

### Keywords:

Climate change impact, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), climate finance, National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs)

## Policy pointers

**The 49 LDCs (who make up 12 percent of the global population), are suffering climate change 'first and worst,' despite contributing less than one per cent of historical greenhouse gas emissions.**

**From 1980–2013 the LDCs suffered 51 percent of deaths from climate-related disasters — 4.7 times the global average. But the statistics are worsening. Taking just January 2010 to July 2013, the figure rises to 67 per cent — 5.5 times the global average.**

**So far, wealthy countries have paid only US\$0.7 billion to the Least Developed Countries Fund to implement already agreed National Adaptation Plans of Action, the total cost of which is around US\$5 billion.**

**The UNFCCC's 19th Conference of the Parties must begin rectifying this immense inequality by moving to fully fund the LDCs' National Adaptation Programmes of Action.**

# A burden to share? Addressing unequal climate impacts in the Least Developed Countries

Less than one-seventh of the US\$5 billion needed to fund the Least Developed Countries' (LDCs') most urgent climate change adaptation projects has been delivered by wealthy countries — a sliver of their annual spending on their own disasters and globally on fossil fuel subsidies. LDCs played almost no role in causing climate change, yet from 2010 to July 2013, their deaths from climate-related disasters were more than five times the global average. International pledges of climate finance to address this inequality are overall both inadequate and unmet. The burden of responding to climate change should fall on those most responsible for causing the problem, and most capable of addressing it.

## Disaster inequality in the Least Developed Countries

The evidence of climate change is unequivocal: global average air and ocean temperatures have increased, there is widespread melting of snow and ice and global average sea level is rising.<sup>1</sup> Climate change is bringing more frequent and more extreme events such as floods, cyclones, storm surges, droughts, tornadoes, landslides, flash floods, heat waves and malaria outbreaks.<sup>1</sup>

Such hazards are often not new to a country, but their intensity, extent and unpredictability have increased significantly because of climate change.<sup>2,3</sup> People in vulnerable countries experience the impacts in many ways: lives are lost, people are displaced, livelihoods are disrupted; disease becomes more prevalent and severe; economic development suffers constraints and shocks, and social and political systems struggle to cope.

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which have contributed the least to causing climate change, are experiencing the impacts worst and first.<sup>1,4</sup> From January 1980 to July 2013, the 49 LDCs (the states with the lowest incomes), suffered 1.28 million deaths from climate-related disasters (51 per cent of the 2.52 million global figure). This is 4.7 times what would be expected if the deaths were evenly experienced worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

And the situation is worsening. Taking just the period from January 2010 to July 2013, deaths from climate-related disasters in LDCs rose to a staggering 67 per cent of the world total, reaching 5.5 times the overall global per capita death rate due to climate-related disasters. For example, in 2011, East Africa experienced its worst drought in 60 years, claiming the lives of an estimated 50–100,000 people — more than half of them children under five.<sup>6</sup>

Climate disasters are expected to soar in coming decades, as sea level rises and storm

## The Least Developed Countries are experiencing the impacts of climate change first and worst

intensity increases. It's clear that LDCs are particularly exposed to climate-related disasters, so when such disasters hit, their inhabitants are far more likely to die. What is the international community doing to address this inequality?

### The NAPA Programme

The human harm posed by climatic changes is largely influenced by populations' adaptive

capacity. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines adaptive capacity as "the ability or potential of a system to respond successfully to climate variability and change, and includes adjustments in both behaviour and in resources and technologies."<sup>4</sup>

The key elements to such adaptive capacity include a stable and prosperous economy, good access to technology, clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for implementing adaptation activities, robust information dissemination systems, and equitable access to resources.<sup>7</sup> Many developing countries lack these elements, and their marginal populations (including Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities and children) are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts.

