Climate-related Development Finance for SIDS and LDCs

DAC-Senior Level Meeting side event: Breakfast Session on Climate-related Development Finance for SIDS and LDCs

20 October 2015, 8:30 am;
George Marshall room, OECD Headquarters

Chair: Erik Solheim, Chair of DAC

Chair’s summary report

PANEL

- Mary Robinson, UN Special Envoy on Climate Change
- Dr Ashni Singh, Consultant to Mary Robinson Foundation and former Minister of Finance of Guyana
- Ambassador Angus Friday, Ambassador of Grenada to the United States of America
- Ambassador Fatumanava III Dr. Pa’olelei Luteru, Head of Mission & Ambassador of the Independent State of Samoa to the Kingdom of Belgium and the European Union
- M. Giza Gaspar Martins, Ministry of Environment, Director of Climate Change Department, Angola, Chair of the LDC group of the UNFCCC negotiations

The meeting was opened by the distinguished panellists and followed by a discussion with members of the DAC Senior Level Meeting.

Key points from the panel

When focusing on reaching an agreement on climate-related issues in Paris in a few weeks, we need to ensure that there is sufficient trust between countries, and that we are working towards a partnership between states. This is crucial for achieving the agreement.

On progress made towards the 100 Bn USD climate finance commitment, the OECD has been actively involved in clarifying the issues, and the OECD report on “Climate Finance in 2013-14 and the USD 100 billion goal”, in collaboration with Climate Policy Initiative was appreciated in Lima. However, a view was expressed that there was not enough prior consultation with developing countries and that they do not feel included or part of the process.

From a perspective of SIDS and LDCs, there are few illusions concerning the current fiscal situation and pressures experienced by the donors. The discussion shall be framed not in terms of poor countries asking for money from the rich yet again, but in terms of the partnership. There should be understanding of the common threat we are all facing.
The Panellists highlighted four categories of finance issues:

1. **Adequacy of Financing**
   - A lot has been produced on this matter. While we are aspiring to achieve the 100 billion by 2020, there is an immediate imperative to make finance available through institutions that proved effective in the past. This includes ensuring that LDC Fund is adequately capitalised and replenished, that projects are in the pipeline (which is indeed the case) and are able to meet the needs of the vulnerable countries.
   - There is also an ongoing discussion on extending the mandate of LDC Fund, and the scope of work. However, the issue of recapitalising the Fund remains all-important.

2. **Creation of Fiscal Space**
   - The reality faced by many LDCs and SIDS is that there is limited fiscal space to borrow money. Many of these countries are heavily indebted, and are thus unable to access the concessional finance available. There are also quantitative ceilings in place, imposed by the IMF. Some of these countries are already beyond this threshold.
   - As a result, they are experiencing the phenomenon of dual vulnerability. On the one hand, they experience fiscal vulnerability and macroeconomic instability, and on the other, extreme climate vulnerability.
   - A lot of this vulnerability is derived from their high levels of fossil fuel consumption and exposure to the associated risks. Many of them rely entirely on fossil fuels to generate electricity.
   - As a partial remedy to this situation, there has been already some discussion on debt relief and restructuring, in order to create some fiscal space to address climate-related challenges, e.g. transition to clean energy.

3. **Crowding in Private Capital**
   - Contrary to the popular belief, LDCs and SIDS do not simply seek free finance from the developed world. They recognise the importance of engaging private capital. Many, however, face significant barriers to attracting private finance. For instance they have a weak presence on capital markets, and either lack a sovereign credit rating or have one which is not of investment grade. Many also incur high political volatility, increasing the risk premia required by investors.
   - It is also often the case that even when a country is credit worthy, it simply may not be known to investors. Even if there are good bankable projects that could contribute to climate resilient trajectory, many countries are just not on the radar of international investors.
   - Therefore, leveraging private capital into LDCs/SIDS offers an important potential.
4. **Improving Accessibility**

- There are significant capacity constraints in most countries, in that they have difficulties even identifying projects, let alone structuring them financially. Even just navigating the bureaucratic processes is becoming challenging. In many countries’ ministries of finance and environment, there are only a few people working in this area. Therefore, it is essential to provide support to these countries and improve their access to the finance which is there.

Solutions to these problems need not always be expensive, as it is often thought. In many cases, it is not about finding capital and providing millions of dollars upfront, but about innovative financing techniques and structuring operations in a way to leverage the capital already available. For instance, deferring or restructuring debt can create short term fiscal space. Working in partnership with LDCs and SIDS, provider countries are well-placed to use public climate finance to help leverage private finance.

