



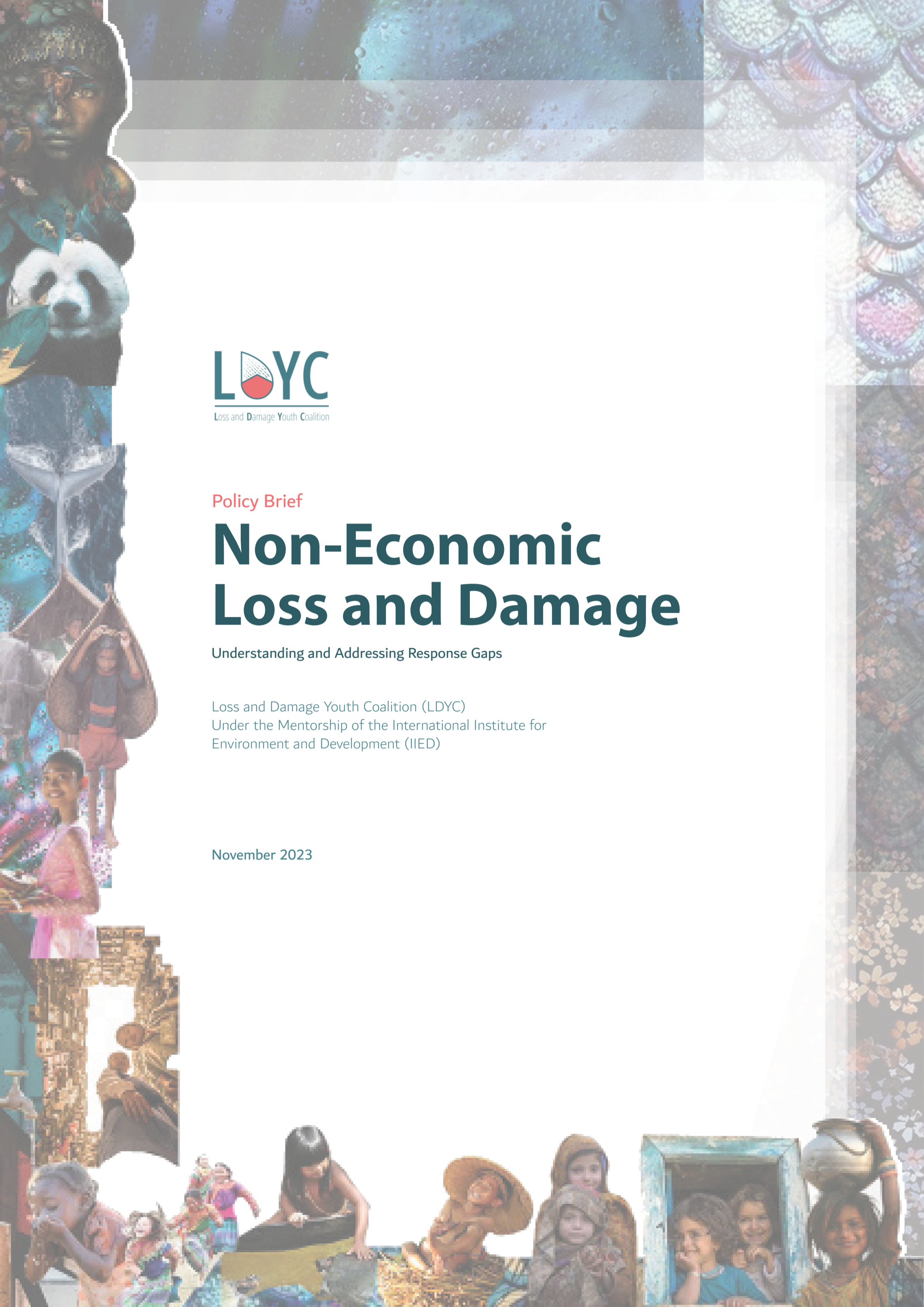
Policy Brief

# Non-Economic Loss and Damage

Understanding and Addressing Response Gaps

Loss and Damage Youth Coalition (LDYC)  
Under the Mentorship of the International Institute for  
Environment and Development (IIED)

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## Acknowledgment

As we reflect on the completion of our policy brief on non-economic loss and damage, our heart is filled with gratitude to each person who contributed time, passion, and expertise to this incredible 8-month journey. We want to express our deepest appreciation to all LDYC participants who dedicated their time and efforts, your opinions and support have been the driving force behind our collective message. Our global coordinator did a fantastic job bringing together the stories and insights of experts from around the world, adding much depth to our policy brief.

