



Climate Loss and Damage? Perspectives on the science and policy debate

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With impacts from climate change observed on all continents and in all oceanic systems, climate adaptation is seeing a lot of emphasis. At the same time, there is concern (however, limited evidence) that a number of systems are seeing limits to adaptation requiring a different set of responses. There is growing discussion around the need to address 'Loss and Damage' from climate change. Yet so far, discussions have largely remained political. Whilst some welcome new mechanisms to address Loss and Damage under the UN Climate Convention (UNFCCC) as an opportunity to consider the challenges of high-level risks, and to integrate existing efforts under adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian work, there are difficult questions associated with Loss and Damage debates around who should pay for impacts and risks from climate change, making progress challenging in the policy arena. A number of promising avenues exist to move from political debate towards practical actions to address Loss and Damage 'on the ground.' The need to work towards solutions ranging from incremental to transformational has been also recognized in debate on the issue. Recently a working group under the UNFCCC Loss and Damage Mechanism has been set up on 'Comprehensive risk management and transformational approaches,' which will be composed of negotiators, researchers and policy analysts.

The talk traces ongoing debate and presents key findings from a recent book publication.

- Evidence shows that soft and hard adaptation limits are close to or already being breached in diverse locations globally signalling urgency for the Paris ambition to strongly cut emissions.
- Climate attribution research is advancing rapidly. For many hazardous weather events around the world, it is now possible to estimate whether and how much climate change influenced their frequency or magnitude. Combined with research on vulnerability and exposure, attribution science has significant potential to inform assessment of climate risks and associated losses.
- Risk-analytics are of fundamental importance. If linked to equity considerations, a distinct risk and options space can be identified for the debate opening doors for policy formulation and implementation.
- Anticipatory and reactive action on Loss and Damage is already visible across many geographies. Action should more clearly delineate the boundaries between adaptation, DRR and Loss and Damage.