Global Goal on Adaptation:

From Concept to Practice

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Foday Tunkara loads the rice mill, Salikenni Photo: Jane Hahn/ActionAid

Key Message:

- The climate crisis we face today is a result of historical greenhouse gas emissions primarily from developed countries and already posing an unjust burden on developing countries.
- The Paris Agreement includes a Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) which provides a "north star" for driving action and support for vulnerable countries, populations and ecosystems to adapt to climate change impacts in conjunction with mitigation ambition
- In order to significantly advance action under the Global Goal on Adaptation by 2018, a key international climate policy moment, the report recommends to:
- Accelerate the development and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and assessments on capacity gaps and support needs in developing countries
- Assist countries in effective adaptation reporting by prioritising adaptation capacity building and strengthening global institutions in the planned 2017 review;
- Develop metrics and indicators by 2018 to measure progress towards meeting the objective of Global Goal on Adaptation;
- Scale-up adaptation finance provided by developed countries for priority actions in developing countries, and longer-term needs, based on adaptation scenarios linked to different warming levels, and a 2025 adaptation finance target;

Executive Summary

Climate change is no longer a future concern but a current reality.

Global average temperatures have already risen by 1°C¹ and the impacts of climate change are being felt the world over. While climate change is affecting countries around the globe, developing countries and in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized populations within them, such as women, children and the elderly, are feeling the brunt of its impacts, making enhancing adaptation action *today* imperative. The climate crisis we face today is a result of historical greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from developed countries over the past 150 years.² The impacts of cumulative emissions are already posing a severe and unjust burden on developing countries and are exacerbating global inequality.

Developing countries are already making significant investments in adaptation, which often compliment but can also divert resources away from other development priorities. With climate impacts rising and set to become more severe in the years ahead, this means that most developing countries cannot meet the growing adaptation needs without further support. The gap between the levels of adaptation needed and current efforts - the adaptation gap - is widening. UNEP's 2016 Adaptation Gap Report found that the costs of adaptation in developing countries, as one important expression of the needs, could range between USD 140 billion to 300 billion by 2030 and between USD 280 billion and USD 500 billion by 2050 – depending on levels of mitigation ambition.³

While increasing mitigation ambition is fundamental to reduce future impacts from climate change, adaptation action must also be scaled up significantly and quickly. Countries would be ill-advised if they only prepare for a 1.5°C warmer world. Instead they should take into account implications of various warming scenarios including 3°C (or more). It will be challenging or impossible to adapt to this level of warming in certain situations, and substantial loss and damage will not be avoided. As adaptation needs increase, so will the costs, and developing countries will have to make choices. A key task facing all countries is the need to integrate adaptation into development planning through explicit linkages and synergies between climate pledges, Sustainable Development Goals and the targets agreed under Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). This is essential to build resilience and thereby safeguard sustainable development progress across sectors. Having said this, we also need to recognize that some adaptation choices will divert resources away from other important development investments into poverty reduction and key sustainable development needs.

In Paris, governments recognised the importance of enhancing adaptation action. The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was established in the Paris Agreement with the aim of "enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the global temperature goal". ⁴ The establishment of the GGA was widely supported as part of the strategy to increase focus on adaptation in the Agreement.

The GGA could be framed as the "north star", providing the direction of travel and unifying work on adaptation, in conjunction with mitigation ambition. It also serves the strategic purpose of increasing attention on adaptation in order to drive action in planning, concrete implementation and cooperation. Special attention needs should be given to protecting the people, livelihoods and ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The Agreement acknowledges the important link between mitigation ambition and adaptation needs and associated costs. This should encourage all Parties, led by developed countries, to ratchet up their mitigation ambition. There is currently a significant gap between the Paris Agreement's goal to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C and the collective ambition of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which translate into an almost 3°C increase in global average temperature⁵ with devastating consequences.

