

Input on the impact of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on human rights

Submitted by STRENGTH Team (Strengthening Loss & Damage Response Capacity in the Global South)

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In the coastal region of Barisal, Bangladesh, the adverse impacts of climate change have inflicted profound loss and damage, significantly affecting the human rights and livelihoods of local communities. Through the lens of the STRENGTH project, spearheaded by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and Institute for Study and Development Worldwide (IFSD) and supported by IDRC Canada, a case study from Barisal, which lies in the Southern belt of Bangladesh, illustrates the tangible consequences of climate-induced disruptions, emphasizing the urgency of addressing these challenges. Farmers and fisherfolk in this vulnerable region have witnessed a decline in agricultural productivity and fishery yields due to changing climate patterns, exacerbating poverty and impacting basic needs such as food, education, and healthcare. While the case of Barisal is emblematic of broader challenges faced by coastal communities in Bangladesh, the STRENGTH project actively engages in policy advocacy, capacity building, and research, contributing to the development of comprehensive strategies that address the multidimensional impacts of climate change, with a focus on equity-based solutions and human rights considerations.

1. Please describe through concrete examples and stories the impacts of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights in your country. Please indicate whether the impact was exceptional or whether an example of many similarly situated cases. Please estimate the number of cases that may be similar in your country.

In the coastal region of Bangladesh, Barisal, the adverse effects of climate change, resulting in loss and damage, have profoundly impacted the full enjoyment of human rights for local communities. Through the lens of the STRENGTH project led by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), a case study illustrates the tangible consequences of climate-induced loss and damage on people's daily lives.

Case Study: Livelihood Disruption in Barisal

In Barisal, a region highly vulnerable to climate change, a substantial number of households heavily depend on agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods. The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as cyclones and saline intrusion, have led to the degradation of arable land and freshwater sources, causing severe disruptions to traditional livelihoods.

Farmers and fisherfolk in Barisal, exemplifying the broader impact of loss and damage, have experienced a decline in agricultural productivity and fishery yields due to changing climate patterns. Saline water intrusion into arable land has made cultivation difficult, rendering previously fertile fields unproductive. Similarly, the intrusion of saltwater into freshwater bodies has depleted fish stocks, affecting the livelihoods of those dependent on fishing.

The loss and damage experienced by these communities extend beyond economic impacts. Families grappling with reduced agricultural output and fishing yields face challenges in meeting basic needs such as food, education, and healthcare. The deterioration of livelihoods in Barisal has led to increased poverty levels, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities within these communities.

The story of Barisal is not an isolated incident but rather emblematic of the broader challenges faced by numerous coastal communities in Bangladesh. Similar cases of loss and damage due to climate change are widespread, affecting the livelihoods and rights of countless individuals and families.

Policy Implications and the Role of STRENGTH:

In response to the loss and damage witnessed in Barisal and analogous regions, the STRENGTH project, supported by IDRC, actively engages in policy advocacy and capacity building. The case study informs policy discussions by highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive strategies that address the multidimensional impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

STRENGTH advocates for policies that not only focus on immediate relief but also prioritize long-term adaptation and resilience-building measures. By emphasizing the human rights dimensions of loss and damage, the project contributes to the development of policies that protect the livelihoods, dignity, and well-being of those affected in Barisal and similar regions.

Through capacity-building initiatives, STRENGTH ensures that local communities are equipped to actively participate in decision-making processes. By amplifying the voices of those directly affected by climate-induced loss and damage, the project empowers communities like those in Barisal to advocate for their rights, fostering a more inclusive and just response to the complex challenges posed by climate change.

2. Please describe any relevant quantitative and qualitative data as well as mechanisms and tools to measure, monitor, report on, and evaluate the impacts of loss and damage, including from extreme weather and slow-onset events, on the full enjoyment of human rights. Please

take into account, inter alia, the disproportionate effects on women and girls, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, persons living in poverty and others in vulnerable situations.

Quantifying and assessing the impacts of loss and damage, particularly from extreme weather and slow-onset events, on human rights in Bangladesh is a complex task, but initiatives like the STRENGTH project funded by IDRC provide valuable insights into measuring, monitoring, and evaluating these impacts.

