

A Simple Guide to the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage

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Overview

The purpose of this slide show is to provide accessible, easy-to-understand information about the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage that you can click through on your own. This guide can serve as a primer for people new to the concept of loss and damage, or a reference for those more familiar with the WIM.

Format

The slideshow outlines the context of the Warsaw International Mechanism, and presents selections from relevant UNFCCC texts. A selection will be reproduced verbatim on one page, then annotated with text boxes on the next.

Outline

- History of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM)
- The WIM decision
- An overview of the WIM's initial two-year workplan
- Action areas of the workplan
- The WIM Executive Committee
- What's next for Loss and Damage in the UNFCCC?
- Further reading

History

- **COP16 in Cancun (2009)** - **Work Programme** established to consider approaches to address loss and damage (Decision [1/CP.16](#))
- **COP17 (2011)** agreed to continue technical work in three thematic areas, and agreed to pursue a set of activities under each thematic area. Parties also presented the need to explore a range of approaches and mechanisms, including an **“international mechanism” to address loss and damage** (Decision [7/CP.17](#))
- **COP18 (2012)** - Parties acknowledged the necessity of strengthening institutional arrangements at all levels and decided to establish institutional arrangements, such as international mechanisms to address L&D in particularly vulnerable developing countries. This decision also mandated the establishment of such **“institutional arrangements and its functions and modalities”** at COP19 (Decision [3/CP.18](#)).
- **COP 19 (2013)** - the **Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM)** was established to “address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change” (Decision [2/CP.19](#))

The Warsaw decision on loss and damage

“The Conference of the Parties... Establishes the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage, under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, subject to review at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties (November–December 2016) pursuant to paragraph 15 below, to address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (hereinafter referred to as the Warsaw international mechanism)...

-[COP19 Decision 2](#) regarding the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts

Warsaw decision on loss and damage, cont.

The WIM was positioned under the Cancun Adaptation Framework despite pressure to acknowledge that L&D is beyond adaptation by creating a stand-alone mechanism

Often shortened to “WIM”

Although the UNFCCC hasn't agreed upon a definition of L&D, Warner et al. 2012 use the following working definition: “negative effects of climate variability and climate change that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to”

“The Conference of the Parties... Establishes the **Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage, under the Cancun Adaptation Framework**, subject to review at the **twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties** (November–December 2016) pursuant to paragraph 15 below, to address **loss and damage** associated with impact of climate change, including **extreme events and slow onset events**, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (hereinafter referred to as the Warsaw international mechanism)...

The WIM will be reviewed at COP22 in Marrakesh, Morocco

The WIM will address both extreme events (such as hurricanes and floods) and slow onset events (like sea level rise)

-COP19 Decision 2 regarding the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts



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The initial two-year workplan of the Executive Committee: An overview

The WIM was established in 2013, and an **initial two-year workplan** was approved at COP20 in December 2014 for the implementation of the WIM's mandate.

The workplan outlines the activities that the WIM ExComm will coordinate in 2015 and 2016 to begin to **implement the loss and damage mechanism**.

The workplan presents **nine action areas** with multiple activities described within each, and provides an indicative timeline for every activity. Activities will be initiated as early as January 2015, and will occur as late as December 2016 (although the workplan specifies that some of the activities will be completed “when appropriate”).

At COP 22 in 2016, a five-year rolling workplan will be considered to build upon the results of the initial workplan.

Action Area 1

Action area 1: Enhance the understanding of how loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change affect particularly vulnerable developing countries, segments of the population that are already vulnerable owing to geography, socioeconomic status, livelihoods, gender, age, indigenous or minority status or disability, and the ecosystems that they depend on, and of how the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage can benefit them

Action Area 1: Vulnerable Populations

Action area 1: Enhance the understanding of how loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change affect **particularly vulnerable developing countries, segments of the population that are already vulnerable** owing to **geography, socioeconomic status, livelihoods, gender, age, indigenous or minority status or disability, and the ecosystems that they depend on**, and of how the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage can **benefit them**

Vulnerability to climate change is influenced by a wide range of factors, and addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability will require a wide range of approaches that consider the **structural roots of vulnerability**.

This action area focuses on knowledge building regarding **vulnerability** to loss and damage climate change. The text acknowledges that countries and groups may be particularly susceptible to and less able to cope with loss and damage

Many climate change researchers and practitioners argue that to best facilitate resilience-building, L&D action should aim to result in multiple benefits to nations and communities, such as sustainable development and poverty reduction gains.

