

ACT NOW! BRINGING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO THE HEART OF COP27 POLICY BRIEFING – NOVEMBER 2022

INTRODUCTION

This document presents CIDSE's position on climate justice and the main messages and policy recommendations for the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is based on the latest climate science and Catholic Social Teaching (e.g., the Encyclical letters, *Laudato Si'* on Care for Our Common Home and *Fratelli Tutti* on fraternity and social friendship), CIDSE's previous analysis on [achieving 1.5°C](#) and transitioning to renewable energy systems and [agroecology](#) as well as the joint, participatory process of [the African Climate Dialogues](#) ahead of COP27.

SUMMARY

The COP27 climate conference will be held in Egypt this November, on the African continent, which is also grappling with worsening climate, food, energy, and socio-economic impacts following the compounding effects of COVID-19 effects. This year's COP can be a turning point in addressing global climate impacts and achieving the true meaning of climate justice for the most vulnerable continents. Therefore, rich countries must ramp up their ambition, climate finance, support for progress on Loss and Damage, and agriculture and food systems.

BACKGROUND

Climate change is already affecting societies and ecosystems across latitudes, but adaptation policy responses are still deemed insufficient to prevent long-term global damage, states the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) latest [6th Assessment Report \(AR6\) on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability](#). Overall, half of the world's population is extremely vulnerable to climate impacts, with people in highly vulnerable regions already 15 times more likely to die due to floods, droughts, and storms compared with those living in low-vulnerability regions. It is said that COP27 will be the first to take place in the [Loss and Damage Era](#), and there is a widespread global acknowledgement that the UNFCCC must work for the people already suffering climate impacts rather than having an exclusive focus on preventing future impacts.

The IPCC 6th Assessment Reports have warned that the window of opportunity to stay within the temperature target of 1.5°C is closing very fast. The message from the [IPCC report on climate change mitigation](#) is clear: urgent and drastic action is required if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C. A 50% reduction in emissions is needed by 2030 to limit the worst effects of climate change while taking urgent, just, and equitable actions to address the impacts that are already affecting the most vulnerable. However, countries are [still far from meeting their obligations](#) and even further from what is needed to address climate change.

OVERARCHING CONCERNS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO PARTICIPATION

Climate and social justice are inextricably linked and addressing emissions reduction and climate impacts is as important as protecting and improving the rights and lives of people and other living beings within our common home. Human rights' violation occurs when governance institutions and corporations prioritise profits over people's rights and community consent. As the UNFCCC Paris Agreement acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind, [civil societies around the world](#) are calling Parties to consider their respective obligations to human, labour, health and land rights when acting to address climate change. Special attention should be given to the rights of indigenous people, local communities, women, children, migrants, and those differently abled. Equal access to participation is fundamental to achieving a just and sustainable climate-resilient development and must be protected at all times including at COP27 and beyond.



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LOSS AND DAMAGE

The issue of Loss and Damage has its origins in 1992 when a financial mechanism was first proposed by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which would help countries address the impacts of climate change. In short, it involved embedding the Polluter Pays Principle into the UNFCCC. Unfortunately, in the past 30 years, including at COP26, developed countries have rejected this proposal, and there is still no finance facility to address Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC. Despite many people losing their lives, homes, and livelihoods, little progress has been made and there is still no clear financial commitment or target to operationalise and address climate losses and damages. This must change at COP27.

A [recent report by the Loss and Damage Collaboration](#) estimates that an average of 189 million people each year have been affected by extreme weather-related events in developing countries since the mechanism was first proposed. In the intervening years, especially at COP meetings, the report demonstrates how developed countries have deployed deliberate delaying tactics to prevent progress on this topic, and how the fossil fuel industry has made enough profits since the turn of the century to cover the costs of the losses and damages in the most climate vulnerable countries 60 times over.

