



## **PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**“As impacts rise, decisions on loss and damage must be central to COP25 agenda”**

*Audio recording of the [press briefing available here](#)*

**03 December 2019, Madrid, Spain:** Climate Action Network (CAN) held a press briefing today with civil society representatives from regions currently facing severe climate-induced disasters such as in the Pacific Islands, Southern and Eastern Africa, Latin America and Australia.

As extreme weather events and slow onset impacts like desertification are felt by millions of people across the globe, civil society called on negotiators to urgently act on the needs of vulnerable populations by agreeing on concrete outcomes on the Warsaw International Mechanism, including a financing mechanism for loss and damage and an expert group on action and support.

### **Reactions from CAN speakers:**

**Teruabine Anna Nuariki:** *Kiribati Climate Action Network and Pacific Islands CAN Board Member*

Loss and damage is the biggest issue for Kiribati. Our livelihood, wellbeing, culture, security and rights are all threatened by climate change. Land erosion has led to loss of lands impacting communities who are uprooted from their homes. Climate change has been destroying homes and killing livestock and food crops in our islands. It has also caused disputes where communities are fighting over lands.

Our nation must now focus on adaptation and building resilience. With our government's disaster funds we can only build sea walls, but we can no longer pay for loss of life and damage on homes and livelihood. Communities are seriously affected not just physically but also mentally and spiritually.

However, we are still fighting to because it is our culture, identity and our lives. We have to protect our lives, identity and culture. We do not ought for migration but fight the battle for climate change. We are now living in a situation we did not create because developed countries are prioritizing profit over people. Together with you, we ask you to work hand in hand to act and amplify our voices as one to sing our song - my world, your world, our world, for health, peace and prosperity.

**Ismael Sayyad:** *Climate Change Advisor from Oxfam LAC*

Yesterday, Oxfam released a report: “Forced from home: Climate-fueled displacement” that highlights that about 20 million people are being displaced annually due to the climate emergency that has shown an increase in the intensity and frequency of disasters. Climate impacts have not only forced millions of people from their homes, but also have consequences on livelihood and armed conflicts.

In the Caribbean, we are suffering impacts of climate change such as hurricane Irma that displaced 1.7 million people, destroying 30,000 houses, and further damaging 100,000 houses. In Central America, climate impacts have caused and exacerbated Guatemala’s malnutrition, forced migration displacing people to Mexico and the United States, and 2.6 million people in need of food assistance today.

Beyond extreme weather events, slow onset impacts such as sea level rise and droughts have displaced communities from their homes and affected our farmers’ agricultural production and everyday they need to adapt. We underscore the inequality in emissions because those who have most emissions are not the ones who suffer the most impacts, they are felt by vulnerable people such as communities in Latin America. This COP we expect progress on loss and damage while emissions are being reduced. We need to recover from the impacts.

**Vitumbiko Chinoko:** *Regional Advocacy and Policy Lead for CARE in Southern Africa*

In South Africa, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth affected 2.2 million people who are still seeing the impacts of climate change, and 1.1 million people have become food insecure. We are seeing the impacts of climate change not just becoming more frequent but also more severe. Money that’s supposed to go to development programmes such as education and health are being diverted to emergency services and restoration. Cyclone Idai-affected countries Mozambique and Malawi had to borrow money from the IMF to address their needs but it is a loan. Climate finance to developing countries must come in a form of grants because climate change is affecting the development pathways of these countries.

These effects have heightened the importance of the agenda of loss and damage for Southern Africa and so we urge our negotiators to focus more on loss and damage. We clearly need a very robust review on action and support and a programme on how Southern African countries, i.e. how to enhance the finance aspect, capacity-building, slow onset and non-economic losses. We need rules on loss and damage finance and have that provide us with the opportunity to apply for funding. We need to make sure that in this COP we will deliver on that.

**Julie Anne Richards:** *Executive Director, CAN Australia*

Loss and damage is something that developing countries are living through, or not living through, unfortunately. Developed countries are also not immune to the impacts of climate change.

We are facing an unprecedented level of fires in Australia. We’re living through the worst drought that has contributed to the huge bush fires and affected several towns and regional centers now facing the risk of running out of water. The fire front in Eastern Australia is 6,000 kilometers long that’s happening in Spring which is unprecedented. Twenty percent of the Blue Mountains national heritage area, of approximately 4 million acres, is burnt which is more than the past three fire seasons combined. The fires have also affected our health, with hospitals in Sydney reporting a spike in asthmatic cases.

At this COP, the review of WIM has to put in place the finance facility that provides new finance on loss and damage which it has failed to do in the past six years. We need new finance that comes from polluting sources because we know that the fossil fuel industry and big polluting countries are the cause of this climate crisis - they have a responsibility to pay for loss and damage experienced by developing countries. We also need to move forward with an expert group on action and support to ensure that we act on loss and damage.

**Lara Muaves:** *Head of the Africa Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, WWF*

I am a witness of severe climate impacts in Mozambique - it's a fact, it is real, we are suffering from loss and damage. Between March and April last year, we were hit by two subsequent cyclones - Kenneth and Idai - that have left huge destruction and 2.2. Million people in need of emergency assistance and 1.1 million youth between 5-17 years old are left without healthcare. 17 districts or 50% of Mozambique was completely destroyed and now we are still suffering. We as a country, we as Mozambique, we as civilians we are still struggling, we are still trying to recover from loss and damage and to connect our infrastructure so we can reach primary needs such as food and resources. I beg our leaders in this COP25: you can make a difference, you have to do something. The Warsaw International Mechanism for loss and damage has to be extended and it must have a finance facility and be fit for purpose.

#### ENDS ####

Contact:

Dharini Parthasarathy, Senior Communications Officer, CAN

[dparthasarathy@climatenetwork.org](mailto:dparthasarathy@climatenetwork.org)

+918826107830