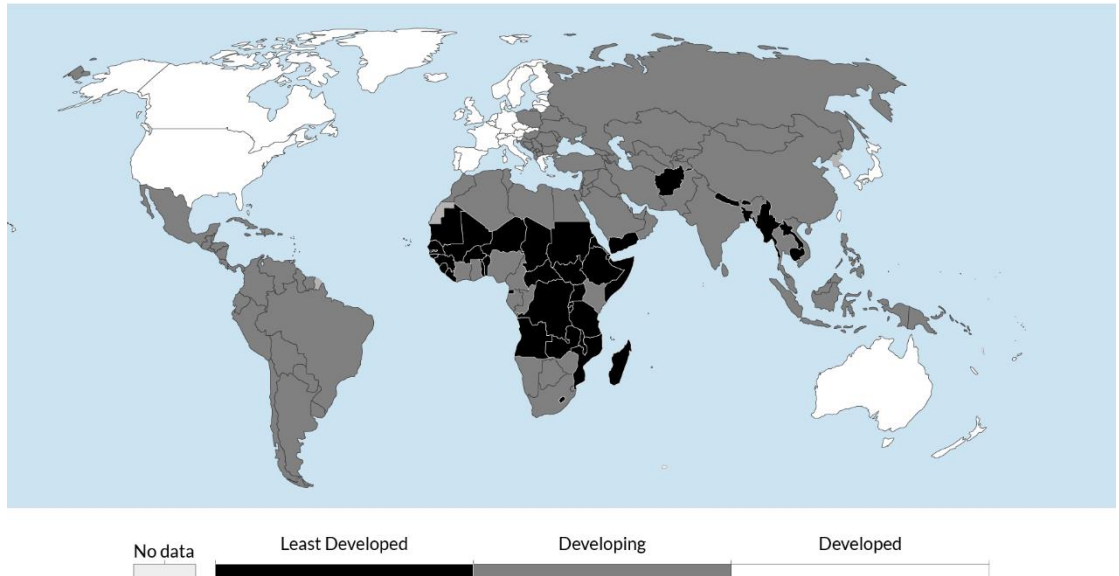




Developing countries



Introductory Note

Developing countries have been experiencing for many years the negative impacts of climate change, including loss in agriculture/forestry resources, water shortage, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, infrastructure damage, loss of human and animal life, drought and health and livelihoods risks. Moreover, adaptation, adjustment and resilience in developing countries are undermined due to factors such as rapid urbanization, poor urban design, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate meteorological information, poor awareness and low levels of literacy combined with human actions such as industrialization, gas flaring, burning of fossil fuels and agricultural practices. Sustainable actions need to be quickly implemented so that the economic, social and environmental processes of developing countries do not totally collapse, especially in the areas of agriculture, tourism and natural resources. (Oyilieze Akanwa and Joe-Ikechebelu, 2019)

A 10-year strategy to put people’s jobs and well-being at the centre of the transition to carbon-neutral and climate-resilient economies was introduced in the 2019 UN Climate Summit, with a focus on delivering decent jobs, advancing social justice, supporting a sustainable future for every country and ensuring an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic, social and environmental dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis need to be addressed so as to build back better, more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies that are more



resilient to future shocks. A climate-positive recovery can be achieved through the six areas of action that the UN Secretary-General has put forward. (New Climate Action for Jobs Board calls for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, 2020)

Environmental aspect

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is providing support to 115 developing countries to submit successfully their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Mapping specific steps that each country intends to take to help meet the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement is a crucial commitment of the international community to restrict global warming below 2°C and getting close, if possible, for 1.5°C. Developing countries represent 22.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. However, these countries are not likely to have their new commitments ready until early 2021, due to COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NDC plans need to be directly linked to a post-pandemic green recovery. Nigeria is a leading example of making the link between pandemic and a green recovery, involving plans for agriculture and housing in NDC planning, and focusing at the role of green jobs in jumpstarting the economy. (Developing countries raise climate ambitions to plot path out of pandemic, 2020)

On the one hand, reduction targets in the Paris Agreement were initially challenged by a number of developing countries that called instead for developed countries to reduce their emissions. The basic argumentation was that developed countries carry greater responsibility in respect to emission reductions and that they should allow instead developing countries to evolve in the “atmospheric space”, eventually, they agreed to adopt “nationally appropriate mitigation actions” (NAMAs). (Pocket Guide to NDCs under the UNFCCC, 2020) Nevertheless, the term “climate debt” and the controversy it entails are still on the table, referring to the debt owed by developed countries to developing countries regarding their disproportionately large contributions to climate change. Global emissions of greenhouse gases are largely contributed by developed countries, but developing countries are considered equally responsible to deal with climate change's negative effects. This concept is part of a broader concept, called “ecological debt”, having received increased attention since its submission to the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference, where developing countries, led by Bolivia, demanded the repayment of climate debt.