Beyond the economic losses and damages, there is also the impact on less tangible, invaluable things that we hold dear, including loss of culture, loss of spiritual land, loss of heritage and the loss of lives. A [recent report on Non-Economic Loss and Damage](#) (NELDs) highlights the urgency of this issue, noting that the lack of dedicated finance to address Loss and Damage is exposed in particular through the failure to address NELDs, and calls on this to be both a justification for and an incentive to call for a Loss and Damage Finance Facility.

As Catholic actors, the issue of NELDs is of particular importance, as is the underlying paradigm of Loss and Damage. The failure to act on Loss and Damage for so long under the COPs signals a failure of our leaders to promote the key principles of Catholic Social Teaching such as solidarity, the common good and the preferential option for the poor. Loss and Damage reflects a state of imbalance in our world driven by the structural sin of climate change, as affirmed in a [recent piece reflecting on Loss and Damage in light of the gospel](#).

To achieve climate justice in line with the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities' (CBDR&C), finance to address Loss and Damage must be pursued for progress at COP27. Below are a number of avenues in which this can be achieved.

➤ Key recommendations and policy asks

Parties to the Paris Agreement should:

1. Establish a Loss and Damage Finance Facility (L&DFF) which is equipped to deliver new and additional finance support to address Loss and Damage, on top of existing adaptation and mitigation flows, along with a process to urgently operationalise it based on the urgent needs of developing countries;
2. Redirect fossil fuel subsidies towards Loss and Damage finance as part of the COP26 pledge;
3. Include Loss and Damage impacts within the 'global stocktake' (GST) assessments to help fully understand our collective progress on the Paris Agreement goals;
4. Fully operationalise the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD) at COP27, including decisions made about its institutional structure, advisory body, functions and funding; and
5. Ensure that the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) incorporate Loss and Damage, as there can be no adequate finance goal without considering the costs of impacts already incurred as a result of climate change.

MITIGATION

Compensation for climate-related losses and damages must go hand in hand with radical emissions reductions at the roots. The IPCC 6th Assessment Report on mitigation warns that the window of opportunity to stay within the temperature target of 1.5°C is closing very fast. The [UNEP Emission Gap Report 2022](#) states that we are currently driving towards a global warming of 2.4° to 2.8°C. It is therefore evident that parties to the Paris Agreement must drastically increase their mitigation ambitions. Such mitigation efforts include the necessity for a rapid transition away from fossil towards renewable energies, as more than 70% of GHG emissions are related to fossil energy emissions. This shows the need for concrete and feasible sectoral decarbonisation pathways.

The need for fast decarbonisation is reflected in the COP26 [Glasgow Climate Pact](#), which “expresses alarm and utmost concern that human activities have caused around 1.1°C of warming to date”, and is stressing the urgency for increasing ambitious climate action. Consequently, countries were invited to submit revised Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs) by the end of the year 2022 and a [Mitigation Work Programme](#) (1/CMA.3 Art. 27) was commissioned to close the pre-2030 emissions and implementation gap to keep 1.5°C alive. The Mitigation Work Programme that complements the GST, must drive the

¹ As part of the ratchet mechanism, the GST will assess the world's collective progress towards fulfilling the Paris Agreement on a five-year cycle. It is therefore of importance that the GST not only assesses the progress in terms of mitigation and finances, but also in terms of providing support for already affected communities (Loss and Damage) and ensuring that climate action addresses the development needs of the most vulnerable (socially-just climate action).

implementation of existing sectoral commitments and allow parties to strengthen their climate action indefinitely.

➤ **Key recommendations and policy asks**

The Mitigation Work Programme should:

1. Lay out a timeline and supervision mechanism for phasing-out fossil fuels and fossil fuel subsidies;
2. Lay out pathways that support parties in prioritising an efficient and fast energy transition, as laid out in the [IPCC Report AR6 WG3](#) (Chapters 6.4.2 and B 4.1);
3. Create an accountability process of Parties' sectoral pledges, for example in the form of a Standing Committee on Mitigation;
4. Provide a space for driving sectoral decarbonisation and yearly political check-ins in order to strengthen ambitions;
5. Provide the ground for rapidly scaling-up ambition of NDCs thanks to substantial participation of national experts, civil society and other relevant stakeholders; and
6. Invite parties to nominate a national NDC focal point that coordinates stakeholder participation in the elaboration of NDCs and the monitoring of the NDC implementation.