A heartfelt thank you to the global experts and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) who shared their knowledge and expertise, helping us understand the different aspects of non-economic loss and damage. To everyone who contributed, whether through your location, cultural perspectives, or personal stories, your input has made a real impact.

As we crafted this policy brief, it became evident that non-economic loss and damage, though challenging to quantify, is far from invisible. Each of us carries invisible disabilities shaped by our geographical locations, diverse opportunities, and cultural backgrounds. Our governments, too, operate in varied ways. However, we hope this policy brief encourages policymakers to understand that these losses are real, even if they can't always be counted. It's a call for action.

**Remember, behind every statistic, there's a human experience. Let's make sure our governments hear the voices of the most vulnerable and take real steps to address the climate crisis.**



Nvivo: Interviewees answers when asked about their definition for NELD

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## Policy Brief

# Non-Economic Loss and Damage (NELD)

Understanding and Addressing Response Gaps

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### Our Key Recommendations

- Establish a Non-Economic Loss and Damage Framework to be approved by the Warsaw International Mechanism Committee and by the UNFCCC.
- Establish a Prevention and Preparedness Framework for Loss and Damage.
- Evaluate current plans to address loss & damage, recognizing that evaluation is the stage at which the significance of non-economic losses is defined. Adaptation options can be assessed in relation to their impacts on non-economic losses.
- Support and empower local leaders by enabling them to take charge and execute initiatives that revolve around the needs and aspirations of their community.
- Enhance the understanding and awareness of the full safety systems for dealing with loss and damage.
- Strengthen coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders engaged in and or/affected by loss & damage.
- Facilitate international cooperation and support needed to address NELD through existing multilateral fora.

For a generation defined by remarkable challenges and intensifying climate catastrophes, the concept and definition of non-economic loss and damage (NELD) has emerged as a crucial component of discussions surrounding climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. Non-economic losses fall under a wide range of intangible impacts, such as loss of human lives, displacement, migration, loss of cultural heritage, health impacts, biodiversity decline, loss of livelihoods, social and psychological impacts, erosion of traditional knowledge, and degradation of ecosystem services.

NELD phenomena are interconnected and may overlap, aggravating their overall impacts on communities and the environment. It has been recognized that comprehensive approaches that bind mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building strategies together are required at both the local and global levels. **This policy brief calls for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to NELD in national and international climate change policies. By addressing the non-economic dimensions of loss and damage, we can enhance the responses to climate change in line with the inherent dignity, rights, and well-being of all communities and individuals affected by these impacts.**

### The Role of Non-Economic Factors in Bridging the Development Gaps

Non-economic factors are considered building blocks to enhance existing development gaps and to strengthen the economy. Healthcare, quality education, and social services are vital for addressing inequalities, improving productivity, and enhancing and building human capital. Putting trust and leadership in the hands of communities allows social cohesion and inclusivity to exist, reducing inequalities, fostering political stability, and enhancing sustainable development. We must prevent resource depletion and enhance long-term economic viability, and environmental sustainability including but not limited to natural resources protection and climate change mitigation. **We must also take into consideration the rule of law, transparency, the effectiveness of governance, and accountability which are non-economic factors that pave the way for equitable resource distribution and economic growth.**

“We need a definition that appreciates and acknowledges the different natures and the different local circumstances of each country that could unite us on what we would be putting effort in mitigating or adapting or preventing”

“This general frustration of why do we have to mitigate when we didn't get the chance to develop yet”

NELD promotes societal cohesion, local economies, and tourism to flourish allowing the protection of cultural heritage and social identity, and reduces regional disparities. Understanding and addressing these non-economic factors are imperative for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

This policy brief, **analyzes the existing policy gaps concerning non-economic loss and damage and proposes recommendations for improvements.** By identifying areas of concern and offering actionable suggestions, we aim to strengthen policy frameworks and enhance the recognition, prevention, and response to non-economic losses and damages.

