

# D&C Days at 20: Ambition, action, resilience

Stocktaking and reflections  
to mark 20 years

By Evan Easton-Calabria



Development and  
Climate Days

Evan Easton-Calabria is a research associate at the Refugee Studies Centre and a senior researcher at the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University

Published by: the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 2023

For more information about this project, please contact:

Clair Grant-Salmon, IIED, [clair.grant-salmon@iied.org](mailto:clair.grant-salmon@iied.org)

D&C Days partners: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IIED and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC)

## Table of contents

Abbreviations and acronyms.....	3
Introduction.....	4
A brief history of D&C Days.....	5
Adaptation Days.....	5
Widening the focus to Development.....	6
Structure and process.....	9
Widening participation and inclusion.....	10
Senior leadership and engagement.....	10
The changing (and consistent) objectives and language of D&C Days.....	12
D&C Days and linkages to UNFCCC COP.....	16
Least Developed Countries.....	17
REDD and REDD+.....	17
Loss and Damage.....	18
National Adaptation Programmes of Action and National Adaptation Plans.....	18
Sustainable Development Goals.....	19
Objectives, agendas, and outcomes.....	20
An ongoing commitment to inclusivity and localisation.....	20
Increasing advocacy at and surrounding COP.....	22
Overall learning and next steps.....	25
Conclusion.....	27
Selected references.....	28
D&C Days partners.....	28

# Abbreviations and acronyms

CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBA	Community-based adaptation
COP	Conference of Parties
D&C Days	Development and Climate Days
EWEA	Early action early warning
ICCCAD	International Centre for Climate Change and Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPGCA	Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action
NAP	National Adaptation Plans
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RING	Regional and International Networking Group on Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SIDS	Small Island States
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention for Climate Change

# Introduction

Over the last 20 years, a varied group of world leaders, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and civil society and community representatives have come together to discuss climate change, adaptation and development. This event, known as Development and Climate Days (D&C Days) has taken place as a weekend-long side event at the annual Conference of Parties (COP) conferences to review progress made on the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was initiated by Saleemul Huq, senior associate of the Climate Change research group at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in Bangladesh. Notably, D&C Days have taken place almost as long as COP events themselves, which were held for the 27th year in 2022.

While COP negotiations are formal and generally led by state representatives, D&C Days strives to offer an informal space for a wide variety of stakeholders to gather and exchange views and information. In particular, D&C Days are designed to:

- Bring together practitioners, negotiators, scientists, and policymakers to explore key issues related to adaptation to climate change in developing countries
- Share best practices in development and climate change
- Provide opportunities to disseminate scientific news, literature, and reports, and
- Promote linkages between development and climate.

The 20th anniversary of D&C Days provides an important opportunity to learn from continuities and changes in the event over the last two decades, including reflecting on the wider trends in climate change governance, policy, adaptation and development that are evident in D&C Days over time. This report presents the result of stocktaking and reflection on key themes, notable occurrences and changes in process based on documents and other information related to D&C Days since its inception and key stakeholder interviews with multiple people closely connected to the event. It is structured as follows: the next section provides a brief overview of the history of D&C Days, followed by a presentation of main thematic findings; the following section focuses on objectives, agendas, and outcomes; and is followed by a conclusions section on learning and next steps based on this stocktaking and reflection.

## Box 1. Snapshot of the research methodology for this report

This report is based on qualitative content analysis of 123 outputs relating to D&C Days since its inception (2002) up to (and including) 2021

A variety of types of outputs were reviewed, including reports, blog posts, photo essays, conference recordings, 'murals', YouTube videos of panels and video summaries of particular D&C Days

Main themes and other key information from each year were analysed in relation to the larger history of D&C Days to develop a working timeline of continuities and changes

For the years 2002-2013, a parallel project of quantitative discourse analysis of D&C Days provided further information to bring into the report.

# A brief history of D&C Days

## Adaptation Days

In 2002, what we now call D&C Days began as 'Adaptation Day', a one-day event to discuss important issues relating to adaptation to climate change. An overriding aim was to bring the topic of adaptation into COP conversations that had previously been primarily focused on climate change mitigation.

A similar event was held in 2003, but over the course of the day's discussions, it was clear that conversations still often remained siloed within adaptation-focused practitioner and research circles. At the time, there was no other space at COP that specifically brought together climate and development practitioners – an intersection that is today fairly commonplace. The 2003 event's report summary concluded with a call for widening the conversation to development practitioners:

Another key group of stakeholders, which had little presence at Adaptation Day, and indeed the whole COP, was the development NGO community. With the growing interest in adaptation issues, people are increasingly asking questions such as What is adaptation? How do we implement adaptation on the ground? and How best can we fund adaptation? The development community, including key NGOs such as ActionAid, Oxfam and Christian Aid, which has long experience with such issues in the broader arena of sustainable development, now needs to join the process and help provide answers to these pressing questions. (Reid et al. 2004)

## Widening the focus to Development

A 'Development Day' was added in 2004 in response to such calls. This aimed to include development practitioners who, up to that point, had not attended climate change negotiations despite their active engagement being crucial to addressing climate change impacts on development. By this point in time, a larger group of actors working on adaptation in different areas had started their own side events at COP. Given this, it was decided that adaptation had become fairly well mainstreamed within the COP process and that development was a larger gap in discussions. As the founder of D&C Days, Saleemul Huq, explained, 'Adaptation Day' had grown in scope beyond its initial focus on adaptation, illustrating the need to connect the issue with other pressing agendas such as development.' As Huq explained in a 2011 video report, 'We [as D&C Days] don't have to do everything anymore, we can focus on some of the higher-quality outcomes and latest evidence emanating from research on adaptation as relevant for the process.' With the view that good adaptation presupposes development (iisd 2009), the event was renamed 'Development and Climate Days' in 2007.