CLIMATE FINANCE

The power imbalance between the Global South and Global North, rooted in colonialism, not only affects countries' abilities for development but also impedes necessary climate action in many of the countries most affected by the climate crisis. The Global North, which contributed most to the climate crisis, has the ability and the moral obligation to support developing countries, especially the most vulnerable communities, with finance for Loss and Damage, adaptation as well as mitigation. Current pledges and unfulfilled targets will not help vulnerable people to survive with dignity in our age of global warming and increasing natural disasters, which are threatening the livelihoods of billions of people around the globe. Only if States support each other in solidarity as one human family, will we be able to save our common home and thrive together.

Climate finance is crucial for helping developing countries to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to extreme weather impacts. Since [2009](#), developing countries were promised in Copenhagen (COP15), to receive US\$100 billion annually from both public and private sources of rich countries between 2020 and 2025. Based on OECD data, the [amount of climate finance in 2019](#) reached only about US\$80 billion, which fell US\$20 billion below the target for 2020. A new study by Oxfam, shows that despite recent pledges to increase these amounts, the latter [are still disappointingly insufficient](#). The main outstanding issues concerning climate finance include notably: clarifying what comprises climate finance; how will the appropriate funding total be calculated; how much allocation is required for effective climate action (e.g., mitigation, adaptation, Loss and Damage, poverty alleviation...); and in what quality or form should climate finance be issued (loans or grants).

Currently, [the lack of a clear climate finance definition](#) allows inconsistent usage amongst the Parties, which discourages progress, transparency and trust. Also, multi-reporting systems are used to account for the required annual US\$100 billion commitment. Achieving a common understanding would make tracking climate finance flows easier, accurate and would improve [the alignment of all financial flows](#) by preventing double-counting for development aid. Secondly, under the 2015 Paris Agreement, a [new collective quantitative goal](#) (NCQG) that considers the needs and priorities of developing countries must be established by 2025. This global goal would also improve the accuracy in estimating the total climate finance needed while building upon the existing US\$100 billion a year target. In 2021, the first [report of the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance](#) on determining the needs of developing country Parties related to implementing the Convention and the Paris Agreement found that as of May 2021, NDCs of 153 parties had identified climate finance needs ranging from financial and capacity building to technology development and transfer of approximately US\$5.8 to US\$5.9 trillion through 2030. Considering that not all countries have accurately measured their NDC costs, this number may be understated. A balance of climate finance increase and disbursement between mitigation and adaptation should always be maintained, but the allocation remains disproportionately biased towards mitigation efforts ([OECD, 2022](#)). Finally, so far, about 74% of public climate finance is comprised of loans, while 20% is grant funding. [Providing access to climate finance](#) remains vital for ensuring effective climate action on the ground. The provision of climate finance should not increase the heavy debt burden that developing countries are already battling with.

At COP27, solidarity of action must be reflected in the negotiations around the character of the new collective quantified goal (NCQG), the alignment of all financial flows (Article 2.1c), reaching the US\$100 billion goal and the doubling of the share for adaptation finance and especially the financial support for Loss and Damage.