Action Area 2

Action area 2: Enhance the understanding of, and promote, comprehensive risk management approaches (assessment, reduction, transfer, retention), including social protection instruments and transformational approaches, in building long-term resilience of countries, vulnerable populations and communities

Action Area 2: Risk Management

Action area 2: Enhance the understanding of, and promote, **comprehensive risk management approaches (assessment, reduction, transfer, retention)**, including social protection instruments and **transformational** approaches, in building long-term resilience of countries, vulnerable populations and communities

Research indicates that business-as-usual approaches to climate change adaptation will not be sufficient to avert rising losses. **Transformational approaches**, requiring "deep shifts in the way people and organizations behave and organize values and perceive their place in the world," may be necessary (Pelling, 2011)

Here are the differences between risk reduction, transfer, and retention according to Nishat et al (2013):

- 1. Risk reduction** - Structural risk reduction measures are physical efforts that reduce the likelihood of a loss, such as dykes. Non-structural measures include risk identification, which allows institutions to acknowledge and take action to prevent damage from risks.
- 2. Risk transfer** - Risk transfer shifts economic risks from an individual or organisation to an insurer, primarily through insurance mechanisms
- 3. Risk retention** - Risk retention efforts focus on resilience building and providing a cushion when the impacts of climate change damage assets and result in loss and damage

Action Area 3

Action area 3: Enhance data on and knowledge of the risks of slow onset events and their impacts, and identify ways forward on approaches to address slow onset events associated with the adverse effects of climate change with specific focus on potential impacts, within countries and regions

Action Area 3: Slow Onset Events

Action area 3: Enhance data on and knowledge of the risks of **slow onset events** and their impacts, and identify ways forward on approaches to address slow onset events associated with the adverse effects of climate change with specific focus on potential impacts, within countries and regions

Slow onset events are marked by a gradual impact. The Cancun Agreements outline the range of slow onset events: “sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinisation, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification.”

Action Area 4

Action area 4: Enhance data on and knowledge of non-economic losses associated with the adverse effects of climate change and identify ways forward for reducing the risk of and addressing non-economic losses with specific focus on potential impacts within regions

Action Area 4: Non-economic L&D

The UNFCCC technical paper on non-economic L&D describes these losses as **losses to non-economic items** that are not commonly traded in markets, such as natural capital, social capital, and cultural capital.

Action area 4: **Enhance data on and knowledge of non-economic losses** associated with the adverse effects of climate change and identify ways forward for reducing the risk of and addressing non-economic losses with specific focus on potential impacts within regions

The assessment of non-economic L&D has been particularly challenging because these impacts are not easily valued using market prices.

Action Area 5

Action area 5: Enhance the understanding of the capacity and coordination needs with regard to preparing for, responding to and building resilience against loss and damage associated with extreme and slow onset events, including through recovery and rehabilitation

Action Area 5: Capacity & Coordination

Action area 5: Enhance the understanding of the **capacity and coordination needs** with regard to preparing for, responding to and building resilience against loss and damage associated with extreme and slow onset events, including through recovery and rehabilitation

There is a need for **capacity building** at all levels to reduce and respond to the new and exacerbated challenges that loss and damage poses, as well as coordination between agencies, organizations, and other groups.

A wide range of organizations are already active in fields relevant to L&D, and coordinating these groups is a step towards providing a harmonized approach to L&D. In particular, the workplan focuses on national disaster risk management organizations, international humanitarian organizations, and their partners.

Action Area 6

Action area 6: Enhance the understanding of and expertise on how the impacts of climate change are affecting patterns of migration, displacement and human mobility; and the application of such understanding and expertise

Action Area 6: Migration, Displacement, Mobility

Action area 6: Enhance the understanding of and expertise on how the impacts of climate change are affecting patterns of **migration, displacement and human mobility**; and the application of such understanding and expertise

Migration has been linked to a range of social, political, and environmental factors, including climate change. Mobility may be an important strategy to reduce vulnerability to risks, but policymakers should create enabling environments that allow people to use mobility as a resilience-building measure (UNU-EHS 2012). Migration may be unfeasible for many households, especially those who are most vulnerable due to poverty and other factors.

Action Area 7

Action area 7: Encourage comprehensive risk management by the diffusion of information related to financial instruments and tools that address the risks of loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change to facilitate finance in loss and damage situations in accordance with the policies of each developing country and region, taking into account the necessary national efforts to establish enabling environments. These financial instruments and tools may include: comprehensive risk management capacity with risk pooling and transfer; catastrophe risk insurance; contingency finance; climate-themed bonds and their certification; catastrophe bonds; and financing approaches to making development climate resilient, among other innovative financial instruments and tools

Action Area 7: Financial Instruments

The key to providing efficient and adequate financial support may lie in finding an “intelligent mix” of instruments and tools. Warner et al (2012) suggest adopting risk layering approach - cost-effective risk reduction should be the first priority for frequent low-impact events, while insurance and other risk transfer mechanisms may be more appropriate for events with higher risk and low frequency.