Over ten years ago, the UNFCCC prioritised LDCs for support through National Adaptation

Programmes of Action (NAPAs) because of their disproportionately high exposure to damaging climate change, and their low capacity to prepare for and recover from its impacts. NAPAs have provided the main avenue for translating global commitments to reduce vulnerability into tangible planning and action on the ground in the LDCs. Forty-nine LDCs have completed their NAPAs under the guidance of the UNFCCC,<sup>8</sup> identifying "urgent and immediate needs" for which further delay could increase vulnerability or drive up costs.<sup>9</sup>

Although constrained by barriers — including insufficient administrative capacity, funding shortages, limiting institutional structures, and the challenges of coordination across multiple focal points<sup>9</sup> — the NAPAs have used a variety of methods to capture social, economic and environmental vulnerability to climatic stresses and risks. They have involved different stakeholders, included various coping strategies, and integrated adaptation policies into national planning.

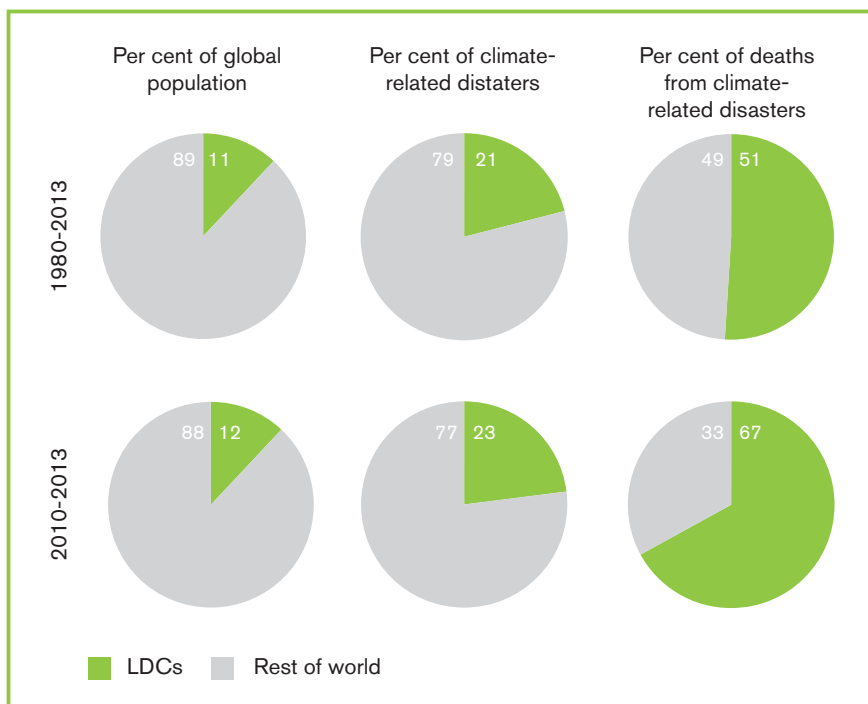
### Finance has been inadequate

Finance delivered from wealthy countries to enable vulnerable countries to adapt to climate change is far below what is needed. The United Nations Development Program, for example, has estimated global adaptation costs of US\$86–109 billion a year by 2015.<sup>10</sup> Despite this, wealthy countries have provided only US\$4 billion annually to support adaptation measures in vulnerable countries during the past three years.

Moreover, only a fraction of that funding is new and additional, as agreed in the UNFCCC. Rather, much is simply being diverted from other pressing development needs such as health and education.<sup>11</sup> Thus, wealthy countries have not fulfilled their obligation. The text of the 1992 UNFCCC makes clear that "The implementation of these [financial] commitments shall take into account the need for adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds and the importance of appropriate burden sharing among the developed country Parties".

This paucity of climate finance contrasts sharply with global defence spending, at more than US\$4.6 billion a day,<sup>12</sup> as well as national subsidies to fossil fuels, which may have been as high as US\$1 trillion in 2012 overall.<sup>13</sup> Although the global economic recession may have contributed to tightened national budgets, clearly old-paradigm values have still maintained high levels of funding, while climate change finance has not been made a priority.

Figure 1. Unequal vulnerability in numbers



## The most vulnerable are neglected

Since the Bali conference in 2007, UNFCCC negotiations have said the needs of the particularly vulnerable, including LDCs, the Africa Group and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), should be prioritised.