### Existing Policy Gaps

**1. Inadequate Assessment and Monitoring with Insufficient Financial Mechanisms:** There is a lack of standardized methodologies and tools for comprehensive assessment and monitoring with regard to NELD. Moreover, existing financial mechanisms to address non-economic loss and damage, such as risk pools and climate funds, may be insufficient in terms of scale and coverage.

**2. Limited Integration in National Policies:** NELD considerations are not consistently integrated into national climate change policies, development plans, and disaster risk reduction strategies.

**3. Lack of Adaptation and Resilience Strategies while Considering the Unequitable Distribution of Impacts and Resources:** While there may be efforts to address economic losses, the incorporation of non-economic aspects may be inadequate. Policies should ensure equity and justice in the allocation of resources and support.

Policy Gaps for Non-Economic Loss and Damage

### Identifying Limitations Hindering Collective Actions for Resilience

**Lack of holistic approaches to address insufficient financial mechanisms to build long-term resilience:** Governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and particularly frontline communities, require a holistic approach to address the complex nature of loss and damage. No single form of existing finance is sufficient to tackle the diverse range of impacts that countries and communities will experience in the coming years.

### Accessible and high-performing data collection mechanisms are necessary to support informed decision-making:

The implementation of proper methodologies and tools for comprehensive assessment and monitoring is crucial for policymakers, particularly in vulnerable communities and countries, to access reliable data necessary for measuring the extent, severity, and frequency of climate-induced impacts. By enhancing assessment and monitoring, policymakers can gain a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by these communities and countries. This, in turn, enables the development of more effective and targeted policy responses. Just and equitable mitigation and adaptation strategies and interventions can be formulated and tailored to address vulnerabilities with access to accurate information and assessment tools to analyze the disproportionate impacts of non-economic loss and damage.

**NELD considerations are not actively incorporated in national policies:** The Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) established a group of experts to study and define approaches to address NELD. However, the progress has been hindered by the sluggish decision-making processes within the WIM, resulting in a limited understanding of the regional aspects and policy responses. Additionally, the necessity for unanimous agreement among all signing parties to establish a potential fund may impede the WIM's effectiveness in addressing the urgency of the issue. It could be considered a long-term objective to transform the WIM into a governance structure that can better address these challenges.

**Lack of support for locally-led actions based on local risk assessments:** Until a global loss and damage financing provision exists, governments and other stakeholders in affected countries must tackle the adverse impacts of climate change using existing tools and instruments at their disposal and -most importantly- involve those who are most at risk as they have the best knowledge of their needs and priorities. NELD finance must be designed to support locally-led action, based on local risk assessments, without eroding hard-won development gains. This challenge will not be overcome easily. However, it is a vital task that can be tackled quickly and effectively if governments work with finance providers, civil society actors, academic institutions, and affected and at-risk community members to identify and craft locally appropriate and mutually acceptable solutions.

## Non-economic factors needed to close the policy gaps

### 1. Governance Effectiveness

**To address inadequate assessment and monitoring processes that currently exist:** It is essential to integrate approaches such as the Disaster-Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) frameworks focused on pre- and post-disaster assessment (Chiba et al., 2017). Additionally, economic valuation methods such as wealth and capital accounting and cost-benefit analysis can be applied to assess NELD alongside other approaches (Champ et al., 2003). The lack of well-established methodologies to measure and estimate loss and damage has resulted in a significant deficiency in reporting NELD across disaster databases, particularly in vulnerable developing nations (Chiba, 2017).