Quantitative data collected by the STRENGTH project includes statistical information on the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as cyclones, floods, and droughts, which are prevalent in Bangladesh. This data helps in understanding the physical aspects of loss and damage, such as damage to infrastructure, agricultural losses, and health impacts, enabling a quantitative assessment of the direct consequences on various demographics.

Qualitative data gathered by the project includes narratives and testimonials from affected communities, shedding light on the socio-economic and human rights dimensions of economic and non-economic loss and damage. These stories capture the experiences of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, and those living in poverty. The qualitative data provides a nuanced understanding of how loss and damage affect different groups, emphasizing the lived experiences and human rights implications.

The STRENGTH project utilizes mechanisms and tools such as vulnerability assessments, participatory mapping, and community-based monitoring to engage with local communities. This ensures that the impacts of loss and damage are understood from the perspective of those most affected. The project employs a community-driven approach, allowing marginalized groups to actively contribute to the assessment of impacts, ensuring a more inclusive and accurate representation of the challenges faced.

ICCCAD, in handling the STRENGTH project, actively involves vulnerable communities in monitoring and reporting processes. Through community-based organizations and local partners, ICCCAD facilitates the collection of data on the differential impacts of loss and damage. This participatory approach ensures that the voices of women and girls, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, and those in poverty are heard and considered in the assessment and evaluation of impacts on human rights.

ICCCAD's work aligns with a rights-based approach, acknowledging that the impacts of loss and damage are not uniform and that certain groups face disproportionate challenges. The project contributes to building resilience by integrating human rights considerations into adaptation and

mitigation strategies, aiming to address the underlying vulnerabilities of marginalized communities in Bangladesh.

The STRENGTH project, employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as community-driven mechanisms and tools, to measure, monitor, report on, and evaluate the impacts of loss and damage on the full enjoyment of human rights in Bangladesh. By actively involving vulnerable communities, ICCCAD ensures a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the challenges faced by different demographic groups in the context of climate-induced loss and damage.

3. Please describe any specific measures, including public policies, legislation, practices, strategies, or institutional arrangements that your government has undertaken or plans to undertake at a national, sectoral or sub-national level, in compliance with applicable international human rights law, to avert, minimize and address loss and damage, including equity-based approaches and solutions. Please also identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability, including means of implementation.

Bangladesh, in alignment with the STRENGTH project managed by ICCCAD, has implemented and plans to undertake various measures, including policies, strategies, and institutional arrangements, to avert, minimize, and address loss and damage. These initiatives emphasize a holistic and rights-based approach, acknowledging the inevitability of loss and damage even with adaptation efforts. ICCCAD's active involvement in the STRENGTH project contributes to the effective implementation of these measures and enhances accountability through monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge exchange. Below are specific measures and approaches that Bangladesh has undertaken or plans to undertake:

Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP) 2022 – 2041:

The MCP, unveiled in 2023, is a comprehensive national strategy that emphasizes disaster resilience and includes a social protection program within the Mujib Comprehensive Climate and Disaster Risk Management and Finance Strategy. The MCP integrates social protection with climate and disaster risk management, addressing loss and damage through locally-led adaptation (LLA) hubs. The STRENGTH project, contributes to the MCP's objectives by supporting local empowerment and resilience through loss and damage finance and innovative solutions.

National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2030 – 2050:

The NAP, published in 2022, is a key policy document focusing on adaptation efforts. While primarily adaptation-focused, the NAP integrates elements related to loss and damage across various policy domains and goals. The STRENGTH project aligns with the NAP by emphasizing a holistic approach to address loss and damage, acknowledging its inevitability even with adaptation efforts. ICCCAD's work under the STRENGTH project contributes to mainstreaming loss and damage considerations into broader frameworks, ensuring a coordinated and rights-based approach.

Eighth Five-Year Plan (8FYP) 2020 – 2025:

The 8FYP, representing the first phase of Bangladesh's Perspective Plan 2041, is a comprehensive national plan that briefly mentions loss and damage. It outlines steps to address loss and damage by integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and establishing a policy body for knowledge exchange. STRENGTH make straight with the 8FYP by emphasizing comprehensive policy integration and facilitating knowledge exchange through its activities.

