities. It also identifies areas where we need to strengthen our understanding and expertise so that we can enhance our efforts. It recognises the need to strengthen international cooperation and in this regard, decided to establish, at COP19, institutional arrangements to address loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

2. Progress in Warsaw

Although the SBI-38 was unable to conduct its work in June, the EU believes that it is possible to make progress on the issue of loss and damage in Warsaw. We therefore underline the need to focus on options that are practical, efficient and effective. In this regard, it will be important to draw and build on the bodies under the Convention, leverage the expertise of relevant organisations and processes outside the Convention and mobilise the engagement of all relevant stakeholders. It is by drawing on all efforts possible, that we can maximise the synergies between processes, enhance coherence and effectively deliver support to developing countries especially those countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change in order to manage and respond to the risks posed by climate change impacts, while still achieving their sustainable development aspirations.

In Warsaw, the EU hopes that Parties will be able to agree on the following:

Activities that need to be undertaken in the work programme to continue to increase our understanding and expertise on approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change. Examples of activities that might be undertaken could include those that aim to:

- enhance the exchange and sharing of lessons on methodologies or tools relevant for assessing climate change impacts and the risks of loss and damage associated with those impacts;
- further the understanding of how to incorporate slow-onset events into early warning systems and policy responses;
- enhance the understanding of the contribution of impacts of climate change to patterns of migration, displacement, planned relocation and human mobility.

In terms of the selection of which modality should be used to address the areas of work in the work programme, this should depend on the extent to which it would ensure maximum benefits in terms of learning, accessibility and participation while ensuring cost effectiveness. While the EU supports the use of workshops, roundtable discussions, expert meetings and technical papers, consideration may need to be given to how to further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the modalities by joint activities with other programmes and bodies under UNFCCC (e.g. Adaptation Committee, Nairobi Work Programme), as well as the use of information generated by these activities. This includes considering how to target the right experts and user groups. In addition, relevant UN agencies, international and regional organisations outside the UNFCCC could be invited to jointly organise and host the activities with the UNFCCC Secretariat. This would enable access to relevant experts as well as for the cooperating organisations to disseminate the outcomes and where possible, continue the deliberations in the context of their regular work.

Guidance on areas already identified: The work programme undertaken in 2011-2012 already highlighted areas where actions can be undertaken to reduce and address loss and damage. Indeed, the Doha decision noted that a range of approaches, methods and tools already exist to do this. As such, the EU believes that the COP can already provide some guidance to Parties to enhance their efforts towards the objective of the Convention and in particular in the context of preparing, planning and implementing actions to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. The COP could provide recommendations to:

- strengthen existing and, where needed and appropriate, establishing national and regional systematic observation and monitoring networks (e.g. for sea-level rise, ocean acidification, glacial melt, drought and desertification climate and hydrological monitoring stations);
- strengthen existing and, where needed and appropriate, establishing national and regional centres and institutions for the provision of research, training, education and scientific and technical support in specialized fields relevant to climate change;
- support activities for vulnerability and adaptation assessment, including the development of risk profiles and hazard maps;
- continue to enhance capacities at the national and regional levels, including institutional capacity, to monitor and respond to slow onset and gradual change as well as for preventive measures, planning, preparedness of disasters relating to climate change, including contingency planning, to integrate climate risk assessment and adaptation measures into sustainable development programmes;
- mobilise financial and technical support to support the efforts of developing countries to undertake the activities in paragraph 6 of decision 3/CP.18.

In Warsaw, we should consider and agree guidance and recommendations that can be provided based on current knowledge of these issues, including on areas where, although we recognise gaps exist, it is still possible to undertake some action, for example, on how to strengthen the capacities of countries to monitor and respond to climatic impacts, in particular slow onset changes like ocean acidification and glacial melt. Guidance should include consideration of how to engage with other processes and organisations to enable us to have coherent, efficient and effective initiatives on the ground.

Institutional arrangements to address loss and damage under the Convention: COP 18 mandated Parties to agree on the institutional arrangements under the Convention at COP 19 that will enable the Convention to play its catalysing role, e.g. promoting leadership, collaboration and cooperation at all levels, to facilitate and enhance efficient, comprehensive, inclusive and strategic responses to address loss and damage. As in the past, the EU prefers that the Parties should first decide on what the institutional arrangements will do before considering the form.

For example, the institutional arrangements might provide for an appropriate space for engagement between multiple actors active in the areas outlined above, thus contributing to coherence and coordinated approaches, increasing and sharing knowledge and facilitating support for capacity building and technical assistance.

In conclusion, the EU is committed to reaching a productive outcome in Warsaw on this issue that will see enhanced understanding and expertise and that will enable us to strengthen the actions undertaken by all Parties to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, especially in developing countries.