

First meeting of the Expert Group on slow onset events of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, 12–19 April 2021

Summary of proceedings

01 May 2021

BACKGROUND

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, at its second session (CMA 2), requested the Executive Committee (ExCom) to launch the expert group on slow onset events.¹ At its 12th meeting (October 2020), the ExCom adopted the terms of reference and launched the group.

PROCEEDINGS

The Expert Group on slow onset events (SOEs EG) held its first meeting from 12–19 April 2021. The modalities of the first meeting comprised live, face-to-face video meetings and electronic means via MS Teams collaboration space on shared documents.

Two live sessions were held on Monday 12 April and Monday 19 April, each for two hours.

The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Malcolm Ridout, member and co-chair of the ExCom. The following members took part in the meeting. The full membership list is available online,² and the members' profiles are contained in Annex I.

Mr. Ruben BASANTES	Ikiam University
Ms. Bettina KOELLE	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre
Ms. Musonda MUMBA	Rome Centre for Sustainable Development Nature, Climate and Energy
Mr. Jaroslav MYSIAK	Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change
Mr. Parashram Jakappa PATIL	Ministry of Commerce and Industry Govt. of India
Mr. Albert SALAMANCA	Stockholm Environment Institute
Mr. Akhilesh SURJAN	Charles Darwin University
Mr. Antonio CANAS	Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
Mr. Malcolm RIDOUT	Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

At the first **live session**, members, after a brief round of introduction, discussed the following two aspects:

1. What are underserved technical areas relating to SOEs where the group should focus its work on
2. How could the group's outputs best be disseminated to reach those stakeholders that the group would like to target?

Technical areas identified for possible focus included ocean acidification, sea level rise and its implications at the regional level, limits to adaptation in the context of multiple hazards, urban water

¹ Decision 2/CMA.2, para. 25.

² [SOEs Expert Group - Membership | UNFCCC](#).

scarcity, risk, including forecast-based, financing, nature-based solutions, monitoring, evaluation and learning concerning SOEs and SOEs as an element of systems thinking. Members also referred to the upcoming special issue on slow onset events of the Elsevier journal *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, which the ExCom has been working on since 2019. The journal special issue is to be published in June 2021 and will feature around 30 papers on SOE topics that may inform the group's work.

In terms of disseminating outputs, members shared ideas on the type of target stakeholders, ranging from UNFCCC Parties to local-level practitioners. In considering potential dissemination modalities suitable to reach each of them, the group underlined the importance of applying innovative means of communication, including non-scientific formats.

Upon closure of the first session, the views shared on technical areas, and the dissemination modalities were captured in two separate tables. The group requested the secretariat to complement the possible technical areas with those stemming from previous work under the Warsaw International Mechanism, e.g. SOEs-related needs communicated by countries under the Santiago Network.

The two tables served as the basis for the group's further work via the MS Teams collaboration channel during the meeting week. In preparation for the **second live session** on Monday 19 April, the secretariat was requested to integrate the content of the two tables with the activities entrusted to the group via its TORs and produce a draft high-level rolling plan of action (PoA). The first draft PoA was shared with the members before the second live session.

The discussion at the second live session underlined the urgent need to raise awareness of the far-reaching impacts on livelihoods and economies, which the simultaneous occurrence of several SOEs has in given territories or connected landscapes. The group, therefore, decided to focus the initial phase of its first rolling PoA on unpacking the compounded interplay of selected SOEs, including their cascading damaging effects on livelihood and corresponding actions which governments, policy-makers at all levels, can effectively prepare and plan for, and implement.

For the first phase, the group decided to focus on the following SOEs: **glacial retreat, sea level rise, and desertification**, thereby take into account interrelated processes (e.g. salinization) and cascading impacts on key systems that lead to loss or damage, such as loss of biodiversity, land degradation, urban water scarcity, and losses from resulting human mobility. The overarching aim of the first phase of the PoA will be the identification of 1) examples of impacts and projected risks on livelihoods in varying contexts of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change; and 2) steps that governments can take to respond to these risks.

