



# Submission by CAN-International on the Work Programme on Loss and Damage

22 August 2011

*Climate Action Network – International is a coalition of 700 environmental and development non-governmental organizations worldwide committed to limiting human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.*

## Introduction

Cancun has rightly brought to the forefront an inconvenient truth of climate change, the question of loss and damage associated with climate change impacts including those impacts that cannot be avoided through mitigation and that also go beyond the limits of adaptation. Already emitted emissions expose developing countries to profound climate change impacts such as increase in frequency, intensity and occurrence of extreme weather events and slow-onset impacts such as rising sea-level, coastal erosions, desertification, ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, loss in arable land or glacier melt. This underlines the historic responsibility of industrialized countries, from where the major share of emissions originate. In wake of existing mitigation actions that feature a significant gap in emission reduction to be consistent with a 2 °C let alone 1.5 °C pathway and that rather commit humanity to a 2.5 to 5 °C degrees world<sup>1</sup>, it is high time for Parties to address the consequences of loss & damage, in parallel with stepping up their mitigation ambition.

For this reason, the Cancun Adaptation Framework contains establishes a work programme to explore relevant approaches for developing countries.

This submission lays out CAN's views on the aim, structure, content and different means of the programme.

## Aim of the Work Programme

The work programme should deliver on several goals.

One is to equip COP 18 with recommendations to adopt bold decisions on all aspects on loss & damage, which in CAN's view should include in particular:

- scaling-up of disaster risk reduction and risk management,
- establishment of an international climate risk insurance mechanism and
- a rehabilitation mechanism to deal with long-term climate loss & damage.

This decision should also entail provisions for financial arrangement acknowledging principles such as polluter's pay and historic responsibility.

Furthermore, the work programme should serve to galvanize immediate action, should compile different experiences in understanding loss & damage and addressing each of its components.

The work programme should also highlight the outlook of loss & damage vis-à-vis current ambition in mitigation and adaptation finance and the implications of failing to reach the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC, and of Parties' failure to meet their commitments under the UNFCCC and its Protocol.

It is useful to note that the Cancun Adaptation Framework does not entail an end-point for the work programme. Since loss & damage is a long-term issue that will become even more relevant in future, the work programme should be established with no definite end-point, however clear milestones are set to achieve concrete time-bound progress.

---

<sup>1</sup> UNEP (2010): The Emission Gap Report

Overall the work programme should aim to give priority to the specific needs of, and the risks for, those countries, people and ecosystem, which are particularly poor and vulnerable.

## Structure & Content

The work programme should be structured along three work topics. Whereas there are synergies between all three topic areas, they address different levels and types of impacts. They might also require engagement of different stakeholders. Therefore, Parties are advised to create them as separate items in the work programme and they should feature independently in the work programme's recommendations to COP18. The relevant paragraph 28 in CAF lists three issue items that need to be advanced:

- (a) Possible development of an **international climate risk insurance facility** to address impacts associated with severe weather events;
- (b) Options for **risk management and reduction**; risk sharing and transfer mechanisms such as insurance, including options for micro-insurance; and **resilience building**, including through economic diversification;
- (c) Approaches for addressing **rehabilitation measures** associated with slow onset events;

In CAN's view, these can be interpreted into the following three areas of action:

### 1. Climate related natural disasters – Action on the international level:

Under this item, Parties should develop solutions for severe weather related natural disasters that overwhelm countries national capacities and that adversely impact their development pathway. Anthropogenic climate change is likely to alter the intensity, frequency and occurrence of such events.

Therefore, an international Climate Risk Insurance Facility, covered through the mechanism, should be developed to provide timely and need based / adequate support for countries in case of severe weather events and biodiversity loss. The design of the Facility should take into account and support a risk reduction paradigm.

### 2. Climate related natural disasters – Action on the national and regional level:

This item covers regional (including trans-boundary), national and sub-national level approaches to weather related risks. Approaches to be adopted should range from risk reduction strategies (as per Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-15), social security / protection measures and risk transfer options such as micro-insurance. Under this item Parties should gather promising examples, lessons learnt and pathways about working solutions on all levels (community, local government, sub-national, national and regional approaches). These include *inter alia* data access, better cooperation between countries and generally more resources for ex-ante risk management. Overall, this should provide a sound basis to identify where, and what kind of, international support is required to enhance and scale-up national, regional (including trans-boundary level) actions to build resilience against the increasing challenge of extreme weather events.