*We [as D&C Days] don't have to do everything anymore, we can focus on some of the higher-quality outcomes and latest evidence emanating from research on adaptation as relevant for the process.*

– Saleemul Huq, 2011

Since this point, D&C Days has continued to tackle a wide range of adaptation and development issues connected to climate change. These have included different elements of development such as gender and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) (for example, the 2009 D&C Days) as well as humanitarian actions such as early action early warning (EWEA) and climate disaster responses. Other issues discussed have ranged from equality and justice, such as poverty and equitable decision-making for climate resilience, to loss and damage and technologies and innovations being used by adaptation and development practitioners.

In 2017, the event began to be structured around four key themes:

- Resilience through empowerment and access
- Valuing lived experience, and local knowledge
- Transparency and downward accountability
- Shared resilience.

Notably, these themes represent much more of a formal packaging of recurrent themes and commitments within previous D&C Days than new agenda items. The following sections discuss these and other key themes and trends across D&C Days in more depth.



Saleemul Huq speaking at D&C Days Marrakech in 2016  
(Photo: Climate Centre)

## Box 2: The first decade of D&C Days

**2002 – COP8:** The first Adaptation Day in New Delhi, India, in 2002, included sessions on: science, funding, policy and actions.

**2003 – COP9:** Adaptation Day in 2003 took place in Milan, Italy, and included sessions on: the science of adaptation; funding adaptation; adaptation in action; and the politics and negotiations of adaptation.

**2004 – COP10:** In Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2004, Development Day focused on climate change and development; food security and disaster planning; and water and health. Adaptation Day included discussions on the science of adaptation; funding adaptation; and adaptation in action.

**2005 – COP11:** Development Day in Montreal, Canada, in 2005, focused on: linkages between climate change and development; health; and disaster management. Adaptation Day included sessions on: the science of adaptation; community-based adaptation; and experience with National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

**2006 – COP12:** In 2006, in Nairobi, Kenya, Development Day focused on: energy and sustainable development; agriculture and food security; and water. Adaptation Day included sessions on: science, tools and adaptation; community-based adaptation; and experience with least developed countries' NAPAs.

**2007 – COP13:** The 2007 event in Bali, Indonesia, included panels on: disaster reduction and extreme weather events; cities; health; financing adaptation; food and agriculture; community-based adaptation; and communicating for communities across sectors and timescales.

**2008 – COP14:** The 2008 event in Poznań, Poland, included discussions on: vulnerable groups; gender and climate change; children; the Arctic and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); rights and justice; policymaking in a changing climate; community-based adaptation; adaptation effectiveness; and adaptation funding.

**2009 – COP15:** The 2009 event in Copenhagen, Denmark, focused on: land, water and forests; justice, ethics and humanitarian issues; planning adaptation; and mitigation, finance and the private sector.

**2010 – COP16:** In 2010, in Cancun, Mexico, Development and Climate Days focused on: low-carbon, resilient development; adaptation, including community-based institutions, planning, assessment and financing; climate change communications; the Fairtrade movement and climate change; and climate change and migration.

**2011 – COP17:** The 2011 Development and Climate Days was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2011. It focused on effective climate change adaptation planning, in response to the decision taken in 2010 under the Cancun Adaptation Framework to invite all countries, and especially LDCs, to develop National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

Adapted from: IISD/IIED 2012



# Structure and process

Over the last 20 years, the structure of D&C Days has shifted in significant ways. The length of the event itself, as noted in the previous section, changed from a one-day to a two-day event – and even expanded to a four-day event in 2009, when it was divided into four thematic topics focused on each day (iisd/IIED 2009).

While the event was traditionally held in person on the middle weekend of COP, D&C Days were held online in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, due to COP26 being postponed, D&C Days was held as part of the Understanding Risk Forum 2020 (IIED 2020). However, even before the event went fully digital, changes and additions were made over the years.



Workshops are designed to get participants to work together to explore innovative ideas (Photo: Mariusz Patalan/Climate Centre)

These included the inclusion of:

- A film festival beginning in 2008 featuring international films on climate change and adaptation
- ‘Serious fun’ climate games beginning in 2013
- Mural reports beginning in 2014, for which an artist drew the event in real-time as sessions took place.

Alongside these changes, D&C Days has maintained a focus on being an informal space for conversation and sharing across sectors and stakeholders. Small group discussions and breakouts have been a regular feature, ranging from speed-dating-type conversations to a ‘world café format’. Conveners such as Huq have also emphasised honest exchanges as ‘human beings and not only negotiators’ among both speakers and participants and, in one instance, urged speakers to hold ‘conversation from the heart.’ (iisd/IIED 2013) Such statements illustrate the departure from formal COP negotiations that D&C Days has consistently sought to provide.

