

UNFCCC Expert Meeting on a Range of Approaches to Address Loss and Damage Associated with the Adverse Effects of Climate Change, including Impacts Related to Extreme Weather and Slow Onset Events

October 9-11, 2012, Bridgetown, Barbados

Over the last few days, we have had the opportunity to hold discussions and exchange views and ideas that will hopefully be another step towards making meaningful progress on a range of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather and slow onset events.

In addition to extreme events, we clearly need to give some much needed focus and attention to slow onsets events as they are NOT future events. They may not be politically or media-attractive, but they are silent and deadly, costly and growing, complex, have long lasting and severe impacts, affecting multiple sectors, exacerbating extreme events and underlying non-climate stressors. Slow onset events are already happening and they are happening now.

We clearly need to reduce loss and damage, cope with loss and damage and cope with residual risks. The range of approaches needs to be clearly articulated in a step by step process. They need not all be innovative and modern. The tools need to be tailored to the different levels and diverse national circumstances of SIDS. As said by various colleagues, we need an independent, centralized, coordinated, structured, focused and targeted strategy/platform/mechanism, with proper sequencing that fits the pieces together.

We note that are many interventions have been completed, are underway or planned for SIDS, but are they addressing our REAL problems? We have already heard of the imperatives of addressing the loss and damage continuum. But what has become clear in the course of our discussions over the last three days, is that there are significant gaps and limitations of the existing approaches at all levels in SIDS. Technical resource requirements, institutional structures and financial resources are clearly major gaps. Actions are required at all levels, including local, sub-national, national, regional and international, with clear connections between them. It is NOT a choice of either/or. Communities rely on their governments; and governments are increasingly reliant on their regional mechanisms. However, we stress that our regional mechanisms alone cannot adequately address loss and damage. Long term, predictable support to fill these gaps MUST come from the international level.

Last, but certainly not least, we must pay much needed attention to mitigation, in order to take stock and work in a significant and meaningful way to reduce the risks associated with loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change. In order to do this, we need the international community to take serious and committed steps.

I'd like to end by thanking the organizers, the UN Secretariat and the Government of Barbados for making this workshop possible and wish to emphasize that we need to prepare effectively and anything less than the establishment of an international mechanism in Doha will be a failure of the international community to begin to address what is now well recognized. Colleagues, let's not wait.