What is the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage?

In 2019 at COP25 in Madrid, the Santiago Network for averting, minimising, and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change (SNLD) was established as part of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was established as a body that would catalyse the technical assistance of organizations, bodies, networks, and experts for the implementation of approaches to help vulnerable frontline communities impacted by the climate crisis avert, minimise and address loss and damage.\(^1\) However, despite the urgent need of those communities for the assistance the SNLD promised to provide, parties were unable to agree on a pathway to operationalise it beyond its agreed establishment on paper.

What is on the table for COP26?

Since COP25, the outgoing Chilean COP25 Presidency together with the UK COP26 Presidency, and the UNFCCC Secretariat have consulted with parties and civil society to gather views and build consensus. With COP26 fast approaching, however, the SNLD does not appear on the provisional agenda that has been released. It is therefore not clear whether the SNLD will be discussed under the subsidiary bodies where parties can negotiate its operationalisation and, if it was discussed, whether the decision that would be agreed would enable the SNLD to begin helping frontline communities as soon as possible.

Civil Society Demands

The UK COP26 Presidency must urgently facilitate cooperation between parties, and the parties themselves must take leadership. As acknowledged by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change earlier this year, the climate crisis is here and loss and damage is already adversely impacting communities who need an effective and operational SNLD to survive. For this to occur, civil society demands:

1. Substantive work at COP26 under the subsidiary bodies to operationalise the SNLD;
2. A comprehensive decision at COP26 that:
   a. Enables the SNLD to begin its work as soon as possible;
   b. Guarantees finance for a secretariat to coordinate the SNLD’s activities;
   c. Guarantees finance for the technical assistance the SNLD will catalyse; and
   d. For any outstanding issues, sets out a clear roadmap under the subsidiary bodies for parties to complete SNLD’s operationalisation at COP27.
3. Parties must learn from the successes and failures of existing technical assistance providers, such as the UNFCCC’s Climate Technology Centre and Network; and
4. Parties must operationalise the SNLD in a way that enables it to deliver inclusive support, fill gaps where technical assistance is not currently available, and empower communities in the long-term through locally led projects that build the capacity of local people and organisations on the ground.

\(^1\) Decision 2/CMA.2, paragraph 43.