**For the integration of NELD into the national policies:** People and policymakers have shown a lack of enthusiasm for integrating NELD concerns like health and gender into current climate change and crisis relief policies and strategies. Additionally, there is a noticeable deficiency in implementing these policies due to insufficient funding, hindering meaningful engagement between communities and policymakers. It becomes challenging to effectively communicate and comprehend the unique requirements within various local, national, and regional contexts.

**Defining NELD:** In many authorities and organizations responsible for managing different sectors of society, there is a lack of awareness and understanding regarding NELD. It is worth mentioning, as noted by experts, that the majority of climate change negotiators, observers, and policymakers tend to prioritize economic Loss and Damage over Non-Economic Loss and Damage, despite its significant impact on vulnerable communities.

**Knowledge gap:** While the policy process continues to develop and forthcoming decisions regarding NELD are anticipated in the coming years, there is a scarcity of knowledge specifically pertaining to NELD in the context of climate change, with only a limited number of publications directly focusing on this subject (R. Bharadwaj et al., 2023). Nevertheless, various disciplines offer valuable insights into different facets of NELD. A concerted effort by the research community to gather and integrate insights, render conceptual clarity, and address emerging research gaps could yield significant benefits for decision- and policy-makers.

### 2. Rule of Law

**Inadequate Assessment and Monitoring:** Lack of adequate and comprehensive methodologies and tools for assessment and monitoring hinders accurate measurement and understanding of NELD. Regulations should establish assessment and monitoring processes through a defined framework designed to incorporate NELD in decision-making.

**Layered Financial Instruments:** 'Layered' financial instruments can address the complexity of loss and damage risks at national and local levels. This will ensure that the right type of finance can be delivered to the right interventions, place, and at the right time, in ways that are locally accessible, flexible, and appropriately targeted. It also outlines four key challenges to consider when designing finance for loss and damage: developing appropriate financing principles; improving access and flexibility; prioritizing grants over loans; and ensuring redundancy in the system (IPCC, 2022). Implementing a layered approach will enhance the strength and resilience of actions, offering vital support to highly vulnerable individuals and preventing a detrimental cycle of decline following successive shocks (Bharadwaj R. et al, 2022).

### 3. Transparency

**Include women in decision-making:** Women are the breadgivers of the family. Unfortunately, they have limited access to expressing their talents and skills in climate change solutions. In some countries, women are not allowed to own land and other natural resources yet they interact with them throughout their day-to-day activities when they collect firewood, help with grazing animals, agriculture, and preparing herbal medicines, etc. Due to climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, the poor and most vulnerable have been significantly impacted, 70% of which have been women (Earthfinds, 2022).

**Establishing methodologies:** It is crucial to develop integrated assessment frameworks for NELD, as they enable key stakeholders to integrate the various aspects of non-economic loss and damage into their interventions. Accessible and high-performing data collection mechanisms are necessary to support informed decision-making.

**Limited Analytical Capacity:** Limited analytical capacity, especially in developing nations, presents significant obstacles in conducting thorough assessments and monitoring necessary to address these challenges. Inadequate resources, limited technical expertise, and data unavailability contribute to this issue. Additionally, the lack of skilled personnel, technological infrastructure, and adequate funding for research and essential programs further exacerbate the gaps in policy implementation and decision-making processes.

“The reason that these patterns occur is because we’re just not prepared to have an honest global conversation about people’s need to move when places are no longer inhabitable.”

### 4. Accountability

**Lack of Efficient Standardized Methodologies:** Many NELD items are intangible and do not occur in distinct units. Although standardized measurements exist for some items (e.g. health), others have not been subject to systematic assessments. Moreover, the concept of NELD is about value; only that perceived as valuable will register as being lost or damaged.

**Including the factors affecting the decision:** Communicating the importance and meaning of NELD is equally challenging. Economic studies show non-monetary factors impact decision-making. NELD presents challenges in economically efficient contexts that rely on cost-benefit analysis. The challenge is to assess and report NELD in a way that respects different contexts and values, while still reaching decision-makers accustomed to quantified information. It was highlighted that non-economic losses related to climate change significantly reduce climate change resilience and contribute to social dissonance and incoherence. (Serdenczny et al., 2018)

**The complexity of Non-Economic Loss and Damage:** Non-economic impacts involve social, cultural, psychological, and ecological dimensions, which need multi-disciplinary approaches and the complexities in measuring all the intangible aspects create a policy gap, as policymakers may struggle to develop targeted interventions. These non-economic factors mentioned often are undervalued or not rightly accounted for in policy frameworks.