## Widening participation and inclusion

D&C Days has grown substantially over the years, beginning with 100 participants in 2002 and growing to nearly 1,500 in 2021, in part due to the remote nature of that year's event. Overall, there has been continuity in the event, changing locations to accompany COP locations. There appears to be a growing diversity of speaker nationalities, illustrating a widening participation base. Despite this change in size, there has been overall continuity in participants and partners: representatives of governments and cities, including local authorities; international organisations; academia and research institutes; business; and non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.

The most notable exceptions to this participant and stakeholder continuity have been the gradual growth in the attendance of grassroots representatives and the inclusion of private sector actors. While D&C Days has had an ongoing emphasis on indigenous knowledge, as illustrated by many discussions on this topic by speakers over the years, in recent years, more indigenous leaders and other grassroots representatives have been included as speakers addressing issues of localisation, indigenous knowledge, and development (this is discussed in more depth in later sections).

In 2016, the private sector was included in D&C Days as a formal stakeholder through the 'We Mean Business' coalition of influential businesses and investors involved in transitioning to a low-carbon economy. As one of the introductions to a session on the topic explained, business 'has a vital role to play in managing risks and enhancing resilience', with the 'ability to anticipate, avoid, absorb and recover from climate-related risks ensures business continuity and enables broader societal resilience'. Interestingly, this inclusion echoes broader trends in the humanitarian and development sector, which over the last decade has increasingly turned to the private sector for funding, dialogue and other forms of engagement. In this vein, D&C Days has had to grapple with the risk of greenwashing from the private sector, which has led to a deeper awareness that partners must share the value of D&C Days rather than simply use it as a platform to advertise their own interests.

## Senior leadership and engagement

The changes in D&C Days' foci and stakeholders over time also relate to shifts in senior leadership and engagement. The event was initiated through IIED and has regularly been hosted by the Institute in collaboration with other actors, such as the Regional and International Networking Group on Sustainable Development (RING), which was a regular co-host in the first years of the Days. Other co-hosts have included the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and a variety of research centres and development agencies, including the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Development actors became involved very

early in D&C Days despite the predominant focus on adaptation; for example, BMZ, SIDA, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) all supported the second D&C Days in 2003, illustrating longstanding linkages between adaptation and development.



Former Irish President Mary Robinson, a long-time supporter of D&C Days, speaking at the 2014 event (Photo: Alex Wynter/Climate Centre)

For its 10th anniversary in 2012, D&C Days was hosted through a new partnership between IIED, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC), and the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN). The inclusion of the Climate Centre marked a change in aspects of both content and delivery of D&C Days. This was clearly evident through a stronger focus on the so-called ‘humanitarian’ elements of development in the ensuing years as well as the inclusion of new forms of participant engagement, such as experiential games and virtual reality. Humanitarian components of D&C Days discussions that became more explicit features through the Climate Centre’s management in later years included early warning, loss and damage and responses to climate-related disasters. In this way, it appears that the humanitarian lens brought by the Centre has contributed to discussions linking humanitarianism and development in relation to addressing and responding to climate change. In so doing, D&C Days has played a role in broaching discussions on, and indeed addressing, the so-called humanitarian-development gap.

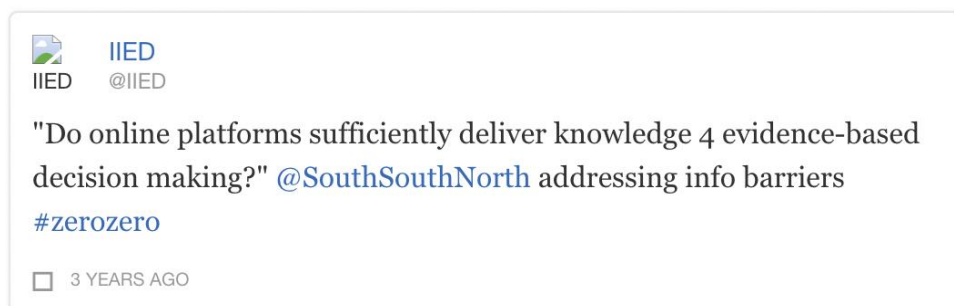
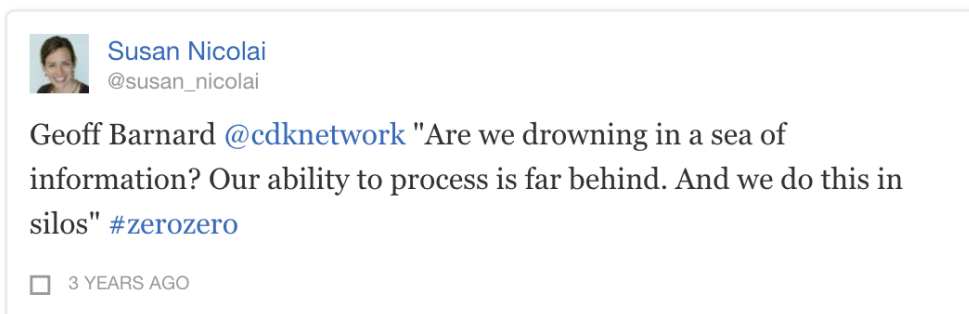
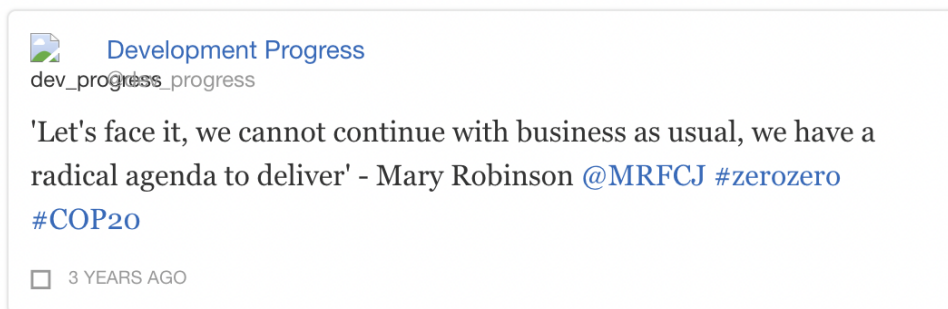
## The changing (and consistent) objectives and language of D&C Days