Action area 7: Encourage comprehensive risk management by the diffusion of information related to **financial instruments and tools that address the risks of loss and damage** associated with the adverse effects of climate change to facilitate finance in loss and damage situations in accordance with the policies of each developing country and region, taking into account the necessary national efforts to establish enabling environments. These financial instruments and tools may include: comprehensive risk management capacity with risk pooling and transfer; catastrophe risk insurance; contingency finance; climate-themed bonds and their certification; catastrophe bonds; and financing approaches to making development climate resilient, among other innovative financial instruments and tools

Action Area 8

Action area 8: Complement, draw upon the work of and involve, as appropriate, existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention, as well as relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention at all levels, as the Executive Committee executes the above-mentioned elements of the workplan

Action Area 8: Other Organizations

A number of arrangements under the UNFCCC have mandates and activities that are relevant to loss and damage.

Action area 8: **Complement, draw upon the work of and involve, as appropriate, existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention, as well as relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention** at all levels, as the Executive Committee executes the above-mentioned elements of the workplan

A wide range of organizations outside the UNFCCC aim to manage climate impacts and reduce vulnerability.

The WIM is charged with finding and establishing channels and modalities to foster “partnerships, dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergy with the public and private sectors” at international, regional and national levels.

Action Area 9

Action area 9: Develop a five-year rolling workplan for consideration at COP 22 building on the results of this two-year workplan to continue guiding the implementation of the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism

Action Area 9: Five-Year Rolling Workplan

Action area 9: Develop a **five-year rolling workplan for consideration at COP 22** building on the results of this two-year workplan to **continue guiding the implementation** of the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism

At COP 22 in 2016 in **Marrakech, Morocco**, the WIM be reviewed by the Conference of Parties

The two-year workplan is only the first step of WIM implementation.

The WIM Executive Committee

Name	Country	Constituency
Mr. Shonisani MUNZHEDZI	South Africa	Non-Annex I / Africa
Mr. Idy NIANG	Senegal	Non-Annex I / Africa
Ms. Pepetua LATASI	Tuvalu	Non-Annex I / Asia Pacific
Mr. Nurul QUADIR	Bangladesh	Non-Annex I / Asia Pacific
Mr. Antonio CANAS	El Salvador	Non-Annex I / Latin American and Caribbean States
Mr. Orville GREY	Jamaica	Non-Annex I / Latin American and Caribbean States
Mr. Adao Soares BARBOSA	Timor-Leste	Non-Annex I / LDC
Ms. Dawn PIERRE-NATHONIEL	Saint Lucia	Non-Annex I / SIDS
Ms. Ama ESSEL	Ghana	Non-Annex I
Mr. Krishna Chandra PAUDEL	Nepal	Non-Annex I
Ms. Helen BRYER	UK	Annex I
Ms. Shereen D'SOUZA	US	Annex I
Mr. Thomas DE LANNOY	EU	Annex I
Mr. Helmut HOJESKY	Austria	Annex I
Ms. Karla JURANEK	Australia	Annex I
Ms. Monika KUŚMIERCZYK	Poland	Annex I
Mr. Erling KVERNEVIK	Norway	Annex I
Mr. Valeriy SEDYAKIN	Russian Federation	Annex I
Mr. Kimio TAKEYA	Japan	Annex I
Mr. Gottfried VON GEMMINGEN	Germany	Annex I

The Executive Committee (members detailed in table on left) is tasked with guiding the implementation of the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

This is the current membership, and members will change over time. See updated membership on the UNFCCC website [here](#).



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What's next for loss and damage in the UNFCCC?

- Some workplan activities have already commenced, beginning as early as January 2015. Some of the activities will continue through June 2016.
- The way loss and damage is integrated into the ADP text in December 2015 at COP21 remains to be seen. A range of five options for L&D has been provided in [the negotiating text](#), including one option that states that “No reference to loss and damage” will be present in this text. A [newly streamlined and re-clustered text from the ADP Co-Chairs](#) provides two options for L&D – the first includes a range of possible actions for L&D, and the second presents no reference to L&D
- The activities of the Executive Committee’s initial two-year workplan will be reviewed in 2016
- While the workplan will make a good start towards enhancing knowledge and understanding, strengthening dialogue and coordination, and initiating actions, the workplan is just another step towards the incorporation of a comprehensive loss and damage approach in the UNFCCC.

Further reading

The [UNFCCC webpage on WIM](#) provides up-to-date information and documents about the WIM's work.

The UNFCCC has provided two online presentations of 1) policy milestones relevant to L&D and 2) technical work. These presentations can be found [here](#).

Relevant research and commentary can be found at the [Loss and Damage in Vulnerable Countries Initiative](#) website and the [Asia Pacific Forum on Loss and Damage](#) website.

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