“By criminalizing the worst harms against nature, you are in fact freeing up a lot of resources because the whole framework changes; from the polluter pays to the polluter does not pollute. So you target the action at source, which can thereby free up a lot of financial mechanisms”

#### Box 1. Study methods

The recommendations are based on 10 structured interviews with LDYC members, policy experts, climate experts and environmental activists from Africa, Asia, America, Europe and the Caribbean conducted over the period of August 2023 to October 2023.

The interviewees were selected to uncover experts' definition of the non-economic loss and damage and to understand the different perspectives on the policy gaps identified through this policy brief. The first question was about defining NELD and the last question was about ensuring the equitable distribution of resources based on the definition they provided at the beginning. Four of the interview respondents were women.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed qualitatively through thematic content analysis. Using NVivo software to identify themes and stories and extract relevant direct quotes. In addition to, the further research and literature review that were done by LDYC members.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Establishing the NELD Framework to be approved by the members of the Warsaw International Mechanism Committee and by the UNFCCC. This should include:

a. An agreement that involves but is not limited to including NELD sources while considering a proper definition for NELD.

b. An annual Summary Report that represents the changes that members of the NELD Framework have made toward positive development to reduce the effects of climate change. The Summary Report should also seek to recognize and legitimize informal work taken on by community members working towards developments and technologies related to the damages that occur within a society.

c. Consultation with Social Scientists and affected communities for available metrics, parameters, and indicators for NELD, while identifying existing instruments from the humanitarian sector and the multilateral development banks.

d. Consideration of flexible solutions that fit different contexts, understanding that these strategies should be implemented in an integrated and context-specific manner, taking into account local needs, capacities, and priorities.

e. Recognizing the findings presented in the 6th Assessment Report which indicate that worsening losses and damages caused by climate change, as well as the projected risks, levels, and vulnerability trends, highlight an increased urgency for global action toward climate-resilient development. These assessments surpass the previous evaluation in AR5, emphasizing the need for immediate and decisive measures. Therefore, policymakers should consider this evidence to support the process while taking into account health evidence.

f. A 'human rights-based approach' leads to more coherent, legitimate, and sustainable policies. This approach, exemplified in areas like the AR6, incorporates human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and emphasizes public participation, access to information, gender equality, just transition, biodiversity protection, intergenerational equity, child rights, and cooperation as a human rights obligation.

### 2. Establishing Prevention and Preparedness Framework for Loss and Damage, which should:

a. Empower countries in preventing and preparing for losses and damages, it is crucial to establish clear, predictable, structured, and accessible grants in advance. Such grants may take the form of blended financing.

b. Include incentive programs with grants to address rapid onset events. Moreover, blended financing, solidarity funds and debt swaps should be considered while designing this framework.

c. Efforts to address debt stress, and integrate humanitarian and development support through

mechanisms such as Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and initiatives like 'debt for climate' and 'debt for nature' swaps.

d. Include long-term financial and technical support necessary to implement Early Warning Systems (EWS), with a shift in funding from disaster response to preparedness. Existing financing mechanisms like the Sendai Framework's Specific Financial Facility (SOFF) and Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) can be utilized. Investing in communication systems such as loudspeakers, radios, and computers would contribute to the effective and efficient dissemination of messages to communities.

e. Develop multi-country disaster response plans to enhance preparedness and coordination.

f. Align the objectives of multilateral finance and trade organizations with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. It was acknowledged that a review of the objectives of entities such as the IMF and WTO is necessary to address existing trade rules and enforce measures against unfair practices. Countries highlighted that current financial regulations are resulting in the accumulation of debt for developing nations, emphasizing the need to address the existing frameworks in place.

g. Introduce a foundational piece in law that affirms a consciousness around our consideration of nature, rather than leaving environmental matters largely to civil law in the form of environmental damage - an example of which is ecocide laws.