D&C Days has evolved over the past 20 years in important and relevant ways. It has also retained core themes representative of an enduring focus on adaptation, development and addressing the needs of communities vulnerable to climate risks. Particularly in the early years of the event, the objectives were not always explicit beyond conveners seeking to further discussion and action on adaptation and resilience between a diverse range of stakeholders. In 2011, however, there was an explicit narrowing of the event’s focus on adaptation, and in particular on research on adaptation to inform the UNFCCC process (Huq 2011), due to competing side events on different areas of development and climate. While this was explicitly stated by D&C Days’ founder, Saleemul Huq, and evident in the 2010 aim of ‘supporting the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge by practitioners and researchers from developing countries’ and the 2011 theme of ‘evidence for adaptation’, clear objectives aren’t apparent in all D&C Days.

The language of D&C Days has, however, maintained a strong focus on adaptation and resilience, and in particular, its importance alongside mitigation. Development has, of course, been a core component of this; interestingly, a separate discourse analysis of the first decade of D&C Days found the word ‘development’ was the most used term after ‘adaptation’ in documentation even before the official name change in 2007. ‘Climate-smart development’ became a much more common term in the second decade of D&C Days, likely gaining popularity after the advent of popularity in the term ‘climate-smart agriculture’ in 2009 (Lipper & Zilberman 2017). In the 2012 D&C Days, for example, an opening activity on the first day centred around climate-smart development in ‘The Marketplace’, essentially a speed-dating-type game helping ‘producers and consumers of innovative approaches to climate-smart development’.

Other themes, such as poverty have remained concepts inherent to D&C Days since its inception. Key recurring concepts such as sustainability and local engagement and knowledge highlight an enduring commitment from D&C Days to focus on key needs associated with adaptation and still under-utilised strategies such as local community involvement in development. These concepts also represent ‘development buzzwords’ that are used to varying degrees and with varying levels of policy influence throughout the NGO development sector (Schnable et al. 2021). In 2004, for example, ‘[r]ecognizing that issues of poverty, development and climate change are connected, the event featured more than 40 speakers on these issues, as well as extended discussions and question-and-answer sessions.’ (iisd/IIED 2004) The most pronounced focus on poverty came a decade later, when the 2014 D&C Days in Lima, Peru, was centred around advocacy on ‘Zerozero’ – zero emissions, zero poverty. This is discussed in more depth in the following section.

Social media, and in particular D&C Days' first use of Twitter in 2014, also served to magnify and make linkages to discussions of themes at the event to wider COP discussions and broader conversations on development and adaptation. The use of the hashtag #zerozero relating to a variety of topics discussed at the 2014 D&C Days illustrates some of these linkages in the following tweets.



Since 2019, D&C Days has also centred on five core themes (see Box 3) that are also priority themes for climate processes and actors, including the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA) and the High-Level Climate Champions. Speakers and topics have been grouped within these topics, and since 2017, key messages have been produced at the end of D&C Days to highlight recommendations and information coming out of the event for policymakers and practitioners. This alignment with other climate action events and actors has served as a way to increase the impact of D&C Days and more broadly, disseminate key points arising from it.

### D&C Days Themes 2021:

- Building resilient agriculture and food systems
- Early warning, early action to leave no one behind
- Financing a resilient future
- Establishing resilient cities and infrastructure
- Working with nature to build resilience.



A mural recording the conversations at the 2014 event. Photo: IIED

## D&C Days and linkages to UNFCCC COP

As an event integrally connected to yet also separate from the COP process, D&C Days occupies a unique position in terms of drawing in COP participants while also staking out separate space for discussions on some topics that were fringe to that year's COP. One of the clearest examples of this was from 2002 when D&C Days was first held as Adaptation Day in an effort to incorporate adaptation more broadly into traditionally mitigation-focused COP discussions. As Huq and Reid (2002) summarised,

COP-8 was also characterised by claims and counterclaims about the nature of adaptation and mitigation. Some Parties viewed these as "two sides of the same coin," while others claimed that mitigation and adaptation are separate issues, mitigation applying to developed countries and adaptation applying to developing countries. Attempts to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation in the Delhi Declaration clearly failed, but the difficulties presented by this dichotomy affected negotiations on other issues as well.

Such analyses highlight the importance of D&C Days at the time, yet also call into question the extent of its influence. Ideally, D&C Days will help feed into the high-level negotiations taking place in the second week of the COP process. Measuring the impact of the event on the wider COP process is beyond the scope of this research, but it is possible to identify convergences between D&C Days themes and COP, as discussed in the following sub-sections.



