

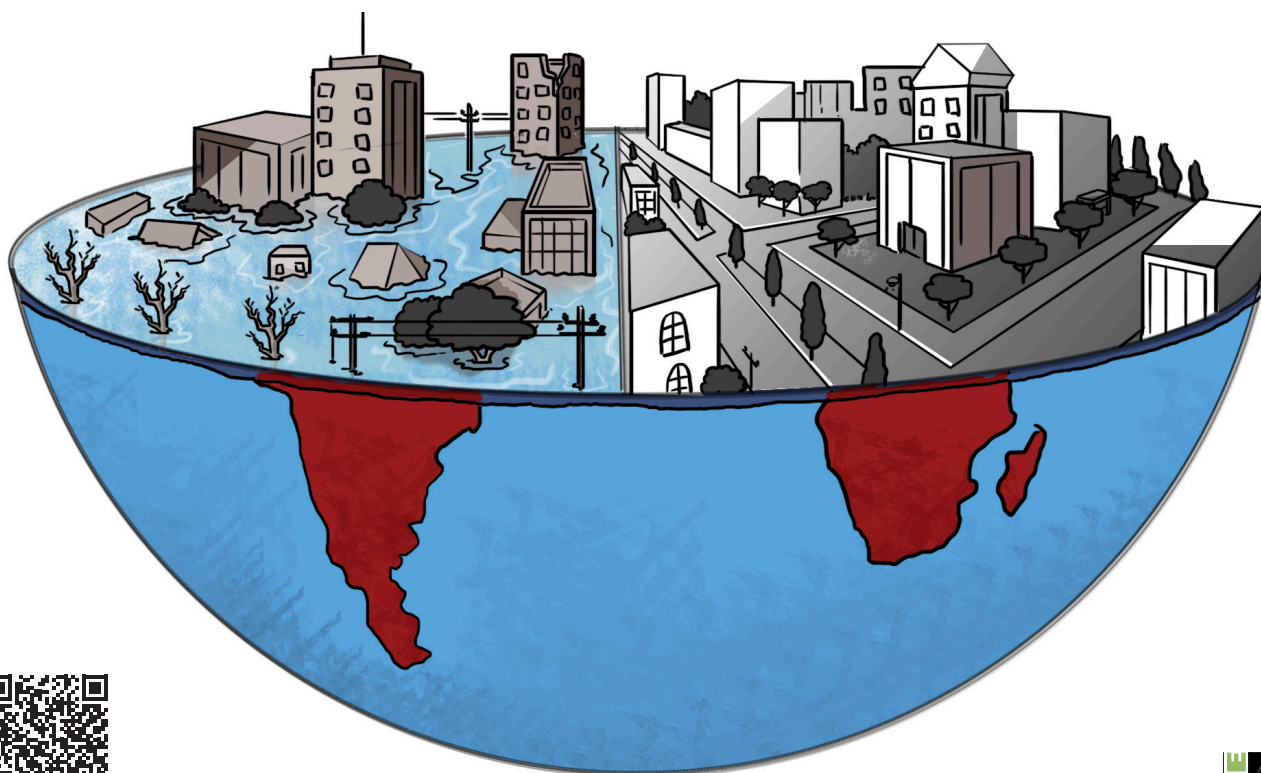
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ADAPTATION GOAL

Adaptation is a global necessity because losses from both rapid and slow extreme climatic events are mounting rapidly

Adaptation must be equitable and locally led

Countries must ensure the setting up of an ambitious adaptation goal with robust tracking mechanisms



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What is adaptation and why is it necessary?

It is now clearer than ever that the world will have to adapt to climate change. It is not enough to just talk about mitigation; extreme weather events are happening with such rapidity and force that countries and people have to find ways of coping and managing the fallout of the calamities. But what must the world do together?

Article 7 of the Paris Agreement establishes a Global

Goal on Adaptation (GGA)—*of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change*. The core components of the goal are interconnected and overlapping. A “global stocktake” will assess their progress every five years under the provisions of the Paris Agreement’s Article 14.

Under the GGA, countries have to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which would identify

activities that need support. These are then recorded in a public registry by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In April 2021, the Adaptation Committee, set up under UNFCCC, brought out a technical paper on how it would review the overall progress made in achieving the GGA. It set down in detail the many challenges of doing this at the global and national levels.¹

The paper concluded that a collation of local efforts spread spatially, rather than just aggregating numbers from these locations to come up with a national total, is a far better approach for the assessment of adaptation activities. The paper defines collation as bringing “together different pieces of written information so that the similarities and differences can be seen.” This would allow adaptation efforts to be judged in their necessary local contexts.