The Bangladesh government has established institutional arrangements to address loss and damage, and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), actively engages with these institutions. ICCCAD collaborates with national bodies, including the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), to integrate loss and damage considerations into policy frameworks. The project contributes to capacity building and expertise within these institutions, ensuring effective implementation of strategies. The STRENGTH project, with its focus on loss and damage, contributes to ensuring accountability in addressing climate impacts. ICCCAD, through the project, engages in monitoring and evaluation activities to assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies. This includes tracking the progress of locally-led adaptation initiatives, assessing their impact on vulnerable communities, and providing recommendations for continuous improvement. The project's accountability mechanisms aim to align with international human rights standards, ensuring that the rights of affected populations are upheld in the face of climate-induced loss and damage.

4. Please identify and share examples of promising practices and critical challenges in the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage, including examples that highlight multilateral cooperation and approaches, at global and regional levels, including equity-based approaches and solutions.

In the context of Bangladesh, several measures and initiatives have been undertaken or are in the planning stage at national, sectoral, and sub-national levels to address loss and damage while ensuring compliance with applicable international human rights law. These efforts align with equity-based approaches and solutions, reflecting the commitment to promoting sustainable development and climate justice. Additionally, the STRENGTH project, led by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and supported by IDRC Canada, contributes significantly to these endeavors.

Comprehensive Climate and Disaster Risk Management:

The Bangladesh government, aligned with the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP), has adopted a comprehensive climate and disaster risk management approach which aligns with the objectives of STRENGTH project. This strategy integrates social protection, capacity building, and dedicated financing mechanisms to address loss and damage. The emphasis on equity-based solutions ensures that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different communities within Bangladesh are recognized and addressed.

Capacity Building for Local Leadership:

Recognizing the importance of local empowerment, the STRENGTH project actively promotes capacity building for local leadership in Bangladesh. By unlocking the potential of communities through training and skill development, the project aims to empower them to effectively address loss and damage. This initiative aligns with the broader national strategies and policies that emphasize building resilience at the local level, especially in regions vulnerable to climate-induced impacts.

Challenges and Solutions: Despite these positive measures, certain challenges exist;

Implementation Timeframe:

One critical challenge is the limited timeframe for implementing measures outlined in policies such as the Eighth Five-Year Plan (8FYP). The STRENGTH project, recognizing the urgency, contributes to policy enhancement but faces the challenge of ensuring the swift and effective implementation of its initiatives.

Holistic Integration of Loss and Damage:

Policies like the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) integrate loss and damage, but challenges persist in fully acknowledging the inevitability of loss and damage despite adaptation efforts. The STRENGTH project addresses this challenge by advocating for a more holistic approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of adaptation, mitigation, and addressing loss and damage.

Enhancement of Policy Discourse:

A continuous challenge is the ongoing enhancement and fortification of the loss and damage discourse within the policy landscape of Bangladesh. The STRENGTH project actively contributes to research, policy advocacy, and capacity building, but sustained efforts are required to ensure that loss and damage policies continually evolve to effectively address the multilayered challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

Bangladesh actively engages in multilateral cooperation at global and regional levels, aligning with equity-based solutions to address loss and damage. The country participates in international climate agreements, such as the UNFCCC, advocating for comprehensive policies that integrate equity considerations. Bangladesh contributes to and benefits from the Green Climate Fund, emphasizing the importance of financial assistance for vulnerable nations. Regionally, collaboration within SAARC highlights shared responsibilities in disaster risk reduction. Globally, Bangladesh advocates for climate justice, emphasizing the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable nations and calling for fair resource distribution. The country actively supports other vulnerable nations, engaging in diplomatic efforts to address their specific needs. Bangladesh also emphasizes the integration of local perspectives in global policies, contributing insights from initiatives like the STRENGTH project. Overall, Bangladesh's commitment transcends national borders, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable global response to the challenges of loss and damage.

5. Please provide specific recommendations, if possible, on how to address the critical challenges that have been identified, including actions to be taken at country, regional, and global levels, as well as by different groups of stakeholders, Governments, development agencies, financing institutions, and others.

Addressing the critical challenges related to loss and damage in Bangladesh, particularly within the context of the STRENGTH project, requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Firstly, at the country level, the government, with insights from ICCCAD's STRENGTH project, should expedite the implementation of measures outlined in policies like the Eighth Five-Year Plan (8FYP). Timely execution is crucial to address the urgency of loss and damage issues. Moreover, there is a need for a more holistic integration of loss and damage within national policies, acknowledging the inevitability of certain impacts despite adaptation efforts, and the STRENGTH project can actively contribute to fostering this approach.