## Least Developed Countries

In 2009 at COP15, for example, D&C Days focused on Least Developed Countries (LCDs), Economics and Equity of Adaptation, and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). These topics explicitly mapped onto some of the key discussions both at and surrounding COP15. As Huq et al. (2010) explained, ‘Before COP15 there was widespread optimism that even if the outcome was not legally-binding, it would include strong positives for the 100 or so developing nations that have done least to cause climate change and are most at risk – the Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and most of Africa.’ As they and others have detailed, these negotiations largely failed, with instead a select group of about 25 decision-makers from developed countries developing the Copenhagen Accord, which featured very little input from developing countries. While this outcome could, of course, not be assured prior to the 2009 D&C Days or COP, the emphasis of that year’s D&C Days on LCDs illustrates the advocacy role of D&C Days to elevate lesser-heard voices and perspectives at COP. This has remained a strong focus throughout its history.



<sup>1</sup>In 2018 the lead climate negotiator for the world’s least developed countries, Gebru Jember Endalew of Ethiopia contributed to the closing panel. Photo: Climate Centre

## REDD and REDD+

The 2009 D&C Days’ topic of REDD also illustrated an important alignment with COP discussions, including key points raised by speakers for explicit discussion in negotiations. So-called ‘REDD-plus’ (now known as ‘REDD+’) was, for example, highlighted by several speakers. Day One of that year’s D&C Days focused on ‘Land, Water and Forests’ and included discussions on linkages between REDD and development as well as on local expertise in addressing environmental challenges. One speaker from FAO who discussed REDD mentioned that the UNFCCC and other processes often focus on one issue in silos and that more benefits could come from an integrated sustainable land management approach to ‘combat desertification, alleviate rural poverty, increase food security, and

mitigate and adapt to climate change'. (iisd/IIED 2009) This is, of course, much of what REDD+ seeks to do. While COP15 ultimately recognised the importance of a REDD+ approach, which has been built on in later years, discussions at D&C Days illustrated forward-thinking planning and suggestions for programming that only emerged more concretely in the UNFCCC process at COP19 in 2013 in Warsaw, Poland.

## Loss and Damage

Another topic that has arisen repeatedly in D&C Days panels since 2012 has been loss and damage. In 2012, the issue was broached as part of a feed-back session from participants at COP to those at D&C Days, including a summary of the status of loss and damage at the negotiations, which that year included an agreement by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to formulate a draft decision on the topic. In following years loss and damage featured more heavily on the D&C Days agenda; in 2013, for example, the same year that the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (Loss and Damage Mechanism) was established at COP19, D&C Days participants had the opportunity to play a participatory game entitled 'Climate Attribution Under Loss & Damage: Risking, Observing, Negotiating (CAULDRON)', which examined loss and damage from perspectives such as a UN negotiator, a farmer, and a climate scientist. The 2013 Days also held a high-level panel on national-level funding on loss and damage, in which participants highlighted greater global solidarity in addressing climate impacts.

The focus on loss and damage has continued in more recent D&C Days, as well, with discussion from a plenary session on it including statements such as, 'We push for loss and damage every year at COP, but are there other forums where it can be discussed?' (IIED 2018) Such statements and other discussions on the topic evince a familiar feeling by many speakers on a range of topics, who often lament that the same topics are brought to the table at COP again and again with limited outcomes. At the same time, the early focus of D&C Days on loss and damage and the COP27 breakthrough agreement to offer loss and damage funding for vulnerable countries struck by climate disasters (UNFCCC 2022) suggest an important pathway of influence from discussions at the Days to the high-level negotiations themselves.

## National Adaptation Programmes of Action and National Adaptation Plans

Another consistent focus throughout D&C Days has been discussions on National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), which were first discussed in 2002 at the inaugural event and referenced in later D&C Days as an area for lessons-learning for those supporting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Starting in 2011, D&C Days has had a growing focus on National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which were established under

the Cancun Process in 2010. The topic of the 2011 D&C Days was “effective climate change adaptation planning” in response to the decision taken in 2010 under the Cancun Adaptation Framework to invite all countries, and especially least developed countries, to develop National Adaptation Plans.’ (ibid.) Topics discussed included vulnerability assessments to guide adaptation planning and ‘adaptive decision-making’, including in cities, which focused in part on the need to recognise and address disparate power relations between actors. However, these conversations on NAPs at D&C Days were initially not strongly linked to COP; in a high-level panel on ‘Drawing Lessons for National Adaptation Planning’, for example, Huq noted that ‘while the event has been rich in shared learning among practitioners, little had been said about how it related to the COP’ (iisd/IIED 2011).

## Sustainable Development Goals

D&C Days has also made linkages to broader development processes and trends, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and put effort into linking these with COP. The SDGs were raised in discussions at the 2013 D&C Days, with the former president of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson noting ‘the need for the climate negotiations, viewed mostly as technical and divisive, to use the political momentum and support behind the Sustainable Development Goals to move forward and make climate change the biggest issue faced by humankind.’ (iisd/IIED 2013) Following on from this, the 2014 D&C Days featured a lightning talk on ‘Understanding the links between the Sustainable Development Goals and COP21’, and in 2016, a panel focused on finding synergies between NDCs, NAPs, and SDGs. These illustrate a growing focus within D&C Days on linking processes related to adaptation and development, as well as identifying complementary agendas for producing impact.