Adaptation is necessary because both rapid and slow extreme climatic events have increased in frequency in the last few years

The fact is there is no clear definition of what the world means by “adaptation” and perhaps there can never be. This is why the work of the Adaptation Committee is becoming highly technical, so much so that it will be difficult for countries to apply this on the ground to measure impacts and monitor the programmes for implementation.

Adaptation at COP 26 and beyond

At COP 26 in Glasgow, the two-year comprehensive Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh (GlaSS) Work Programme on the GGA was established. Developed nations were also urged to double their provisions for adaptation finance.

The first workshop under GlaSS on “Enhancing understanding of the global goal on adaptation and reviewing progress towards it” was organised on June 8–9, 2022. Relevant examples of targets and goals at different levels were discussed by participants: Canada uses 200 different indicators to assess progress on adaptation action. While 21 of these are at the national level, the rest are at the regional and local levels. EU has instituted an adaptation preparedness scoreboard and its adaptation goal is to become resilient to unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050. Tunisia’s nationally determined commitment (NDC) integrates gender, land use planning and natural disaster risk reduction. The UK’s measurement framework is in the form of a grid, with one axis showing the quality of planning and the other indicating outcomes.²

The second workshop under GlaSS on “Enhancing adaptation action and support” was held on August 30–31. Participants discussed enabling conditions such as institutional frameworks and governance, including the private sector. They also identified gaps in adaptation support, especially finance, and discussed how to fill them.³

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In September 2022, the UNFCCC secretariat released a technical paper on GGA, building on the earlier technical paper by the Adaptation Committee based on the inputs given by various UN-related agencies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Agenda for Sustainable Development, etc. This paper synthesised indicators, approaches, targets and metrics that could be relevant for reviewing overall progress towards achieving the GGA. It also offered possible lines of questioning for future consideration on the topic. These were taken up at the third workshop under GlaSS held on October 17 and 18 and will also be taken up at the upcoming fourth workshop at COP 27.⁴

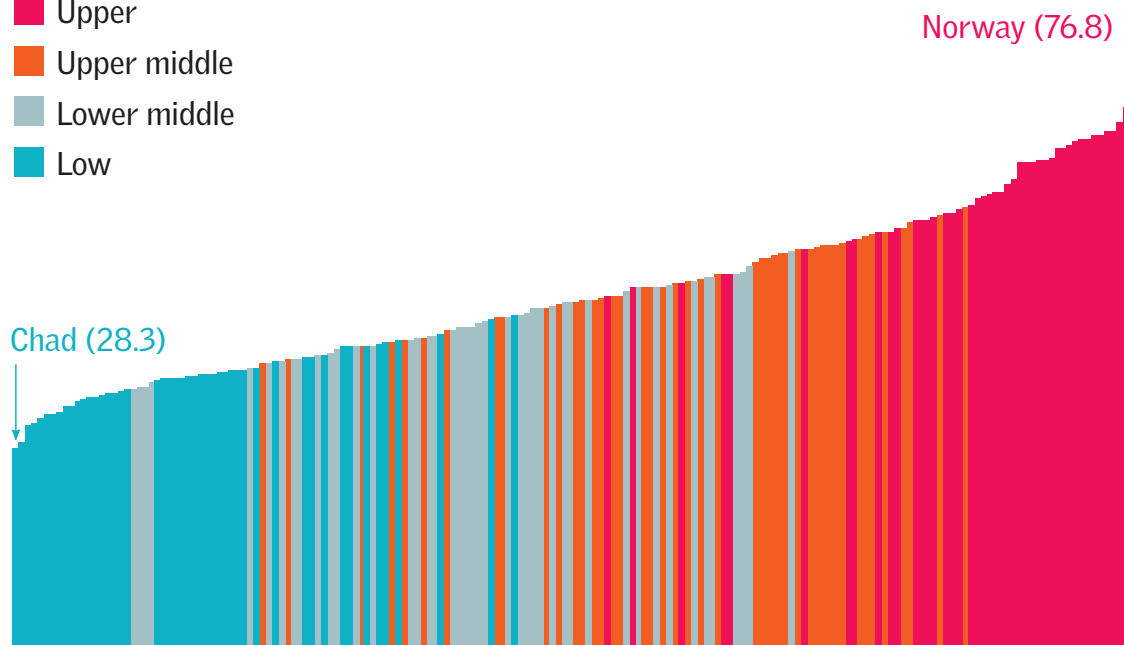
Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index