### 3. Slow-onset impacts from climate change and associated rehabilitation measures:

Here Parties should develop adequate solutions for impacts that go beyond the limits of adaptation (e.g. sea level rise, coastal erosion, biodiversity loss, glacial retreat or desertification) and require extreme responses for affected communities and ecosystem such as resettlement and migration. This should include proposals for an international mechanism to achieve rehabilitation of slow-onset impacts, a mandate to explore compensation options for loss and damage caused by climate change and provisions to deal with the political and legal implications of failing the ultimate objective of the Convention. Given the diverse nature of this challenge, which *inter alia* involves security, migration and displacement, human rights and refugee aspects, this may also require to accompany the UNFCCC process on this matter by considerations at other fora within the broader UN system.

## Means of the work programme

Generally, CAN suggests that the work programme should go through three different phases:

1. Phase: Assessment of loss & damage exposures:  
For each topic area, Parties and experts should discuss tools to assess and map exposures to loss & damage. These include risk assessment, modeling, mapping, and an evaluation of future loss & damage potentials. It should also entail discussions on the type of natural resources and assets exposed (e.g. economic exposure, social exposure like loss in life, loss in ecosystem and their services etc.) and about

suitable metrics to measure these losses.

2. Phase: Discussion on instruments, their opportunities and limits

Subsequently, the work programme should compile tools and approaches to understand, reduce and address the specific types of loss & damage. This area could help articulate lessons learned, good practice, challenges and analysis of relevance of various instruments and frameworks in the context of adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

3. Phase: Implementation options

This phase of the work programme is of great importance since this work programme is being developed and will be carried out under the Subsidiary Body of Implementation. This phase needs to design implementation options based on principles and issues such as country needs, the reduction of risk exposure, the reaching of poor and vulnerable people, communities and ecosystem, necessary institutional and financial arrangements etc. In this phase countries should also figure out an effective arrangement of activities under the Convention and accompanying activities complementary to Convention actions. The 3rd phase would require most of the time until COP18.

Timeline: The schedule for the work programme to deliver recommendations by COP 18 is very tight. The bulk of the work must lie with the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, the design of implementation options. The work programme should therefore aim to finish phase 1 and 2 prior to SB 35/COP17 and focus on phase 3 for the most of 2012 to provide consolidated recommendations prior to SB 37/COP18.

**Workshops and Call for submissions:** Little progress has been made so far on loss and damage issues, leaving no further time to waste. The activities under work programme must be agreed by parties by COP17 in Durban with detailed planning and time line of the implementation of all the 3 phases of the programme mentioned above. The phase 1 and 2 of the work programme must be finished well before SB 36 and phase 3 by the end of October 2012 in order to provide consolidated recommendations prior to SB 37/COP18.

**High Level Working Group:** On the issue of slow-onset impacts resulting from a failure of meeting the ultimate objective of the Convention, CAN sees the need to address political and legal implications more sincerely. Given the broad nature of this challenge this may exceed the scope of the UNFCCC process and may require to accompany the UNFCCC process on this matter by considerations at other fora within the broader UN system. Thus, CAN proposes to accompany the implementation of the work programme by setting up a High-Level Working Group consisting of eminent persons that would independently report back to COP 18 and other relevant UN bodies about such implications and possible way forwards. To initiate this process, the COP should invite the UN Secretary General to convene such a group in its decisions to be taken at COP17.

**Complementary activities:** There are events, processes or documents that could be harnessed for the SBI work programme. For example, under 1/CP.10 Cancun mandated the UNFCCC to host a workshop on risk reduction and management. Since the Cancun Adaptation Framework gives a mandate to coherently address adaptation under the Convention, it is obvious that efforts should be combined and therefore the workshop could be part of the SBI Work programme.

Moreover, the UNISDR Global Platform (May 2011) and Global Assessment Report have provided useful information for the work programme and should be noted by Parties in establishing the work programme. Later on in the year, the IPCC Special Report on Extreme Events (IPCC SREX) will be launched and should feed into the Work Programme. Last but not least, the Nairobi Work Programme under the SBSTA could take a special focus on elements from the Work Programme, to complement the implementation-related activities with scientific and technical advice.