# Objectives, agendas, and outcomes

When we examine D&C Days over years, and in relation to the topics presented above, several key themes and trends surrounding the objectives, agendas, and outcomes of the event stand out. These include an ongoing commitment to inclusivity and localisation and increasing advocacy and utilisation of D&C Days as a platform not only at COP but more widely within the development community.

## An ongoing commitment to inclusivity and localisation

First, D&C Days has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to inclusivity and localisation since its inception. In one vein, D&C Days has lived out inclusivity through the very evolution of its initial focus on adaptation to its broader focus on development. This shift later led to the stronger inclusion of not only the development community but the humanitarian community as well and opened up partnerships with key actors such as the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. This, in turn, can be seen as contributing to a positive (and much-needed) blurring of the lines between development and humanitarian work in the realm of climate disasters. As an important forum for civil society and other non-state actors, D&C Days' emphasis on inclusion and localisation also relates to the broader prominence of non-state actors in climate change processes, including but not limited to the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action and later for Enhancing Ambition.

The topics of D&C Days panels and discussions over the years illustrate a longstanding recognition of the importance of communities on the frontline of climate change, and in particular, the value and necessity of community-based adaptation and community-led climate resilience efforts. This focus has often been part of discussions on those most vulnerable and at risk of climate change and climate disasters. For example, in 2005, just a few years after D&C Days started, speakers focused on topics such as the importance of 'two-way communication between decision-makers and local communities; increased knowledge by community members of rights and duties regarding natural resources and climate actions; and consideration of traditional knowledge in adaptation/resilience policies.'

This focus was made more explicit in the 2010 D&C Days at COP16, which was on expertise from developing countries. As the agenda stated:

'The focus of the event at COP16 will be on supporting the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge by practitioners and researchers from developing countries. This is in

recognition of the challenges that developing country researchers face in funding research and publicising research findings; in response to the need to ensure that evidence from the Global South is included in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other assessments; and, with the intention of questioning the norms of what is considered 'valid' knowledge to inform policy.' (IIED et al. 2010)

Notably, in recent years this commitment to inclusivity has been increasingly matched through hosting speakers from the Global South, including local leaders, at D&C Days. While calls for localisation and recognition of community-led resilience strategies have been consistent throughout the history of D&C Days, there appears to have been a shift from people from the so-called Global North speaking on behalf of grassroots voices to instead presentations by more grassroots and indigenous actors themselves.



I'm from Kwazulu Natal. My experience is that people don't talk about climate change in our communities and they are not aware of what's happening globally. Local people should be participating in climate change adaptation. We need to have dialogue with these communities so they're engaged, so they can respond and start to recognise the changes happening around them.

– Nonthuko Xaba, South Africa, a panellist at the 2017 opening plenary

In this way, D&C Days has had an important role in providing a platform for perspectives from the Global South, including those from many of the countries most impacted by climate change, within discussions on adaptation and development and by proxy to the COP negotiations. This is furthered by the commitment of D&C Days' organisers to keep the event 'outside' of official COP proceedings so that participants don't need a badge to participate. The virtual and hybrid format of the events since 2020 has also enabled greater international participation and, in this way, contributed to a 'levelling' of opportunities to participate.

### Increasing advocacy at and surrounding COP

One striking shift evident in event documentation is the increasing advocacy by conveners and participants at and surrounding D&C Days, illustrating the role of the event as a platform not only at COP but more widely within the development community. This is evident in the increasing level of documentation, including media articles, on the event since 2016 in particular. This shift also mirrors recent increased advocacy around COP to

stop negotiating and instead take action by setting ambitious targets for reducing the impacts of climate change.

In part, the heightened advocacy focus of D&C Days appears to have occurred out of increasing frustration by D&C Day's conveners, speakers and participants about the limited or lack of progress achieved at successive COPs. In 2012 at the 10th anniversary of D&C Days, for example, Mary Robinson discussed the value of D&C discussions as 'they offer entry points for engaging more actively with the formal process to make it more political and urgent'. The 2012 D&C Days report explained that Robinson 'observed that at the national level "no one knows what the politicians are doing at this COP so they are not being pushed". She stressed that it is critical to take the next step of linking the international dialogue with national-level advocacy to create "constituencies of demand" and link them to a global movement to focus public attention on the injustice of climate change.' (iisd/IIED 2012)

### **[D&C discussions] offer entry points for engaging more actively with the formal process to make it more political and urgent.**

- Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Chair of The Elders

The 2012 D&C Days was also the first year of a new co-hosting partnership between IIED, the Climate Centre, and the Climate and Development Knowledge Network and appears to have contributed to a growing focus on advocacy. Beginning in 2014, D&C Days appear much more advocacy-focused than in previous years, with clearer messaging and explicit calls for action. For example, directors of these agencies, along with 2014 co-host Overseas Development Institute (ODI), issued a joint statement calling for 'substantially expanded ambitions to tackle both extreme poverty and greenhouse gas emissions'. They centred their statement on the need to integrate goals surrounding climate mitigation, sustainable development and international disasters, and the importance of addressing poverty, stating, 'Effective climate mitigation and adaptation strategies are pivotal to eradicating poverty. Without integration, these agreements will fail to address the development possibilities for the poorest and most vulnerable in a changing climate.' (IIED 2014)

