

INDCs: APPROACHES AND
TEMPLATES
FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

by South Centre
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**Based on the Paper:
A Note on Intended Nationally
Determined Contributions (INDCs)**

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What was agreed to in COP 20

- **Paragraph 9** “*Reiterates* its invitation to each Party to communicate to the secretariat its INDC towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2.”
 - This leaves the scope of the INDC open, to include mitigation, adaptation, loss&damage, finance&technology, if a Party wants.
 - It invites Parties to communicate their INDCs without it making it a mandatory requirement.

Paragraph 10 states: “*Agrees* that each Party’s INDC towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2 will represent a progression beyond the current undertaking of that Party”;

Paragraph 12: “*Invites* all Parties to consider communicating their undertakings in adaptation planning or consider including an adaptation component in their INDCs”.

Paragraph 13: “*Reiterates* its invitation to all Parties to communicate their INDCs well in advance of COP 20 (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the INDCs”.

Paragraph 14 : *“Agrees that the information to be provided by Parties communicating their INDCs, in order to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding, **may** include, **as appropriate, inter alia**, quantifiable information on the reference point (including, as appropriate, a base year), time frames and/or periods for implementation, scope and coverage, planning processes, assumptions and methodological approaches including those for estimating and accounting for anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and, as appropriate, removals, and how the Party considers that its INDC is fair and ambitious, in light of its national circumstances, and how it contributes towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2.”*

- This paragraph relates to the information that is to accompany the INDCs. Given the use of the terms **“may”** and **“as appropriate,”** it is up to Parties to decide what kind of information will accompany their INDCs.

Meaning of ‘intended’

The term “intended” NDCs, is meant to convey an intention only of the kind of commitments/contributions/actions that Parties are considering to undertake and are not final in the context of the 2015 agreement. In fact, it can be viewed as an ‘initial offer’, subject to what is agreed under the Paris agreement.

The role of INDCs itself will be determined by the Paris Agreement, whose final content and nature is not yet known.

Shortcomings

- From the viewpoint of many developing countries, a shortcoming of the INDC decision in Lima is that it did not ask developed countries to include their contribution or commitment on finance and technology support as part of their INDCs
- This implies that developing countries will not have the information on the level of supports they may obtain in the post-2020 period.
- This has implications on the actions they can plan and the INDCs they may put forward.

Developing countries can include mitigation and adaptation in their INDCs

They will plan and undertaking a range of climate actions.

These include actions on adaptation; loss and damage; mitigation; and other relevant sustainable development actions

It is good to show this range of actions

The reasons for this are:

(1) To reflect the reality of the range of actions the country is planning to undertake, and not only the mitigation actions;

(2) To therefore enable all Parties and the public to appreciate the scale of the challenge faced by the country in its overall planned actions/intended contributions;

(3) To also allow Parties and the public to appreciate that the country has to prioritise its intended actions, in the context of limited financial, technical and human resources, and that thus there will be a different mixture or combination of types of actions (mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, other sustainable development), depending on the level of resources available;

(4) To also show the level of external resources required if the country is to attain certain levels of actions in the various categories of actions/contributions.

INDCs of Developing Countries

(Developing country Parties prepare sets of national contributions (Plan 1-4) depending on the finance and technology obtained from Annex II Parties)

Category of Actions	Plan 1 (With low external finance and low tech support)	Plan 2 (With moderate external finance and tech support)	Plan 3 (With good external finance and tech support)	Plan 4 (With optimal external finance and tech support)
Adaptation	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action
Loss and damage	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action
Mitigation	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action
Sustainable development	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action	(a) Action (b) Action (c) Action

Developing country INDCs with varying levels of support

- The level and type of contributions by developing countries depends on the national priorities and conditions plus the level of external support.
- The country can draw up its climate plans with options according to the level of external support. It will have different combination of mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage and capacity building, with different levels of external support.
- For example, a country facing very low support (Plan 1 scenario) may decide to place most of its resources on capacity building (including developing institutions and human capacity), loss and damage, then adaptation and mitigation. With higher support, significantly more actions on mitigation become possible, while additional adaptation and loss and damage are also made possible.