➤ **Key recommendations and asks**

Parties to the Paris Agreement should:

1. Fulfil their climate finance commitments of reaching US\$100 billion by 2022, and US\$600 billion overall between 2020 and 2025;
2. Fulfil their pledges of doubling adaptation finance by 2025, as agreed at COP26;

3. Ensure that the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) is needs-, science-, evidence-, and equity-based, considers sectoral targets and demonstrates additionality of finance;
4. Agree on a common interpretation of Article 2.1c, assess how it relates to other processes under the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC including the post-2025 targets, and identify a suitable method for tracking progress; and
5. Provide fair, streamlined, and simplified access to climate finance especially for poor and vulnerable people and communities in the NCQG and the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

FOOD SYSTEMS AND AGRICULTURE

While the current food system still leaves [828 million people facing hunger and around 2.3 billion moderately or severely food insecure](#), it is also responsible for [1/3 of global greenhouse gas emissions](#). Moreover, within the current global food system, we are increasingly observing biodiversity loss and soil deterioration caused by escalating overgrazing, deforestation, agricultural mismanagement, overexploitation, land grabbing, which exacerbate more land rights' conflicts against local and indigenous communities. Therefore, a fundamental transformation towards a just, sustainable and resilient food system is urgently needed if we want to keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C before the end of this century.

Agricultural issues and broader land use issues are inextricably linked. Decision makers should consider the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to addressing food security and land rights. Considering these interrelationships would allow [the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture \(KJWA\)](#) to build on synergies and address trade-offs between various options. The UNFCCC recognises the importance of this sector (Article 2, Article 4.1(c), Article 4.1(e); the KJWA, adopted in November 2017, is a landmark decision that has given agriculture a very special status under the UNFCCC, as it is the only sector discussed holistically. The decision requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SABSTA) to address agricultural issues jointly through workshops and expert meetings, in collaboration with the Convention's constituted bodies, which stalled a solid conclusion during SB56. Negotiators are expected to finalise their conclusions and agree on the future of the KJWA at COP27. Any future agreement must translate into countries adopting a food system approach in their NDCs, while giving a clear mandate to financial institutions to support a food system transformation.

➤ Key recommendations and policy asks

CIDSE urges COP27 to formally include agriculture and food systems as an integral part of the UNFCCC negotiations, building on the work done through the KJWA process and calls for:

1. The recognition of, and support for agroecology as an appropriate framework to adapt to climate change and transform the food system towards a more sustainable, just and resilient one; and to
2. Ensure that resources are oriented towards supporting smallholder farmers, including subsistence farmers and indigenous people, and providing extension services, training, and research and development based on agroecological methods.

CIDSE supports the continuation of informed discussions and the implementation of decisions on agriculture and land by establishing a body within the UNFCCC as suggested by various parties through the KJWA process. We urge parties to consider the following points, in order for this new body to effectively lead towards a food system transformation:

1. The continuation of thematic workshops to ensure a strong scientific evidence approach and policy recommendations. We call on the new Body to closely work with the High-Level Panel of Experts, which is the recognised United Nations body for assessing science related to world food security and nutrition;
2. The integration and participation of civil society, Indigenous Peoples and small-scale farmers' communities in developing countries, in particular women and youth. These farming communities must be placed at the centre of the Body and recommendations, as they are the main actors within the food system and the first social groups impacted by climate change;
3. The participation of climate finance structures representatives in the newly agreed Body to ensure coherence and practicality between policy recommendations and implementation;
4. The need for coherence and support for other policy recommendations on agriculture and land across relevant UN bodies, in particular the Committee on World Food Security, the UN Biodiversity Conference and the High-level Political Forum on SDGs;
5. The incorporation of just and equitable distribution of land and territories in policy recommendations addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, in order to promote small-scale food producers' agroecological modes of production and management;
6. The incorporation of respect of basic human rights and UN Declarations (such as land rights, FPIC, the right to food, UNDROP, and UNDRIP) in all the policy recommendations.

CONTACTS:

Lydia Machaka, Climate Justice & Energy Officer – [machaka\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:machaka(at)cidse.org)
Vincent Dauby, Agroecology and Food Sovereignty Officer – [dauby\(at\)cidse.org](mailto:dauby(at)cidse.org)
CIDSE - Rue Stévin 16, B-1000 Brussels – T: +32 2 230 77 22 – www.cidse.org

² Free, Prior and Informed Consent

³ UN Declaration of the Rights of Peasants

⁴ UN Declaration of the Right of Indigenous Peoples