

HOW THE U.S. IS LEADING THE GLOBAL NORTH OBSTRUCTION ON LOSS AND DAMAGE FINANCE

The U.S. has long been a [primary blocker of progress](#) within the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). One of the issues it has dug its heels in the hardest on is the climate debt owed by rich nations most responsible for climate change, and especially [Loss and Damage \(L&D\) finance](#). L&D, as you may know, is the finance owed to Global South communities for the harm that is already being experienced as a result of the Global North's climate inaction.

The U.S. is the largest historical emitter, and thus has contributed exorbitantly to causing L&D. Yet it continues to obstruct any progress to provide finance. Unfortunately, because of the UNFCCC's lack of effective good governance requirements—especially in ensuring openness, inclusivity, and transparency around climate talks such as those about to happen at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh—much of this obstruction is obscured from public view.

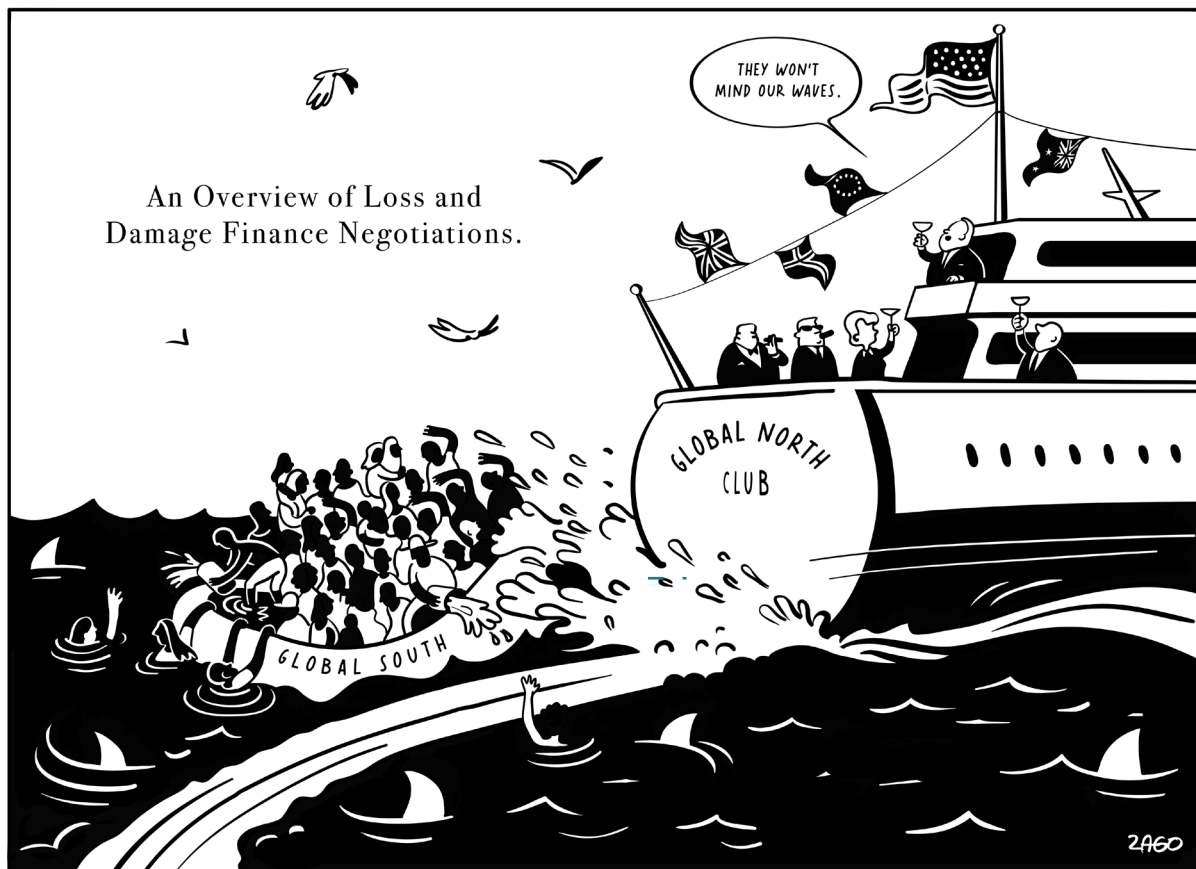


Illustration by:
Zago Brothers
Instagram:
@zagowork
Twitter:
@zagobrothers

This backgrounder aims to prompt further scrutiny of the U.S. and other Global North countries that, among many other things, are blocking creation of a fund to remunerate climate-vulnerable countries for [the hundreds of billions, if not trillions, in climate damages](#) the U.S. and other Global North countries inflict.

TIMELINE OF OBSERVABLE U.S. OBSTRUCTION OF L&D FINANCE AND CLIMATE FINANCE MORE GENERALLY

COP26 TO THE EVE OF COP27

The following timeline brings into clearer view recent obstruction on L&D finance—and climate finance more broadly—that has occurred just from COP26 last November in Glasgow, to the Bonn talks that occurred in June 2022, to the eve of COP27 happening November 2022.