More vulnerable countries are less ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change

Overall Preparedness Ranking

Income Group

- Upper
- Upper middle
- Lower middle
- Low



Data: University of Notre Dame (ND-GAIN). Graphic: Aon (Catastrophe Insight)

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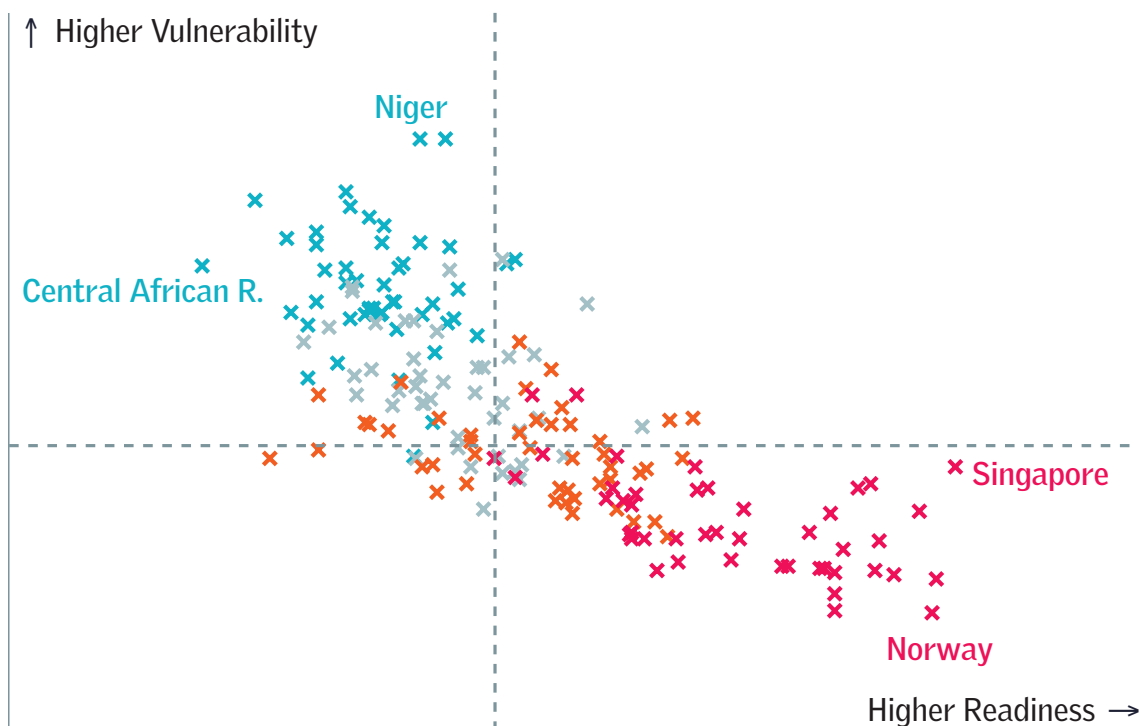
In this way, adaptation—or what needs to be done to urgently address the issue of building resilience and coping abilities of the poorest in a fast-warming world—has been reduced to a series of meetings and metrics.

What's on the table at COP 27 on the Global Goal on Adaptation?

In the GlaSS workshop which will be held at COP 27, countries are expected to work out how to operationalise the adaptation goal with robust tracking mechanisms. This would need to include an account of the quantity and quality of finance reaching local communities.

The real issue—the endangered elephant in the room—is finance, or the lack of it. The cost of building resilience

Vulnerability and Readiness



against weather related devastation is massive. It needs revamping of existing infrastructure to withstand storms and floods; building of advanced forecasting and early warning systems for cyclones and extreme weather events; and then, of course, development with speed to build resilience. This will need huge investments, not just in research but in supporting communities when disasters hit. We know that a disaster is not a single day event, but that it cripples local economies and takes away the development dividend.

