

**Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and
International Centre for Climate Change and Development Joint Submission on
the Work Programme on Loss and Damage on behalf of a consortium of regional
and global partners**

September 2012

Introduction

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) supports a growing capacity of Bangladesh stakeholders and also enables experts in a range of disciplines from the region to benefit from training in the field, where they are exposed to the adaptation and resilience building strategies in progress and the latest research on climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation. ICCCAD, hosted at Independent University of Bangladesh, was established by Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Through the expertise and research outputs of these institutes and their local, regional, and global partners, they aim to facilitate the sharing and dissemination of knowledge between and among a range of stakeholders working on a diversity of issues related to climate and development strategies and actions.

Experience on Loss and Damage in Asia

Many countries in Asia have long been responding and adapting to weather and climate related events. However, loss and damage presents new challenges to Asian countries, many of whom are still struggling to eradicate poverty and develop. The poor will experience the greatest (but in many cases invisible) loss and damage from the adverse impacts of climate change and have the least ability to recover, for which they need to be compensated. In response to a growing concern about the impacts of climate change, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) approached the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) to seek support in helping not Bangladesh, but other vulnerable countries - like those in the Himalayans – develop approaches to assess and address possible future loss and damage. To undertake the work, CDKN has appointed a consortium consisting of Germanwatch, United Nations University-Institute for Environmental and Human Security (UNU-EHS), Munich Climate Insurance Initiative and the International Centre for Climate Change and

Development (ICCCAD). Together the consortium is implementing the Loss and Damage in Vulnerable Countries Initiative from February 2012 through March 2013. This consortium along with other leading research institute including BCAS is conducting research to determine the needs associated with assessing the risk of loss and damage, a possible range of approaches to minimise loss and damage as well as a potential mechanism at the national level for compensating those who incur loss and damage from the adverse impacts of climate change. Since initiating the project, ICCCAD has engaged a wide range of stakeholders in discussions and workshops on loss and damage and is also liaising with the government to discuss the implementation of concrete policies to reduce both potential climate change related risks and resulting loss and damage.

A number of organisations participating in the UNFCCC Asia Regional Workshop - on a range of approaches to address loss and damage - held in Bangkok from 27th to 29th August 2012 have already expressed an interest in participating in this proposed Asia Regional Working Group to focus on loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts from climate change (See Annex for a list of supporting organisations). These organisations bring a wealth of experience and expertise on a range of issues related to climate change and relevant to loss and damage. UNEP Finance Initiative has supported discussion on loss and damage particularly on issue of insurance and finance. Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) has compiled good practices on climate change adaptation in the regional of which one fourth are related with loss and damage. UNEP and APAN together with sub-regional and thematic nodes will be able to generate knowledge and organize capacity building event. The Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research¹ (APN) can support regional cooperation on scientific activities to support development of needs-oriented data and knowhow on climate adaptation that are relevant to loss and damage. APN, the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies,² BRAC University³, Kyoto University⁴ and others can play an important role in actively facilitating regional research and capacity development activities in the region. The All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)⁵ has worked to reduce the risks faced by the poor in 37 cities and 42 districts in India and

¹ <http://www.apn-gcr.org>

² <http://www.bcas.net/>

³ <http://www.bracu.ac.bd/>

⁴ <http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en>

⁵ <http://www.aidmi.org/>

brings a significant understanding of the on the ground realities faced by the most vulnerable communities facing a range of climatic impacts. The International Centre for Integration Mountain Development⁶ (ICIMOD) has extensive experience helping mountain people in the Himalayan region understand and adapt to climate change impacts and capitalise on the opportunities these changes bring. LEAD Pakistan⁷ bring relevant technical expertise on loss and damage to the Asian Regional Network through its access to the Leadership Development Program - as well as other associated networks – and experience and knowledge gathered through its work in capacity development, community empowerment and action research. Finally, ActionAid⁸ brings extensive experience in both working with and advocating for climate-affected communities in Asia and beyond and raising the profile of the issue of loss and damage.

