

SUBSIDIARY BODY ON IMPLEMENTATION (SBI)
SUBMISSION OF GHANA

Theme III - Role of the Convention on loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change

Developing countries including Ghana require systematic consideration and support on loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change. Loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change is the unfortunate result of insufficient ambition in addressing the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and in achieving the objective of the Convention. A country suffering 6% loss of its GDP due to a single extreme weather event, seeing millions of its people displaced, witnessing how their main economic sectors become unviable, or how lifestyles and survival are jeopardized is at the core of the loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change discussion. The scope of loss and damage related to the adverse effects of climate change ranges from that incurred from weather-related extreme events to slow-onset events—steadily incremental changes in climate which cause loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change to systems upon which humans rely in order to live and flourish. Ultimately loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change represents lost of development opportunities and a barrier to achieving sustainable development.

Adaptation to climate change and addressing loss and damage to the adverse effects of climate change have multiple synergies, overlaps and are not necessarily separate. They can both build on disaster risk reduction approaches. Therefore, the concept of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate should rather be viewed as additional to adaptation, focusing on challenges of both identifying and addressing the instances when adaptation is not longer possible. These instances may arise due to sudden extreme events, slow onset events, and/or the combination of various sudden and slow onset events leading to crossing of ecosystem tipping points. The combination of these events might create chain-reactions, where, for example, populations are forced to migrate due to slow-onset effects of the changes in ecological zones within northern parts of Ghana. For example it is reported that relatively high population of people from the northern part of Ghana migrate to the southern part of the country during the long dry period in search of jobs.

A range of approaches already exist to address loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change, but these are insufficient to prevent and manage the sweeping scale of real and potential future “residual” loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change and require further action, particularly those associated with slow-onset impacts, including sea level rise, increasing temperatures, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity, desertification, salinisation and related impacts.

Assessments must be based on anthropogenic climate change of the coming decades, rather than on current frequencies and severities of extreme events. Planning “only” for the extreme climate-related events of today could leave countries in a position in the future where actions have been devoted to a static understanding of climate-related adverse impacts. Vulnerability and risk drivers are not the cause of losses: loss and damage result from the adverse effects of climate change. Damage and loss can be exacerbated due to underlying vulnerabilities, but vulnerability is not the cause of drought or sea level rise.

There is the need to fill existing gaps in institutional and legal frameworks to address loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change, including through an institutional mechanism to address slow-onset impacts and other essentially unavoidable damages. Changes to the legal frameworks and institutions may be required inside and outside the Convention, including at the national level. These must be supported in accordance with principles and provisions of the Convention.

UNFCCC principles and provisions relevant to the discussion on Loss and Damage from the adverse effects of climate change

The Convention contains relevant principles for addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change that should be taken into consideration as Parties debate next steps on loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change. Under Convention Articles 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, developed country Parties have committed to provide and facilitate financial and technical support for developing country adaptation efforts. Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change under the Convention should not distract from the desire and commitment by developing countries to carry out adaptation obligations under Article 4.1(e), supported by Article 4.4 and others.

The UNFCCC and action at the international level

Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change will require international-level action. This requires the use of institutions and mechanisms that already exist under the Convention, but the nature of the issues also requires additional efforts and institutions to systematically consider and address the needs of developing countries.

The following are the main types of action that must be undertaken under the Convention with respect to loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change:

- Provide financial assistance, including long -term financing for loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change
- Promote coordination and cooperation on addressing technical and other capacity needs related to loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change through the following:
 - Enhancing data collection, including establishment of foundational requirements, assessment tools and processes to collect loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change data at the appropriate level, in a manner that is also sensitive to vulnerable groups and people;
 - Enhancing the ability of countries to conduct needs assessment and baseline assessments in order to be able to analyse and make informed decisions on various risk management policies, including enhancing understanding and coordinating assessment methods for slow onset changes at national and regional levels, including through regional cooperation and regional activities;
 - Enhancing the ability of countries to establish institutional and operational modalities at the local, national and regional level to channel support, including after disasters.

The role of the Convention with respect to gaps in addressing loss and damage including managing long-term issues and emerging challenges such as:

- *Migration:* The needs of climate migrants (from migration, displacement and planned

relocation) require appropriate consideration.

- *Non-economic losses:* Both economic and non-economic losses must be addressed by loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change mechanism. Ultimately finance cannot adequately compensate people for the loss of life or health, homes and assets, livelihoods, territory, culture, or ecosystems that will result from radical changes in climate, whether at local, regional or global levels.

International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

There is a need for a permanent process to address loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change needs to be put in place, with roles assigned to the Adaptation Committee, and consideration of the matter taken up also under the financial mechanism. The mechanism could address the following among others:

- **Assessment of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change:** Some foreseeable loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change may be avoided. Some loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change is built into the climatic system and will occur regardless of the nature of mitigation and adaptation practices. The special needs of particularly vulnerable developing countries must be accounted for in assessing the avoidable or unavoidable nature of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change.
- **Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change, including through a compensation and rehabilitation fund:** Unavoidable loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change may be addressed through risk sharing mechanisms, but total loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change will need to be redressed through compensation and rehabilitation mechanisms. This role could include coordinating and supporting technical assistance and acting as a clearing-house for data and expertise relevant to adaptation and disaster risk reduction; establishing and supporting regional networks of collaborative partners within and external to Governments, etc.
- **Leadership of the Convention, including for the coordination of work on loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change:** The Convention could under these mechanisms take systematic efforts to support in regulating response to slow-onset damage, link with UN institutions managing human mobility, coordinate cross-boundary issues and resources, link with other UN convention processes such as the CBD and the CCD, guide the data collection and analysis activities of the WMO, inform the work of the UNISDR.

Gender Considerations

Consideration of a decision on an international mechanism for Loss and Damage should incorporate gender mainstreaming as an approach that will enhance efforts to address loss and damage associated with the adverse affects of climate change through the following:

- Ensuring women's equitable participation in decision-making and loss and damage activities;
- Assessing gender-differentiated vulnerability and prioritized needs;
- Integrating women's particular vulnerability in the loss and damage accounting processes; for example in Ghana loss and damage associated with crop, fisheries and water sectors has serious negative impact on the socio-economic well-being of women and children.

- Providing gender-sensitive training, education and creating immediate and urgent actions to address loss and damage that are inclusive of vulnerable constituencies, particularly vulnerable women.