Summary of main points

- 1. The INDCs of a developing country should contain the full range of its intended climate-related actions.**
- 2. The country can prepare “scenarios” or different sets of INDCs, with each set reflecting the level of financial and technological resources available;**
- 3. Since information on how much international funds (or even national funds) are available after 2020 is not available yet, the country may, in its own domestic planning, have a baseline scenario of actions with less external financing, and an optimistic scenario then an optimal scenario of actions with significant and more significant external financing.**

Summary of Main Points (2)

- 4. The country can then decide on which of the scenarios to submit as its INDC, and the assumptions or conditions e.g. relating to availability of finance and technology.**

- 5. In the INDCs on Adaptation and Loss and Damage, it can be clarified that the Intended Contributions are included for the purposes of Information and they do not constitute international obligations of the country.**

INDCs on mitigation

- Lessons can be drawn from summary of types of mitigation actions of developing countries in the pre-2020 Cancun pledges. They include economy-wide targets (eg GHG: GDP ratio, deviation from biz-as-usual), sector-specific targets (eg energy efficiency and mix; forest cover) or qualitative plans and programmes
- A developing country can choose to include one or more INDCs from among a rich variety of actions or programmes, depending on its national priorities.
- More than one set of mitigation INDCs can be presented: with each set corresponding to levels of external financing and technology support.

TEMPLATE FOR MITIGATION

Preamble	It can be stated that the extent of implementation of the intended contribution on mitigation stated here is conditioned on the extent of financial resources and the technologies that are available to the country.
National situation and policy context	Provide brief information on the overall national context for the INDC, including how the actions fit with national plans and strategies, including with sustainable development priorities
Type of Contribution related to mitigation/avoiding emissions	Provide a set of the type/types of mitigation actions or targets to reduce or avoid emissions. This could be sector-based, economy-wide, or programmes and projects (See types of actions mentioned in the paper). For sectors, the country could include one or more of the following, as appropriate: energy (efficiency, energy intensity of GNP, use of renewable energy); transportation; industry; buildings; other infrastructure; forest and land use; etc. The country can provide a set of actions or targets that are “basic” (possible with present available resources) and another set or sets conditioned on the receipt of certain levels of finance and technology supports.
Timeframe for implementation	The year the contribution will start and its ending date. For goals and targets, the base year and target years should be given, for example to increase forest cover in the country from 40% in 2010 to 50% in 2025 or 55% in 2030.
Scope and coverage	This can include the scope of the gases included; and the sectors/sources
Assumptions and methodological approaches	It is up to the country to define the assumptions and what methodologies are used for accounting, e.g. IPCC GHG inventory guidelines. It is important to also note that past COP decisions have given flexibility to developing countries to develop their NAMA and REDD-plus actions. What developing countries have been communicating via their National Communications could also be a useful reference.
Planning processes	Could be a brief summary related to the contribution.
Means of implementation	Could specify available national resources, and the external support needed in terms of cost estimates of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building needs for a particular set of mitigation-related INDCs. Another estimate of the higher resources required can be given, if another set of INDCs (with higher ambition) is also provided.

INDCs on Adaptation and Loss & Damage

Developing countries have been undertaking adaptation related actions and Loss and Damage actions , usually or mainly with their own domestic resources, as these are immediate, priority issues.

Thus it is important to include adaptation and loss and damage in the country's INDCs, to show the actions being planned and the need finance and technology support, besides mitigation.

The country need not worry that including adaptation would lead more international obligations, in the INDC it can state that this is included for the purposes of Information and they do not constitute international obligations of the country.”

