

CCWG Position Paper

Securing Effective and Equitable Climate Action at the COP 21 in Paris

In November 2015 196 parties will meet in Paris at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to come to a new climate change agreement. This is intended to set the main parameters for the next era of international climate action following the Kyoto Protocol, with obligations for all countries according to their historic responsibilities and respective capabilities. With the right political leadership and commitment, an ambitious and just agreement can be secured that will limit global warming and promote climate action on the ground by scaling up funding for the most vulnerable people and countries. To ensure meaningful action on climate change the Paris Agreement has to contain the following elements:



- 1 Ambitious and binding provisions to ensure that average global temperature rise does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels
- 2 Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC) to be fair and ambitious and include adaptation and mitigation with later upscaling mechanisms to achieve the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal
- 3 Include and reinforce the Warsaw Loss and Damage Mechanism and funding for loss and damage in the Paris Agreement
- 4 Scaled up climate finance for adaptation and low carbon transition, focusing on the most vulnerable countries, communities and peoples
- 5 A central role for equity: guaranteeing adequate, gender-equitable and pro-poor climate change responses

Expectations

The following are key expectations from COP 21 proposed by the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) – the biggest network of non-governmental organizations working in the field of climate change in Vietnam.

“I challenge you to bring to the Summit bold pledges. Innovate, scale up, cooperate and deliver concrete action that will close the emissions gap and put us on track for an ambitious legal agreement.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

COP 21 and the Paris Agreement must accelerate equitable actions to keep global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid catastrophic climate change impacts.



The Paris Agreement may be the last chance for agreeing on a long-standing, legally binding accord that aims to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. In order to do so governments must commit to increased and urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve climate change adaptation. The current commitments contained in the INDCs submitted by a number of Parties are not sufficient to keep greenhouse gas emissions to acceptable levels and limit global warming to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, as agreed at COP 15 in Copenhagen, let alone the 1.5 degrees that many scientists and more than 100 countries believe to be the more appropriate target. The massive gap between the actions and commitments of the most powerful and responsible

governments and populations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and what is needed to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees must be closed without delay. Actions must be taken to ensure and incentivize countries to adjust current pledges with new forward-looking and increasingly ambitious plans and commitments. In addition, when the INDCs become actual nationally determined contributions (NDC), they should drive a participatory national process to agree investments for improved national resilience.

Climate funding must be scaled up and must reach the most vulnerable groups (e.g. the poor, low-income people, women, children, elderly, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, people with disabilities).



Those countries and populations most responsible for climate change should commit in Paris to provide sufficient and equitable public funding to help the most vulnerable groups to deal with climate change impacts. We recognize the contribution that communities at risk make in trying to adapt to climate impacts, however their resources are not sufficient to fully adapt to climate change and cope with unavoidable losses and damages. There is still a glaring gap between finance promised and funds needed, as well as delivered, to help vulnerable populations and developing nations.¹ Climate finance and especially funding for adaptation not only needs to be increased drastically, there is a clear need to make certain that it reaches local communities and the most vulnerable.

To be effective climate finance must not just deliver resources but also meaningful public participation. Climate funding needs to be committed and disbursed with a pro-poor orientation based on the principles of gender equity, effectiveness, additionality, transparency, adequacy and inclusivity. Only by promoting context-specific and appropriate solutions to climate change that work because they are in line with priorities, realities and capacities of local people can climate finance be assured to generate a lasting impact and reduce climate vulnerability effectively.

Major greenhouse gas emitters must address unavoidable loss and damage related to climate change harming vulnerable countries and people.



Even though ambitious mitigation and system-wide adaptation must be the priority of governments to minimize climate change impacts, it is clear that global warming will cause some unavoidable losses and damages, especially in the poorest and most vulnerable countries and communities. This will largely affect those with the least responsibility for causing climate change and the least capacity to take action: a) developing countries, which have the lowest historic greenhouse gas emissions and b) the most vulnerable people and communities who lack access to and control over resources, are heavily exposed to climate risks, depend on climate sensitive livelihoods and who may face discrimination. Compensating vulnerable countries, communities and people for the harm and destruction caused by climate change will contribute to addressing this historic injustice. The Warsaw Mechanism for unavoidable loss and damage must be built up and continue under the Paris Agreement, and funds for loss and damage must be committed by the richer countries, based on historic but dynamically evolving responsibilities and capabilities.

Climate change action must protect people most at risk and improve their resilience.



Adaptation can only be effective if it is in line with the specific context and local conditions and based on the rights of people to have their voices heard as well as addressing their concerns, priorities and challenges. This is why community-based adaptation (CBA) in harmonization with ecosystem-based adaptation (EBA) must be a cornerstone of adaptation planning and why climate change response must take into account scientific as well as local knowledge. Guidance and examples of how this can be achieved are readily available and waiting to be taken up. The Joint Principles for Adaptation², for example, are a benchmark of good standards for adaptation planning and provide guidance to governments on how to assure an equitable, rights-based, gender sensitive and effective climate change response. There are many successful examples from NGOs of how to improve the resilience of the most vulnerable, which remain limited in scale and location. In order to achieve systemic impact these need to be scaled-up into government policies and programs.