NOVEMBER 2021 COP26

- [U.S. insists a new fund for L&D](#) is not needed and will not be supported
- U.S. successfully [blocks G77 \(largest Global South country negotiating block\) proposal](#) for a new L&D financing mechanism
- U.S. also [blocks new finance goal](#), saying there is only need to deliberate, not decide
- U.S. [objects to language](#) calling for the overdue \$100 billion U.S. dollars per year to materialize “as soon as possible”
- U.S. works with EU and others to [block the scaling-up of adaption finance](#)
- U.S. (and EU) refuse to even agree to a [common definition of “climate finance”](#)



MARCH 2022 INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

- [U.S. tries to remove all references to L&D](#) in the Summary for Policymakers of the latest IPCC report, not even allowing the inclusion of a simple statement that “Losses and damages on natural and human systems have increased”
- [U.S. opposes any language](#) that could fuel the political debate for public climate finance
- [All mention of fossil fuel industry manipulation](#) detailed in the full report are mysteriously omitted from the Summary for Policymakers



JUNE 2022 BONN INTERSESSIONAL CLIMATE TALKS

- [Developing country proposal to add L&D finance](#) to official agenda mysteriously does not make it on agenda, making it nearly impossible to establish a fund by COP27
- U.S. [co-facilitates the Glasgow Dialogue](#), the now toothless and de/down-prioritized platform offered to discuss (not provide) L&D funding
- U.S. insists [there is no need for a new L&D fund](#), demanding that existing climate finance (which largely remains undelivered) can help cover L&D
- U.S. insists that if the Glasgow Dialogue is expected to [lead to actual finance](#), they will be less likely to engage on the topic
- U.S. refuses to accept any decision text reflecting the negotiations on the need for L&D finance from the official policy documents of the Bonn climate talks
- The [opposition of the U.S.](#) and other Global North countries successfully blocked meaningful outcomes during the Bonn climate talks on the need to establish L&D funding

TIMELINE OF OBSERVABLE U.S. OBSTRUCTION OF L&D FINANCE AND CLIMATE FINANCE MORE GENERALLY

COP26 TO THE EVE OF COP27



SEPTEMBER 2022

AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

- U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry tries to [offload responsibility](#) for climate change and its impacts away from the largest historical emitter to 'everyone'



SEPTEMBER 2022

NY TIMES EVENT

THE ROAD TO COP27: THE STATE OF U.S. CLIMATE AMIBITIONS

- John Kerry finally [publicly admits](#) that L+D finance will require [trillions of dollars](#), yet insists that the wealthiest country in the world doesn't have such funds
- John Kerry says "You can't just set up a facility in six weeks," ignoring that official negotiations on L&D have been ongoing for 10 years, with no meaningful progress thanks in part to U.S. obstruction that Kerry himself had a key role in

WHAT CIVIL SOCIETY HAS TO SAY

ASIAN PEOPLES MOVEMENT ON DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT

CLAIRE MIRANDA

These strategies to delay, deceive and avoid climate finance obligations have been going on for years, and they are nothing but outrageous and appalling. Their empty promises and inaction have led to massive destruction and injustices for people and communities in the Global South, which now require huge amounts of climate finance beyond the Global North's unfulfilled \$100 billion target. And it should not be a question of which one to prioritize, as all three—mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage—must be urgently addressed and adequately financed as part of the Global North's fair share of climate actions.

THIRD WORLD NETWORK

MEENA RAMAN

Developing countries stand united in demanding finance to help address the loss and damage they are experiencing; not tomorrow, not in the future, but here and now. Loss and Damage finance, and climate finance more generally, is not charity. It is not goodwill. And it is not optional. Climate finance is part of the climate debt that is owed and already overdue by developed countries for the havoc they have wrought on our communities. People in the Global South are paying for the impacts of climate change with their lives. The very least developed countries, having caused this crisis, can do is to provide the cost of reparations needed so that we can begin to address some of these harms.

ACTIONAID USA

BRANDON WU

The Biden Administration has talked a good game about environmental justice at home, even if its rhetoric has outmatched the reality. But in stark contrast, it is turning a blind eye to communities in the Global South, who had no role in causing the climate crisis but are on the front lines of its impacts. Unfortunately, this is business as usual for the United States. Democratic administrations have always had the gall to claim the mantle of "climate leadership" while blocking or watering down key aspects of climate policy, particularly those most important to the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. Removing its opposition to a Loss & Damage financing facility would be a bare minimum first step to reverse U.S. hypocrisy and it could have transformative impacts for many frontline communities around the world.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

NATHALIE RENGIFO

Rich, polluting countries can't fool us anymore. The obstructive attitude of the U.S. government to own up to its climate debt and provide finance to address Loss and Damage is a confirmation of complicity with those truly responsible for the climate crisis—the Big Polluters. Together they have been and will continue to condemn billions of people to an uninhabitable world full of suffering. It's time to make Big Polluters, and those that do their bidding like the U.S., pay for the harms and devastation they cause.

WHAT CIVIL SOCIETY HAS TO SAY

CLIMATE WATCH THAILAND

WANUN PERMPIBUL

Loss and Damage has been neglected for far too long in these negotiations. And now that it has gained traction with voices of people and communities from the Global South becoming stronger and louder, the U.S. and its allies are again playing dirty tricks to get away from their obligations, aggressively pushing for false solutions and continuing with their fossil fuel addiction. As they try to move away from discussions about numbers for climate finance targets, we must remind them of their climate finance obligations based on actual needs for adaptation, mitigation and Loss and Damage. We should not let them get away with these repeated tricks!

CORPORATE EUROPE OBSERVATORY

PASCOE SABIDO

By blocking progress on Loss and Damage, the U.S. government thinks the lives of those dying from climate change today are worth less than the profits of its own polluting industries. This should come as no surprise given the U.S.' track record. How can the EU—a self-professed climate leader and champion of human rights—still support such a position? It's completely incoherent, and if the EU wants to be taken seriously it should distance itself from the U.S. immediately.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL

SARA SHAW

It's simply outrageous that the U.S., one of the countries most responsible for the climate crisis, is doing everything in its power to derail and block much needed Loss and Damage finance for communities hit hardest by climate change. Any developed country that chooses to side with the U.S. on this issue is on the wrong side of history. We need Loss and Damage finance now.