(Commitments for Annex I Parties under paragraph 1(b)(i) of the Bali Action Plan: Evaluating developed countries' historical climate debt to developing countries, 2012)

On the other hand, this transition offers many opportunities for the creation of green and decent jobs for inclusive, low carbon growth. The design of integrated and coherent policies to promote green growth is a challenge in all countries, especially in the developing ones as the existing resources and tools are often inadequate. The green jobs concept is linked with labor market shifts, directly dependent on various aspects of environmental management and low carbon development, as well as climate change adaptation. Moreover, green growth policies can guarantee economic, in terms of productivity and incomes, environmental, in terms of resource and energy efficiency, and social, in terms of better job quality, benefits. Individual governments need to invest in programs supporting private enterprises so as to boost the development of a greener economy. The greening of existing sectors and their jobs has a lot of potential, within supply chains that are based on small and medium-sized companies. These companies represent 90% of the industrial base in most developing countries. (Jarvis, Varma and Ram, 2011)

Apropos of carbon neutrality, commitments have already been made by a number of countries, both developed and developing, varying in their definition of neutrality, the date to achieve zero net emissions and the legal strength of the commitment itself. An example of these commitments is the “2050 Pathways” platform, a multilateral initiative supporting the achievement of long-term zero GHG commitments. 19 countries have committed to this initiative so far, with Fiji, Marshall Islands, South Africa, Brazil and Nigeria being among them. [Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality 2050 (RNC2050), 2019]

In the context of green growth success stories in the developing world, there are six countries that should be mentioned as leading examples. In the case of China, considerable steps are taken to reach net-zero emissions by 2060, following the example of European countries. The development of renewable energy sources is another big commitment in the Chinese government's agenda. Renewables are resilient to the pandemic but not to policy uncertainties. However, if China addresses such policy uncertainties, global solar PV and wind additions could each increase by a further 25% in 2022, pushing renewable capacity additions to a record 271 GW with



China alone accounting for 30% of the increase. (Renewables 2020; Analysis and forecast to 2025, 2020) In addition, Kenya faced challenges concerning unsustainable use of traditional forms of biomass and exposure to high and unstable oil import prices. Kenya's Ministry of Energy adopted a national plan that promotes the use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES), such as solar, wind, small-hydro, biogas and municipal waste energy, creating space for a large number of green jobs creation in these sectors. Uganda has also made important progress in transforming conventional agricultural production into an organic farming system. The benefits for its economy, society and the environment are significant. The world's lowest amount of artificial fertilizers is used in Uganda, less than 2% of the already very low average of 9kg/ha in Sub Saharan Africa. A policy direction pursuing organic forms of agricultural production is widely embraced by Uganda.

Moreover, Brazil, having the 4th largest urban population after China, India, and the US, has implemented innovative systems over the last decades, such as the Bus Rapid Transit system, providing an example of integrated urban and industrial planning and enabling the creation of new industries and jobs. In terms of forest management, Nepal focuses on community forestry. The government supports and facilitates the work of Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), as forest management is viewed as a community effort. Lastly, Tunisia's example concerns the promotion of the development and use of renewable energy so as to reduce the country's dependence on oil and gas. A funding mechanism, the National Fund for Energy Management, was established so as to support increased capacity in renewable energy technologies and improve energy efficiency. (Green Economy Developing Countries Success Stories, 2010)

Economic aspect

In general, the implementation of these goals will depend upon the support provided by developed countries to the developing ones. For example, the fiscal burden required to achieve GHG emissions reduction is predicted heavier in BRICS countries, which are commonly regarded as developing countries. Without the assistance of the "powerful", these countries aren't likely to meet their goals. (Jin and Kim, 2017)



In the context of equitable access to financial resources, UNFCCC foresees financial assistance from Parties with more resources to those less endowed and more vulnerable. Conforming to the Convention, a Financial Mechanism is established to provide funds to developing country Parties. According to Article 11 of the Convention, the operation of the Financial Mechanism is entrusted to one or more existing international entities, Global Environment Facility (GEF) being one of them. However, at COP 17 Parties established the Green Climate Fund (GCF), as an operational entity as well.