Hurricanes also tend contribute to the vulnerability as well as the indebtedness of poor nations, acting as a drag on their economies. As an example, a few years ago, Grenada experienced two hurricanes that wiped out 200% of its GDP and destroyed 90% of dwellings. This compares to the US, where even the worst hurricanes result in damage amounting to only a few percent of GDP. Other island countries, which have wealthier populations and can afford stone homes, and that base their economies on more resilient industries, may recover faster from such natural disasters. After a disaster hits, island states seek to re-build their economy in a way to reduce its vulnerability.

Another source of vulnerability is the over-reliance on fossil fuel, particularly petroleum imports. As a result, these countries tend to have expensive electricity, while a lot of funds leave the islands to pay for energy imports. Renewable energy (RE) could offer a solution to this problem, as a relatively cheaper source from a perspective of remote islands. Although many islands contribute little to CO₂ emissions, we should also focus on developing programmes that would reduce dependence on fossil fuels, freeing finance for RE.

More and more islands are moving towards RE, however we are not there yet. There are a lot of readiness programmes, but there is not enough capital investment to transform the energy sectors. There is a need to create a portfolio of bankable projects to attract both public and private finance. The former should be used more efficiently. It is critical that we leave Paris with a plan to help LDCs and SIDS.

It is time for SIDS to bring their own solutions to the table, for instance, one representative spoke about how in their country they are raising awareness through school curriculum projects, and reforming their institutions for better accountability. Small or big, such initiatives when joined can become a major force.

A main concern of LDCs (as well as SIDS) is to support adaptation. The recent OECD report on climate finance recognises that finance for adaptation is a small proportion of overall climate finance flows.

Another of the greatest concerns is the ability to implement the mandate of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDC Fund). That is, to meet the needs of LDCs for finance and address the difficulties they experience in accessing finance and technology. The LDC Fund is an internationally-agreed mechanism that provides grant based finance to meet these needs.
However, the future of LDCF is precarious. There are around 35 projects currently in the pipeline requiring USD250 million. They are already prepared and approved by the LDCF Board. Another USD72 million are needed for projects that have been submitted to the Board pending its approval.

We call on donors to contribute to the LDC Fund, for it to continue to act as an institution that provides the particular finance required by climate vulnerable countries. So it is not solely about clearing the current pipeline, but also about adding a degree of sustainability and predictability to the Fund.

The OECD-CPI 100 billion report, an independent report produced under the authority of the OECD Secretary General at the request of the French and Peruvian presidencies of the COP of the UN FCCC, is recognised as an important contribution to transparency on climate finance. However, in the view of some of the panellists, the definition on which the report is based is inherently flawed. For instance, it counts the instruments, such as loans, which should be re-paid by countries and a question was raised about whether these should be counted as climate finance.

**Highlights from the discussion**

A number of important initiatives recently have been taken up by provider countries to respond to some of the call for action from the most vulnerable states. Notably discussion flagged:

- Climate Risk Insurance Initiative, recently introduced by the G7, seeking to cover an additional 400 million people in countries most vulnerable to climate change by 2020.

- Green Climate Fund as an excellent example that adequate funds are allocated to LDCs. 50% of adaptation finance going the vulnerable countries. In the GCF, the first tranche of projects demonstrates that mitigation and adaptation can sometimes be tackled together.

- A French initiative is promoting an early warning system to protect lives, livelihoods and property in more than 50 SIDS and LDCs, in cooperation with WB, UN, and others. It will launch it during COP21

- UAE, in an effort to ensure access to clean energy, established a Pacific Partnership Fund, which can respond to this need in the Pacific island region. Through this fund, and in partnering with NZ, they are funding solar energy in the Solomon Islands.

Discussion also highlighted a number of points on the themes raised by the panellists:

- On the OECD-CPI report: reaction to report is strong because countries do not feel included. It was not because the report was not robust nor the best report on the topic. Such a report had never been done before so it was a difficult exercise and it sets a baseline for debate.

- On adaptation finance, collective responsibility should be shown and sufficient finance made available. While adaptation is important, mitigation is primordial. If we do not take steps in mitigation, no adaptation in this world will suffice. We need a bit more and stronger commitment regarding mitigation through the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).
• Getting rid of fossil fuel subsidies is a key to aiding both mitigation and adaptation. As an example, Indonesia just cut their fossil fuel subsidies, freeing finance amounting to combined global aid of Sweden and Norway.