The *Adaptation Gap Report 2021*, released by the UNEP in November 2021, states that the adaptation finance gap is

not closing—not by a long shot. The annual adaptation costs in developing countries alone are currently estimated to reach the upper range of US \$140–300 billion by 2030 and US \$280–500 billion by 2050.⁵ This is possibly a gross underestimate of the costs which countries are already incurring with increased frequency of extreme weather events. Aon, a UK-based insurance broker, has estimated that in 2021, the world suffered economic losses of US \$343

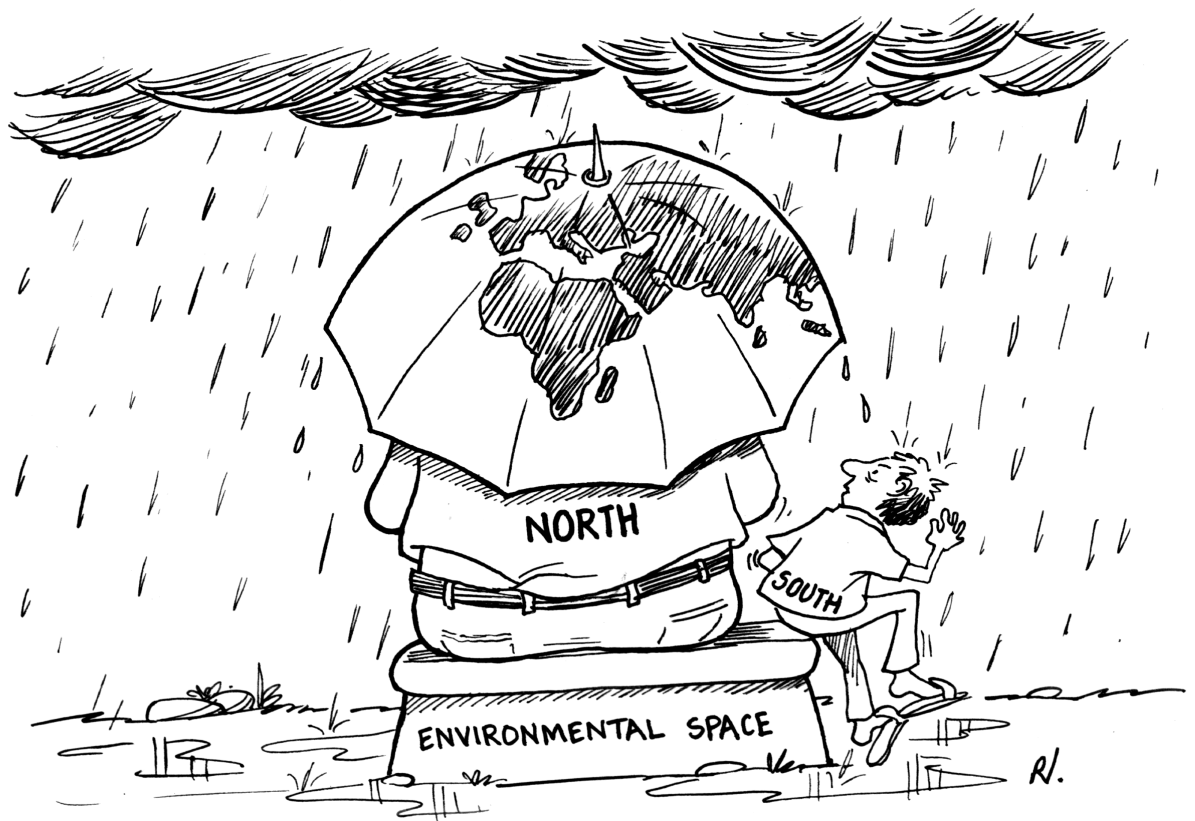
billion from weather-related disasters, most of it uninsured and unprotected.⁶ Aon has also estimated that just in the first three quarters of 2022, the total losses from such disasters has amounted to US \$227 billion.⁷ Countries are paying the bill for this and it is costing them dearly.

The Adaptation Fund, which was set up in 2001 to fund projects in developing countries, was financed with a share of the proceeds from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), established under the Kyoto Protocol. With CDM now dormant and defunct, the fund, though little, continues to be in operation under the Paris Agreement.

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At COP 26, countries pledged additional finances of US \$350 million for the Adaptation Fund. It was also decided that around 5 per cent of the proceeds from the international carbon market mechanism under Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement would go towards adaptation finance but these are woefully inadequate.⁸ It's a game of shells. More needs to be done to finance adaptation efforts and initiatives.

The issue of adaptation—the goal to make the world less vulnerable and more resilient—needs to be addressed urgently. This is the real agenda for the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference at Sharm el-Sheikh.

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