

norway

# the oslo policy forum

changing the way we develop:  
dealing with disasters and climate change

report on the findings of the conference





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# **Changing the Way We Develop: Dealing with Disasters and Climate Change**

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## Overview

This report summarises the discussions and conclusions of the Oslo Policy Forum on Changing the Way We Develop: Dealing with Disasters and Climate Change, held on February 27-29 2008 in Oslo. Additional information on the Forum, including the full agenda, list of participants and background documents can be found at: [www.oslopolicyforum.no](http://www.oslopolicyforum.no)

The main objective of the event was to exchange experience, and as a result obtain a greater understanding of:

- progress and challenges of disaster risk reduction (DRR) mainstreaming together with efforts to address climate change within international development organisations;
- progress and challenges of promoting DRR mainstreaming within development programmes, with a particular focus on promoting mainstreaming in developing country governments/systems;
- progress and challenges in establishing a fruitful dialogue among the different actors promoting DRR and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

This included a focus on the following questions:

- What are the necessary components of a successful mainstreaming strategy?
- How to promote coherent approaches to multiple challenges?
- What are the practical links between DRR and governance in a context of increasing attention to climate change?

The main target audience of the event was international development organisations, including bilateral donors, international financial institutions (IFIs), research institutions, UN agencies and representatives of governments in the South, which are considering or are in the process of integrating disaster risk reduction and climate risk management into their programming. Representatives were invited from beyond the 'disaster' units of the invited organisations in order to look at how disaster risk reduction is being integrated into specific areas of development; and to explore linkages with the development, climate change adaptation, and humanitarian assistance communities.

The event was jointly organised by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the ProVention Consortium and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The host of the conference was the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Store.

## Background

Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is already jeopardized by current levels of disaster risk. Global levels of disaster risk are intensifying. Climate change is a major contributing factor in increased phenomena such as heatwaves, floods, droughts, the intensity of tropical cyclones, and higher sea levels. Vulnerability to these hazards is also increasing, due to continuing poverty and social vulnerability, poorly planned urbanisation, environmental degradation, and population growth.

Despite mitigation efforts, certain levels of climate change due to the greenhouse gases already emitted are inevitable. Climate change adaptation is therefore not an option but a requirement. These impacts will fall disproportionately on developing countries and in particular the poorest. Nonetheless, the development process in many countries is not reducing vulnerability to natural hazards. In fact, in many cases new forms of vulnerability are emerging, impeding efforts to reduce poverty and promote growth. With this knowledge, the urgency to change how development efforts and humanitarian action are perceived, conceived, designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated becomes glaringly clear. We need to drastically alter the way we approach development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. The 'mainstreaming' of climate risk management and disaster risk reduction into development policy and planning is a key priority for the international community.

In January 2005 at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, in Kobe, Japan, 168 governments adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) with the goal of substantially reducing disaster losses by 2015 in terms of lives and social, economic and environmental costs. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, a clear message from developing countries was that we need to focus on climate change adaptation, as well as mitigation.

Over the past few years a number of development organisations have produced policies and/or made major commitments to disaster risk reduction. The emphasis has been on mainstreaming risk reduction into *ongoing* development activities. These government and agency commitments represent critical first steps. The challenge now is how to transform these commitments into action. Outstanding issues include; building on this momentum to bring others on board, how to influence national level decision making, and how to develop indicators for measuring progress against these stated objectives.

The time is now right to consolidate these policy commitments in frank discussions of the political realities in making disaster risk reduction a priority. The Oslo Policy Forum was organised as a platform for high level government and agency representatives to discuss how they address the challenges surrounding the political economy of disaster risk reduction, and to explore what constitutes an enabling environment for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development practice. Practical country experience was also shared regarding the processes as well as the successes and challenges related to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction. This dialogue has been intended to benefit both those organisations that have already begun the process of mainstreaming, and those that are working towards this end.

# Summary of the opening address

*Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway*

Climate change is leading to a ‘development emergency’ with respect to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and dealing with disasters. New challenges are emerging that were not known when the MDGs were set. There is therefore a need to consider guidelines for new policies to address these issues. Uncertainty about links to conflicts and food security exist, but this must not be an obstacle to action. Even if a direct causal link cannot be verified, the emergent nature of climate related insecurity at local level is indisputable and must be addressed.

The right levels of analysis are essential. We have many facts, but we need a proactive agenda to ensure that risk analysis informs development policies in a more comprehensive and effective manner. Practical recommendations are required regarding how to integrate our growing awareness of the implications of climate change into development programming. The needs are global, but they are more dramatic and urgent in the most vulnerable societies.

More funding is key, but is not enough. Globally designed solutions must be implemented locally. Capacities need strengthening and institutional silos must be broken. Norway’s commitment is to bring together DRR, climate change adaptation and conflict management. This involves supporting partnerships among a range of actors. We must transcend arguments over differences between adaptation and mitigation and instead move towards action in addressing these enormous challenges.

## Summary of the keynote address

*Jeffrey Sachs: Director, Earth Institute, Columbia University, and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General*

Major investments are needed now, especially from the countries that are not engaged in the climate change debate today. Otherwise we will not arrive where we need to be in Copenhagen next year. A successful COP-15 will require a 'miracle' of international diplomacy. Climate lies at the core of the global economy and this is an enormously varied and uncertain issue which will require an extraordinary diplomatic effort.

