

**Policy Brief**

# Integration of **Nationally Determined Contributions** and **National Adaptation Plans** for Effective Adaptation Actions

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## Highlights

- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) focus on national level climate actions and complement each other.
- The NAP is considered the implementation of mechanisms for adaptation NDCs, and countries create linkages between their NDCs and NAP.
- Integration of NDCs and NAPs provides the opportunity to avoid duplication of action and facilitate the effective utilization of climate finance for adaptation. It also provides the opportunity for common monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and developing holistic adaptation measures to address climate change impacts.
- NDCs provide entry points for the formulation of NAPs in countries that have not yet prepared their NAP, and contribute to identifying the country's climate adaptation priorities.
- There are synergies that could be developed between the NDC process and the NAP process such as climate risks assessments, stakeholder engagement, and climate finance for adaptation actions which facilitate an efficient and effective adaptation process at national and sub-national level and avoid the duplication of actions and double-counting of adaptation finance.

## Introduction

In 2015, 196 Parties signed the Paris Agreement with the objective of changing the world's course towards a sustainable pathway, and limiting global warming to 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. One of the key elements of the Paris Agreement, or its core could be deemed the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) previously referred to as intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) prior to the ratification of the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs. The NDCs communicated are recorded in a public registry titled NDC Registry, maintained by the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat.<sup>i</sup> NDCs are submitted every five years, and the next round of NDCs, which could potentially include new or revised NDCs, is expected by 2020. To date, 184 Parties have submitted their first NDCs, and 1 Party its 2<sup>nd</sup> NDC.<sup>ii</sup>

NAPs were introduced under the Cancun Adaptation Framework (CAF)<sup>iii</sup> during COP16, where the Parties decided to formulate and implement national adaptation plans. These were to build upon the experiences from the national adaptation programmes of actions. The objectives of the NAP process is to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience; to facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation, in a coherent manner, into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities, in particular development planning processes and strategies, within all relevant sectors and at different levels, as appropriate.<sup>iv</sup>

The guiding principles of NAPs indicate that NAPs should be undertaken in accordance with the Convention; follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into

consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems; be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, and by gender-sensitive approaches, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate; not be prescriptive, nor result in the duplication of efforts undertaken in-country, but facilitate country-owned, country-driven action.<sup>v</sup>

To date 13 countries have completed their NAPs, and have shared via the UNFCCC Secretariat maintained NAP Central. Additionally, there are some countries that have developed a document or plan that is deemed to be equivalent to the country's NAP, but has not been shared on NAP Central.<sup>vi</sup>

## Alignment between NDCs and NAPs

There are different areas for alignment and integration of NDCs and NAPs in the national planning processes. A few key areas are:

**Climate vulnerability and risk assessments:** NDCs and NAPs both focus on adaptation measures that will be addressing the identified climate vulnerabilities and risks, which will in turn lead to building climate resilience of communities and ecosystems. Given that national and sub-national level adaptation planning need to build on scientific evidence is important. With NDCs and NAPs overlapping in implementation, and the need for both to develop evidence-based climate change adaptation measures for climate resilience building, climate vulnerability and risk assessment will form a useful entry points for integration of NDCs and NAPs.

Identification of priority sectors, communities and ecosystems, and areas for the application

of adaptation actions: While the climate risks and vulnerability assessments form an important component of the adaptation planning process in a country, it is equally important to identify the key development sectors, the overlaps between the development, economic and social priorities and the identified risks and vulnerabilities for the implementation of sustainable adaptation measures. The baseline scenarios integrating these elements would be vital to identify the key sectors and geographical focuses of adaptation planning for the country, and they could be utilized for developing common actions for the NDCs and the NAPs, integrating the two processes and duplicating similar efforts/ avoiding potential contradictions between the adaptation actions under the NDC and the NAP of a country.

Enhancing strengthening of the institutional and coordination mechanisms for national

and sub-national level adaptation actions: Research conducted for identifying gaps and needs for the implementation of NDCs on adaptation<sup>vii</sup> has indicated the need for enhanced coordination mechanisms for the effective implementation of climate change adaptation at national and sub-national levels. The two processes on NDCs and NAP could be integrated in facilitating the strengthening and the enhancing of institutional capacity and coordination on climate change adaptation.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>viii</sup> and mainstreaming climate adaptation into national development planning processes: SDGs and achieving SDG targets are an important component of many countries' development planning processes. In this process, climate action under SDG 13 is pivotal, while there are many interlinkages between SDGs and different sectors that have potential to be priorities in the formulation and implementation of a country's NAP or NDC. SDG related action and synergies between the SDG process, the NDC and NAP processes also provide further opportunities to align the NDC and NAP process, as well as the integration of adaptation measures at country level to national development policies, plans and actions.