The Agreement itself does not specify how the GGA should be operationalized and there was never a common understanding among Parties on specifics, beyond the objective of the GGA as defined in Article 7.1. Decision 1/CP.21 allocated five tasks relevant to operationalizing the GGA to the Adaptation Committee (AC), along with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF). These relate to methodologies for assessing efforts, needs and costs in developing countries, reviewing adaptation-relevant institutional arrangements and the overall adequacy and effectiveness of action and support. These tasks are essential to make GGA concrete, ambitious and implementable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this report, ActionAid, CARE and WWF make nine key recommendations, aimed at accelerating adaptation action in preparation for 2018, which is a significant political milestone for the climate policy agenda. This ambitious timeline is necessary to support urgent implementation to safeguard the most vulnerable and fulfilling towards the objective of GGA. In addition, progress on adaptation can contribute towards creating momentum for other UNFCCC processes taking place that year.

- 1. Accelerate development and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs): All developing countries should prepare, with support as needed, participatory and gender-responsive NAPs. The NAPs must be submitted to the UNFCCC by early 2018 in order to input into the NAP assessment process that year, as mandated by COP21. Countries should undertake steps to improve the coherence of their policy and institutional frameworks, as well as coordination across sectors to foster an integrated approach to adaptation and climate resilience, including explicit linkages and synergies with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SFDRR, where appropriate.
- 2. Assess capacity gaps: By 2018, all developing countries should have available assessments of their existing capacity and projected gaps to develop adaptation strategies and meet adaptation needs, with clear requirement of international support to be provided. This process should in particular inform the replenishment of the GCF and the NAPs assessment process.
- 3. Enhance capacity building for adaptation: The newly formed Paris Committee on Capacity Building must prioritise in its first activities addressing capacity constraints related to adaptation planning in developing countries, including converting the conditional elements of the NDCs into fundable projects. This should include elaboration of the content, approaches and actions needed to strengthen adaptive capacity and achieve ongoing and effective adaptation.
- 4. Advance metrics and indicators for the GGA:
 Based on work conducted by the AC and the
 LEG, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and
 Technological Advice (SBSTA) should develop
 proposals for metrics and indicators to
 operationalize the GGA by 2018. These should
 address the adequacy and effectiveness of action
 and support in an inclusive and participatory
 manner. This should take into account the

- capacities of developing countries, as well as synergies with other relevant processes such as the SDGs and SFDRR.
- 5. Streamlined adaptation communication: By 2017, the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) should develop guidance for a streamlined communication process to assist developing countries in effectively and efficiently managing their adaptation planning, addressing monitoring challenges, as well as meeting reporting requirements. This should take into account the different roles of NDCs (forward looking), NAPs (in conjunction with NDC implementation roadmaps) and National Communications (backward looking) as well as synergies with the SDGs and SFDRR.
- 6. Review of existing adaptation institutions:
 The review of adaptation-related institutional arrangements to be undertaken in 2017, as mandated by COP21, should be completed with the view to addressing the existing gaps and future needs to ensure the successful operationalisation of the GGA.
- 7. Ensure funding for priority actions: Developed countries must provide sufficient funding to developing countries, and in particular to LDCs, by 2018 to support the implementation of remaining National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) projects and/or other immediate priorities as identified in NDCs, or NAPs, to reduce the adaptation gap urgently.
- 8. Meeting the adaptation needs of developing countries: SBSTA, by 2018, should develop various adaptation scenarios for a range of possible temperature scenarios, taking into account the IPCC special report on 1.5°C. A mechanism should be developed to trigger support for adaptation corresponding to the most likely scenario in light of likely emission trajectories based on existing pledges and the impacts thereof.
- 9. Setting science based adaptation finance target: An adaptation finance target for 2025 must be set by no later than 2018, to ensure that adequate support is provided to developing countries to implement their adaptation plans. The support must be based on a scientific analysis, needs to adapt to global warming impact scenarios and levels of realized mitigation ambition, and should be provided by developed countries taking into account their historical responsibilities.

Recommendations and milestones

The Paris Agreement made significant strides in increasing the focus on adaptation under the Convention.

It could be argued that the goal of addressing adaptation on parity with mitigation was achieved – at least on paper. However, it is now time to translate that commitment into action and to ensure that adaptation continues to be a priority as the Agreement is implemented. The GGA provides the framework through which the adaptation provisions in the Agreement can be realised. However, there remains a lot of work to do to ensure that the GGA is operationalised in a way that best meets the needs of developing countries.