Due to a lack of transparency in climate finance, it is very difficult to assess how contributors to international climate finance take vulnerability into account, but there is one indicator: the most urgent and immediate adaptation needs identified by LDCs in their NAPAs. These require an estimated US\$5 billion to be contributed to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) (see Table 1).<sup>14</sup> Yet just over a decade since the NAPA programme began, only US\$679 million has been paid to the fund (see Table 2). These paid funds represent only two per cent of the total 'fast-start finance' agreed for developing countries at Copenhagen in 2009.<sup>15</sup>

## Least Developed Country demands

Climate finance, particularly for adaptation, has been an important issue for the LDC Group in the UNFCCC negotiations — unsurprisingly, given that these countries are already facing the brunt of climate impacts, yet have the least capacity to adapt. Their experiences with the LDCF have not engendered trust or confidence that the global community is taking sufficient heed of their predicament.

The LDC Group has made several submissions and interventions related to climate finance since the previous climate negotiations. They cover the following issues:

**Fully fund NAPAs.** The remaining US\$4.22 billion needed for NAPA implementation should be provided immediately to address urgent needs in LDCs. The LDC Group is also calling for greater transparency from the LDCF and the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the institution operating the fund, and for phased funding for NAPAs.

**Provide adequate and additional finance.** The agreed principles that climate finance should be additional and adequate must become reality. Climate finance by developed countries should be new and additional to their existing commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to development assistance.<sup>16</sup>

**Ensure funding is predictable and sustainable.** Developed countries must commit to a projected pathway of climate finance between now and 2020, to provide the urgently

**Table 1. Funding levels of the Least Developed Countries Fund**

	US\$ million
Total cost of funding NAPAs (including additional support or co-financing from LDCs)*	5,000
Total contribution needed to implement initial set of NAPA projects (excluding co-financing from LDCs)*	3,000
Amount pledged to LDCF**	779.50
Amount paid to LDCF***	679.33
Finance gap for implementing NAPA projects	4,220.50
Amount disbursed (as of October 2013)**	628.15

\* from Climate and Development Lab personal communication with GEF Secretariat, March 2013.

\*\* from GEF status report on the LDCF, October 2013<sup>18</sup>

\*\*\*The World Bank Group LDCF Financial Report, September 2013<sup>19</sup>

**Table 2. Individual country paid contributions to the Least Developed Countries Fund**

Country	Contributions to LDCF (millions of US\$)*
<b>Australia</b>	42.97
<b>Canada</b>	27.36
<b>European Union</b>	485.44
Austria	0.58
Belgium	34.03
Czech Republic	0.03
Denmark	30.23
Finland	24.46
France	14.62
Germany	140.17
Hungary	1.34
Ireland	14.00
Italy	1.00
Luxembourg	5.70
Netherlands	75.27
Portugal	0.06
Romania	0.21
Slovenia	Not specified
Spain	1.77
Sweden	75.94
United Kingdom	66.03
<b>Iceland</b>	0.28
<b>Japan</b>	0.25
<b>New Zealand</b>	5.81
<b>Norway</b>	28.75
<b>Switzerland</b>	8.46
<b>United States</b>	80.00
<b>Total contributions from all parties</b>	<b>679.33</b>

\*LDCF contributions data comes from The World Bank Group LDCF Financial Report, September 2013<sup>19</sup>

needed clarity on sources and channels to be used as this will ensure predictability and reliability to enable developing countries to plan their actions. Developed countries should also make substantive pledges to the Green Climate Fund so it becomes operational.

**Support adaptation.** Developed countries should commit to allocate at least 50 per cent of climate finance for adaptation.

**Improve disbursement practices.** Even when funds have been provided, disbursement practices have hindered access. UNFCCC parties have many times discussed calls to improve these disbursement practices. The GEF has taken on board some of the suggestions — for instance, to reduce the time taken to process and approve projects. LDCs saw some progress with their project proposals in 2009 and 2010, but many challenges remain. Over the past two years, despite supposed improvements in the process, the LDCs have continued to face problems in getting their project proposals accepted into the GEF project cycle, because of the level of detailed information that is required, burdensome co-financing requirements or other political reasons. More fundamental change is needed, such as eliminating co-financing requirements, which cause a significant financial

burden to LDCs in their efforts to adapt to climate impacts.

**Prioritise the most vulnerable.** The needs of LDCs, a particularly vulnerable group (along with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and the Africa Group),<sup>17</sup> should be prioritised in fund allocation. The LDC group has argued that 70 per cent of the adaptation financing be allocated for LDCs.