Mobilizing adaptation finance, and accessing sector-based climate finance for projects: Another form of integrating NDCs into the NAP process in a country could be through

the adaptation actions for which climate finance is mobilized. Project development requires different steps highlighted as potential for integration of NDCs and NAPs, and provides synergies and entry points to align the NDC and NAP process. Further, it would provide additional entry points linked to monitoring and evaluation of adaptation activities in countries.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of adaptation actions: Alignment of NDCs and NAP could be created through common M&E processes. These have the potential on focusing on common standards for M&E, data collection and data sharing of all M&E processes on climate change adaptation in a country which builds avenues for efficient measuring, reviewing and verification of adaptation actions.<sup>ix</sup>

Integration of NAPs to NDC review process of countries: Many countries are focusing on revising their NDCs for submission in 2020.<sup>x</sup> In countries where NAPs are not yet formulated, the NDC process will provide entry points for identifying the key focuses that could be prioritized in their NAPs. Further, this could be a mutually beneficial process of reviewing the effectiveness of certain actions, the gaps and needs for improving the NDCs and other adaptation measures in the country, and also aligning the national adaptation planning process so as to enhance the impact of climate change adaptation actions.

## Recommendations

To create an environment which is conducive to alignment of NDCs and NAPs, it is important that:

Multi-stakeholder climate change adaptation actions are encouraged and implemented at national and subnational level. This would provide the space for interlinkages among

different stakeholders with diverse expertise and experiences to share their knowledge, resources, and contribute to developing holistic adaptation actions.

Laws, policies and plans need to develop mandates for coordination among relevant authorities and stakeholders, data access and

knowledge sharing, and setting up institutional mechanisms for efficient implementation of adaptation actions at country level (through NDCs, and NAPs).

While countries highlight the need for improved coordination and institutional set ups for efficient implementation of adaptation measures through NDCs and NAPs, many countries have the need for new mandates for such coordination<sup>xi, xii</sup>. The lack of these leads to not being able to develop comprehensive adaptation actions, due to lack of data and resources, as well as the mandate for implementing the planned actions to address climate risks and vulnerabilities. To avoid such situations, it is important that countries conduct analysis of existing laws, policies and plans, identifying the areas to be addressed to gaps and needs identified, and draft and enact needed laws and policies to empower the relevant authorities for implementing effective coordination to implement NDCs and NAPs in the country of focus.

Capacity building, sharing of knowledge and experiences among key stakeholders: To ensure that alignment of different climate adaptation processes in the country, and interlinkages between key thematic areas such as SDGs, disaster risk reduction, and the incorporation of climate risks and

vulnerabilities into the climate change adaptation processes in the country, the capacity and technical expertise of different stakeholders is crucial. Research conducted in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have highlighted different capacity needs which have been shared by key stakeholders including policy makers and government officers which equip them to take effective climate adaptation action. For better alignment of evidence-based, participatory and country driven climate change adaptation, with alignment of NDCs and NAP, it is important that the key stakeholders are capacity built to contribute effectively to these processes.

Mobilizing of climate adaptation finance, and investment of finance for building in country capacity and expertise: The need for climate finance to benefit countries links with the capacity, skills and expertise that remains in the country. It is important that climate change adaptation focused finance, has a focus on developing the skills of key stakeholders to be able to develop and implement holistic adaptation actions, with synergies between NDCs, NAPs, disaster risk reduction measures, and SDGs through multi-stakeholder driven participatory processes.

## Conclusions

Many developing countries are yet to develop their NAPs, and NDCs are in the process of being revised for submissions in 2020. This provides an opportunity to countries to create alignment between NDCs and NAP processes, and to ensure that adaptation actions at national level are coordinated, multi-

stakeholder driven, and maximizes on the investment of climate adaptation finance contributing to building the resilience of vulnerable communities and ecosystems to face climate change impacts.

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<sup>i</sup> Article 4, Paris Agreement

<sup>ii</sup> NDC Registry, UNFCCC

<sup>iii</sup> Decision 1/CP.16, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1

<sup>iv</sup> Decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 1

<sup>v</sup> decision 5/CP.17, paragraph 3

<sup>vi</sup> For example Afghanistan has prepared a national adaptation plan which is not yet submitted to the NAP Central of the UNFCCC

<sup>vii</sup> *Policy Gaps and Needs Analysis for the Implementation of NDCs on Adaptation and Loss and Damage in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka*, SLYCAN Trust, ICCCAD, Prakriti Resources Center, APN (2019)

<sup>viii</sup> Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations

<sup>ix</sup> *Policy Gaps and Needs Analysis for the Implementation of NDCs on Adaptation and Loss and Damage in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka*, SLYCAN Trust, ICCCAD, Prakriti Resources Center, APN (2019)

<sup>x</sup> Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka are presently in the process of revising their NDCs. The regional research project *Policy Gaps and Needs Analysis for the Implementation of NDCs on Adaptation and Loss and Damage in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (2019)* has contributed to these processes

<sup>xi</sup> For example, Sri Lanka is in the process of developing the Climate Change Commission Act with the aim of enhancing the coordination mechanism of climate change actions in the country, including NDCs and the NAP.

<sup>xii</sup> Examples of countries highlighting gaps in coordination on climate change adaptation, NDCs include Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.