

Assessing the applicability of global loss and damage frameworks in national and local policies to address climate-induced loss and damage in Sri Lanka

E. M. K. S. Ekanayake¹, W. G. K. Withana¹, R. U. K. Piyadasa²

¹*National Building Research Organization, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Environmental Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Sri Lanka, one of the most climate-vulnerable nations in South Asia, continues to face severe socio-economic and environmental disruptions from climate-induced disasters. While global attention to Loss and Damage (L&D) has grown through mechanisms such as the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) and Article 8 of the Paris Agreement, a significant gap remains between policy frameworks and their integration into national and sub-national governance. This study assesses the applicability of global L&D frameworks in Sri Lanka's national and local policies, plans, and regulations, identifying gaps and offering recommendations for better alignment. Using a qualitative research design, it combines literature review, content analysis, and expert consultations. A multi-criteria evaluation framework was developed around five globally recognized L&D components: slow onset events, non-economic losses, migration and human mobility, comprehensive risk management, and action and support. Seven national policies and regulations, together with three local development plans from Kalutara District, selected for their high exposure to floods, coastal erosion, and livelihood vulnerabilities, were assessed against these components. Findings show a critical shortfall in integrating L&D principles, especially regarding non-economic losses and migration. Some policies align with rapid-onset hazards, but others fail to systematically incorporate human mobility, financial mechanisms, or international cooperation tools. For example, slow onset events are partly addressed through forecasting; non-economic losses appear only in cultural and biodiversity references; risk management stresses early warning and resilient village initiatives; migration is limited to a displacement guideline; and support and action mainly rely on international funding. Local-level integration remains weak, with development plans lacking structured climate policy framing or operational strategies. The study concludes that while policy infrastructure exists, it lacks depth and coherence in covering the full scope of L&D. By situating this analysis at both national and district levels, the study addresses a key gap in scholarship by examining how global L&D frameworks are reflected in Sri Lanka's governance. It recommends institutionalizing L&D in planning, establishing dedicated funding streams, and strengthening multi-level governance coordination. Addressing these areas will be essential for Sri Lanka to build resilience and respond effectively to irreversible climate impacts.

Keywords: *Loss and damage, Climate change, Sri Lanka, Policy integration, UNFCCC*