

## Special Session: Neglected Areas of Disaster Loss and Damage

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Over the past decades, extreme weather events and climate disasters have killed more than 410,000 people and affected 1.7 billion people around the world (IFRC, 2020). The World Meteorological Organisation's (WMO, 2021) latest *Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses 1970-2019* offers some clear trends: the number of disaster deaths is declining despite the increase in the number of disasters in time; losses, especially economic losses, due to disasters are increasing largely in high-income countries; and most disaster-related deaths are occurring in lower-middle and low-income countries.

Disaster 'Loss and Damage' as such, has been one of the most important climate change negotiation discussions right from the Cancún Adaptation Framework of COP16, through to the Paris Agreement's Article 8 on 'Loss and Damage' of COP21, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage of COP19, the Glasgow Climate Pact of COP26 and now for the COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

The disaster 'Loss and Damage' debate is also vital to the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction's aim for "The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health" and several Sustainable Development Goals (including 1, 2, 3, 7, 13 and 17).

The Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26) has strengthened the commitment to 'Loss and Damage' by recognising it as the third component of mitigation and adaptation, and by reiterating the:

“urgency of scaling up action and support, as appropriate, including finance, technology transfer and capacity-building, for implementing approaches to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change in developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to these effects” (UNFCCC, 2021, p7, section 63).

Although the recognition of 'urgency of scaling up action' is a step forward, the policy debate still concentrates on the physical aspects of the loss and damage with limited focus on the loss of life, effects on human health, loss of livelihoods, damage of the natural environment, change of ecosystem, and loss of social network and cultural heritage (UNISDR, 2015). The impact of climate change and weather extremes is felt and lived empirically by households and communities around the world. The lived experience of losses is indirect, intangible, cascade

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over time and are difficult to quantify. As such, they are **neglected areas** of public health, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development. They go unnoticed and unaddressed, pushing millions of poor and vulnerable households into poverty ratchets and spirals of vulnerability at local and national levels, especially in low-and middle-income countries.

This highly topical and timely Special Session organised by the Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on ‘Geographical Science for Resilient Communities, Ecosystems and Livelihoods under Global Environmental Change (GORILLA)’ in Kampala, Uganda addresses the **neglected areas** of Loss and Damage. The session will take place on Wednesday 07 December 2022 at 11:30 – 13:30 GMT (UK) which equates to 14:30 – 16:30 EAT (Uganda).

Typical ‘Loss and Damage’ debates and studies focus on: existing or potential loss and damage; compensation for loss and damage for the low-and middle-income countries; calculating the link between emissions with specific loss and damage; establishing formal attribution of loss and damage to anthropogenic climate change – among others (Surminski, 2021; Roberts and Pelling, 2016; BBC, 2022; Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, 2022).

Facilitated by the **ADN Uganda Hub** this Special Session on ‘**Neglected Areas of Disaster Loss and Damage**’ will engage with policymakers, policy influencers, politicians, researchers, climate activists and climate scientists to bring the neglected areas to the fore. Some of the neglected areas that the Expert Panel will explore (although not limited to) are:

- direct and indirect losses as well as their cascading effects on people’s health, nutrition, lives and livelihoods
- limits of coping and adaptation from recurrent loss of livelihoods and depletion of natural resources based on local evidence
- capacity-building needs for local and national actors for loss and damage
- strengthening governance for loss and damage
- understanding loss and damage at the intersection of Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Protocol, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Health Emergency Disaster Risk Management Framework.

The purpose of this Special Session is then to highlight the **neglected areas** of Loss and Damage so that they receive the much-needed **attention** that they deserve from the UN, World Health Organisation, politicians and critical support organisations in the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

By doing so, it is hoped that these organisations will **lead** the way to promote **context-specific evidence-based interventions** to tackle poverty ratchets, vulnerability spirals and barriers to human freedom and capabilities for growth and sustainable development.

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