

Prioritizing NAP Implementation for Resilient Futures in the Global South in the Wake of COP28

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I. Introduction

In alignment with the theme of climate change, the United Nations convenes annual Climate Change Conferences (COPs) to deliberate on particular topics or agendas that demand urgent and immediate consideration (United Nations Climate Change, 2023). The most recent conference, COP28, was held in Dubai, an additional defining moment in the worldwide effort to combat climate change. The main outcomes of global action were established on four pillars: accelerating a just, orderly, and equitable energy transition; resolving climate finance issues; prioritizing people, lives, and livelihoods; and underpinning everything with complete inclusivity. Amidst the discourse surrounding mitigation, adaptation, and financing, a pivotal element that garnered considerable interest was the execution of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). In light of the increasing consequences of climate change, especially in susceptible areas such as the Global South, it has become imperative to prioritize the execution of the NAP in order to foster resilience and ensure sustainable futures (UNFCCC, 2023). This piece illuminates how the implementation of NAPs in the Global South can be prioritized following COP28.

II. Understanding the Context & Key Outcomes of COP28 related to NAPs

The Global South, consisting predominantly of countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, is characterized by its status as a “periphery,” “third world,” “periphery,” low-income, politically or culturally marginalized, pre-colonial, and primitive region. Consequently,

it is particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change (Dados & Connell, 2012). The catastrophic consequences of climate change have had a profound impact on the vulnerable populations residing in the Global South (Chidakwa, et al., 2020). Most of the time, they lack the necessary resources, capacity, and support to effectively implement adaptation measures that strengthen resilience to climate change. National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) are significant in this context. They assess vulnerability to the impacts of current and future climate change, analyze the current and future climate change, and play a crucial role in establishing the framework for national and subnational adaptation action implementation and expanding access to climate finance. NAPs aid nations in the identification, prioritization, implementation, and monitoring of adaptation measures that mitigate susceptibilities to climate-related hazards. The development of NAPs has been endorsed by the UNFCCC since 2010 as a means for developing countries in the Global South to tackle adaptation challenges over the medium to long term. Since 2016, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) has extended additional financial aid to developing nations to assist in the formulation and implementation of adaptation plans (Pringle & Thomas, 2019).

COP28 served as a forum for countries to reassert their dedication to NAPs and establish ambitious objectives for their execution. Amid the deliberations, the focal points were the mobilization of financial resources, the improvement of technical aid, and the promotion of cooperation to assist NAPs in the Global South. Significant funding commitments and resolutions were passed, indicating a renewed emphasis on constructing climate resilience through NAPs. In addition to identifying gaps in the effective, inclusive, and ambitious direction of NAP processes, COP28 provided valuable insights to assist small island developing states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs) in preparing financially viable and operationalizable NAPs. They acknowledged that a multifaceted approach is necessary for the successful implementation of the NAPs. Regarding methodologies, four significant observations were made regarding the execution of NAPs: firstly, it is crucial to recognize the significance of employing a multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach when developing and executing NAPs; secondly, it is imperative to evaluate the medium and long-term consequences of climate change on NAPs; thirdly, additional efforts are required to provide resources; and finally, strengthening implementation capabilities at the national, subnational, and local levels (UNFCCC, 2023). This entails the incorporating adaptation factors into domestic policies, budgets, and plans, as well as developing institutional capabilities and the promoting stakeholder participation. Effective case studies from countries in the Global South illustrate the significance of customized approaches that address challenges specific to the local environment and circumstances.

III. Prioritizing NAP Implementation: Strategies, Approaches and its Significance

The NAP, which is an ensemble of country-specific guidelines determined by a nation's varying degrees of progress and priority, does not possess prescriptive guidelines. The design of the system facilitates the seamless integration of the process into national programs, tailored to the specific requirements of each country. Coordination and coherence are two crucial components of the NAP process (UNFCCC LDC Expert Group, 2012). In other words, extensive coordination between subnational authorities and municipal organizations is necessary for the successful implementation of the NAP. Within this particular framework, vertical integration denotes the deliberate and strategic establishment of connections between the planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of adaptation initiatives at the national and subnational levels. A continuous endeavour is achieved through the multiple stages of vertical integration to ensure that the NAP reflects local realities and enables adaptations at subnational and local levels. Five critical elements comprise vertical integration in NAP processes: information exchange, institutional arrangements, capacity building and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Daze, et al., 2016).