2018 is an important year and a significant political milestone for the climate policy agenda through a number of processes and activities, including:

- Facilitative dialogue: In Paris Parties agreed to hold a facilitative dialogue in 2018 to take stock of progress towards a peaking of global emissions and rapid reductions thereafter to achieve the global temperature goal. This dialogue will provide information about the projected temperature trajectory.
- Progress on NAPs: In 2018 there will be an assessment of the progress on developing and implementing NAPs. This outcome of this assessment should inform future work on NAPs.
- Ministerial on climate finance: At COP 24

 a ministerial meeting on climate finance is
 mandated. The importance of increasing finance
 for adaptation should be an integral part of this
 discussion.
- Replenishment of the GCF: In 2018 the replenishment of the GCF is provisionally scheduled to take place.
- Special report on the impacts of 1.5°C: In Paris Parties invited the IPCC to provide a special report on the impacts of 1.5°C warming and related global emission pathways in 2018 to which it agreed.

There is also some indication that 2018 might become a target year for finalising further rules in support of the Paris Agreement under the APA.

In order to assess progress towards the GGA targets could be developed to determine the direction of travel and assess progress along the journey to achieving the goal. We recommend the following:

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Governments should envisage to significantly scale-up action in order to close the adaptation gap by 2018. We are proposing the milestones that need to be achieved between now and 2018 in the following graphic. The GGA has been established but a more coherent discussion is needed to determine how it will be operationalised. We encourage Parties to make space for discussing the operationalisation of the GGA at the upcoming sessions of the APA and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement.



Niama, 35, a mother of two in western Somaliland Photo: Jennifer Huxta/Actionaid

Annex 1: Mandates relevant for operationalising the GGA

MANDATE	BY WHOM	NEXT STEPS AS PROPOSED BY THE SECRETARIAT	RECOMMENDATIONS
Consider methodologies for assessing adaptation needs in developing countries	AC	I. Proposed scoping for relevant experts in late January 2017 II. Scoping paper outlining the limitations and strengths of existing methodologies by AC 11	Ask the SCF to develop eligibility criteria for climate finance II. Choose a methodology or methodologies that are most appropriate and develop guidance for developing countries to use in implementing it
Develop modalities to recognize the adaptation efforts of developing countries	AC and LEG	I. Joint task force to identify a range of possible methodologies and modalities and solicit feedback through outreach to Parties and other stakeholders II. Select options to include in recommendations to CMA	I. Determine how to report this information and how it will be used II. Develop a template that harmonizes the requirements of different reporting vehicles to ensure that there is not an additional burden on developing countries.
Facilitate the mobilization of support for adaptation in developing countries in the context of the global temperature goal	AC, LEG and SCF	Side event at COP 22 to report progress on the joint mandates Synthesis of submissions to build on desk review of joint mandates as the basis for future work	I. Ensure that support addresses adaptation needs associated with mitigation ambition and realised global warming scenarios, not just 1.5°C and 2°C II. Ensure support includes finance, technology transfer and capacity building
Methodologies for assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support	AC, LEG and SCF	I. Synthesis of submissions to build on desk review	I. Ask SBSTA to develop a broad set of possible indicators of the effectiveness of adaptation, in conjunction with the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Risk Reduction and others. II. Ensure that the Paris Committee for Capacity Building addresses the need for capacity to assess the adequacy of support
Reviewing the work of adaptation- related institutional arrangements under the Convention in 2017	AC	I. Finalization of the ToRs of the review by AC members by 30 September II. Issue a call for submissions with a deadline of 31 December III. Synthesize submissions for AC11	I. The review should be undertaken within the Framework of operationalising the GGA (i.e. what gaps would need to be filled, etc.) II. Assess coherence amongst relevant institutions and identify opportunities to enhance cooperation

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Content and opinions expressed are solely those of the authors on behalf of ActionAid International, CARE International and WWF.

Feedback and comments on the content and recommendations in this report are appreciated and welcome.

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