COP20: Informal Meeting on Loss and Damage

While the twentieth Conference of the Parties (COP) was underway in Lima, ICCCAD launched an informal meeting to gather researchers and practitioners working on loss and damage to discuss their research. The purpose of the meeting was to build a larger network of individuals currently working on the issue from around the world. In total the event brought together 32 individuals from around the world with the majority of individuals representing the Asia Pacific that has now become the leading region in the world on loss and damage research.

Dr. Saleemul Huq introduced the informal session by describing the historical significance of loss and damage in the negotiations. Explaining that was introduced by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) back when the negotiations first began, he mentioned that it was a term that was pushed aside until more recently. Specifically since Cancun and Durban when a longer workplan was established and regional workshops began to take place. Dr. Huq also explained the first large scale project the Climate Development and Knowledge Network (CDKN) funded on loss and damage for which his centre, the International Centre on Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), was part of the consortium of organizations conducting the research. Working alongside Germanwatch, United Nations University-Institute for Environmental and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and Munich Climate Insurance Initiative (MCII) to carry out this work, ICCCAD helped establish a series of working papers that have all been made available online. These papers can be found here: http://www.lossanddamage.net/

Dr. Huq concluded by commending the strong group of researchers and negotiators during the Doha and Warsaw round of negotiations that came up with a clear proposal for loss and damage. When the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group, African countries, AOSIS and the G77 plus China came together before Warsaw to set up the Warsaw International Mechanism on loss and damage (WIM), it was one of the first times a significant number of countries had prepared a mandate before the COP. Their efforts proved successful and now, as Dr. Huq rightly pointed out, researchers have a two year time frame to explore elements as stated in the workplan.

Ms. Erin Roberts then expanded on the process following the formation of the WIM. Established at COP 19 in Warsaw, the executive committee of the WIM has recently established the two-year workplan for which 150 inputs from civil society were considered. At Lima the composition of the Executive Committee was also decided upon for which groups have started nominating members so that the Committee can begin its duties under the two-year workplan.

Dr. Huq added that two important events were taking place on loss and damage at COP 20. One being the newly established workplan and the need to establish
the composition of the Executive Committee and the other to keep loss and damage in the text so as to be agreed upon in Paris – either as part of adaptation or separate. The discussion to separate loss and damage from adaptation has become an issue of contention.

Following the introductions, questions were raised on certain aspects of loss and damage at COP 20 namely:

- The importance for financing for loss and damage as separate from adaptation
- Contentions with the term compensation
- Aspects of gender in the WIM and specifically in the two-year workplan
- Timeline and strategy for success in implementing the workplan
- Importance of loss and damage in the agreement

Although time did not allow to get into discussions, overall there was discontentment on how negotiations were addressing loss and damage. In general, there seemed to be disagreement as to how the WIM would feed into the new agreement and whether this would lead to a successful outcome in Paris.

The purpose for this informal meeting in Lima was to gather feedback on what individuals have been doing in the field of loss and damage research. What was created following the meeting therefore was a compilation of individuals and their organizations and aspect of loss and damage they were currently pursuing or interested in pursuing in the future. Such information may be used to inform the secretariat as they begin to deconstruct components of the two-year workplan to advise and make recommendations to the COP for further action.

The link to the Google Document can be found here.

Mr. Harjeet Singh from ActionAid International responds to questions on compensation in the negotiations.