



## NEW ZEALAND

### Submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

#### *Review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage*

December 2019

#### Introduction

1. New Zealand is pleased to submit views relevant to the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) as called for in the terms of reference for the 2019 review of the WIM appended to the SB 50 conclusions of the SBSTA and SBI.<sup>1</sup>
2. It is clear that many countries are already suffering permanent loss and damage as a consequence of the adverse effects of climate change, including many of New Zealand's neighbours in the Pacific region, which are especially vulnerable. It is equally clear (from, in particular, the IPCC's special reports on 1.5°C of global warming, land, and the ocean and cryosphere) that the consequences of extreme weather events and slow onset events will continue to become more severe without urgent and ambitious action: mitigation, adaptation and averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.
3. New Zealand sees the WIM as a critical apparatus in the global effort to avert, minimise and address loss and damage. We fully support the review of the WIM, to ensure it is well positioned to fulfil its mandate in a coordinated, pragmatic and timely manner.
4. In our view, the WIM's mandate<sup>2</sup> is usefully broad, and its three functions<sup>3</sup> sufficiently comprehensive, to ensure it pursues a multifaceted approach as is appropriate for managing the complexity and localised diversity of how loss and damage is experienced on the ground. This is an important consideration in reflecting on the structure of the WIM.
5. We do not see the WIM as a 'one-stop shop', however. The global response to loss and damage must encompass bilateral and regional activity, alongside facilitative efforts at

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<sup>1</sup> FCCC/SB/2019/L.3, annex.

<sup>2</sup> 2/CP.19, paragraphs 2, 5, 6 and 7.

<sup>3</sup> 1) Enhance knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches to address loss and damage; 2) Strengthen dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders; 3) Enhance action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building to address loss and damage

the multilateral level. Indeed, Article 8(3) of the Paris Agreement recognises Parties' efforts will be channelled through the WIM on an inclusive, not exhaustive, basis. New Zealand supports Pacific Island countries in a range of activities of the nature set out in Article 8(4) of the Paris Agreement, for example, emergency preparedness, early warning systems, sea-level rise, displacement, and disaster risk insurance. The WIM cannot substitute for such specialist local and regional approaches on the ground, but it can play an important role in strengthening these. Expectations of its outputs should be cognisant of this.

### **Views on the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism**

6. New Zealand's assessment is that the WIM has performed its **first function** very well on enhancing knowledge and understanding of approaches to address loss and damage. Since its establishment in 2013, the ExCom has undertaken some ground-breaking work, in particular on displacement and risk transfer. The Task Force on Displacement's reports and recommendations are of a very high standard, and we have used them to inform our development of an Action Plan for Pacific Climate-Related Human Mobility. We assess these outputs to be very useful, and would encourage the Review to explore any barriers to countries making full use of them.
7. Countries' knowledge can only be enhanced by the WIM if its outputs are received and utilised. New Zealand recognises many countries, including many Pacific Island countries, have very limited capacity for absorbing the high volume of climate change-related information. The WIM needs to be mindful of this challenge and be proactive in producing outputs that can be easily communicated to and integrated by countries, especially SIDS and LDCs. For some countries designating a national contact point for loss and damage may facilitate greater use of the WIM's outputs and ensure information is reaching the right people within their national systems. New Zealand notes 18 countries have nominated national contact points for loss and damage,<sup>4</sup> we encourage other parties to do so.
8. In considering the opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficacy of the WIM, New Zealand sees need to focus on the nexus between efforts to avert, minimise and address loss and damage and the latest scientific evidence. The recent outputs for the IPCC, for example, highlight the type and level of mitigation and adaptation action necessary to achieve the Paris Agreement's goals. Science-based targets for action give communities in the most vulnerable countries, including low-lying atoll nations of the Pacific, the best chance of being able to avert and minimise loss and damage. The IPCC reports are also very clear about the implications of not taking such action, and the devastating impact this will have on the most vulnerable countries. New Zealand

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<sup>4</sup> Loss and damage contact points: <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/loss-and-damage-ld/collaboration-and-outreach/loss-and-damage-contact-points>. Parties were invited to nominate national contact points: see 4/CP22, paragraph 4(d).

suggests future work of the WIM could be more deliberately grounded in the IPCC's work to better reflect on, and respond to, climate change science in delivering its first function.

9. New Zealand recognises activities to avert, minimise and address loss and damage rubric are being addressed by multilateral and sub-regional actors. To that end, the WIM's **second function** relating to dialogue and coordination is critical to facilitating coherence of related processes, reducing inefficiencies and leveraging co-benefits from the full spectrum of activities.
10. Other United Nations bodies have established mandates and work programmes that contribute to averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage. Amongst these are the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization, and many others. In performing the WIM's second function, the ExCom should prioritise coordination with such organisations to strengthen synergies in delivery of their workplans and implementation activities in order to improve the WIM's reach and effectiveness. A beneficial outcome from the Review would be enhanced visibility of the WIM's "fit" into the broader picture of loss and damage relevant work by the UN system overall.
11. We have heard from many countries, including in our Pacific region, that consider the Ex Com has not performed WIM's **third function** on enhancing action and support adequately. This perception is a concern. We fully understand the imperative for predictability of finance, technology and capacity building support for developing countries to avert, minimise and address loss and damage.
12. We see the WIM has a critical role to play in identifying available support, and its report, "Elaboration of the sources of and modalities for accessing financial support for addressing loss and damage", is a very positive step forward. Follow up work within the WIM's mandate could include analysis of how needs for finance for responding to loss and damage can be best addressed within the UNFCCC system. We are open to discuss how the WIM can work better with the Standing Committee on Finance, the GCF and the GEF to support performance of its third function.
13. The review of the WIM provides an opportunity to consider how the WIM can ensure greater action and support for loss and damage is made available to vulnerable countries by relevant operational and delivery mechanisms.
14. One consideration New Zealand thinks relevant to the WIM's third function is understanding how support for action is delivered on the ground, particularly the extent to which responses to loss and damage are integrated with broader climate change and sustainable development action. This is appropriate given the extent to which

experiencing loss and damage puts sustainable development and climate change gains at risk. At the Pacific Islands Forum in 2016, leaders adopted the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Address Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management* (FRDP).<sup>5</sup> This framework promotes mainstreaming of action to address climate change and risks of rapid and slow onset disasters into development planning, policy making, and ultimately financing, programming and implementation. We view understanding this integrated approach as critical for the WIM's work on enhancing action and support for averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.

## **Conclusion**

15. New Zealand recognises the Paris Agreement establishes the WIM as the key forum to enhance understanding of loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, and facilitate action and support. The COP 25 review is an important responsibility for Parties to ensure the WIM operates as intended to support vulnerable countries as intended, and cogniscant of the need for urgency emphasised in the IPCC's recent special reports.
16. New Zealand looks forward to the WIM's work continuing on all aspects of this important and evolving area. We look forward to contributing actively to the Review at COP25.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at [https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/frdp\\_2016](https://www.pacificclimatechange.net/document/frdp_2016).