1. UNEP 2014: The Adaptation Gap Report. <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/adaptation/gapreport2014>

2. What are the Joint Principles of Adaptation? <http://southernvoices.net/en/home/sv-on-adaptation/669-joint-principles-for-adaptation.html>

“We are the first generation to understand the consequences of a high carbon economy on the planet, on future prosperity and, in particular, on the most vulnerable around the world. Let us be the generation that stands up and takes the responsibility conveyed by the knowledge.”

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary UNFCCC

Recommendations for the Paris Agreement:

- **Create a binding, effective and just mechanism within the Paris Agreement** to step up commitments and promote actions **to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius** compared to pre-industrial levels.
- **Ensure ambitious mitigation actions** are already **undertaken before** the new climate agreement enters into force in **2020** and **mechanisms to upscale mitigation ambitions** are in place.
- **Developed countries** must **increase technical and financial support to help developing countries** to prepare for climate impacts, **taking their historic responsibility into account.**³
- **Include a global adaptation goal in the Paris Agreement** and recognize that achieving it is a common obligation based on emissions responsibilities and differentiated capabilities.
- **Developed countries must support the expansion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency at home and in developing countries**, as well as **provide technical and financial support to developing countries in order to create low-carbon economies**, including institutionalizing and incentivizing sustainable production, consumption and lifestyle patterns.
- More attention should be paid by the international community to **linking adaptation and mitigation and a commitment to harness multiple benefits** from combined climate action should be included in the Paris Agreement.
- The Paris Agreement should signal clearly that **loss and damage** needs **to be addressed through additional finance.**
- **Loss and damage require clear institutional arrangements, procedures and mechanisms**, which should be recognized within the Paris Agreement. The **Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage should be absorbed and strengthened** in the period after 2020.
- A COP 21 decision should **support the implementation of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage in the period until 2020**, before the Paris Agreement enters into force.

“The lack of action on climate change not only risks putting prosperity out of reach of millions of people in the developing world; it threatens to roll back decades of sustainable development.”

World Bank, 2012

Recommendations for climate change action and finance:

- **International climate finance must be increased** and following the example of the Green Climate Fund **50% of it should be committed to adaptation. At least half of the adaption funding** on the international level **should go to developing nations** and at least half of the national adaptation funding should **prioritize vulnerable groups** within countries.⁴
- **Sufficient and additional funding should build on the 2009 commitment to provide 100 billion USD annually by 2020**, and put into practice through **regularly updated public finance support goals for adaptation, loss and damage, as well as mitigation.**
- **International finance for local adaptation should be strengthened** and international bodies, including the Green Climate Fund, should **prioritize transformational and systemic change**, the **scaling up of successful practices and strategies into planning and implementation processes**, as well as **channel funding to the local level with a clear timeframe commitment.**

3. UNEP 2014: The Adaptation Gap Report. <http://www.unep.org/climatechange/adaptation/gapreport2014>

4. 2014, Kathmandu Declaration on Climate Finance. <http://bit.ly/1iryEAH>

- Climate finance investments must **ensure an appropriate balance between infrastructure and non-infrastructure elements**, such as capacity building, awareness raising, climate change education, livelihood support, as well as community-based and ecosystem-based approaches.
- **Information on availability, disbursement and utilization of climate finance flow must be accessible** to all stakeholders from the international to the national and sub-national level to assure accountability and transparency of climate finance flow at all stages.
- For **INDC implementation** governments **need** to ensure **coordination within and across sectors as well as allocate clear responsibilities and resources**.
- **Institutional principles and procedures** should **use existing experiences, approaches and tools to assure appropriate, equitable and rights-based adaptation**.
- **Existing** government **policies and services** should be systematically **adjusted to address the challenges posed by climate change**, for example integrating adaptive social security into traditional social security systems.
- **Social and environmental safeguards** should be applied **in national and international climate change response planning and programming**, including climate finance, and viable monitoring and enforcement systems.
- **Broad stakeholder involvement** (including the most vulnerable people such as: the poor, low-income people, women, children, elderly, ethnic minorities, people with disability) in government **climate change planning and programming** to ensure increased resilience should be **institutionalized**.
- **Climate actions** must **maintain a clear linkage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** as those actions will be essential to meeting development aims including poverty reduction, education, health, food and energy security as well as functioning ecosystems.

“Ours is the first generation that can end poverty, and the last that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The role of civil society

Local communities and the most vulnerable, such as poor and low-income people, women, children, elderly, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups and people with disabilities, must have a strong voice and clear role in shaping climate change policies and decisions, including the Paris Agreement. The Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) believes in the power of people and advocates for the voice and rights of people and communities who are at the frontlines of climate change impacts to be heard at the COP 21 and other global fora.

As an open network for all interested Vietnamese and international non-governmental organizations, institutions and individuals, CCWG strives to bring these voices forward and highlight their concerns.

Its mission is to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of poor people in Vietnam to the impacts of climate change through coordination, advocacy and capacity building for environmentally and economically sustainable as well as socially just responses to climate change.

CCWG is willing to collaborate with government agencies in Vietnam, international development agencies, NGOs, individuals and other stakeholders, to contribute to achieving a fair and ambitious deal in Paris as well as meaningful climate change actions on the ground.