• Many SIDS will not be able to access finance through the GCF. LDCF acts as a form of incubator for them.

• Experience shows that some countries have difficulty accessing the resources of a fund mechanism like GCF due to the complexity of the procedures. So the issue is to facilitate and ease the access.

• The DAC members are very committed for SIDs and LDCs, looking for a strong agreement that they will help to implement.

Closing remarks

In their closing remarks, Mary Robinson and Erik Solheim noted the need for a constant and open dialogue to share lessons and avoid countries feeling excluded. They also highlighted:

• Collective concern about how strong the distrust is on the climate finance side, and the need to build trust between now and December, and beyond, keeping this dialogue going.

• The LDC Fund is an essential part of the climate finance architecture for the poorest and most vulnerable countries, but to function, the LDC Fund needs replenishing.

• A suggestion to organise a small working to keep dialogue going and work towards Paris, and beyond, to share innovative ideas on SIDS and LDCs, address the issue of a constrained fiscal space and replenishment of LDC Fund.

• OECD nations should both make an effort to do more, while also making public and explaining better what they are currently doing at home and in the field. This will reduce uncertainty and build understanding and trust.
The session will stimulate a discussion on practical measures that might be taken on climate-related development financing in support of the special needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Many of the specific development financing needs for LDCs and SIDS were set out in the Financing for Development Addis Outcome document - including issues such as debt sustainability, challenges in attracting private finance, and issues related to accessing Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other forms of development finance. A summary can be found here.

These issues are also important to the effectiveness of climate action, and addressing them could provide a significant boost to the overall impact of the climate finance that is to be deployed in the years ahead. On October 9th, in Lima, the proposed climate finance elements to underpin the Paris climate agreement were discussed. The final package will be agreed at COP 21 in Paris by parties to the UNFCCC.

The objective of the session is to provide a platform for participants to exchange ideas and discuss specific, short-term actions that can be taken – either by OECD-DAC member countries, Development Finance Institutions or by SIDS/LDCs – outside the UNFCCC process that can improve the impact of the climate finance being agreed within the UNFCCC process.

Representatives of LDCs and SIDS will be asked to set the scene with some initial ideas and examples of practical actions that can take place. The DAC Chair will then facilitate an informal conversation. Background information described in the rest of this document provides more detail and context to inform the debate.
The special financing challenges faced by SIDS and LDCs

SIDS comprise a heterogeneous mix of 57 countries: 22 are high-income countries, most are situated in the middle-income grouping, and among the 35 ODA-eligible SIDS, 9 are LDCs. These countries show high variability on key economic and social indicators, including GDP magnitudes, extreme poverty, human development and economic growth. For example Haiti has nearly 55% of its population living in extreme poverty (under $1.25 a day) whereas the Seychelles has less than 2%.

Despite the heterogeneity of SIDS, when it comes to development financing in general, they face some common challenges:

- Most face challenges in mobilising finance effectively and some have high debt levels.
- They share common vulnerabilities:
  - Environmental vulnerability: SIDS are disproportionately exposed to the effects of climate change, in particular to severe weather events and sea level rise;
  - Economic vulnerability: high infrastructure costs, highly open economies (rapidly affected by financial and trade volatility), and undiversified output;
  - Social vulnerability: the geographic dispersion of some island groupings affects the delivery of services by the government and increases costs; many SIDS are experiencing rapid population growth.

The 48 countries in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group are the world’s poorest countries, and some of the most vulnerable to climate change. When it comes to development finance, they face many common challenges:

- Acute economic vulnerability to shocks;
- Lack of relevant capacity to respond effectively to climate change impacts while simultaneously combating poverty and stimulating economic activity;
- With a few exceptions, LDCs face challenges in attracting private capital to support economic growth.

Partly as a result of these challenges, SIDS and LDCs face specific financing difficulties:

- High dependency on ODA;
- Attracting and deploying private capital;
- Capacity to access climate finance;
- Marshalling resources for disaster risk management to more effectively limit damages and to respond once a natural disaster has hit;
- Limited access to debt and international capital markets

These difficulties were recognised in the Addis Ababa Financing for Development Outcome Document. Although climate finance is being addressed through the UNFCCC process, its effectiveness will be blunted unless these difficulties are dealt with. In many cases, they will have to be addressed through processes other than the UNFCCC. Without tailored solutions, these difficulties will create obstacles to sustainable development in all its forms, including the ability to take climate action, both for mitigation and adaptation.

