

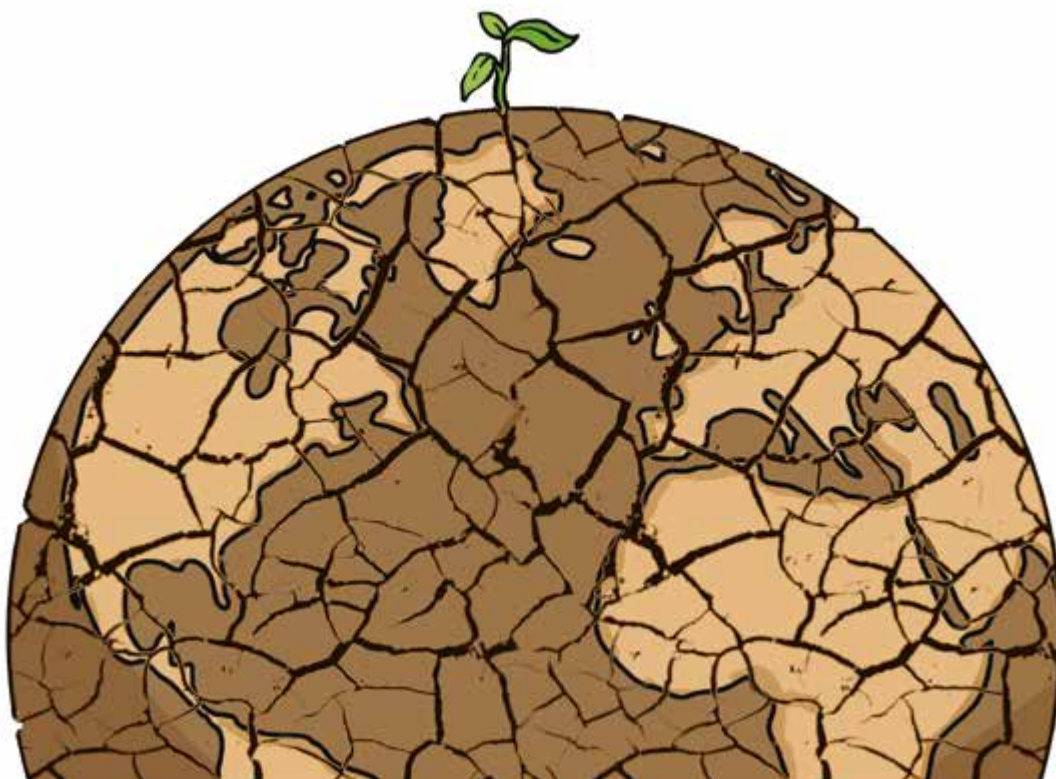


ADAPTATION GOAL

Even after eight Glasgow Sharm El-Sheikh (GlaSS) workshops on the Global Goal for Adaptation (GGA), adoption of the GGA framework at COP 28 may be tricky

The GGA framework has to be in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities

Grant-based contributions for adaptation finance, especially to the Adaptation Fund, from developed countries have to increase by many times to reduce the Adaptation Finance Gap



What is adaptation and why is it necessary?

It is now clearer than ever that the world will have to adapt to changing climate. It is not enough to only talk about mitigation because extreme weather events are happening with such rapidity and force that countries and people must find ways of coping with and managing the fallout of the calamities.

Article 7 of the Paris Agreement establishes a Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) of “enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.” The core components of GGA are interconnected and overlapping. Their progress will be assessed every five years under the Paris Agreement’s Article 14, Global Stocktake (GST).

Under the GGA, countries must develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which would identify activities that need support. These are then recorded in a public registry by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In April 2021, the Adaptation Committee, set up under UNFCCC, brought out a technical paper on how it would review the overall progress made in achieving the GGA. It details the many challenges of doing this at the global and national levels.¹

The fact is there is no clear definition of what the world means by “adaptation” and perhaps there can never be. This is why the work of the Adaptation Committee is becoming highly technical, so much so that it will be difficult for countries to apply this on the ground to measure impacts and monitor the programmes for implementation.

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS ARE HAPPENING WITH SUCH RAPIDITY AND FORCE THAT COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE MUST FIND WAYS OF COPING WITH AND MANAGING THE FALLOUT OF THE CALAMITIES

Adaptation at COP 26

At COP 26 in Glasgow, the two-year comprehensive Glasgow Sharm El-Sheikh (GLaSS) Work Programme on the GGA was established. COP 26 also urged developed nations to double their provision for adaptation finance.

