



A Real Mosaic of Solutions to Respond to Loss and Damage from Climate Change

Sustainable Development

lossanddamagecollaboration.org

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Introduction

This publication is part of a [series of briefs](#) unpacking the pieces of a fit for purpose “mosaic of solutions” to respond to loss and damage from climate change. This series expands on our earlier work, which presented a [five-year vision for Loss and Damage under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) to look beyond the international climate regime at catalysing a wider mosaic of solutions.

In the [flagship paper](#) of the series, we unpack the pieces of the mosaic. In these thematic briefs, we dive deeper into existing solutions and how they can be strengthened. We also consider any reforms needed and explore emerging solutions.

This brief unpacks the relationship between sustainable development and Loss and Damage. It provides a short introduction to what sustainable development entails, highlights emerging and existing solutions and related challenges, and how these challenges can be addressed.

What is sustainable development?

Sustainable development has been defined by the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ By advancing sustainable development, loss and damage can be both prevented and reduced.

What are the existing solutions?

In 2015 the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) were adopted. The goals cover economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. They also include a dedicated goal on [climate action](#). The Addis Ababa Action Agenda aims to mobilise the trillions needed to achieve the SDGs.² The [Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development](#) aims to strengthen national data and statistical systems to help monitor the implementation of the SDGs.³

What is the problem?

The underdevelopment of Global South countries is the result of centuries of colonial exploitation, uneven economic exchange, and structural subordination by countries in the Global North.⁴ This has drained resources and left Global South countries unable to meet the basic needs of their citizens, such as education, health care, and safe shelter.⁵

Only 35 percent of the SDGs are on track or making modest gains towards being met by 2030.⁶ Nearly half are progressing too slowly and 18 percent are actually regressing.⁷ Challenges include a 4 trillion USD annual financing gap and inadequate data collection and analysis to support implementation and monitor progress in developing countries.⁸ As climate impacts escalate, hard won development gains are being reversed, further exacerbating loss and damage and creating a vicious cycle of poverty.⁹

What do we need to see?

All countries must get back on track to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Developing countries must be supported by developed countries with at least 4 trillion USD a year under the UN’s [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) and through [Official Development Assistance \(ODA\)](#). Debt cancellation and fair international tax and trade rules are also needed to increase fiscal space in developing countries and raise domestic funds to achieve the SDGs. Data collection and analysis must be enhanced to support implementation and monitor progress.

Meeting their obligations under international law to mobilise and provide finance and support to developing countries for sustainable development, will not harm developed countries. Instead it will benefit them by creating a more stable, prosperous, and secure world for all. A world in which the drivers of migration are reduced, trade is stable and not frequently disrupted by conflict and climate impacts, and pandemics are quickly contained, amongst other things.¹⁰ Table 1 highlights how existing solutions can be strengthened.

Table 1 : Enhancing sustainable development solutions to prevent loss and damage.

CURRENT SOLUTIONS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?	WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	The SDGs are non-binding. Implementation and success relies on countries' own policies, plans, and programmes. Resources need to be mobilised from domestic and international sources, including through ODA. Success is monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators. ¹¹	Progress on SDG 13 (climate action) is inadequate. ¹² Inadequate progress or regression on SDGs on poverty, hunger and inequality, amongst others, further compound loss and damage. ¹³	All countries must get back on track to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Developing countries must be supported by developed countries with at least 4 trillion USD a year. Enhanced data is needed for monitoring and policy implementation.
Finance for Sustainable Development	The <u>Addis Ababa Action Agenda</u> aims to mobilise the trillions needed to achieve the SDGs through the quadrennial <u>High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development</u> , the <u>International Conference on Financing for Development</u> , and the annual <u>Forum on Financing for Development</u> .	Finance available for sustainable development was just 435 billion USD in 2023 ¹⁴	Money raised through the <u>UN Tax Convention</u> and <u>Special Drawing Rights</u> allocations must support sustainable development, as well as other pieces of the mosaic.

CURRENT SOLUTIONS	HOW DOES IT WORK?	WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?	WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?
Official Development Assistance (ODA)	ODA is government-provided assistance targeting the economic development and welfare of developing countries. ODA consists of grants or concessional loans to countries on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list . ¹⁵	Developed countries have cut ODA as geopolitical tensions escalate and spending priorities shift to militarisation. ¹⁶ The cost of living crisis arising exacerbated by the conflict in the Middle East is likely to result in further cuts. ¹⁷ Based on OECD's projections, last updated in November 2025, ODA from DAC countries was projected to decline by 9 to 18 percent from 2024 to 2025. The outlook beyond 2025 is highly uncertain. ¹⁸	Developed countries must mobilise finance from innovative sources to meet and exceed the ODA target of 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) . ¹⁹
Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development	The Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development I aims to strengthen national data and statistical systems to help achieve the SGDs. ²⁰	The Medellín Framework faces severe funding gaps for national statistical offices and difficulty in accessing timely, disaggregated data.	Developed countries must mobilise finance to ensure that the capacity of national statistical offices can be increased in developing countries.

Endnotes

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