Moreover, Article 9 of the Paris Agreement states that developed country Parties shall provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation, taking into consideration country-driven strategies, and the priorities and needs of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and have significant capacity constraints, such as the least developed countries and small island developing States, considering the need for public and grant-based resources for adaptation. In addition, COP 21 decided that developed countries intend to continue their existing collective mobilization goal through 2025 in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, and that prior to 2025 the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement shall set a new collective quantified goal from a floor of USD 100 billion per year, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. (Climate Finance in the negotiations, 2019)

In terms of equitable access to technology, it is mandatory for developed countries to support the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, pursuant to UNFCCC obligations. In 2001, the technology transfer framework was introduced in order to implement Article 4.5 of the Convention, laying the foundations for international technology cooperation. In 2010, the Technology Mechanism was established. In 2015, the Paris Agreement highlighted the importance of technology for mitigation and adaptation actions, as well as supported the provision of technology development and transfer to developing countries. However, the establishment of a technology framework to guide the work of the Technology Mechanism was strongly criticized by the African Group according to reports of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin in 2015. Their main concern was the lack



of substantial cooperative actions on technology transfer under the technology transfer framework. Back in 2007 during the Bali conference, developing countries also challenged the existing framework and focused on shifting from technology transfer to technology development. In order to achieve that, they suggested the creation of a multilateral acquisition fund to buy intellectual property rights, multilateral cooperation on research, development, and demonstration and the development of endogenous capacities and technologies. (Oh, 2019)

It is also important to highlight that nowadays equitable access to technology which entails developing countries going digital is more crucial than ever. It's actually a matter of "life and death", as we're going through the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on research undertaken in South Africa in 2019, 18.85% of employed workers must continue to go to their workplace (e.g., health care professional, security forces, food processing workers, etc.). Under lockdown conditions, the remaining 81.15% of workers cannot go to their workplace. Of these workers, 25.93% can continue to work by telecommuting from home. The remaining 74.07% cannot work remotely from home. In sum, 60.11% of the total workers in South Africa, are either not allowed to go to work or cannot continue to work by telecommuting. (Katz, Callorda and Jung, 2020)

Social aspect

UN Secretary-General António Guterres is urging governments to "Leave no one behind" so as to recover better from the pandemic. But who are left behind in general? People experiencing extreme poverty are not usually part of the conversation. 31 severely off-track countries will have poverty headcount ratios of at least 20% in 2030, 23 of these countries being in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of the world's poor lives in Africa and Asia (not including China). The first of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted in 2015, concerns the end of extreme poverty by 2030. However, poverty is not the only reason that people are being left behind. Inequality is another fragility factor. Countries considered extremely fragile, among them Haiti and Central African Republic, are among the countries with the most unequal income distributions. A more specific form of this injustice is gender inequality. Eight of the ten most gender-unequal societies in the world in 2015 were also considered fragile, among them Yemen, Chad, Niger, Mali,



Côte d’Ivoire, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, having some of the lowest life expectancies in the world. According to Cassie Flynn, UNDP Climate Advisor, “91% of *Climate Promise* countries have included gender responsive activities within their thinking on the NDCs. And this includes everything from effective governance, to inclusion in planning processes, and also to developing these policy frameworks that ensure that women and girls are not just included in the moment of the decision, but also have the support in the long term to help bring that NDC to life.” (Developing countries raise climate ambitions to plot path out of pandemic, 2020)

Forced displacement is also part of the problem, both for the “exporting” and the “importing” countries. In 2016, 55% of all refugees worldwide were coming from Afghanistan, South Sudan or Syria, all three classified as extremely fragile. Same goes for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan and Uganda, being six of the top ten countries hosting refugees in 2016. Moreover, people with disabilities aren’t always part of the decision-making processes, although they comprise around 15% of the world’s population. More than 80% of these people are living in poverty, with an estimated 800 million in developing countries. They are excluded from all areas of economic, political, social, civil, and cultural life, including employment, education and healthcare. To conclude, they need to focus on the inclusion of the most marginalized groups in all processes at all levels, in line with global commitments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Collecting data on marginalized people is a crucial starting point to avoid leaving anyone behind. (What does it mean to leave no one behind?, 2018)

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