

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: 5 YEARS OF THE WARSAW INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE



This event generously supported by:



Norwegian Ministry
of Climate and Environment

About the event

The 5 year anniversary of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage was celebrated with a high level reception on December 10th at COP 24 in Katowice.

More than 200 people, including Executive committee members and partners, attended the successful reception, which was organized by the COP Presidency and the Executive Committee, and generously supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment.

The celebration featured posters and a photo exhibition illustrating the impacts and future direction of the WIM. More details of the exhibition can be found in Appendix I. In addition, distinguished speakers from the COP Presidency, Germany, Fiji, and the UNFCCC shared their reflections on the evolution and achievements of the WIM.

Key messages

Monica Antosik opened the reception on behalf of the Polish Presidency, and introduced the functions of the WIM. Several high level speakers provided remarks on the importance of the WIM for the most vulnerable communities, its achievements so far, and visions for the future of the WIM.

The importance of limiting global warming to 1.5-degrees above pre-industrial levels to reduce loss and damage was highlighted by the speakers. "We need to be serious, because we are not on track to stay within the temperature targets agreed upon in Paris", Mrs. Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary of Germany, said. Mrs. Flachsbarth referred to the disastrous impacts already occurring, acknowledging the challenge facing people living with climate change. For those in poverty, it is a matter of life and death, she said.



Michał Kurtyka, the COP 24 President, noted that the WIM has an important role in the Paris agreement architecture of climate change because it brings in the human dimension and zooms in on the losses and damages suffered by the most vulnerable.

Mr. Karan, permanent Secretary to the office of the Fiji Prime Minister, used the occasion to celebrate Article 8 on loss and damage in The Paris Agreement. It means "that developing countries are not left alone in addressing vulnerabilities", he said. The work of the WIM also received praise, including the Executive report, which Mr. Karan said is critical for future sustainable development for developing countries and all island states.

Speakers highlighted the WIM's achievements, including:

- fostering more ambition to build resilience;
- forging important partnerships;
- the recently released report of the Executive Committee (2018);
- opening a solution space for addressing the adverse impacts arising out of extreme weather events and slow onset events such as sea level rise, desertification and ocean acidification;
- introducing comprehensive risk management approaches so that countries can more readily address the full spectrum of climate risks;
- launching the Fiji Clearing House for Risk Transfer;
- establishing The Task force on Displacement, which has generated seven extensive reports on various aspects of displacements, and a set of recommendations on climate related displacements. The recommendations were endorsed in Katowice.

A more extensive list of the outputs under the WIM can be found on the next page.

The speakers also shared their visions for the future of the WIM and its work on Loss and Damage. Although the steps made since COP 19 are gaining momentum, Mr. Karan highlighted that mobilizing adequate support for developing countries is an ongoing challenge. Policy makers need to create an environment that invites private sector participation in the WIM, Mrs. Flachsbarth said. She emphasized the need for major public and private investments and for scaling up the role of the private sector.

Moving forward, the UNFCCC hopes the WIM will continue to:

- complement existing national planning processes;
- shine the light on the catastrophic level of impacts of climate change; and
- help generate new knowledge into action.

The functions of the WIM



Enhancing knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches



Strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders



Enhancing action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building

Key outputs under the WIM

SLOW ONSET EVENTS

Database of organizations working on slow onset events

2016



164 organizations from around the world

SIDE EVENT

2017

Breaking new ground on risk financing for slow onset events



7 expert presentations and discussions



123 participants in an awareness raising photo campaign

Scoping paper on slow onset events as reported by partners in the slow onset events database

2018



Regional analysis on the work of:

- Private sector and research
- Inter-governmental organizations
- Non-governmental organizations
- United Nation affiliated organizations

COMPREHENSIVE RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

The Fiji Clearing House on Risk Transfer

2017

Bridges expertise on insurance and risk transfer and those seeking solutions, and employs innovative artificial intelligence technology



291 Risk management experts



111 Questions asked



137 Solutions found



Compendium on comprehensive risk management approaches

2017

Compiles briefs of pioneering initiatives contributing to:

- Risk assessment
- Risk reduction
- Risk transfer
- Risk retention
- Transformational approaches
- Building an enabling environment

NON-ECONOMIC LOSSES

Meeting of the expert group on non-economic losses

2016



SIDE EVENT

2016

Shining the light on non-economic losses: challenges, risks and lessons learned for addressing them



6 expert presentations and an interactive roundtable discussion



65 people participated in a photo booth campaign



HUMAN MOBILITY

Technical meeting on migration, displacement and human mobility

2016



55 participants including WIM Executive Committee members and international experts, organized by the International Organization for Migration

Stakeholder consultations workshop in Geneva

2018



90 participants, including experts on human mobility and key stakeholders, organized by the Platform on Disaster Displacement

The first phase of work of the Task Force on Displacement

2018



7 technical reports produced



472 relevant national policies and institutional frameworks mapped



200 international and regional tools identified for averting, minimizing and addressing displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change

Task Force on Displacement workplan adopted

2017



The Task Force brought together perspectives from 11 communities of practice to collaboratively work under the umbrella of the Mechanism.