### 3. Evaluate current plans to address loss & damage, recognizing that evaluation is the stage at which the significance of non-economic losses is defined. Adaptation options can be assessed in relation to their impacts on non-economic losses:

a. Developing plans to address and mitigate climate change risks requires an inclusive process and the translation of these plans into policies and practices. As of August 31, 2022, at least 84 percent of Parties to the UNFCCC have implemented at least one adaptation planning instrument such as a plan, strategy, law, or policy (GST Summary, 2023).

b. Although monitoring, evaluation, and learning from adaptation progress are crucial for effective and iterative adaptation, the current implementation of monitoring and evaluation is limited (IPCC AR6 WGII contribution). As of August 2021, only approximately one-fourth of countries had established a monitoring and evaluation system (GST Summary, 2023). One-size-fits-all approaches should be avoided. NELD needs to be understood by different levels of scientific education and easily translated to frontline and marginalized communities.

c. NELD considerations should be further integrated into the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage by highlighting case studies, with a particular emphasis on (mental) health impacts.

d. NELD impacts should be incorporated into existing metrics from the World Bank and other MDBs, or developed when missing.

### 4. Support and empower local leaders by enabling them to take charge and execute initiatives that revolve around the needs and aspirations of their community members. By implementing work plans and objectives that are driven by local input, we can create an environment where resilience thrives at the grassroots level:

a. Build the capacity of communities and their members to contribute to or lead the process of assessing, documenting, and addressing NELD.

b. The Warsaw International Mechanism must provide a platform for communities and experts on NELD to contribute their ideas and plans during UNFCCC negotiations.

c. Documentation is key. The complete resilience of a community cannot be determined at a single point because the conditions and risks faced by the community evolve over time. The process of planning and implementing adaptation strategies is ongoing, with each iteration building upon past actions and knowledge while addressing newly identified risks. It also involves sharing successful approaches with other countries and local governments. Consequently, there is no singular method or protocol to assess the progress of adaptation efforts in terms of their sufficiency and effectiveness. Instead, the adequacy of adaptation actions can be evaluated in phases and by assessing the extent to which they lead to sustained resilience over time (6th Assessment Report, 2023).

d. People who are affected by climate change and are facing loss and damage issues and the effects of NELD (communities, CSOs, and NGOs) will promote awareness of the "need" to build local proof and information, learn lessons from them, and work on practical solutions. (Bharadwaj and Shakya, 2021).

e. Use "Impact storylines"; a method that is used to show what are the implications of a climate hazard and climate risk and explore all different sets of impacts (interviewee experience).

f. The main factor we have to consider is "local government support" which redirects campaigns, events, and other actions needed to implement preparedness measures.

### 5. Enhance the understanding and awareness of the full safety systems for dealing with loss and damage:

a. Risk assessment forms the basis for planning and implementing climate change adaptation actions in response to identified risks, impacts, and vulnerabilities. Among the Parties that included an adaptation component in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), 80 percent have described key climatic changes and how they affect vulnerable sectors and groups (FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/4).

b. During the GST discussions, participants highlighted the varying interpretations and definitions of loss and damage, as well as their relationship with adaptation, mitigation, and climate change. *There is currently no universally accepted understanding of neld, within different communities and institutions employing distinct definitions.* Loss and damage were recognized as issues spanning past, present, and future, with short-, medium-, and long-term implications that require attention across all time horizons.

c. The importance of addressing human mobility, including the integration of refugees and migration in international agreements, was also emphasized. Additionally, it was underscored that discussions on loss and damage should explicitly and systematically focus on children, including climate-induced child displacements. Furthermore, considering health, including mental health, is crucial for effective action on loss and damage.

d. Engagement and support can be facilitated by translating and localizing climate information, often involving the use of local languages and the need for climate literacy capacity-building. This approach

“National advocacy efforts need to take place, tailored to each nation. No one size fits all solutions, we need people centric policies”

allows for tapping into local climate knowledge and provides benefits in fostering community involvement.