Template on Adaptation

Preamble	<p>It can be stated that the intended contribution on adaptation stated here is for the purposes of information so that an overview of the range of planned climate-related actions of the country are made known. It does not constitute an international obligation to the country.</p> <p>Also, the extent of implementation of the intended contribution depends on the financial resources and technologies available to the country</p>
National situation and policy context	National Adaptation Plan or other policy framework
Area/sector (if applicable) where adaptation actions are planned	Provide information about areas/sectors where adaptation actions are planned eg. coastal and low-lying areas; food producing/farming areas; forests/mangrove areas; urban areas; management of water resources etc.
Impacts and vulnerability	Brief information of impacts and vulnerabilities faced e.g. sea-level rise; rain and floods; storms and hurricanes; drought etc.

Planned actions	<p>Summary of planned actions to address impacts/vulnerabilities.</p> <p>This can be by any one or more of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) geographical areas (urban, rural, coastal, mountainous areas) (b) sectors (forest, mangroves, agriculture, buildings, roads, drainage systems and rivers, water supply, health services, education, food systems, etc) (c) disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and disaster management plans and schemes (establishing early warning system, evacuation system, rescue and food/health system, equipment for dealing with disasters, training, human resources, etc) (d) Needs related to and actions in identifying and addressing limits to adaptation and associated impacts of slow onset events relevant to the country: desertification, sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacier loss and related impacts.
Timeframe for implementation (if applicable)	<p>The period for implementation</p>
Means of implementation	<p>Estimates of costs for the planned actions; what national resources are available and what additional support is needed in terms of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building needs.</p> <p>The adaptation contributions can also be submitted as sets of adaptation actions; the first set is the “basic level”, with the actions that can be taken with limited presently available resources. Another set could be actions if there is moderate external financing, whereas a third set could have a higher level of activities, assuming there is adequate external financial resources made available.</p>

Template for loss and damage

Preamble

It can be stated that the intended contribution on loss and damage stated here is for the purposes of information so that the planned actions of the country are made known. It does not constitute an international obligation to the country.

Also, the extent of implementation of the intended contribution depends on the financial resources and technologies available to the country.

National situational and policy context

National plan or framework for loss and damage. For several countries, there may not yet be a specific action plan on “loss and damage” arising specifically from climate change. However most countries have a plan for dealing with natural disasters. The elements of the plan for coping with disasters could be used for this section on loss and damage.

Description of climate events that lead to loss and damage, and impacts of these events

A short listing of the types of: (a) extreme weather events such as storms, heavy rainfall, floods, coastal erosion or flooding, drought etc. and the adverse effects that lead to loss and damage (b) Slow onset events relevant to the country: desertification, sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacier loss and related impacts that lead to loss and damage.

The country may also include the impacts on society in the particular areas or eco-systems, such as reduction in food and other agricultural production, reduction or loss of income for farmers; factories, workers, small and bigger business enterprises, traders; damage to buildings, roads, other infrastructure, transport materials, etc. owned either by government agencies or by individual members of the public. These are among the victims and components of loss and damage.

Plans/actions to address these problems

In the context of “loss and damage” and weather events or natural disasters, the types of actions and plans may include: (a) Rescue operations, such as search, rescue and and evacuation; relocation to evacuation centres; provision of food, water and health care; (b) Rehabilitation, including basic repair of houses, schools, buildings, clinics, roads, electricity, water and infrastructure, so that victims are able to return to homes, offices and school; (c) Recovery, which includes full restoration of housing, other buildings, utilities, infrastructure, and livelihoods and jobs, so that development and economic growth can resume together with social and environmental protection. (d) Actions to cope with loss and damage resulting from slow onset events relevant to the country: desertification, sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacier loss, etc.

Timeframe	The timeframe for implementation of the intended actions could also be provided
Means of implementation: Financing, Technology, etc.	<p>Estimates of costs for the planned actions; what national resources are available and what additional support is needed in terms of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building needs.</p> <p>The loss and damage contributions can also be submitted as sets of adaptation actions; the first set is the “basic level”, with the actions that can be taken with limited presently available resources. Another set could be actions if there is moderate external financing, whereas a third set could have a higher level of activities, assuming there is adequate external financial resources made available.</p>
Needs Assessment	<p>If the country has carried out needs assessment, including on finance and technology, this can be briefly mentioned. If not, it can mention that the INDC on loss and damage is could be modified when needs assessment is carried out.</p>

Some Conclusions (1)

- **FLEXIBILITY:** Though countries are expected to submit their INDCs before COP₂₁ in Paris, there is considerable flexibility in the scope, methodology and timing of submission of the INDCs. Developing countries should be aware of this flexibility and can make appropriate use of it.
- **ADAPTATION CONTRIBUTIONS:** Developing countries can choose whether to include adaptation (and also loss and damage, within adaptation) in their INDCs. The advantage of doing so is that they can show the full range of their climate actions, which go beyond mitigation; and by doing so also indicate the requirements they have for assistance with finance and technology.
- However, developing countries that choose to include adaptation (and loss and damage) should indicate that the contributions on this is for information and do not constitute international obligations under the Paris outcomes.

Conclusions (2)

MITIGATION INDCs and INFORMATION:

- **The Lima COP₂₀ decision on ADP and INDCs provides in Paragraph 14 a list of items for member states to communicate. However the Paragraph explains that the information on INDCs “may include, as appropriate, inter alia...” the items included in the list.**
- **Therefore each country can decide which among the items listed may be included in the country’s INDCs on mitigation.**
- **Country can choose its mitigation INDC or INDCs from among a wide variety of types of mitigation actions, for example, those which are in Cancun pledges of many developing countries**

Conclusions (3)

ABSENCE OF RELEVANT INFORMATION: A disadvantage of developing countries in preparing their INDCs is that a lot of information is not available when preparing the INDCs:

(a) Lack of information on the financial resources and technology transfer that will be made available to developing countries

(b) The country has not yet prepared comprehensive (or even initial) action plans for mitigation & adaptation (and loss and damage) for post 2020. Thus putting forward the “contributions” before the plans are ready is somewhat like putting the cart before the horse.

(c) The country may not yet complete an assessment of its needs in terms of financial resources, technologies, institutions, and human resources, etc.

(d) It is not yet known how INDCs will be treated in the Paris outcome, and the significance of what is put forward as INDCs.

CONCLUSIONS (4)

INITIAL INDCS CAN LATER BE REVISED

Due to lack of information, developing countries can have initial INDCs, with some contributions containing figures, while others may not have figures.

A country can revise their initial INDCs or give more information later. There are 4 years between Paris COP21 and 2020, or Year 1 of the Paris outcome. Thus there is ample time to revise its INDCs.

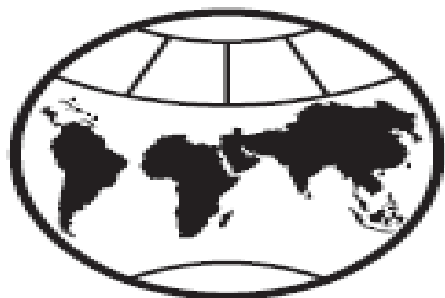
Thus countries need not have to put forward a complete set of information or the most ambitious actions they can envisage, as the initial INDCs can be amended during the 4-year period.

Since information on post 2020 finance & technology support is not yet available provided, the country does not yet know the level of available support. They it need not put forward the highest possible level of actions, as this may have to wait for more information to be available, i.e. information on support, needs & post-2020 action plans

Conclusions (5)

INDCs need not be complicated

- **The INDCs need not be complex or complicated. They can in fact be simple, The pledges made by most countries following the COP in Cancun were mainly simple. The INDCs already submitted are also relatively simple. Developing countries' INDCs can be expected to be simpler than those of developed countries.**
- **INDCs need not be as detailed as the information in the national communication or biennial update reports.**
- **The INDCs could be taken as an initial attempt to place some of the country's planned actions into the international arena as a contribution to global actions.**
- **The country's initial INDC is not cast in stone, and can be expected to be amended if conditions change.**



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