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2 In the climate change negotiations the SIDS coalition represents some 40 low-lying island states.
Possible solutions

Possible solutions to the climate financing challenges SIDS and LDCs face will be advanced as part of the negotiations for COP21. However, actions outside the UNFCCC can also improve their climate financing prospects and enhance overall climate action impact. Also, broader understanding of the issues faced by SIDS and LDCs within OECD DAC members can boost the potential for success in Paris. Examples likely to be raised by SIDS and LDC representatives include:

**Immediate, ambitious recapitalisation of the LDCF.** There are 34 projects in the pipeline of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) requiring an investment of approximately $250 million. These projects have been qualified and approved – however, project preparation processes have been put on hold. A further US$42 million+ of projects are well-advanced and awaiting review by the GEF Secretariat. There is a further estimated US$300 million in near-term demand for additional projects for addressing climate change. The fact that these projects have all effectively been put on hold several months before Paris is seen by many LDCs as an indicator of the lack of predictability in climate finance commitments that have been made. This is impacting on trust-building in the run-up to Paris.

**Work with the UNFCCC process to expand LDCs access to funding for transitioning to the low carbon economy – not just adaptation.** While the priority for many LDCs is adaptation, many LDCs also wish to take ambitious mitigation action to avoid being locked-in to high carbon infrastructure in the energy sector and elsewhere. The LDC Fund – if properly capitalized – could be expanded to include the transition to the low carbon economy.

**Examination of eligibility criteria for ODA funding instruments.** SIDS have been calling for some time for vulnerability criteria to be included in the aid allocation decision-making process, in particular regarding multilateral climate financing instruments. Although a lot of work has been done to assess the possible scope and parameters of vulnerability indices and measures, they are included in very few actual instruments – catastrophic risk insurance instruments being one notable exception.

**Improve the predictability and increase the volumes of ODA to LDCs and SIDS when appropriate, including ODA supporting climate change actions, and enhance related data tracking and transparency.** Better tracking tools would enable greater transparency regarding overall ODA financing, and within that the specifically noted as climate financing, for SIDS and LDCs. Better access to good data from providers would greatly assist these countries in their annual / periodic funding reviews with donors, multilaterals and IFIs. Another important issue is transparency to show that climate financing as ODA is not going up at the expense of ODA financing for other essential needs, without the involvement of SIDS and LDCs in this policy choice.

**Improve accessibility to finance.** Even when resources are available in climate funds, and countries are in theory eligible to secure this financing, there are often complex requirements, specific to each fund, that make accessing finance difficult or insufficiently attractive. There are lengthy and highly technical processes to secure funding; channelling via intermediaries can add extra complexity and cost. Often, funds are made available for short-term enabling activities such as staff training, disaster preparedness assessments and planning activities – while very little funding is allocated to concrete and lasting climate investments such as i) flood defences to secure homes, private investment and agricultural land or ii) the incremental investment that is needed to climate-proof existing infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.
Key questions for discussion:

- What could be done to attract bilateral support to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)? Would extension of the Fund to cover low carbon economy activities help attract more bilateral support?

- Where do DAC member stand on the proposition to include vulnerability criteria in addition to other special considerations when implementing the full array of climate financing instruments for SIDS and LDCs, including multilateral instruments?

- How could the DAC strengthen reporting to improve predictability for climate finance? For example, could members agree to report on climate finance programme commitments via the DAC forward spending survey? How could DAC members work with LDCs and SIDS to ensure that climate finance as ODA does not compete with ODA for other essential needs?

- How might the effectiveness of the climate finance package be further improved through actions by the OECD-DAC members, as shareholders in multilateral institutions hosting special climate funds, to streamline the application procedures and reduce the supervisory costs for SIDS and LDCs?

To start the discussion, we will hear from:

- Mary Robinson, UN Special Envoy on Climate Change
- Ambassador Angus Friday, Ambassador of Grenada to the United States of America
- M. Giza Gaspar Martins, Ministry of Environment, Director of Climate Change Department, Angola, Chair of the LDC group of the UNFCCC negotiations
- Ambassador Fatumanava III, Dr. Pa’olelei Luteru
  Head of Mission & Ambassador of the Independent State of Samoa to the Kingdom of Belgium and the European Union
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<thead>
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<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Mary ROBINSON</td>
<td>United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy on Climate Change</td>
<td>UN Climate Change Secretariat</td>
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### OECD/OCDE

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