



The vision of the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage develops

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, has recorded scientific consensus that global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change have not prevented losses and damages caused by human-induced climate change from occurring. The Working Group II (WGII) contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) published in February 2022 is clear in its findings that the adverse impacts of climate change and related losses and damages are disproportionately affecting vulnerable people and systems with some impacts irreversible. The WGII report was published in the context of a global community only just beginning to respond to the seriousness of the challenge that the IPCC has identified and come to terms with the need to find solutions to address it as the perilous road to recovery for affected communities is increasingly visible: [Al Jazeera 2022](#).

When we talk about losses and damages caused by climate change, this means economic and non-economic loss and damage caused by extreme weather and slow-onset events:

- **Extreme weather events:** tropical cyclones, storm surges, floods, heatwaves, and wildfires.
- **Slow-onset events:** sea level rise, desertification, land and forest degradation, increasing temperatures, loss of biodiversity, glacial retreat, ocean acidification, and salinisation.
- **Economic loss and damage:** income (business operations, agricultural production, and tourism); and physical assets (infrastructure, property).
- **Non-economic loss and damage:** individuals (life, health, and human mobility); society (territory, cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge, societal/cultural identity); and environment (biodiversity, ecosystem services).

As acknowledged by the IPCC, some losses and damages are already irreversible and frontline communities will continue to feel the impacts regardless of what action is taken today. However losses and damages can be addressed, for example, through setting up financial protection measures (insurance, social protection schemes, and contingency funds); recovery and rehabilitation measures (reconstruction, reparation, rebuilding, and restoring); displacement, migration and alternative livelihoods measures (support for planned and forced relocation/resettlement, developing alternative livelihoods); and special measures to address non-economic loss and damage (recognition of loss, active remembrance, and counselling): see [Germanwatch 2021](#); [Stockholm Environment Institute 2021](#).

The Santiago Network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage (**Santiago Network**) began as an idea to set up a body to enhance action and support for developing countries to address loss and damage. Countries agreed to establish this idea in 2019 at COP25 and, since agreement was reached in 2021 at COP26 to operationalise the Santiago Network, momentum is building for it to become



something tangible as the vision of what it will do, and what it might look like develops. On 15 March 2022 submissions started arriving into the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat's email inbox and submissions portal. The submissions portal has since been populated with submissions from various stakeholders. So far, they include the following and more are being developed and submitted:

- **Parties to the Convention:** Uganda, Australia, Indonesia, Canada, Bangladesh, Norway, Kenya, Vanuatu, the European Union, the United States, and Chile on behalf of the AILAC Group of countries (Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru)
- **United Nations System:** Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- **Admitted intergovernmental organizations (IGOs):** International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP)
- **Admitted non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) on behalf of Loss and Damage Network, Munich Climate Insurance Initiative, Action by Churches Together Alliance (Act Alliance), Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) on behalf of International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Oxfam International, Practical Action, and the Loss and Damage Collaboration.

After COP26 in Glasgow, the Loss and Damage Collaboration (L&DC) under the banner of the Santiago Network project and with funding from Practical Action commenced a process to inform effective negotiations on the Santiago Network including by developing a [submission](#). In doing so the L&DC was able to take into account the invaluable views of its members who also assisted their respective constituencies and advised negotiators on the Santiago Network.

The L&DC hopes to continue to take into account and reflect in its work more views as the negotiations unfold. We believe that to ensure that the Santiago Network becomes a body that responds to the urgent needs of communities on the frontlines of climate change all voices must be heard including Parties; organisations, bodies, networks and experts who will become members of the Santiago Network; and marginalised groups who are disproportionately impacted by loss and damage: women, youth, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people of colour, farmers and rural people, local communities, and frontline communities.

As noted by a Least Developed Countries negotiator during negotiations on the Santiago Network in 2020, we must not rush but we cannot wait. As many submissions have now been submitted, there is a concern emerging that finance for the Santiago Network is not a guarantee: this must be addressed urgently. This is in circumstances where finance was already promised for its operations and for the provision of technical assistance to address loss and damage, with developed countries being urged in a decision adopted at COP26 in Glasgow to provide funds. But there is pause for concern as we observe the way that developed countries have so far approached the Loss and Damage negotiations under the UNFCCC in 2022.



At COP26 countries agreed to establish the Glasgow Dialogue (GD). This was a counter proposal made by developed countries which emerged after they rejected the proposal made by developing countries to establish a Loss and Damage Finance Facility (LDFF) and a process to operationalise it. Developing countries made clear in the closing plenary of the conference that their agreement to the GD was based on an expectation that its outcome would be the LDFF being established and operationalised. Developed countries have since resisted the GD being on the agenda for the June meeting of the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC. Instead it will be a mandated event. This means that currently, the GD will only be informal discussions that provide no scope for countries to agree to anything that would lead to a decision being adopted at COP27 including the establishment and operationalisation of the LDFF under the UNFCCC and progress on agreements that would result in new and additional loss and damage finance being secured to support those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

Frontline communities need ambitious progress within the Loss and Damage negotiations under the UNFCCC including on both the Santiago Network and Loss and Damage finance which are two separate but complementary topics. A precondition to the Santiago Network being able to carry out its mandate will be for financial arrangements to be in place from the start. Voluntary-based funding should be avoided to avoid a false start where the attention of the coordinating body is diverted to fundraising and does not fulfil its mandate of catalysing technical assistance to address loss and damage: [Practical Action 2021](#). New and additional loss and damage finance must be urgently mobilised to deliver climate justice to developing countries who are disproportionately impacted by the adverse effects of climate change, do not have the capacity to address it, and are least responsible for it.

The Santiago Network must be resourced inter alia to assist developing countries to identify their needs and the legal, institutional, financial, social and economic barriers that exist. It must also have the resources to assist developing countries to access finance, technical assistance and capacity building to give them the tools to implement policies and projects to address loss and damage. It needs to be able to coordinate and create coherence among those already working to address loss and damage, complimenting what already exists including within the disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance communities as it works to fill gaps where loss and damage is not already being addressed. Its organisational structure needs to be lean, and cost-efficient. It should have a relatively small facilitating mechanism at the centre and a decentralised network of organisations, members, networks, and experts (OBNEs) at the international, regional, national and sub-national level. It should have a decision making, accountability, and transparency mechanism such as an advisory body or executive board.

There is still much to research and understand to develop a collective vision of the Santiago Network to be adopted by a decision at COP27 from which a fit for purpose Santiago Network emerges. Parties and stakeholders must continue to discuss their respective visions of the Santiago Network's institutional arrangements and find common ground on an ambitious outcome: the Santiago Network cannot be an empty shell.

In the next brief we will turn to unpacking the submissions including understanding the different visions for the Santiago Network's institutional arrangements. This work will be focussed on technical support and external messaging to inform effective negotiations in the lead up to and at the workshop being



hosted by the UNFCCC secretariat [on 4-6 May 2022](#) to discuss and build upon the submissions process. We will start by asking the questions: Are there any ideas that everyone agrees about? What will be the challenges to reaching agreement? What other ideas and positions have emerged separately to the submissions process?

Once we understand the parameters of both the technical and political landscape we will collate ideas and provide an updated report on: What will the Santiago Network do? How will it be structured and governed? How will it connect with the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism, which already exists? How will it connect with the national level and other stakeholders at the regional, national and subnational level to ensure that help reaches those who need it most? What should be the possible elements for the terms of reference of a potential convening or coordinating body that may provide secretarial services to facilitate work under the Santiago network?

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