### 6. Strengthen coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders engaged in and or/affected by loss & damage:

a. Recognizing the significance of involving youth and community leaders in the formulation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), particularly in developing nations that bear a disproportionate burden from climate change impacts.

b. There is a requirement for access to data, the development of additional data infrastructure, and the establishment of standardized data protocols.

c. The Global Stocktake (GST) has the potential to facilitate broader information sharing among countries, creating opportunities for enhanced North-South and South-South cooperation in this domain.

d. The focus should not only be on integrating diverse groups into national plans but also on acknowledging the existing efforts at the sub-national and local levels. This recognition is crucial for amplifying and linking actions effectively. A specific area of emphasis was the need to simplify technical terminology to ensure its applicability at the local level.

e. The Santiago Network provides a key opportunity to strengthen coordination, coherence and synergies at different levels.

f. Consider small grants window or sub-fund implementation

g. Provide a chain of accountability, starting from national level to regional to international one.

h. Discover the concept of restorative justice.

### 7. Facilitate International Cooperation and Support Needed in Addressing NELD:

a. Developed countries can provide financial assistance, technology transfer, and capacity-building support to developing nations to enhance their adaptation and resilience efforts. This collaboration can help bridge the capacity gaps and foster a more equitable global response to climate change. (UNFCCC, 2015)

b. To attract foreign investments and boost local economic performance or revenue, local governments can eliminate inflexible and wasteful administrative procedures. A policy innovation's effective implementation by early adopters can also encourage nations to discover and adopt the same policy innovation. WIM is reviewed again in 2024, this will be a great factor to consider in future discussions.

### Box 2. Study methods

Documentation from COP, SBs and GST has been reviewed to enhance the recommendations proposed in this policy brief.

WIM's three functions are in order to gain some orientation regarding the range and level of implementation of instruments under it.

c. There are significant barriers to accessing emotional and financial support for impacted communities. There is a need to raise awareness of available sources of support and mobilize resources and technical assistance to those impacted. The Executive Committee for the Warsaw International Mechanism has developed knowledge products and tools for comprehensive risk management and the Santiago Network was recently operationalized to catalyze demand-driven technical assistance to developing countries on approaches to avert, minimize and address the non-economic loss and damage. The Santiago Network and the WIM are playing a huge role in executing and operating the tools necessary to address NELD.

d. There is acknowledgment in the context of Article 7, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all, with local, subnational, national, regional, and international dimensions. The Paris Agreement affirms the importance of support for and international cooperation on adaptation efforts, taking into account the needs of developing country Parties.

e. The need to strengthen the credibility of the climate change process for a clear and well-defined net-zero strategy, including mechanisms that can secure high-quality interventions, and probably net-zero regulations to restore credibility.

f. Consider a programme of national debt swaps for action in mitigation and adaptation in developing countries.

To conclude, addressing non-economic losses and damages requires urgent action. A paradigm shift is needed to prioritize proactive resilience-building strategies, anticipating adaptation actions to prevent and minimize such losses. This necessitates a multisectoral approach, integrating climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian efforts.

To achieve effective implementation, an integrated policy and regulatory framework should be established, harmonizing different instruments and strengthening policy environments, particularly in developing countries. Additionally, it is crucial to enhance understanding of non-economic losses and damages, utilizing the Global Stocktake (GST) to estimate and evaluate their impact. This requires investment in data and evidence, as well as integrating reporting on non-economic losses and damages into countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

A people-centered approach is vital, ensuring inclusivity and human rights-based approaches. Vulnerable populations must be protected, and their voices should be heard in decision-making processes. Lastly, adequate climate financing should be directed towards prevention and preparedness measures, allocating resources to social protection and long-term resilience building.

By implementing these measures, policymakers and stakeholders can effectively address non-economic losses and damages and strengthen resilience.

“Important issue is establishing solidarity between affected nations”

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