This broader focus on advocacy was also evident in the 2014 D&C Days' focus on 'Zerozero' – zero emissions, zero poverty, as previously discussed. As the director of IIED wrote in a blog reflecting on her time at COP, 'A focus on zero-zero establishes a **new narrative, and higher level ambition**, linking together a low-carbon future, with bringing

prosperity to the poor...'. (Toulmin 2014) [emphasis added] These aims are evident in the language of that year's D&C Days, which had the tag of 'Zero poverty. Zero emissions. Within a generation.' The official event description included discussion questions for the event, such as 'How far-reaching, far-sighted and radical does adaptation need to be to make poverty eradication resilient to climate tipping points?', thereby illustrating some of the expected scope of the conversation. The focus on 'Zerozero' continued at the 2015 D&C Days, as did the advocacy element; as one blog post documenting the event stated, 'More than 200 policymakers, scientists and development practitioners **urged immediate and bold climate action** on the first day of the 2015 Development & Climate Days.' (Dupar 2015) [emphasis added]

The 2015 and later D&C Days have continued this advocacy, which is evident through event messaging, the content of sessions, and the surrounding media and other outputs from the Days. The 2015 D&C Days' tagline was, for example, 'Zero Poverty. Zero Emissions. Tough talk on poverty and climate.' The advent of key themes and key messages, as discussed in earlier sections of this report, also illustrates a growing focus on using D&C Days as a platform for both dialogue and explicit calls for action.



## Overall learning and next steps

When we take a step back to consider what we can learn from examining 20 years of D&C Days, both continuity and change are striking. Alongside the consistent focus on the importance of community-based adaptation and development described in previous sections, is another sort of continuity, that of many similar themes and conversations repeated over years. There is an enduring focus, for example, on the need to increase adaptation financing, pursue equitable and just climate policy agreements and outcomes, and increase climate resilience for those most affected by climate change. While these aims are undoubtedly important, over the years discussions on these topics included laments about the fact that negotiators at COP were still not addressing these issues adequately (or in some cases seemingly at all) and continued to leave out the issues and voices of people and communities most impacted by and suffering from climate change. To this end, the repetition of discussions during D&C Days also seems to echo a repetition of the lack of action arising out of COP itself. This, in turn, links to changes such as the heightened advocacy element of D&C Days in the last decade.

Other positive changes evident over the years of D&C Days include more precision about areas of research related to adaptation as presented by the broader scientific and development community. These include the presentation of more robust and defined monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks on adaptation; ongoing discussions, including refinements, of vulnerability assessments; and the inclusion of more case studies by grassroots representatives of community work or local-level change. In this way, the advances of the scientific, development and humanitarian communities on issues of adaptation and development are also evident through D&C Days.

This stocktaking and reflection also sheds light on some areas to consider for the future of D&C Days. Above all, it illustrates the importance of continuing to provide a multi-stakeholder space for this intersection of climate, adaptation and development from the development, humanitarian, and scientific community with COP agendas. The consistent focus of D&C Days to include and highlight the needs of people on the frontlines of climate change is an important and crucially needed addition to COP negotiations and discussion by non-state actors. Alongside this, some of the key enduring foci of the event, such as community-based adaptation, now called locally-led adaptation, are important to keep on future agendas due to both their ongoing relevance for driving climate decisions and finance and the role that D&C Days has consistently played in bringing such perspectives to COP. Given that locally-led adaptation is now a clear focus of COP, it would be valuable to consider whether this could become an explicit cross-cutting theme of D&C Days, as well.

This analysis also reveals that the agenda of D&C Days is, to some extent, constrained by the agenda of the global community and leaders at COP. While D&C Days is ambitious and expansive, it also necessarily relates to and reflects on current agendas, which are often

frustratingly limited, based on where high-level negotiators are willing to go in discussions. This represents an ongoing tension for conveners to acknowledge and reflect on in the design of the D&C Days' objectives and agenda. To some extent, it appears that D&C Days conveners and speakers have sought to address this by heightening the advocacy within and surrounding the event; while this seems to be a positive shift, it may also be constrained by the fact that at the end of the day D&C Days is just that – a collaborative event rather than an institution unto itself. While this does not necessarily need to limit advocacy, it does raise questions about how best to pursue it. This, in turn, raises reflections on where power and influence lie when such an event is built on annual partnerships rather than one clear source of funding and interests.

One way for D&C Days organisers to address the constraints of COP might be for D&C Days sessions to be held at other important climate negotiations, such as the Bonn Climate Change conferences held in June each year. Such continued and expanded presence at climate discussions and negotiations might be a further way to continue or advance momentum and action beyond COP. Another complementary option might be for the D&C Days' key messages to become more explicitly action-focused and perhaps targeted at particular stakeholders who could be engaged with in different ways throughout the year.

To this end, the continuation or establishment of partnerships with key initiatives and actors for a few UNFCCC processes and other mechanisms (for example, UNFCCC MPGCA and High-Level Climate Champions, Gobeshona, the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage, the Conference on Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change (CBA) and others) may be one avenue to further explore to ensure influence and dissemination of key messages and recommendations for decision-makers in negotiation processes and climate and development finance discussions. In particular, focusing on several key processes or areas will likely be the most impactful way to exert influence, given limited time and resources.