GLaSS: First workshop

The first workshop under GLaSS on “Enhancing understanding of the Global Goal on Adaptation and reviewing progress towards it” was organized on 8 and 9 June 2022. Relevant examples of targets and goals at different levels were discussed by participants: Canada uses 200 different indicators to assess progress on adaptation action. While 21 of these are at the national level, the rest are at the regional and local levels. EU has instituted an adaptation preparedness scoreboard and its adaptation goal is to become resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050. Tunisia’s nationally determined commitment (NDC)



integrates gender, land-use planning and natural disaster risk reduction. The UK's measurement framework is in the form of a grid, with one axis showing the quality of planning and the other indicating outcomes.²

Some of the participants pointed out goals used under other processes such as reduction of global mortality from natural disasters under the Sendai Framework and the Feminist Action for Climate Justice which aims to increase the percentage of global climate finance flows. This would include a 65 per cent increase in the promotion of gender-responsive bilateral and multilateral climate finance by 2026.

GLaSS: Second and third workshops

The second workshop under GlaSS on “Enhancing Adaptation Action and Support” was held on 30 and 31 August 2022. Participants discussed enabling conditions such as institutional frameworks and governance, including the private sector. They also identified gaps in adaptation support, especially finance, and discussed how to fill them.³

In September 2022, the UNFCCC secretariat released a technical paper on GGA, building on the earlier technical paper by the Adaptation Committee based on the inputs given by various UN-related agencies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Agenda for Sustainable Development, etc.

This paper synthesized indicators, approaches, targets and metrics that could be relevant for reviewing overall progress towards achieving the GGA. It also offered possible lines of questioning for future consideration on the topic. These were taken up at the third workshop under GlaSS held on 17 and 18 October.⁴

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Adaptation at COP 27 and beyond

At COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, the **fourth workshop** under GlaSS was held but countries could not arrive at a consensus on a target for the GGA. Then in the final COP 27 decision text on GGA, countries decided on the establishment of a framework for GGA. The framework was to have a structured approach based on the adaptation cycle.

The structured approach further involved a categorization into dimensions such as impacts and vulnerability assessments; support in terms of finance, capacity building and technology transfer; themes such as water and cities, tangible cultural heritage, mountain regions and biodiversity; cross-cutting considerations such as country and gender responsiveness; science-based indicators and metrics; and various sources of information.

The adaptation cycle generally involves the following:

1. Preparing the ground for adaptation
2. Assessing risks and vulnerabilities to climate change
3. Identifying adaptation options
4. Assessing adaptation options
5. Implementation
6. Monitoring and evaluation

The themes are the following:

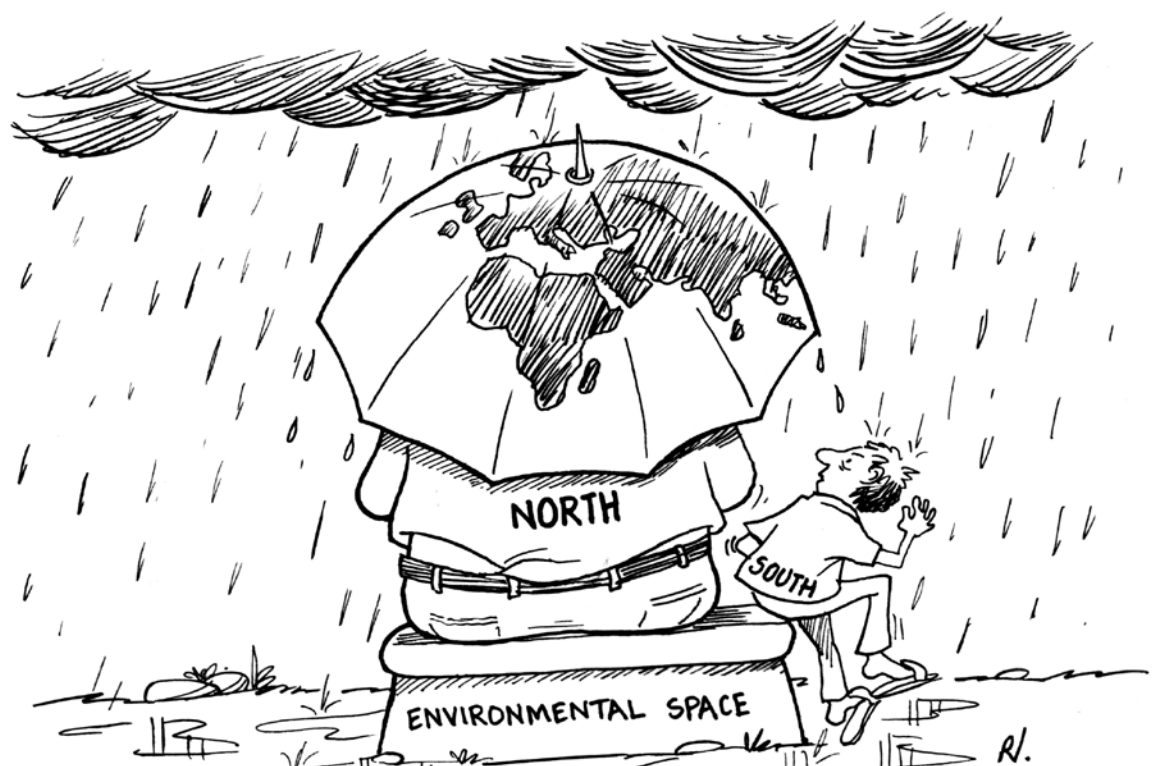
- Freshwater
- Food systems
- Forests
- Biodiversity
- Ocean and coastal systems
- Local communities and livelihoods
- Infrastructure
- Health
- Cities and informal settlements
- Mountains and cryosphere
- Poverty
- Culture and heritage