Recommendations for the Work Programme on Loss and Damage

Decision 7/CP.17 recommended that the UNFCCC conduct a series of expert meetings to enhance the understanding of Parties and relevant stakeholders on thematic area 1 (assessing the risk of loss and damage) and thematic area two (a range of approaches to address loss and damage). Representatives of ICCCAD as well as several members of supporting organisations attended both the expert meeting on thematic area one and the Asian regional expert meeting on thematic area 2. During the meeting the following needs were identified:

Accessible, high quality data relevant for decision makers and communities

One of the issues highlighted in the expert workshop on assessing the risk of loss and damage, held in Tokyo earlier this year, was the lack of high quality data that is relevant to end users as well as the lack of accessibility and sharing of data. Moreover, when data is available it is often difficult and expensive to access. Delegates also highlighted the need for information to be communicated in a way that helps policy and decision makers make sound decisions vis-à-vis both assessing the risk of and implementing approaches to address loss and damage

Regional collaboration

⁶ <http://www.icimod.org>

⁷ <http://www.lead.org>

⁸ <http://www.actionaid.org>

Climate change impacts have a significant transboundary element. Transboundary issues are especially relevant to the issue of 'too much or too little' water i.e., the assured availability of quality water and early warning and pre-disaster planning for flood and drought risk reduction measures, which are issues of particular concern in Asia. Increasing temperatures are causing widespread retreat of glaciers in the region and affecting the water supplies of half a billion people in the Hindu-Kush-Himalayan region of South Asia and a quarter of a billion people in China⁹ as well as extreme rainfall events are increasingly causing loss of life and damage to the property. Himalayan rivers contribute 40 percent of the average annual flow in the Ganges River Basin in the wet season and 70 percent in the dry season.¹⁰ This has significant repercussions for downstream agriculture. There is thus a great need for regional collaboration, between both Parties and among other stakeholders. Regional cooperation plays an essential role in enhancing loss and damage reduction related activities through the sharing of data and knowhow necessary for end users, such as high-resolution datasets, climate risk assessment, good practices on adaptation measures and implementing scalable pilot projects.

More emphasis on slow onset events

Decision 1/CP.16 emphasises the “need to strengthen international cooperation and expertise in order to understand and reduce loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather events and slow onset events.”¹¹ Throughout the regional workshops on a range of approaches to address loss and damage the need to understand and address potential loss and damage from slow onset events arose. Given that the global mean sea level rise is predicted to be approximately 1 metre, even at the lowest emissions scenario¹², it is important to continue a dialogue on assessing and addressing loss and damage from slow onset climatic events. These impacts may take longer to arise but will inevitably occur and in many cases, already are. Sea level rise and salinity intrusion

⁹ Christensen, J.H. et al. (2007). “Regional Climate Projections.” In: *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Solomon, S. et al., eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰ Jianchu, X. et al. (2007). “The Melting Himalayas: Regional Challenges and Local Impacts of Climate Change on Mountain Ecosystems and Livelihoods.” *ICIMOD Working Paper*. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

¹¹ FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.

¹² Vermeer, M. et al. (2009). “Global Sea Level Linked to Global Temperature.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106(51):21527-21532.

are already causing loss and damage in Asia, which is expected to increase significantly as sea levels continue to rise throughout the century. In Viet Nam a 1 metre rise in sea level would impact 10.8 percent of the population and reduce both GDP and agricultural productivity by 10 percent.¹³ Slow onset events such as sea level rise, loss of biodiversity and ocean acidification cannot be reversed through the lowering of greenhouse gases but the extent of future loss can be reduced by increasing mitigation ambition significantly and urgently. Moreover, Asia is poised to experience even greater loss and damage in the future given current inadequate levels of mitigation. Thus, enhanced understanding of both the nature of loss and damage to the adverse impacts of slow onset events that Asian countries are facing as well as a possible range of approaches to reduce it are needed.

Way Forward

One of the ways the Convention can help Parties and relevant stakeholders to begin to facilitate increased understanding of loss and damage along with the implementation of result-oriented approaches to address loss and damage from the adverse impacts of climate change is by supporting regional collaboration and knowledge management. Thus, ICCCAD and supporting organisations would like to recommend that the Convention support a regional network of organisations collaborating on developing adaptation strategies and resilience building measures to loss and damage issues in Asia. ICCCAD would like to offer to host the first of these workshops and contribute to the growing body of knowledge around this issue.

Others who wish to also participate are encouraged to contact Dr Saleemul Huq, the Director of ICCCAD, at saleemul.huq@iied.org.

¹³Dasgupta, S. et al. (2007). "The Impact of Sea Level Rise on Developing Countries: A Comprehensive Analysis." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4136*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

ANNEX

List of supporting organisations¹⁴

ActionAid

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)

Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN)

Asia Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)

BRAC University

LEAD Pakistan

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Kyoto University

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

¹⁴ This is a list of organisations that contributed and officially support the submission. However, several other organisations have expressed interest in both helping to form and joining an Asian regional network on loss and damage.