

Overview

Loss and damage caused by climate change is a significant concern for many countries, including in the Pacific. While there is no agreed definition, it refers to impacts of climate change including slow onset events and extreme weather events which may result in loss and damage. In 2013, the UNFCCC established the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage Associated with the Impacts of Climate Change (WIM). The Paris Agreement affirms the WIM as the permanent vehicle for this purpose (Article 8) and further makes clear that the Paris Agreement cannot be used to underpin claims for liability or compensation. There is much useful work that can be done to avert, minimise and address loss and damage – and New Zealand is active in the Pacific in many of these areas, for example, on emergency preparedness, early warning systems, slow-onset disasters such as sea-level rise and displacement, and disaster risk insurance.

The Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM)

The WIM's three functions are guided by its Executive Committee.



Enhancing knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches

Strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders

Enhancing action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building

¹ From "Climate Change Negotiations Mandate: Update", available here: <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/environment/climate-change/>

What's happening at COP25?

At COP25, the UNFCCC's Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage associated with the impacts of Climate Change will undergo its scheduled review. Parties to the UNFCCC will discuss, among other issues, where the WIM has done well according to its functions and mandate, how useful it has been to developing countries, and ways in which it can be improved.

New Zealand's objectives

New Zealand will be working with the Pacific to ensure that developing countries are able to effectively increase resilience to climate change impacts by averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.

This includes continuing to support the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage in fulfilling its mandate to address loss and damage in developing countries in a way that is consistent with the Paris Agreement.¹

We will continue work to respond to the threat of loss and damage, particularly in the Pacific, including through the provision of climate-related support, delivered bilaterally and through regional or multilateral mechanisms.

For more information:

<https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/introduction-to-loss-and-damage>

<https://unfccc.int/wim-excom>

<https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/environment/climate-change/>



What is included as 'loss and damage'?

Slow-onset events

Sea level rise, desertification, ocean acidification

Non-economic losses

Ecosystem services, cultural heritage, health, biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, territory

Human mobility

Displacement, migration, relocation and resettlement

Economic losses

Agricultural production, infrastructure, tourism

Comprehensive risk management

Risk transfer, recovery, risk reduction, emergency preparedness

Cross-cutting issues

Sustainable development, complementarity and collaboration

Unavoidable events

Examples of New Zealand support activities

Early warning systems

supporting expert meteorological forecasting and training services to ensure accurate monitoring of severe weather events in the Pacific and South East Asia

Emergency preparedness

strengthening disaster risk management across risk reduction, readiness, response and recovery in 5 Pacific island countries - Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Cook Islands, and Niue.

Slow-onset events

championing the progressive development of international law to protect coastal state rights in respect of maritime zones in the face of sea level rise

Risk insurance facilities

supporting the design of the proposed Pacific Resilience Facility, a regionally-owned funding facility that will channel financing into initiatives that build climate- and environment-related resilience

Non-economic losses

Adopting an Action Plan for Pacific Climate Change-Related Human Mobility. This includes robust research, using development assistance to avert and delay climate mobility, and explore a regional approach to the issue.

Resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems

Supporting coastal communities in Cambodia to be more resilient through increased life-skills, improved education of children and young adults, and improved land use planning.