

Trócaire Opening Statement to 28 November Joint Committee on the Environment and Climate Action Session on COP 28

24 November 2023

Chairperson and Committee Members, thank you for this invitation to meet with you today to discuss COP 28.

2023 has been a year when record temperatures have been repeatedly broken, with climate change impacts in the form of unprecedented wildfires, floods and droughts experienced worldwide. Insufficient mitigation and adaptation action to date means the risks associated with breaching the Paris Agreement's 1.5°Celsius threshold are increasingly imminent.

The impacts of more frequent and intense climate and weather events mean people around the world are experiencing rising loss and damage costs. With small island developing states and developing countries who have contributed least to the climate crisis facing its worst consequences, the climate crisis is deepening global inequalities. This injustice, manifest in the disproportionate impacts on people living in poverty and others in vulnerable situations, demands climate action is rooted in human rights and climate justice principles.

The necessity of decisive accelerated action this decade is uniquely underlined for Governments at this COP. For the first time since the Paris Agreement, Governments are tasked with responding to a Global Stocktake, a report card on their collective climate action. The political response to the Stocktake is a litmus test of Governments commitment to limiting global warming to 1.5°Celsius. These include the need for countries to set more ambitious and detailed 2030 and 2035 NDC targets before COP 30.

The climate crisis is a crisis of inequality, and its scale is staggering. There is gross global inequality in emissions. The Global North responsible for 92% of all excess global carbon dioxide emissions while the Global South accounts for 8% of these emissions.¹ Decades of rampant extraction and burning of fossil fuels by the world's wealthiest countries, as well as failure to take the action necessary to reduce emissions and build resilience to climate change, have driven increasingly frequent and catastrophic climate events. The unavoidable and irreversible

¹ Hickel, Jason, 2020, Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: an equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30196-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30196-0/fulltext)

impacts associated with these events - referred to as **Loss and Damage** – have had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable countries and communities in the world, who are picking up the tab for a problem they overwhelmingly did not create. It is estimated that Sub-Saharan African countries will have to take on almost \$1 trillion in debt over the next ten years unless wealthy countries provide adequate finance to address the climate crisis.²

While the ambitious measures required now are costly, the costs will be all the more burdensome the longer we wait. For communities Trócaire works with, the costs of insufficient action to date are already increasingly devastating. Global failure to adequately mitigate and support effective adaptation to climate change means increasing numbers of people are experiencing related loss and damage.

After many years work to have Loss and Damage, which refers to climate change impacts that go beyond what people can adapt to, recognised as an essential ‘third pillar’ of climate finance, a breakthrough was achieved at last year’s COP, with the Parties agreeing to establish a Loss and Damage Fund.

A year on, significantly affected sectors such as agriculture, which accounted for more than a quarter of all loss and damages between 2008 and 2018; and communities which have and are experiencing both economic costs, including loss of livelihoods, homes and land, as well as non- economic costs including loss of life, culture and biodiversity, await the operationalisation of the Fund.

As a country which played a leading role at COP 27 in forging agreement to establish a Loss and Damage Fund, followed by participation in the Transitional Committee meetings, which have resulted in a list of implementation [recommendations](#) being brought forward to COP 28, Ireland has an important role to play in the successful operationalisation of the Fund.

New [research](#) by Christian Aid Ireland and Trócaire estimate Ireland’s fair share of ‘Loss and Damage’ finance, to help developing countries pay for the cost of the climate crisis, to be at least €1.5 billion annually by 2030. At COP 28 we call on Ireland to show leadership in the following areas:

- Agreement on new Loss and Damage Fund based on climate justice principles. Specifically we urge Ireland to advocate for a clear commitment

² <https://climatenetwork.org/2022/10/17/the-climate-crisis-could-increase-african-country-debts-by-1-trillion/#:~:text=Sub%2DSaharan%20African%20countries%20will,Action%20Network%20International%20%5B1%5D>.

by richer countries to pay their fair share of finance into the fund on an ongoing basis. Payments being made on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and countries being held accountable in this regard. Funding should be additional, adequate, accessible, grant and needs based in line with core principles of equity, gender justice and human rights.

- **Captitalize the fund.** The COP27 decision to establish the fund was an historic first step, but it remains an ‘empty bucket’. Wealthy, high-emitting nations that overwhelmingly caused this crisis must now lead the way in filling it. In this respect Ireland can demonstrate leadership by being ready to make an initial substantial pledge to the Fund at COP 28 and commit to developing a pathway to delivering its fair share of Loss and Damage finance, of at least €1.5bn by 2030.
- **Ensure Civil society representation:** It is crucial that affected communities are involved in the Fund’s decision-making processes, and along with stakeholder engagement that civil society has a seat on the board of the fund. Ireland should work to ensure the Fund follows the principle of subsidiarity, wherever possible, and prioritise direct access, representation and participation in decision-making by impacted communities, including rural women, smallholder farmers and other marginalised groups. To this end, the Fund should include a small grants window for direct access for local communities.

Once again progress on Loss and Damage will be a critical issue at COP and a litmus test of richer countries commitment to climate justice.

In summary, Trócaire welcomes this opportunity to draw the Committee’s attention to:

1. The unparalleled urgency for an ambitious response to the Global Stocktake Report. Ireland must work to ensure the final part of the Stocktake results in a political outcome that is consistent with the Paris Agreement ambition to limit global warming to 1.5°Celsius.
2. Ireland should continue its leadership role on the Loss and Damage Fund. Specifically, Ireland should be ready to make an initial substantial pledge to the Fund at COP 28. This pledge representing new, additional, grant based finance.
3. Ireland should further support the development of a Fund that will provide predictable and adequate funding that is based on climate justice

principles, whereby developed countries pay their fair share of Loss and Damage finance.

4. Ireland should work to ensure the Fund follows the principle of subsidiarity, wherever possible, and prioritise direct access, representation and participation in decision-making by impacted communities, including rural women, smallholder farmers and other marginalised groups.