

Backgrounder

Climate change

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Least Developed Countries' expectations for COP19

Addressing gaps, lack of planning and loss and damage concerns in Warsaw

As nations prepare for the upcoming UN climate change negotiations, the most vulnerable countries gather to formulate their key expectations for Warsaw. The 49 poorest countries on earth face the negotiations as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) negotiating bloc. In studying the LDCs' UNFCCC submissions, four key issues seem likely areas of focus: addressing the current finance gap, creating a work plan to close the current mitigation ambition gap, establishing a roadmap for adopting the 2015 agreement, and agreeing on an international mechanism to address loss and damage in vulnerable developing countries.

Addressing the finance gap

Providing finance is essential for encouraging developing countries to take action in their own countries and build trust in the current global climate regime; it demonstrates developed countries' commitment to act. For LDCs, finance is key

for realising their urgent, as well as medium- and long-term adaptation plans. Yet climate finance remains a promise that is under-delivered. Out of the assessed US\$5 billion needed to implement the projects identified by the LDCs (under their National Adaptation Programmes of Action or NAPAs), developed countries have committed only US\$779.50 million (as of October 2013).

In 2009 developed country parties committed to a goal of mobilising US\$100 billion a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries. How they will achieve this remains unclear. Tackling this lack of planning and addressing the apparent 'gap' in climate financing are key LDC expectations for the Warsaw negotiations.

Some ambiguity remains concerning the meaning of the phrase 'finance gap' within the context of the UNFCCC. Two primary gaps remain:

- The gap between the estimated costs of

KEY TERMS

LDC Group: Least Developed Countries Group in the global climate negotiations

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Finance gap: The gaps that exist between financial pledges in the international climate negotiations, particularly those concerning the developed countries' pledge to provide US\$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020.

Mitigation ambition gap: The gap that exists in climate change mitigation between the globally agreed goal of limiting temperature increases to 2°C and the low level of ambition put forward in current emissions reduction targets.

The 2015 agreement: A new treaty applicable to all parties, which will govern the future international climate regime. In 2011, nations agreed to finalise the treaty by 2015; it comes into force in 2020.

Loss and damage: loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

VITAL STATISTICS

US\$100 billion: The financial pledge developed countries committed to mobilising per year by 2020.

44 gigatonnes: The CO₂ emissions needed to keep global temperatures to an increase of 2°C by 2020.

52–57 gigatonnes: The CO₂ emissions current reduction targets would amount to by 2020.

8–13 gigatonnes: The CO₂ emissions that represent the mitigation ambition gap.

climate change actions in developing countries and the funds that nations pledged.

- The gap of financial commitments to reach US\$100 billion a year by 2020.

Both these present challenges for the resource-poor, climate-vulnerable LDCs, as scaling up the necessary finances will be critical in their efforts to adapt. Clearly a roadmap is needed for developed country parties to meet their financial pledges, with the aim of increasing them beyond 2020.

Closing the mitigation ambition gap

In 2011, the United Nations produced an important study called *Bridging the Emissions Gap*, which disclosed that the 2°C goal requires nations to hold global emissions of no more than 44 gigatonnes of CO₂ by 2020. The current emissions reduction targets submitted by parties forecast an emissions level of 52-57 gigatonnes of CO₂ by 2020. Thus, a mitigation ambition gap of between 8-13 gigatonnes of CO₂ exists. Closing this gap by 2020 is paramount to getting the world onto a sustainable emissions pathway. But negotiations on this issue have yielded little progress. It is likely that the LDC Group will continue to draw attention to the mitigation gap in Warsaw. A work plan that includes technical and political phases to implement actions, and which delivers robust and enhanced mitigation ambition in 2014 and beyond is needed.

Adopting a roadmap for the 2015 agreement

Parties agreed in 2011 to finalise a new treaty applicable to all nations by 2015 to allow enough time for its entry into force in 2020. Since 2011, the LDCs have clearly called for the new agreement to be a protocol under international law and for parties to submit a negotiation text to the COP by the end of 2014. This would allow time to engage in domestic stakeholder consultation and build political will, as well as ensure high-level inputs early enough to adopt the new protocol in 2015. The LDC proposals indicate that delivering a clear roadmap for negotiating the scope, structure and design of the 2015 agreement is crucial.

Institutionalising loss and damage

When mitigation and adaptation actions fail, people affected by climate change impacts

may face damage to their property or health, permanent loss of assets or even loss of life. There are some losses and damage that are unavoidable due to historical emissions and 'locked in' climate change impacts. Thus, addressing loss and damage has two components: first, reducing residual loss and damage through mitigation and adaptation efforts, and second, addressing the residual loss and damage that cannot be avoided through those efforts.

Due to persistent pressure from the LDCs and island nations, parties decided in 2012 to establish institutional arrangements to address loss and damage under the UNFCCC in Warsaw. While details on what this means remain unclear, LDC submissions to the UNFCCC propose a framework that enhances mitigation ambition, supports the bodies overseeing adaptation, and encourages increased funding to help developing countries implement adaptation activities. It should support the development and implementation of approaches to assess and address residual loss and damage. The framework should also include components addressing risk management, an international insurance pool, and rehabilitation.

Looking ahead

The upcoming Warsaw negotiations represent a crucial step in the international climate negotiations. By taking a proactive role in strategising how nations might move constructively to address the key issues on the table, the LDCs will continue to demonstrate leadership in the international arena. The LDC Group hopes that both developed and developing country parties will come to Warsaw prepared to work together so that COP19 can make progress in achieving global climate goals.

CRITICAL CHOICES

The first output of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, published in September 2013, paints a grim picture of greater climate impacts for LDCs in the future. It presents an overwhelming case for human involvement in rapidly increasing global temperatures. Scientists are now "95 per cent certain" that humans are the "dominant cause" of the global climate change problem.

The international community tries to provide global solutions to climate change through long-term planning and formulating goals under the UNFCCC. These UNFCCC negotiations provide a decision-making platform where the most vulnerable can have influence.

The LDC group will use this platform in Warsaw to emphasise the impact manmade emissions have on the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable communities in their countries. The areas highlighted opposite are LDC priorities for final decisions in Warsaw.

FURTHER READING

- *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis Summary for Policymakers:* www.climatechange2013.org
- Least Developed Countries Fund: www.thegef.org
- The Emissions Gap Report: www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/emissionsgapreport
- Morgan, J. *Reflections on COP 18 in Doha: Negotiators made only incremental progress:* <http://insights.wri.org>



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FIND OUT MORE

Our work on global climate negotiations is part of the support programme for the Least Developed Countries run by IIED's Climate Change Group and partners. This group drives our efforts to strengthen the voices of the world's most vulnerable countries and communities to ensure fair and equitable solutions to climate change. Find out more about our work at www.iied.org/helping-vulnerable-countries-achieve-equitable-solutions-climate-law-policy-making-processes.