Task Force recommendations forwarded to the Executive Committee

ACTION AND SUPPORT

INFORMATION PAPER

2016

Best practices, challenges and lessons learned from existing financial instruments at all levels that address the risk of loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change

Suva expert dialogue

2018



200 experts convened



- 6 round-table discussions on:
- Risk assessment, risk reduction, risk transfer, and risk retention
 - Comprehensive risk management approaches to address extreme weather events and slow onset events

Key points from speakers



Michał Kurtyka,
COP 24 President

- 5 years ago, during the winter in Warsaw, a collective decision was made to establish the WIM;
- The WIM has since evolved through the process of learning by doing. Numerous practitioners and experts are now a part of the WIM, and Poland has been involved in its implementation since COP 19;
- The Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of the Warsaw mechanism and participation through collaborative action from partners;
- The latest report from the IPCC sends a message to strengthen resilience to climate change, and the WIM has an integral role to play.



Maria Flachsbarth,
Parliamentary State
Secretary, Germany

- Natural disasters have had huge impacts. 4 million people are homeless because of damages. Ultimately poor planning is to blame and it has resulted in a question of survival for many;
- Policy makers need to create an environment that invites private sector participation in the WIM;
- Synergies need to be created among relevant stakeholders. The Fiji clearinghouse for risk transfer is a good example of knowledge sharing. More such platforms are needed;
- Looking at the achievements of the WIM, it has fostered more ambition to build resilience, and led to important continued partnerships.

“Natural disasters have had huge impacts —
4 million people are homeless because of
damages”



Yogesh Karan,
Permanent Secretary,
Office of the Prime
Minister, Fiji

- The WIM executive report is critical for future sustainable development for developing countries and all island states;
- The incremental steps made since COP 19 are gaining momentum. To continue financial and social support, gaps need to be addressed. It is an ongoing need and challenge to mobilize adequate support for developing countries;
- The inclusion of text on loss and damage in the Paris Agreement means that developing countries are not left alone in addressing vulnerabilities;
- Fiji's climate struggle has been expressed in the Talanoa Dialogue; this platform ensures that there is respectful engagement to increase ambition.



Ovais Sarmad,
Deputy Executive
Secretary, UNFCCC

- The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage is extremely important in the Paris Agreement architecture of climate change;
- It fills a crucial gap in establishing resilience against climate change impacts;
- By introducing comprehensive approaches of the sort that the WIM provides, countries can better address the full spectrum of emerging climate risks;
- Moving forward, the WIM should complement existing planning processes and help generate new knowledge that can be turned into action.

“ Well done for a splendid five years. I know the next five will be just as productive ”

Annex I

The Loss and Damage team at the UNFCCC Secretariat prepared a photo exhibition for the reception. Five questions were sent to leaders and experts in the Loss and Damage community:

- How has the WIM helped advance your daily work?
- How has the WM helped advance the work on loss and damage around the world?
- How has the WIM changed your understanding of loss and damage?
- How has the WIM fostered relevant dialogue and useful collaboration?
- How would you envision the WIM in ten years? What would its impact be?

16 respondents shared their views, including members of the Executive Committee, and Task Force on Displacement, as well as stakeholders from non-governmental organizations, research institutions, funds, youth groups, and UN organizations. Responses were showcased through a slide show during the reception, which is included on the following pages.

IMPACTS OF THE WARSAW INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM (WIM):

TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE

“The Warsaw International Mechanism, by attracting the attention of world leadership to the link between climate change and related loss and damage, is the main driver and motivator for taking serious and urgent actions in light of the latest 1.5 degree report of IPCC. Its role should be enforced and well recognized.”

NEDAL KATBEH-BADER

Climate Change Advisor, Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Palestine; Member, WIM Executive Committee



“The Warsaw international Mechanism has fostered useful collaboration between NGOs in the Global South and in the Global North and strengthened the dialogue between civil society, practitioners, governments and media.”

SABINE MINNINGER

Policy advisor on climate change,
Bread for the World



“The Warsaw International Mechanism has set the agenda for research and action on Loss and Damage. In ten years from now, the WIM will be a central place for expertise and funding for countries and regions whose habitability is under threat of climate change, offering transformative solutions.”

KEES VAN DER GEEST

United Nations University

“The Warsaw International Mechanism has brought a critical dimension of losses and damages resulting from climate events at core of my work. There is much greater awareness of risk of unavoidable and irreversible losses and damages. There is also greater awareness of immaterial, cultural and social categories of loss and damage.”

KETI CHACHIBAIA

Regional Technical Advisor, United Nations Development Program; Member, Task Force on Displacement



Photo: UNDP



“The Warsaw International Mechanism put an important issue on the agenda. It is important that the taboo issue loss and damage is now an official agenda point and it's positive to note that climate-related migration is now on the agenda, too, but dialogue without action is not enough.”

RIXA SCHWARZ

Team Leader International Climate Policy,
Germanwatch

“The Warsaw International Mechanism has a very valuable role in sharing good practice examples from real life to demonstrate, in a concrete manner, the feasibility, diversity and multiple benefits of actions that contribute to minimizing, averting and addressing loss and damage.”