Regionally, Bangladesh, in collaboration with neighboring countries through platforms like SAARC, should strengthen regional initiatives on disaster risk reduction. This involves sharing best practices, coordinating early warning systems, and collectively addressing climate-related challenges. At the global level, Bangladesh, supported by ICCCAD's STRENGTH project, can

continue advocating for equity-based solutions and a fair distribution of responsibilities in international forums. This includes active participation in climate agreements and efforts to integrate local perspectives into global policies.

Different groups of stakeholders, including governments, development agencies, and financing institutions, should prioritize the implementation of equity-based measures. ICCCAD, through the STRENGTH project, can play a pivotal role in engaging with these stakeholders, facilitating knowledge exchange, and advocating for the activation of loss and damage funding. The project's emphasis on capacity building and local empowerment should guide development agencies and financing institutions in tailoring interventions to the specific needs of vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, fostering collaboration and information sharing among various stakeholders is essential. ICCCAD, with its expertise in the STRENGTH project, can facilitate dialogue between governments, NGOs, community representatives, and international organizations. This collaboration can enhance the effectiveness of initiatives, ensure transparency, and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

To sum up, addressing critical challenges related to loss and damage in Bangladesh, aligned with the STRENGTH project, requires immediate action at the country level, enhanced regional collaboration, and sustained global advocacy for equity-based solutions. ICCCAD's role in knowledge dissemination, capacity building, and policy advocacy is crucial in guiding stakeholders toward a more effective and inclusive approach to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

6. Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action and justice that promotes the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage.

In the context of Bangladesh, additional efforts to support climate action and justice, aligned with the STRENGTH project led by ICCCAD, can further enhance the full enjoyment of human rights in the context of loss and damage:

1. **Community-Centric Approaches:** The STRENGTH project, recognizing the significance of community perspectives, should continue advocating for policies that prioritize community engagement and empowerment. Ensuring the active involvement of local communities in decision-making processes, especially regarding loss and damage, can lead to more effective and culturally sensitive interventions. This community-centric approach contributes to the fulfillment of human rights by respecting the dignity and agency of affected populations.

2. Inclusive Research and Data Collection: ICCCAD, within the STRENGTH project, should emphasize inclusive research methodologies that capture the diverse experiences of vulnerable communities. Integrating local knowledge and understanding the nuanced impacts of loss and damage on different groups, including women, children, and indigenous communities, is crucial. This data-driven approach informs evidence-based policies and ensures that human rights considerations are central to climate action.

3. Gender-Responsive Strategies: Building on the STRENGTH project's commitment to a value-based approach, there should be a specific focus on gender-responsive strategies. Recognizing the differentiated impacts of loss and damage on men and women and promoting gender equality in adaptation and mitigation efforts aligns with human rights principles. ICCCAD can advocate for policies that address the unique vulnerabilities and capacities of both genders within the context of climate-induced impacts.

4. Education and Awareness: ICCCAD, through the STRENGTH project, can play a pivotal role in enhancing public awareness and education on climate change, loss and damage, and human rights. By conducting outreach programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns, the project can empower communities to understand their rights, advocate for their needs, and actively participate in shaping climate policies. Education is a key tool for promoting climate justice and ensuring that vulnerable populations are informed and engaged.

5. Policy Advocacy for Legal Protections: ICCCAD can engage in policy advocacy to strengthen legal protections for those vulnerable to loss and damage. This involves working with the government and relevant stakeholders to develop and enforce policies that explicitly recognize and protect the human rights of communities affected by climate change. By establishing legal frameworks that address the specific challenges of loss and damage, Bangladesh can contribute to a just and rights-based response to climate impacts.

6. International Collaboration on Capacity Building: The STRENGTH project, in collaboration with international partners, can enhance capacity-building initiatives. This includes knowledge exchange programs, training sessions, and skill development opportunities for local communities, policymakers, and practitioners. Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders at various levels ensures a more effective and coordinated response to loss and damage, aligning with the principles of climate justice and human rights.

By integrating these additional considerations into the STRENGTH project's activities, ICCCAD can contribute to a more robust and rights-based approach to addressing loss and damage in Bangladesh. These efforts not only support climate action but also foster climate justice by placing human rights at the forefront of policy and intervention strategies.