In the four GLaSS workshops conducted in 2023, representatives discussed all these aspects of the GGA framework.

GLaSS: Sixth workshop

At the sixth workshop that was held on the sidelines of SB 58, the mid-year climate conference of the UNFCCC, country representatives discussed timelines for targets—short-term (2030), medium-term (2040) and long-term (2050). They also discussed quantitative and qualitative targets under the GGA framework.

An example of a quantitative target could be an estimation of the number of people at risk from climate change and bringing down this number over the short, medium and long terms. For instance, IPCC estimates that around 3.3 to 3.6 billion people are highly vulnerable to climate change. A target could be to bring down this number to 2 billion by the seventh assessment cycle of the IPCC which has already started.



A qualitative target could be based on the assessment of the extent to which countries have achieved the top five adaptation priorities listed in their NAPs.

In the informal consultations at SB 58, the GGA framework was still not completely clear to the country representatives, especially regarding if and how it would inform the GST process. Enough information is not getting aggregated from the framework to be able to arrive at a target for policymakers. These confusions remained unsolved in the seventh and eighth GLaSS workshops as well.

GLaSS: Seventh and eighth workshops

At the seventh and eighth GLaSS workshops for GGA, country representatives further detailed the nitty-gritty of the framework which is to be adopted at COP 28.

The seventh workshop was dedicated to the definition of targets, indicators for those targets and metrics for their assessment; the relationship of the GGA to the GST; international cooperation; and the general structure of the framework for GGA. The countries discussed 26 different targets that were submitted by parties at the SB 58 session and at the opening plenary of the seventh workshop.

The targets spanned various aspects of adaptation such as early warning systems for reducing risk from extreme weather events, achievement of NAP priorities, reduced exposure to climate risks, progress on the implementation of adaptation actions, and access to means of implementation such as finance, technology and monitoring and evaluation systems.

The parties also discussed the different attributes that can be given to these targets, such as whether each of them was ambitious, equitable, measurable, realistic and transformational. They worked on bringing together many of these targets and making them more specific. But many challenges emanated from these discussions such as the lack of shared understanding of the attributes that were being used.

Many parties suggested using a different set of attributes or criteria to categorize the targets. Some parties were also

reluctant to assign any attributes at all so that they are not "locked in" to a limited set of targets or perceived as agreeing to certain attributes of targets such as "transformational". Further, countries also discussed development of indicators for these targets and overarching targets or high-level targets but there was not a lot agreement on these aspects as well.

Challenges remained on methodological questions such as how to assess targets when things are in flux and in the absence of baselines; standardization of what qualifies as adaptation considering different national circumstances; and ensuring that targets do not lead to additional burdens on countries.

In terms of the inter-relationship between GGA and GST, the parties were still not sure about how the GGA would inform the ongoing process which is to conclude at COP 28 or the GST process which would take place for the next five years. The participants were interested in how the GGA framework can enhance international cooperation on adaptation, in the role that international cooperation can play in the operationalization of the GGA, and in how transboundary issues can be considered under the GGA.