In 2022, D&C Days was not held due to the decision by organisers to reflect on how best to hold the event in a meaningful and impactful way going forward, particularly given post-COVID-19 funding constraints. The 2021 event showed the possibilities offered by holding the event remotely – and also highlighted for many the particular impact that D&C Days can have as an in-person gathering. While very early in its history, D&C Day conveners realised they had neither interest nor need in 'competing' for space or recognition at COP, a solely in-person event may inadvertently further some of the inequality in participation for which COP has been criticised. At the same time, it is important to reflect on ways an online format may minimise one of the most beloved features of D&C Days – its promotion of informal and authentic, open and frank discussions and dialogues.

When considering how best to maximise both discussions and impact, moving ahead with a hybrid format for D&C Days may offer the best opportunity to include the most participants and promote equitable discussions with people on the frontline of the climate crisis who are not able to join other COP events. This option would also lower carbon footprints by reducing the number of people travelling to the event. Based on past

experience, it seems important to continue to hold the in-person portion of the event during the weekend between the two weeks of the COP conference, as this remains some of the only free time that senior climate experts and other key stakeholders have to participate in D&C Days. As discussions around what would have been the 2022 D&C Days revealed, considerable resources, time and advanced planning will be needed to hold the event in a hybrid format in the best way possible. Doing so may require further partnerships and funding, but it also presents possibilities for new connections, wider global inclusivity and broader impact.

## Conclusion

As conveners and past and future participants of D&C Days reflect on the event, both as it has been and as it could be, it is valuable to return to the slogan that the event has used since 2017: Global ambition. Local action. Climate resilience for all. Throughout changes and decades, D&C Days has maintained its commitment to these goals and is one of now many voices continuing to call for progress and climate action at COP and far beyond. This focus on climate resilience in terms of shared narratives and cohesive action should continue. The ongoing goal is for decision-makers to listen, learn, inspire, and increase climate resilience implementation across and within sectors so that the most vulnerable and at-risk people and communities are at the centre of urgent climate action.

## Selected references

Huq, S. & Reid, H. (2002) Report of Adaptation Day at COP 8. Delhi, India. 28 October 2002.

IISD (2009) Summary report, 11-14 December 2009. Copenhagen Development and Climate Days at COP 15. Available at: <https://enb.iisd.org/events/copenhagen-development-and-climate-days-cop-15/summary-report-11-14-december-2009>

IIED (2018) Event Report. 11-12 November 2017. Bonn, Germany, D&C Days. Available at: [https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2019/03/dc-days-2017-event-report\\_0.pdf](https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2019/03/dc-days-2017-event-report_0.pdf)

IIED (2020) Development and Climate Days 2020. Available at: <https://www.iied.org/development-climate-days-2020>

IISD (2002) Summary Report, 23-1 November 2002. UNFCCC COP 8. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/unfccc-cop-8/summary-report-23-1-november-2002#brief-analysis-cop-8>

IISD/IIED (2013) Summary report, 16 November 2013. Warsaw Development and Climate Days (D&C Days) at COP 19. Available at: <https://enb.iisd.org/events/warsaw-development-and-climate-days-dc-days-cop-19/summary-report-16-november-2013>

Lipper, L., and Zilberman, D. (2018). A short history of the evolution of the climate smart agriculture approach and its links to climate change and sustainable agriculture debates. In *Climate Smart Agriculture* (pp. 13-30). Springer, Cham. Available at: [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-61194-5\\_2#:~:text=Abstract,developing%20and%20implementing%20the%20concept.](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-61194-5_2#:~:text=Abstract,developing%20and%20implementing%20the%20concept.)

Schnable, A., DeMattee, A., Sullivan Robinson, R., and Brass, J. N. (2021). International development buzzwords: Understanding their use among donors, NGOs, and academics. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 57(1), 26-44. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/zy7f3rv8>

UNFCCC (2022) COP27 Reaches Breakthrough Agreement on New “Loss and Damage” Fund for Vulnerable Countries. 27 November. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/59f65xam>

## D&C Days partners

Adaptation Learning Programme, CARE International	International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
Adaptation Network	ITAD
Adrienne Arscht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center/Atlantic Council	Latin American Center for Rural Development (RIMISP)
Amy Gibson Events	Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice
Anticipation Hub	Mercy Corps (Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance)
BRAC	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
BRACED	Nourish Scotland
Cameron Climate	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
CARE International	Oxford Climate Policy
Change by Degrees	Oxford Policy Management
Climate Action Network	Practical Action
Climate and Development Knowledge Network	Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP)
Climate Justice Resilience Fund	Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC)
Climate Wise Women	South South North
College of the Atlantic	Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
Cross Consulting	The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
DIE	The Global Environment Facility (GEF)
EFC West	The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)
EIT Climate-KIC	The Gold Standard Foundation
German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)	The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
Global Commission on Adaptation	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Global Commission on Adaptation at WRI	The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)	Thomson Reuters Foundation
Global Resilience Partnership (GRP)	UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
IIASA/Loss&Damage Network	We Mean Business
InsuResilience Global Partnership	World Bank
International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)	World Resources Institute
International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	YVE Nigeria (JVE intl)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance
International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	