To achieve this aim, the group decided to initiate a broader co-creation process by engaging additional relevant experts via thematic workshops on the three selected SOEs to collect evidence of the impacts on livelihoods and critical systems and pitch policy and practical solutions to identified problems. Leads and co-leads from among the SOEs EG members were assigned to take this work forward. Additional sources of information for this activity would include established country-led processes, such as national adaptation plans and nationally determined contributions.

After collecting examples of the far-reaching and cascading impacts from these SOEs, the group agreed the next activity should be developing scenarios on necessary steps to plan for practical action and policy responses to those impacts/implications at different levels. A case study approach could be used for this step. The 'scenario may take into account the full spectrum of the risk

management process, ranging from assessments to identifying resources, including financial, to implement solutions. The subsequent activity would be the provision of technical advice and support to developing countries on integrating findings on practical action and policy responses into national planning and policy-making processes. This could also include, for example, the capacity-building of national or regional stakeholders. The group decided to disseminate the outputs of its activities via webinars and other learning events and develop catalogues of approaches and recommendations for targeted stakeholders.

The results of the discussion were subsequently turned into a revised draft rolling PoA. Outstanding scope of work from the TORs was captured in the PoA as activities to be further determined. This includes the mandated development of topics for the technical guides of the group as per decision 2/CMA.2, paragraph 26.

As a result of the first meeting week, the group agreed on the following:

- Forward the high-level draft plan of action to the ExCom for its endorsement after a period of post-meeting refinement;
- Start planning for the thematic expert workshops/meetings to be held by September 2021, pending the endorsement at ExCom 13;
- Seek to fill in additional expert seats to complement the existing expertise and resources within the group. In doing so, a priority given to female experts, to the extent possible, to improve the gender balance of the group. One viable channel to seek this additional expertise may be the planned thematic expert meetings/workshops.

NEXT STEPS

Following the post-meeting refinement, the draft rolling PoA (see annex II) will be presented to the ExCom for its endorsement at its thirteenth meeting (27–30 April 2021).

The group will continue elaborating the implementation approaches to each activity of its draft PoA and start the implementation after the plan's endorsement. It will also seek to identify additional experts to complement existing expertise and resources, with a priority given to female experts.

Further information on the meeting is available on the meeting page [First meeting of the Expert Group on Slow onset events | UNFCCC](#).

Annex I: Members' profiles of the SOEs EG

Annex II: Draft rolling Plan of Action

ANNEX I SOEs EG MEMBERS' PROFILES

Member's name/ affiliation, areas of expertise	Self-introduction
<p>Akhilesh Surjan/ Charles Darwin University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Sea level rise 	<p>Associate Professor Surjan is proactively engaged with the issues of disaster-environment-climate risk reduction and global change and sustainability in the context of human settlements.</p> <p>He has served as a Lead Author of the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and also as Contributing Author of the United Nation's Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction.</p> <p>Dr Surjan deliberated risk management issues from the platform of Disaster Management Institute, Bhopal (India), which was established in the aftermath of the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984. Later, under UNDP's Disaster Risk Management Program, he facilitated mainstreaming of community-based disaster preparedness concepts in the Indian Government's policy, planning and implementation.</p>
<p>Albert Salamanca/ Stockholm Environment Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia • Sea level rise • Ocean acidification 	<p>Albert is a Senior Research Fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute's Asia Centre where he leads the Climate Change, Disasters and Development cluster. He has over 15 years of experience working on climate change adaptation, natural resources management, conservation, development and sustainable livelihoods issues in several countries in Southeast Asia. His current research interests are on the themes of resilience, risk and vulnerabilities, traditional ecological knowledge, mobility and spatial linkages, disaster displacement, and sustainable livelihoods.</p> <p>He will bring to the group social science and Southeast Asian perspectives on coastal disasters and their impacts on households and communities, particularly those in remote small islands in the region.</p> <p>With regard to sea level rise, which is one of the key areas of work of the expert group, he is currently leading a project looking at the critical challenges of the seas of Southeast Asia, particularly marine microplastics, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. Together with ETC Zurich, they are presently investigating adaptation to sea-level rise in highly stressed coastal social-ecological systems. In another project he is researching on how the different SDG targets interact at delta levels focusing on three major Asian deltas: Red River, Mekong and the Brahmaputra-Ganges-Meghna. SLR and its impacts on delta communities and environment are some of the concerns of the Hub. He is also involved in a project with University of York to look at the health implications of climate change in the Indian and Bangladeshi Sundarbans.</p> <p>He has a PhD in Geography from Durham University (UK).</p>
<p>Bettina Koelle/ Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa 	<p>Bettina Koelle is a Senior Knowledge and Learning Specialist with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. She is a geographer who has been facilitating community-based development and adaptation for the past 20 years whilst also engaging in policy-related research and discourse both in South Africa and internationally. She is a contributing author to the current draft IPCC AR6 report and has previously contributed to the IPCC</p>