MATTI NUMMELIN

Senior Consultant, Commelina Oy



“The Warsaw International Mechanism has given unprecedented levels of visibility to the climate migration nexus at a time where the topic was only a marginal consideration – this has helped us, migration practitioners, develop new approaches to support states and migrants.”



MARIAM TRAORE CHAZALNOËL

International Organization for Migration



“The Warsaw International Mechanism has raised the understanding for critical risks beyond adaptation and the need for transformational risk management. The Excom meetings including the Suva dialogue in mid 2018 have truly been a useful platform for exchange and deliberation.”

REINHARD MECHLER

The International Institute for Applied
Systems Analysis



“The Warsaw International Mechanism has been pivotal in shaping the work on loss and damage due to climate change despite the uncertainties and in the face of significant push-back.”

ORVILLE GREY

Adaptation Planning Specialist,
Green Climate Fund

The WIM has shed a new light on the loss and damage dimensions of the climate migration nexus, generating discussions on topics that were not previously considered. It should continue playing a catalytic role, generating new insights and encouraging innovative discussions on climate migration that can bring profound changes for individuals and communities.”



DINA IONESCO

International Organization for Migration,
Member of the Task Force on Displacement



“In ten years time the Warsaw International Mechanism should have enabled vulnerable developing countries to better address loss and damage, for example by having trained the relevant actors on the ground, and by fostering systematic support as countries will increasingly run up against limits to adaptation. ”

DAWN PIERRE-NATHONIEL

Deputy Chief, Department of Sustainable Development
Saint Lucia; Member, WIM Executive Committee

“WIM has encouraged WMO and its National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to reach out to the relevant international organizations and national authorities to begin to strengthen national systems for cataloguing high-impact events and associated losses and damages in a way that allows the event and impacts data to be more precisely cross-referenced.”

MAXX DILLEY

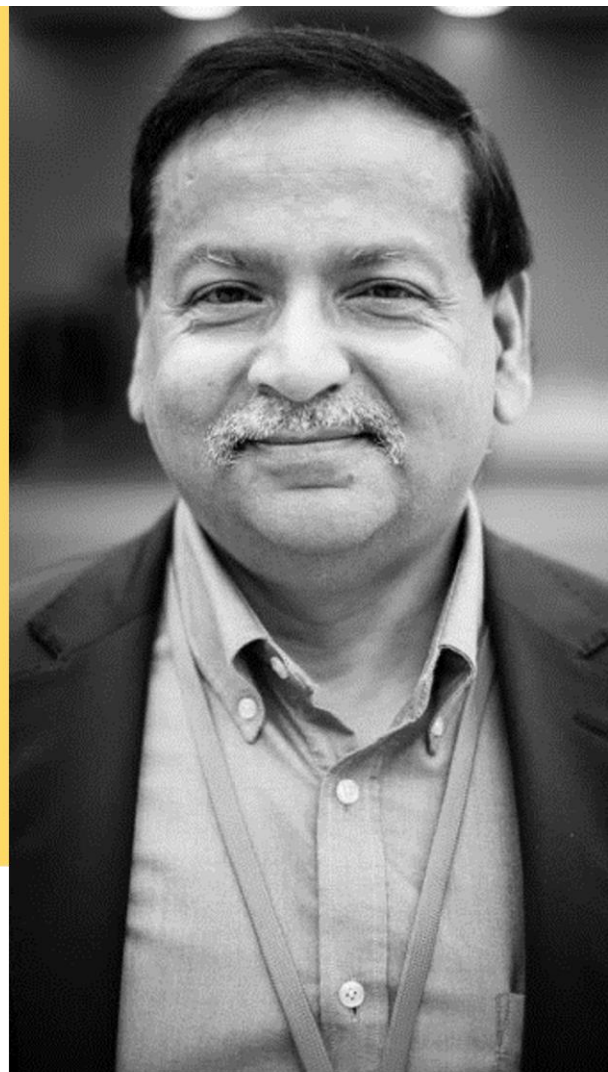
Director, Climate Prediction and Adaptation,
World Meteorological Organization



“The Warsaw International Mechanism and its Work Program and Action Areas have provided us with vital guidance for our own research as well as for advising the LDC Group. It really has to be mandated and supported to do more on raising Global Funding for Loss and Damage.”

SALEEMUL HUQ

Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development



“The purpose and the mission of the Warsaw International Mechanism serves as a baseline for our youth empowerment activities, where we simulate climate negotiations and use it as an interactive tool to introduce new mindsets.”

VIKTOR JÓSA

Empowerment Co-Director, CliMates

“The Warsaw International Mechanism has encouraged me to explore collaborations with institutes like the Munich Climate Insurance Initiative and Germanwatch to explore how climate risk transfer can best benefit climate vulnerable groups like indigenous peoples.”



DENISE MARGARET MATIAS

Researcher, German Development Institute



“The Warsaw Mechanism has a very strategic position in terms of allowing already happening good practices and innovative practices to further reach scale. These efforts are actually changing lives.”

DONNA LAGDAMEO

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies