

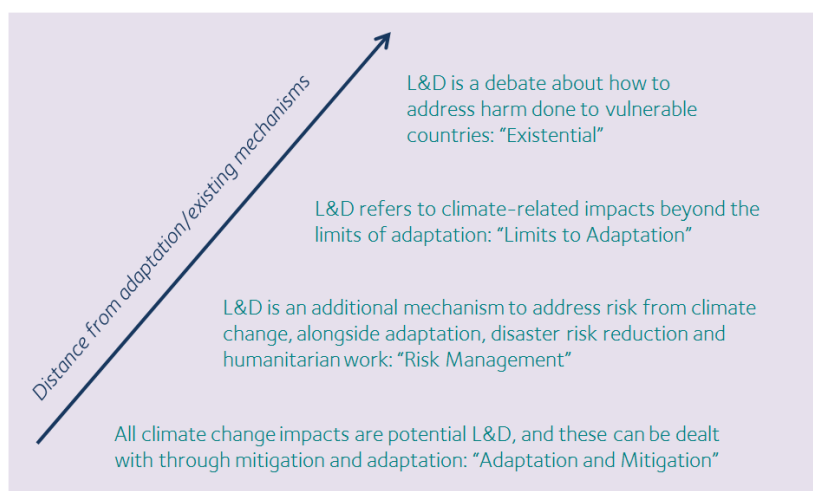
# Typologies of Loss and Damage and Associated Actions

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Loss and Damage (L&D) has emerged as a key area in international climate policy with actions to address L&D being developed under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Developing this policy and related actions is relevant to a wide range of stakeholders who express a range of perspectives on L&D. In support of these developments, this policy brief presents typologies of L&D to increase awareness of these perspectives and actions associated with them. The typologies result from an in depth social science research study including interviews with approximately 40 key stakeholders. The brief has been revised following very helpful discussions at the third meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts.

## Key Messages

- Perspectives on L&D vary in terms of the distinction between L&D and adaptation, the emphasis on climate change, the relative focus on preventing L&D versus actions to address L&D once it has occurred, the role of finance, and the emphasis on justice.
- There is a spectrum of viewpoints on L&D, from the perspective that L&D can be dealt with through mitigation and adaptation; to an emphasis on new approaches to address unavoidable harm to vulnerable countries, as illustrated below.



- The WIM includes elements of many of these typologies and demonstrates a process of building political consensus across a range of perspectives on L&D. The typologies may nevertheless be useful to provide clarity for research and practice.

## Why might typologies be useful for addressing L&D?

Whilst an official definition of L&D may not be necessary politically, conflicting perceptions could be harmful for progress on the ground. For example, it is difficult to have practical conversations about actions to address L&D and science to support these actions, if different stakeholders have contrasting perceptions and definitions in mind. Parties need not adopt a formal definition of L&D, but progress may be enhanced if there is awareness of the different ideas and views which are being held.

This policy brief reports findings from a social science study to examine perceptions, definitions and "typologies" of L&D. Through interviews with key L&D stakeholders between April and November 2015, we explored their perspectives on L&D, actions associated with these and points of agreement

and distinction. Interviewees were selected for their geographical, expert and gender cross-representation among the L&D community.

Four typologies and associated actions were identified from this analysis which were then shared with the ExCom and observers. The feedback indicated that while they are a good reflection of much of the discourse, the WIM requires consensus to move forward, and already integrates elements of these perspectives. For the ExCom exploration of a possible *fifth* integrative/consensus typology may be useful.

## **The four typologies of L&D**

Four distinct viewpoints of L&D emerge from the interviews and literature. These do not represent separate groupings of stakeholders, but a spectrum of typologies, with some stakeholders expressing elements of more than one, and the potential for opinions to shift between them. The typologies do not necessarily have associated definitions, and we found that the term “loss and damage” was not used consistently, sometimes being used to refer to climate change impacts, or to describe a mechanism, or a debate.

### **Adaptation and Mitigation Typology**

Some stakeholders highlight all climate change impacts as potential L&D, and stress that the mandate of the UNFCCC is to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference, or L&D from climate change. The UNFCCC already has mechanisms for mitigation and adaptation, and, according to this typology, these existing mechanisms are sufficient to address, or prevent, L&D. Consistent with this typology, stakeholders can express confusion at the call for L&D mechanisms which are separate from adaptation, or suggest that distinctions between adaptation and L&D are false or politically motivated.

### **Risk Management Typology**

For other stakeholders, L&D mechanisms represent an opportunity to promote comprehensive risk management, alongside existing efforts under disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, and humanitarian work. They may allow for climate change risk to be more comprehensively integrated into disaster risk reduction. This could include approaches to risk reduction, risk retention, and risk transfer which go beyond the national level, and address high level risks. The typology focuses on a techno-pragmatic problem approach.

### **Limits to Adaptation Typology**

Under the Risk Management typology, separating L&D which can and cannot be adapted to might be perceived as unhelpful. In contrast, under this typology stakeholders’ perspectives on L&D are centred around the limits to adaptation, and how to address residual L&D beyond mitigation and adaptation. They highlight that even with additional adaptation and risk management there are limits and side effects, which will negatively affect vulnerable communities in developing countries. L&D generally applies to impacts of any climate-related event, rather than just those that can be attributed to climate change, to maintain a focus on addressing vulnerability on the ground.

### **Existential Typology**

There are some for whom L&D represents a means to highlight the importance of addressing the inevitable harm which climate change will impose on vulnerable countries, populations, cultures, and ecosystems. This perspective is “existential” in the sense that climate change represents unavoidable transformation for some communities and systems. There is an emphasis on irreversible loss, non-economic loss and damage (NELD), justice and responsibility. There is a sense of urgency to provide options for those who are most vulnerable, for example through migration facilities; and there is also discussion of compensation, whether monetary or non-monetary.

## The spectrum of typologies and associated actions

TYPOLOGY	ADAPTATION/ MITIGATION	RISK MANAGEMENT	LIMITS TO ADAPTATION	EXISTENTIAL
<b>Keywords</b>	adaptation, mitigation, Cancun Adaptation Framework, disasters	risk, insurance, risk transfer, risk retention, comprehensive risk management, extreme events	residual risk, side effects, vulnerability, resilience, on the ground, transformation, hard and soft limits	permanent, irreversible, unavoidable, compensation, justice, non-economic, responsibility, slow onset, sea level rise
<b>Distinction from adaptation</b>	L&D can be dealt with through mitigation and adaptation	L&D mechanisms should address impacts which can be adapted to and impacts beyond adaptation	L&D refers to impacts beyond mitigation and adaptation	Emphasis on irreversible, unavoidable L&D, which cannot be adapted to
<b>Climate risks considered</b>	L&D refers to all climate change impacts (or L&D from disasters)	Emphasis on incorporating climate change risk into comprehensive risk management	L&D mechanisms should address any climate-related damage (not exclusively climate change impacts)	Focus on addressing anthropogenic climate change impacts
<b>Ex-ante / Ex-post</b>	Adaptation and Mitigation can be used to prevent L&D (ex-ante)	Main focus on future risk, preventing L&D (ex-ante), and insurance mechanisms to aide recovery (ex-post)	Emphasis on avoiding L&D/risk reduction (ex-ante), but also addressing unavoidable L&D (ex-post)	Emphasis on addressing unavoidable future losses (ex-post)
<b>Relevance of finance</b>	L&D does not require additional funding beyond existing climate finance	Emphasis on insurance schemes, private sector finance	Emphasis not generally on finance	Associated with calls for compensation, but not exclusively
<b>Role of justice</b>	Implies common but differentiated responsibility already embedded in existing mechanisms	Based on principles of distributive justice	Emphasis on support for the most vulnerable	Emphasis on justice and responsibility, in particular compensatory justice
<b>Associated actions</b>	Mitigation and adaptation	Insurance, insurance pools, catastrophe bonds, life insurance, DRR, sovereign disaster risk rating, climate services and early warning, engineering, capacity building	Risk transfer, social safety nets, micro insurance, innovations in livelihoods (early warning), participation	Compensation, migration facilities, homeland resettlement, acknowledgement, official apologies, memorial, historical preservation, international litigation

## Potential implications for actions to address L&D

Each of the typologies has a different emphasis in terms of the most appropriate actions to address L&D (see Table 1). Fundamentally, there is a distinction between actions which attempt to prevent L&D, or reduce risks (ex-ante), and actions which are intended to deal with actual L&D after it occurs or to prepare for actual L&D which will occur (ex- post). Most stakeholders agree that both aspects are relevant for L&D, but there is difference in emphasis, with the Adaptation and Mitigation typology implying that L&D can be avoided, and the Existential typology focusing on addressing the unavoidable. The latter highlights questions such as how to deal with the loss of homeland and sovereignty, and discussion of actions includes reference to reparation or compensation. The Risk Management and Limits to Adaptation typologies are situated somewhere between these two, including both ex-ante and ex-post actions. Both of these typologies emphasise innovation in disaster risk management and resilience mechanisms particularly insurance and reinsurance.

### Relevance for the ExCom and a possible fifth typology

Development of action areas under the WIM and specific decisions at COP21 represents a clear desire by Parties along with a range of well established NGOs, research institutions, and international organizations, to jointly develop policy and actions to deal with L&D. The WIM may thus represent a fifth typology, which addresses concerns highlighted across a range of perspectives. Many of the actions noted under the other typologies, for example insurance, risk transfer and addressing non-economic loss and damage and migration, are important features of the WIM 2-year work-plan. Further analysis would be needed to establish how stakeholder perspectives are represented in the current work plan, and this may be useful to identify gaps which could be incorporated into the new five-year work plan.

### Relevance for research and practice

A fifth integrative/consensus typology, is arguably important for political progress, but might lack specificity for some developments in research and practice. There are remaining questions which could be important for the purpose of specific applications, for example which actors are responsible, at what level, which losses and damages need to be addressed. One issue which was discussed at ExCom3 was the role for insurance in addressing L&D: parties and observers agree that insurance is important, but further work is needed to establish what kinds of insurance are most relevant, and how these relate to the use of insurance in disaster risk reduction and adaptation. More specificity may also be desirable for measuring effectiveness of projects, programmes and activities on the ground.

The typologies could be used to inform collaboration between scientists, policy-makers and practitioners to discuss actions to address L&D and relevant research gaps. These could be explored through a workshop to identify new research questions of relevance to the community and for generating evidence for future global assessments such as the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report.

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