	<p>Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (IPCC SREX).</p> <p>In collaboration with the South African National Biodiversity Institute and the University of Cape Town she has contributed to creating policy-oriented dialogue in the context of rural and urban adaptation, and served on the South African Steering Committee of the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for the Adaptation Fund as well as on Project Advisory Committee for the NIE's Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility Project.</p> <p>As a member of the Adaptation Fund NGO network Bettina was an active contributor to the development of the Adaptation Fund's Environmental and Social Policy. Her engagement in global policy processes draws on grassroots experience and insight from her action research work with climate change affected communities.</p>
<p>Jaroslav Mysiak/ Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe • Ecosystem and biodiversity financing • Economic and social impacts of water scarcity and droughts – land degradation 	<p>Dr Mysiak is the director of the research division 'Risk assessment and adaptation strategies' at the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (www.cmcc.it), and teaches at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice.</p> <p>Jaroslav's research focusses on risk assessment and governance, including behavioral responses to risks and risk-reduction measures, risk perception and transformational social change, environmental economics, sustainable finance, climate adaptation and services.</p> <p>Jaroslav is a member and rapporteur of the EC Horizon Europe's Mission Board on Climate adaptation and Societal Transformation, a member of the Scientific Committee of the European Environmental Agency (EEA), and a member of the UNDRR European Science and Technology Advisory Group.</p>
<p>Musonda Mumba/ Rome Centre for Sustainable Development Nature, Climate and Energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa <p>Land & forest degradation</p>	<p>Musonda Mumba is the new Chief of the Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit with over 20 years experience working at both scientific and political levels on climate change adaptation, conservation, protected areas management and wetlands ecology. She has also been UN Environment's focal point on Mountains.</p>
<p>Parashram Jakappa Pati I/ Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia • Land & forest degradation • Desertification • Loss of biodiversity 	<p>Dr. Parashram Patil is an agricultural and natural resources economist and social scientist. He is a well-known international expert in the field of agriculture and natural resources economics. He has earned Doctorate from Shivaji University, Kolhapur, (Agro based Industry of India) and Post Doctorate from Savitribhai Phule University, Pune (Natural Resources Accounting). He is presently working as agricultural and natural resources economist (expert) for Asian Development Bank. He has professional work experience in the areas of Forest accounting, biodiversity loss, forest and land economics, desertification, natural resources valuations, ecosystem services, sustainable development and agriculture economics.</p>
<p>Ruben Basantes/ Ikiam University</p>	<p>Dr. Basantes-Serrano is a research professor at Universidad regional Amazónica Ikiam in Ecuador. His research focuses on understanding climate through glacier response over the last century in the Andes region. His interpretations are based on in situ glaciological and meteorological observations, as well as remote sensing</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andes mountains, Amazonia, South America • Glacier response to climate • Glacio-hydrology 	<p>techniques. Currently studying the Amazonian influence on the behavior of glaciers in the inner tropics. Ruben maintains a close collaboration with the GLACIOCLIM monitoring program from France, and the research teams of INAIGEM in Peru, UMSA in Bolivia and CECs in Chile. He also is involved in activities developed under the framework of SERVIR-Amazonia program lead by NASA. In addition, he has nearly 10 years of experience in field measurements in mountainous regions such as the Andes and the French Alps.</p>
<p>Antonio Cañas/ Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage</p>	<p>Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage</p>
<p>Imran Khan/ Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage</p>	<p>Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage</p>
<p>Malcolm Ridout/ Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage</p>	<p>Malcolm Ridout is responsible for Adaptation and Loss and Damage climate negotiations for the incoming UK presidency of the UNFCCC. He has been a technical adviser for the UK's Department for International Development on livelihoods and climate change since 2004, including regional programme and policy work and a secondment to the UN High Level Task Force on food Security. Before 2004 he worked with NGOs and the UN, leading development and humanitarian relief programmes in both Africa and Asia.</p>