One of the conclusions of the seventh workshop was: "In terms of the design of the GGA framework, the attributes that participants wish to see are that it be guided by the principles of the Convention; that it is focused on people, the economy and ecosystems; and that it guides future GSTs. One participant reiterated their preference for the structure of the GGA framework to comprise purpose, principles, political messages, targets, cross-cutting considerations, action and support, indicators and sources of information."

In the eighth and final GlaSS workshop for GGA, the parties continued their discussions on defining overarching and specific targets based on dimensions and themes.

THE ANNUAL ADAPTATION COSTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ALONE ARE CURRENTLY ESTIMATED TO REACH THE UPPER RANGE OF US \$140-300 BILLION BY 2030

The overarching targets were kept around specific aspects of adaptation action, such as 1) access to climate services and transformational adaptation; 2) consideration of justice and equity, 3) adaptation finance; and 4) linking to the temperature goal under the Paris Agreement—keeping the global average temperature rise to below 1.5 °C (ambition) or 2 °C.

The specific national level targets were kept around the implementation of the adaptation policy cycle but there were still divergent views on whether there should be targets for each step of the cycle and the number of targets for each step. To further muddle the development of the framework to be operationalized at COP 28, more targets were proposed at the eighth workshop. There were also wide-ranging discussions on the means of implementation for taking adaptation actions.

Several parties raised the concern that “insufficient consideration of means of implementation as a standalone element of the GGA framework without clear links to the other elements of the framework would result in an empty framework, leaving parties without the tools to achieve the GGA, with developing countries, in particular, losing out.”

It was thus suggested that means of implementation should be uniform across the GGA framework. Some other parties suggested that targets related to means of implementation should not be included under the GGA framework.

One group of countries proposed the following target under the means of implementation: “By 2030, achieve funding of at least 80 per cent of expressed needs by developing countries, within their nationally determined contributions, NAPs, or other nationally identified programmes and projects, with the quantum of adaptation finance reaching at least USD 400 billion per annum by 2030, and achieving 50 per cent adaptation finance of the total share of the total flows of finance to developing countries.”

Other parties did not agree on these numbers for the targets even though the proponents said that this came from the United Nations Environment Programme’s Adaptation Gap report.

Overall, even after eight GLaSS workshops for the GGA, much work still needs to be done in terms of operationalization of the framework for GGA, its linkages to the GST and the means of implementation within the GGA framework.

GGA framework and adaptation finance

Under the operationalization of the framework, much work remains on developing technical indicators for targets, guidance and training, exchange of knowledge, assessment of progress towards the GGA, review of the framework of the GGA and overseeing the future work on GGA.

All these discussions were not negotiations so all these aspects would be further negotiated at COP 28. New ways of looking at the GGA framework could help resolve this issue.

A research paper published in the journal *Nature Communications* in August 2023 details a framework to judge an adaptive action—whether it is an example of good adaptation or maladaptation or adaptation with negative



consequences.⁵ Researchers called it the Navigating the Adaptation and Maladaptation (NAM) continuum framework.

This framework is composed of six criteria relating to outcomes of adaptation for 1) ecosystems, 2) climate (greenhouse gas emissions) and 3) social systems (transformational potential), as well as equity-related outcomes for 4) low-income populations, 5) women/girls and 6) marginalized ethnic groups. The study also assessed various representative adaptation options and showed that a considerable difference exists between potential for adaptation with positive consequences and the risks associated with maladaptation. Such a systemic approach to the GGA framework could reduce maladaptation and bring to the fore the right adaptation options.

But the real issue—the endangered elephant in the room—is finance, or the lack of it. The cost of building resilience against weather-related devastation is massive; it needs revamping of existing infrastructure to withstand storms and floods; building of advanced forecasting and early warning systems for cyclones and extreme weather events; and then, of course, development with speed to build resilience. This will need huge investment, not just in research but also in supporting communities when disasters hit. We know that disasters are not single-day events; they cripple local economies and take away the development dividend.

