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María del Pilar Bueno Rubial  
Linda Siegele *Editors*


# Negotiating Climate Change Adaptation

The Common Position of the Group of 77  
and China

 Springer

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Editors

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*This book is dedicated to Fredrick (Fred)  
Kossam (in memoriam).*

*Our brother and friend. A distinguished  
adaptation coordinator for the least  
developed countries group (LDCs) on behalf  
of his home country Malawi.*

*He used to say that the passion underlying his  
work was motivated by the poverty he saw.*

# Foreword<sup>1</sup>

Over the past three decades, the role of adaptation to climate change has evolved considerably. In the early days, it was often misconstrued as being a defeatist approach to climate action. It subsequently evolved to becoming a niche for stand-alone projects in climate-vulnerable economic sectors, to finally constituting a holistic and comprehensive approach to climate-resilient development. The current outlook therefore transcends the climate context, and fully contributes and responds to the requirements of sustainable development priorities and aspirations.

The latest science on climate change points to existential implications that require transformative actions which will entail a shift in paradigm towards scaled-up actions in the coming years.

It is therefore important to reflect on and comprehend how the context of vulnerability and adaptation evolved in the UNFCCC negotiating process. This will not just help in understanding the history, but also in defining and shaping the future direction in which the world must embark, in order to protect the most vulnerable from the scourge of climate change impacts, and from their associated losses and damages. This book is an important step towards such an understanding.

Having conceptualized the first ever workshop under the UNFCCC to propose initial actions to address the adverse effects of climate change back in September 1999, I reflect with profound gratification at how far the mindset has progressed in the negotiating process in support of adaptation action in developing countries over the ensuing two decades, in terms of both financial and technical support. Back then, methodological work was lacking in some sectors, such as in health and food security; and the interplay between different impacts was not well understood. There were no dedicated modalities for funding adaptation action nor for technology transfer. Integrated resource management was still at initial stages of evolution. There was no stand-alone arrangement or work program to address the specific needs and special situations of the least developed countries (LDCs).

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<sup>1</sup>The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the United Nations or the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Today, we are in a far better situation and have adopted a holistic planning overview. Methodological work has advanced significantly. Many iterations of assessment and prioritization of needs have taken place, notably in the LDCs where this was triggered by the National Adaptation Programs of Action—the NAPAs. In addition, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) currently play a central role in planning for adaptation. All developing countries now have tools available by which they can plan medium- and long-term adaptation actions. The UNFCCC’s financial mechanism has evolved to include multiple support channels that cater, inter alia, to adaptation: The Adaptation Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Green Climate Fund. Complementary to the Convention process, a wide network exists of bilateral and international development cooperation agencies, as well as sectoral and non-governmental organizations, all of which are fully engaged in fostering the implementation of adaptation. There are mechanisms to fill adaptation knowledge gaps, including under the UNFCCC’s Nairobi Work Program on Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation; and to address loss and damage arising from climate impacts, under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. With this plethora of actions undertaken to further the adaptation agenda, the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee ensures the coherence and alignment of adaptation efforts within and outside of the Convention process.

As we look ahead to a world where we achieve steady progress in adaptation and its actions are further supported, and where the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is steadily advanced, there is still a need to heed the call of the latest scientific findings. The reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services have both made the urgent case for a transformational paradigm in climate action. The principle of *leaving no one behind* is now most relevant to a redefined future in which climate resilience is achieved and sustained, especially for the most vulnerable.

June 2019

Youssef Nassef  
Director, Adaptation  
UNFCCC Secretariat  
Bonn, Germany



# Acknowledgements

As editors of this important and unique body of work, first and foremost, we would like to acknowledge the men and women who have worked tirelessly through the years to ensure that addressing adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change in particularly vulnerable developing countries is an indispensable part of the global response to the climate crisis.

Included in this illustrious group of individuals are those who selflessly agreed to make a contribution to this project. Thank you for embracing our vision and for your efforts to set out the complex history of adaptation from the perspective of your countries. Without your contributions, we would not have a book.

We must also acknowledge the Presidencies of the Group of 77 and China over the years for supporting the work of the lead coordinators for adaptation, helping them through sometimes challenging times to find solutions that all members of the Group would support—the underlying understanding from one President to the next being the fundamental importance of adaptation to developing countries.

Converting country positions into consensual agreements could not have been done without the responsiveness (and sleepless hours) of members of the secretariat of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change who have worked on adaptation-related matters. Thank you for your dedication on our behalf. We also acknowledge the often-unheralded work of those in civil society who have championed adaptation on the global stage and helped present the hard evidence that has supported our arguments.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the support of Springer Nature, our publishers, for their guidance as we have navigated the waters on the journey toward finalizing this volume of work.

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# Acronyms

ABU	Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, negotiating group under the UNFCCC
AC	Adaptation Committee, established under the CAF, to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention
ADP	Ad-hoc working group on the Durban Platform, established at COP 17 in Durban in 2011 to develop a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties
AGN	African Group of Negotiators, negotiating group under the UNFCCC
AILAC	Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean, negotiating group under the UNFCCC
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on Environment, a permanent forum where African ministers of the environment discuss mainly matters of relevance to the environment of the continent
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States, negotiating group under the UNFCCC
APA	Ad-hoc working group on the Paris Agreement, established to prepare for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement
AU	African Union, consisting of 55 member states located on the continent of Africa, with exception of various territories of European possessions located in Africa
AWG-KP	Ad-hoc working group on further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, established in 2005 by Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal to consider further commitments of industrialized countries under the Kyoto Protocol for the period beyond 2012

AWG-LCA	Ad-hoc working group on long-term cooperative action under the Convention, established in Bali in 2007 to conduct negotiations on a strengthened international deal on climate change
CAF	Cancun Adaptation Framework, established by UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16 with the objective of enhancing action on adaptation, including through international cooperation and coherent consideration of matters relating to adaptation under the Convention
CAHOSCC	Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, established in 2009 with the primary objective of providing visible continent-wide political leadership in climate negotiations
CBDR-RC	Common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, guiding principle of the UNFCCC
CDM	Clean development mechanism, a mechanism under the KP through which developed countries may finance greenhouse-gas emission reduction or removal projects in developing countries and receive credits for doing so
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from non-Annex I Parties, a panel established to improve the preparation of national communications from developing countries (renamed the Consultative Group of Experts at COP 24 in Katowice, Poland)
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, governing body of the Paris Agreement
CMP	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, governing body of the Kyoto Protocol
COP G77	Conference of the Parties, governing body of the UNFCCC Group of 77, along with China, a large negotiating alliance of developing countries that focuses on numerous international topics, including climate change
GCF	Green Climate Fund, established by UNFCCC decision 1/CP.16 as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention to support projects, programs, policies, and other activities in developing country Parties
GEF	Global Environment Facility, established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems
GGA	Global goal on adaptation, established by Paris Agreement Article 7, paragraph 1
GST	Global stocktake, a process established by Article 14 of the Paris Agreement for a periodic assessment of collective progress toward achieving the purpose of this Agreement and its long-term goals