ANNEX II DRAFT ROLLING PLAN OF ACTION OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON SLOW ONSET EVENTS

Expert Group on slow onset events of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, 1st meeting (12–19 April 2021)

As an outcome of its first meeting, the expert group on slow onset events (SOEs EG) decided to take the following overarching approach to its first rolling plan of action (PoA).

Recognizing the far-reaching impacts of slow onset events across livelihoods and economies, characterized by their simultaneous occurrence in given territories or even different but connected landscapes, the SOEs EG will focus the initial phase of its first rolling PoA on unpacking the compounded play-out of selected SOEs and their combined damaging effects. For the first phase these will be the three water-related slow onset events **glacial retreat, sea level rise and desertification**. Thereby, interrelated processes (e.g. salinization) and cascading effects that impact e.g. agricultural practice, and lead to e.g. loss of biodiversity, land degradation, water scarcity in urban and other contexts and human mobility will be taken into account.

The overarching aim of the first phase of the PoA will be the identification of 1) examples of projected risks and impacts associated with the compounded play-out of the selected SOEs on livelihoods in varying contexts of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change; and 2) steps that governments can take to respond to these risks in a timely manner, taking into account regional particularities, traditional knowledge and local practices.

Thematic Lead/Co-leads

Glacial retreat: **Ruben Basantes**/ Parashram Jakappa Patil

Sea level rise: **Jaroslav Mysiak**/ Albert Salamanca, Akhilesh Surjan

Desertification: **Bettina Koelle**/ Musonda Mumba, Akhilesh Surjan

The SOEs EG will review the progress of its PoA annually and update/adjust as needed.

Activity	Indicative timeline
<p>1. Convene three expert meetings, using SLR and salinization, glacial retreat, desertification, as entry points to collect evidence of impacts on livelihoods and implications on critical systems in countries. Experts to ‘pitch’ policy and practical solutions to problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Desk review/targeted stocktaking exercise to complement/support the findings at the expert meetings. This will include the reviewing of the SOEs Special journal issue articles, NAPs, NDCs, and knowledge products under the NWP and work under the WIM.</i> <p>Deliverable: compilation of data, information, mapping of key stakeholders</p>	<p>by end of September 2021</p>
<p>2. Develop scenarios/guidance/strategy on necessary steps to understand and plan for practical action and policy responses to those impacts/implications unpacked under activity # 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>At the regional, national and community levels;</i> - <i>Taking into account the full spectrum of the climate risk management process -- impacts assessment and identification of options to reduce the impacts, practical solutions to manage risks, assessing capacity gaps and needs, identification of resources, including finance, for implementation of solutions;</i> - <i>Possibly using a case study approach.</i> <p>Deliverable: key messages/pitch, guidance material, webinars and other types of learning events, catalogue of approaches, a set of recommendations for targeted stakeholders (possibly in response to specific requests)</p>	<p>Second half of 2021 and onward</p>

<p>3. Provide technical advice and support to developing countries on integrating considerations of impacts associated with SOEs and applicable responses into national planning and policy-making processes, taking into account regional particularities, traditional knowledge and local practices.</p>	<p>2022 and onward</p>
<p>Activities from the ToR to be further defined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define <i>topics of the technical guides of the SOEs EG (to be endorsed by the ExCom; ExCom to suggest additional topics as necessary)</i> - Produce <i>guide(s)</i> 	<p>Tbd.</p>