As previously stated, the NAP seeks to increase the resilience of a nation's human population, ecosystem, and economy. Coherent policy and transformative changes are necessary in developing nations or the Global South to achieve this objective. Countries in the Global South have been integrating ecosystem-based measures into their National Adaptation Plans recognizing the critical role that NAPs play.

As of now, according to UN reports, 120 developing countries have initiated NAP processes and are making progress towards advancing national adaptation planning and implementation. Certain nations have achieved significant milestones in their National Action Plans (NAPs) in an effort to increase global resilience to climate change. For example, Kiribati formulated the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2014, which was subsequently revised in 2019 to incorporate recently devised strategies, such as the national climate change policy. The endeavour of the nation demonstrates the benefits of an iterative approach to the NAP procedure. By strategically engaging the President's Office in support of adaptation efforts and increasing the participation of sectoral ministries in the NAP process through an active multi-sectoral advisory committee, they were able to enhance their plan. Additionally, gender considerations have been incorporated into the Kiribati, establishing a foundation for the implementation of adaptation measures in a gender-responsive manner (Government of Kiribati, 2019).

Similarly, Uruguay initiated the NAP for climate variability and change in the agriculture sector in 2019, which consists of a strategy for 2050 and an action plan for 2025 (NAP Global Network, 2019). The country has increased support for farmer organizations and networks, as well as institutional capacities for adaptation, in an effort to bolster their strategy. Moreover, members of the private sector, public service, and civil society participated in a series of dialogues regarding adaptation to various agricultural production systems to define the climate variability and change for each subsector.

In the same line of thought, several other nations, including Saint Lucia, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, India, Ghana, Mauritius, Thailand, Kenya, and Nepal, have successfully implemented NAPs and achieved significant progress in the development of resilience (NAP Global Network, 2019).

IV. Overcoming Challenges and Moving Forward

Despite some advancements, the implementation of the NAP continues to face obstacles such as insufficient financial resources, inadequate capabilities, and political impediments. To tackle these challenges, it is imperative to maintain enduring dedication, devise inventive resolutions, and fortify governance mechanisms. This way, we can expedite the development of resilient futures in the Global South by capitalizing on collective knowledge and utilizing prior experiences as an abundant resource of knowledge.

It should be remembered that partnerships and international assistance are indispensable to the success of NAP implementation initiatives. Development partners, multilateral institutions, and civil society organizations have the capacity to offer substantial financial aid, specialized knowledge, and avenues for the exchange of ideas. These alliances can enhance the effectiveness of NAPs through the promotion of coordination and collaboration. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt an inclusive approach when implementing NAPs to guarantee that the concerns and priorities of all stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized and vulnerable communities, are duly considered. The implementation of gender-responsive strategies, social inclusion measures, and participatory decision-making processes is crucial in fostering grassroots equity and resilience-building.

V. Conclusion

Effective NAP implementation not only serves as an interplay between national biodiversity strategies and action plans, but also facilitates the coordination and investigation of synergies

between adaptation and biodiversity protection. The necessity to prioritize the implementation of the NAP for resilient futures in the Global South has become more evident since the conclusion of COP28. By emphasizing ecosystem-based adaptation in NAPs, the intended objectives of numerous international agreements can be achieved. Furthermore, through extensive research on adaptation, collaborative alliance formation, and community empowerment, it is possible to alleviate the consequences of climate change and pave the way towards a more sustainable and equitable global society. By acting immediately, we can create a future in which no one is left behind in the face of climate adversity

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