The latest *Adaptation Gap Report*, released by UNEP in November 2023, states that the adaptation finance gap is not closing—not by a long shot. The annual adaptation costs in developing countries alone are currently estimated to reach the upper range of US \$215–387 billion per year by 2030 and \$280–500 billion by 2050.⁶ This is possibly a gross underestimation of the costs which countries are already incurring with increased frequency of extreme weather events. The adaptation finance gap—which is the difference between estimated adaptation finance and actual finance being made available—stands within a staggering range of US \$194 billion to \$366 billion. This is 10–18 times the actual finance flows to the countries and 50 per cent more than the earlier estimate.

The Adaptation Fund, which was set up 2001 to fund projects in developing countries, was financed with a share of the proceeds from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), established under the Kyoto Protocol. With CDM now dormant and defunct, the Fund, though little, continues to be in operation under the Paris Agreement.

At COP 26, countries pledged additional finances of US \$350 million for the Adaptation Fund and it was also decided that around 5 per cent of the proceeds from the international carbon market mechanism under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement would go towards adaptation finance. But these were woefully inadequate.

At COP 27, an even lower sum of US \$230 million was promised. More needs to be done on finance for adaptation. To add to this, developed countries have been blocking the inclusion of finance under the GGA framework and in its linkages to the GST. This became clear during the negotiations at SB 58 on GGA and also in the seventh and eighth GlaSS workshops.

What has to happen at COP 28 regarding the Global Goal on Adaptation?

- The development and operationalization of the GGA framework to be adopted at COP 28 should be in line with the principles of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement which includes the essential principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities (CBDR-RC).
- Means of implementation—which means finance, technology and capacity building—should be mainstreamed across the various targets of the GGA and its linkages to the GST.
- The overarching targets under the GGA should be aligned with the temperature goals of 1.5 °C and 2 °C. They should keep people, and ecosystems at their core.
- Definitions of targets under the GGA need to be made clearer for policymakers, implementation agencies and communities vulnerable to climate risks.

ADAPTATION GOAL

- National Adaptation Plans need to be made the primary instrument to assess adaptation progress and these should be revised periodically to meet future risks.
- The adaptation finance gap needs to be reduced largely through more contributions coming in from developed countries.
- The GST process should inform the GGA so that further enhancement of adaptation action can be ensured for developing countries.

The issue of adaptation—the goal to make the world less vulnerable and more resilient—needs to be addressed urgently. This is the real agenda for the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28).



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COP28

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FACTSHEET

ARTICLE 6 OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

While the negotiation carves out further guidance on Article 6, bilateral deals between countries are making Article 6 operational.

Parties need infrastructure and institutional capacities to understand the opportunity cost of trading mitigation outcomes

Non-market approaches under Article 6 are equally important and require more attention than they currently receive




FACTSHEET

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FACTSHEET

CLIMATE FINANCE

In 2009, developed countries committed to providing US \$100 billion in climate finance per year to developing countries from 2020. In 2021, the total climate finance provided by them stood at US \$89.6 billion according to OECD.

Progress on deciding a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance by 2025 is slow. Developing countries hope to see discussions on the quality of finance at COP 28.




FACTSHEET

MITIGATION

Climate change mitigation is achieved by limiting or preventing GHG emissions and by enhancing activities that remove these gases from atmosphere.

Current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are insufficient, with estimates suggesting a temperature rise between 2.1 to 4.0C by 2030 if these pledges are implemented.

Shifting to a low-emission energy mix, tripling renewable energy capacity, and phasing down fossil fuels require addressing regional imbalances, redirecting financial flows to underserved regions, and incentivizing renewable adoption in developing nations.




FACTSHEET

METHANE IS ALL THE TALK ACCOMPANIED BY A WALK?

The Global Methane Pledge, announced in 2021, has now been signed by 149 countries. Many countries have announced methane policies, but they lack depth and specificity, and reporting rigour.

Oil and gas companies have set methane intensity targets but continue to expand production.




FACTSHEET

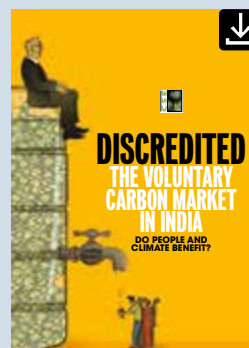
LOSS AND DAMAGE

Estimations of economic, non-economic and ecological losses due to ongoing and future impacts of climate change are termed as loss and damage (L&D).

The world needs to provide L&D finance under the broader climate justice and equity framework.



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Centre for Science and Environment

41, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 062

Phones: 91-11-40616000 Fax: 91-11-29955879

E-mail: cseindia@cseindia.org Website: www.cseindia.org