
DECLARATION OF THE THIRD AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON LOSS AND DAMAGE

Lilongwe, Malawi; March 22, 2024

Preamble

The third Africa Regional Conference on Loss and Damage, aimed at providing a platform for African stakeholders to develop strategies for accelerating access to loss and damage funds took place at Lilongwe, Malawi, on March 20 -22, 2024.

The Conference was hosted by the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONNECC) and the Government of Malawi, in partnership with Trocaire, Oxfam, Concern Worldwide, Save the Children, Habitat for Humanity, Give Directly, CARE International, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF), ActionAid, Pelum Association and Christian Aid.

Aware of the first meeting of the Advisory Board of the Santiago Network held from 18 to 20 March 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland, and whose main agenda was to consider the technical report by the UNOPS-UNDRR on the cost-effectiveness, including a cost-benefit analysis of various locations around the world as options for the location of the head office of the Secretariat from a pool of potential locations;

Further aware that UNOPS-UNDRR strongly recommended Nairobi as the optimal location to host the Network based on their thorough analysis using scientifically-proven methodologies from a shortlist of various other locations such as Addis Ababa, Bonn and Geneva;

Gravely concerned that the Advisory Board blatantly and contemptuously ignored recommendations from UNOPS-UNDRR and selected a third candidate - Geneva - that ranked third in the analysis;

Aggrieved that the hosting right for a Platform which embodies the struggles of the communities at the frontline of the climate crisis, and whose location should symbolise the very palpable rationale of tackling Loss and Damage has once again been unjustly snatched from a third country through a clandestinely nefarious process of manipulation, carrot-dangling and intimidation;

Conscious of the power imbalance in the Loss and Damage Fund's Board as currently constituted, with developed countries potentially using their monetary and material advantage to ostensibly render developing Country representatives decorations in the Board;

Recalling the IPCC-ARC6 report that asserts that Africa will be impacted by climate change under all mitigation scenarios, setting a stage for agitation for accelerated adaptation and response measures on loss and damage actions to enable communities at the frontline of the crisis to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Further recalling the Adaptation Gap Report 2023 points to the inevitability of loss and damage as underfinancing, under-preparedness, inadequate investment and planning on climate adaptation continue to leave people exposed to the full force of climate impacts without any shield.

Sceptical of World Bank's constraining Policies, bureaucracy and transparency deficit, especially when administering a Fund expected to respond to emergencies;

Disappointed by paltry pledges of USD700 million to the Loss and Damage Fund, fatally insufficient to meet the recovery responses to a single episode of climate disaster such as that caused by Cyclone Freddy in Malawi estimated at USD900 million;

Declare as follows:

a. The Advisory Board Decision in Geneva is null and void

1. Condemn, in the strongest possible, the apparent subversion of the laid-down procedures by the Advisory Board, and call upon appointing authorities, especially those from Africa and other developing countries, to investigate the possibility of collusion, carrot-dangling and manipulation by industrialised countries.
2. In order to regain the lost glory, the Advisory Board should, with immediate effect, reverse their ill-intentioned decision and adopt the recommendations from UNOPS-UNDRR by unanimously picking Nairobi as the Host of the SNLD.
3. Call on the Chair of the Committee of the Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) and Chair of AGN to pronounce themselves, and expeditiously compel the Advisory Board to respect and adopt the recommendations of UNOPS-UNDRR.

b. The Imperative of climate justice should inform global response to loss and damage

1. Stand by the principles of climate justice, CBDR-C, human rights including children's rights, and gender equality, in addressing Loss and Damage
2. Object to the use of loans and concessional loans as sources of funds for loss and damage, as the exacerbated deepening debt crisis in countries
3. Implement locally-led, people-centred frameworks, ensuring genuine participation of frontline communities and civil society across the programme/ project cycles.
4. Reject the gate-keeping practice by a chain of intermediaries, thus complicating and delaying access to funds by communities in need.

c. The Board should be driven by the best interest of people at the frontline of the climate crisis

1. The board should rise above partisan interests and develop sound and adequate operational modalities, delivery mechanisms, access modalities, financial instruments and funding structures that facilitate adequate and timely access of the funds to vulnerable communities and countries.
2. To ensure progressive operational modalities, the Board should advance participation, to the greatest extent possible, for African Civil societies, local communities and vulnerable groups such as children, women, youth and people living with disabilities in developing these access modalities.
3. The Board should develop and implement a robust stakeholder consultation and engagement strategy, including facilitative decentralized, people-driven consultation processes that are relevant, meaningful, responsive and less bureaucratic to communities and countries.
4. Set aside a Readiness Facility to support countries and communities to prepare better and set up agile and inclusive policy and institutional frameworks for responding to loss and damage.
5. Call for a tailor-made window for Local Communities - including indigenous peoples, youth, women and other marginalized groups - in the form of micro-grants which are easily accessible.

d. L&D Fund pledges and replenishments should be honoured without delay

1. Previous Funds have faced deliberately schemed long, tedious bureaucratic delays in deployment. Good faith should be demonstrated by swiftly putting together structures that will ensure communities facing losses and damages are reached soonest possible.
2. Call for an elaborate 2024 Workplan, including a long-term fundraising and resource mobilization strategy for new, additional, predictable and adequate financial resources to meet the growing needs of communities at the frontline.
3. Such fundraising strategy should be complemented by a clear sub-goal for long-term funding enabled by New Collective and Quantified Goal (NCQG).

e. Interim host of the Fund should work hard to gain our trust as a credible partner

1. The trust deficit that characterises the World Bank should not be allowed to jeopardise the progress made in the functionality and operationalisation of the Fund. The Bank should fix its ways of working and fulfil the conditions set out by parties to deliver funds directly and timely to the communities in need.
2. The World Bank should fast-track the design features, governance modalities, proposed activities, roles and responsibilities of as a host and trustee as laid out in the COP28 decisions.

f. Developed countries should stop shifting goalposts

1. Urge developed countries to be transparent and accountable in their contributions to the Fund in line with the principle of Common but differentiated Responsibility and respective capabilities.
2. Caution against repackaging existing climate financing, humanitarian assistance and/or ODA as loss and damage pledges/commitments by developed countries. The contributions must be new and additional and should meet the agreed full costs of loss and damage risks.
3. SNLD must have sustainable, predictable and sufficient resources (financial, technical, and human resources) to enhance the capacity of countries in responding to losses and damages occasioned by the changing climate.

g. African Leaders and Institutions stand with people by ensuring the L&D Fund serves its purpose

1. Advance a shared and collective accountability in positioning African people above all personal and partisan political and economic interests, and ramp up pressure on the North to honour their commitments, upholding the imperatives of climate justice.
2. Learn from the failure and/or success of other Funds to ensure the L&D Fund puts in place access mechanisms that facilitate genuine implementation of the Fund.
3. African governments should enhance and hasten adaptation planning, ensuring a comprehensive ecosystem of policies, laws, programmes, institutions and regulations, taking into account the continent's exposure to multiple hazards and the need to minimise the impacts of disasters associated with climate change on vulnerable people.
4. Urge the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission to strengthen the continent's climate research capacities and information management systems to provide the evidence basis for key positions, policy and programme development on L&D at national, regional, and global scales.
5. African countries should include the L&D in their next round of NDCs review, and the Long-term Emission Reduction Strategies, including providing cost estimates where possible, to drive predictable and adequate finance.

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