The UNFCCC negotiations in Warsaw are an opportunity to make strong progress on some core equity issues, and most importantly full funding for the NAPA programme. The burden of rectifying the unequal impacts of climate change should be shouldered by those most responsible for causing the problem, and most capable of addressing it.

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## Knowledge Products

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This briefing has been produced with the generous support of Danida (Denmark), Irish Aid and Sida (Sweden).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Core Writing Team, Pachauri R.K., Reisinger, A. (eds). 2007. *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press. / <sup>2</sup> Solomon S. et al. (eds). 2007. *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press. / <sup>3</sup> Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies. 2010. A Review and Synthesis of National Adaptation Programme of Action prepared by LDCs. / <sup>4</sup> Nicholls R.J. et al. In: Parry M.L. et al. (eds) *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp 315–356. / <sup>5</sup> All statistics here are based on calculations by the Brown University Climate and Development Lab, 2013, based on CRED-EMDAT database. Data on LDCs are for the 44 of 49 LDCs included in the CRED-EMDAT database. / <sup>6</sup> East Africa's drought: the avoidable disaster. 17 January 2012. *The Guardian*. / <sup>7</sup> IPCC. 2001. *Climate Change 2001: Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. See: [www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg2/index.php?idp=653](http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg2/index.php?idp=653). / <sup>8</sup> 49 out of 50 LDCs that received financial support completed their NAPAs, including Cape Verde and the Maldives, which graduated from the LDC category in 2007 and 2011, respectively. Source: UNFCCC. / <sup>9</sup> Least Developed Countries Expert Group. 2002. *Annotated Guidelines for the Preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action*. UNFCCC, Bonn. / <sup>10</sup> Indeed, a 2012 report by Oxfam International estimates that only 33 per cent of FSF can be considered new — the rest was meeting pledges from before the Copenhagen conference — and at most only 24 per cent was additional to existing aid promises. Oxfam International. 2012. *The climate 'fiscal cliff': an evaluation of Fast Start Finance and lessons for the future*. See: [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org) / <sup>11</sup> UNDP. 2007. *Human Development Report 2007/08*. p.109. <http://hdr.undp.org/> / <sup>12</sup> Ki-moon, B. 2012. Time to explode the myth that nuclear weapons bring security. *The Nation*, Bangkok, Thailand. See: [www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Time-to-explode-the-myth-that-nuclear-weapons-brin-30189402](http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Time-to-explode-the-myth-that-nuclear-weapons-brin-30189402) / <sup>13</sup> Oil Change International. 2012. *No Time to Waste: The Urgent Need for Transparency in Fossil Fuel Subsidies*. <http://priceofoil.org/> / <sup>14</sup> Climate and Development Lab communication with GEF Secretariat, March 2013. We have included the full costs of implementing NAPAs, which the LDCs argue should be supported in full by wealthy countries, without a co-financing requirement. / <sup>15</sup> As a percentage of \$33.27 billion, as represented in Ciptet, D. et al. 2013. *Least Developed, Most Vulnerable*. The European Capacity Building Initiative. / <sup>16</sup> United Nations. 2002. *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development*. Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002. See: [www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdconf/](http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdconf/) / <sup>17</sup> Relevant UNFCCC decisions include: CP.13 1. (i); CP.16 II (11); and CP. 16 IV (a) 95. / <sup>18</sup> See: GEF. 2013. *Progress Report for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund*. See: [www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF-LDCF.SCCF\\_15-03,%20Progress%20Report%20on%20the%20LDCF%20and%20the%20SCCF;%20DRAFT%206,%202013-10-10.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/GEF-LDCF.SCCF_15-03,%20Progress%20Report%20on%20the%20LDCF%20and%20the%20SCCF;%20DRAFT%206,%202013-10-10.pdf) / <sup>19</sup> World Bank Group. 2013. *LDCF Financial Report, September 30, 2013*. See: [www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/DRAFT%20LDCF%20Trustee%20Report%20-%20September%2030,%202013%20-%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/DRAFT%20LDCF%20Trustee%20Report%20-%20September%2030,%202013%20-%20FINAL.pdf)