Unless the climate and development agendas come together we will not obtain an agreement. The credibility of the international system is at stake. The G-77 have development at the top of their agenda and that is not going to change. Furthermore, they distrust the commitments made by the North to promote both poverty alleviation and climate change mitigation/adaptation, with good reason. Commitments to achieving the MDGs remain unfulfilled. The coming year is the midpoint in achieving the MDGs and preparing for COP-15 and a failure to follow through on aid commitments and bring these objectives together will prevent any agreement in Copenhagen.

Consensus in the climate negotiations is essential, and is reliant on a visible technological path that goes from research to the widespread diffusion of technologies with clear impact on growth and poverty alleviation. Pressures for change in the South in the run-up to COP-15 will not yield results if investments have not been made in verifying that the solutions being promoted for combining climate change mitigation and adaptation with economic development really work. We need to make sure that proven technologies are in hand before placing demands on countries like China. Such investments in testing these new technologies have not yet been made. Additional investments will be necessary as well for diffusion of these technologies.

Conflict and security are part of this equation as well. Large areas of the planet will become uninhabitable and migration will therefore be one of the biggest challenges. The 'drama' is whether the rich world will follow through on its promises in mitigating these dangers. Without a bigger shift from words to action there will be no peace, no agreements. This is ultimately a test of whether we can find a minimal standard of global civilisation.

Tens of billions in adaptation funding are needed in agriculture and other sectors where the changes are most urgent. This is not so expensive if viewed in comparison with the flows of global capital and the costs, for example, of the war in Iraq. The needed investment is a small enough percentage of global income not to be an impediment for the needed changes.

A full audio file of the keynote presentation can be found at [www.oslopolicyforum.no](http://www.oslopolicyforum.no)

## Session discussions

### *Session One: The Road from Bali to Copenhagen - how can climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction pave the way?*

Objectives of the panel:

- address how global efforts towards integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction can be better co-ordinated.
- reflect on key policy and practice recommendations that donors and other key players should commit to in the lead up to the Copenhagen COP (2009).

The opening session put into stark relief the fundamental issues and challenges that will need to be addressed if climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are to be addressed in tandem on the 'road from Bali to Copenhagen'. Decisions are urgent. They need to be made based on scientific information, but also be solidly anchored in political processes. They need to reflect the MDGs and the changing and increasingly acute international crisis of hunger. This will not be easy.

The process of determining priorities and modalities for climate change adaptation is underway and in order to influence this process those working with disaster risk reduction, and indeed even the broader development community need to 'get on the climate change adaptation bus'. It is presumably this climate change 'bus' that will be the vehicle for the most sizable resources in the future, but the language spoken by the climate change negotiators is little understood by the DRR community, or even the development or humanitarian communities. It is unlikely that these negotiators will listen to arguments from outside the climate change discourse if these arguments are not phrased in terms of the mechanisms and concepts that they are dealing with. Claims that DRR is so complementary to adaptation as to be interchangeable are not credible and will not influence the process of preparing for COP-15.

It was also noted that national governments in the South, most notably the ministries of finance, are also not 'on this bus'. Concerns for poverty alleviation and basic food security will continue to dominate their development agendas for the foreseeable future. Indeed, food security crises that are partially climate change induced will reinforce attention on the need for immediate action to reduce poverty. The link between poverty and hunger can be expected to become a major driving force in decision-making. A failure to adapt climate change priorities to the development agenda may therefore further aggravate the considerable distrust existing in the South regarding the climate change agenda. There is already a widespread perception that climate change is being used as an argument to renege on commitments to the MDGs and divert resources that have been committed to poverty alleviation. A failure to address these concerns is likely to scuttle an agreement in Copenhagen.

In the perspective of this debate between the climate change and development communities the DRR community can be seen to be travelling in a minibus. The commitments of the Hyogo Framework for Action have been consistently reconfirmed, and there have been significant successes. The reduction in fatalities due to cyclones in

Bangladesh was noted. However, especially with respect to risk mitigation, the Hyogo Framework for Action remains largely unimplemented. There has been some headway in catching up with the changing trends in climate change adaptation and mainstream development, but not enough. DRR is still perceived by many as a humanitarian issue, which has meant unsustainable and limited allocations, and difficulties in obtaining resources to address the underlying nature of risk. The language of risk reduction is highly relevant as a bridge between climate change and development concerns, but so far the potential of using DRR as a bridge has generally not been realised.

It was pointed out that perhaps the lingua franca for these bus passengers is money. Tools of economic analysis, including greater attention to the costs of disasters, may be the best way to instil a greater mutual understanding of how we cannot ‘choose’ whether to adapt to climate change, alleviate poverty or reduce disaster risks as the three areas of action are profoundly interrelated.

### ***Session Two: Making the case for prevention***

Objective of the panel:

- to discuss the economic rationale for disaster risk reduction and how to effectively engage economic decision makers; and
- to explore key challenges and opportunities related to supporting an enabling environment for effective integration of disaster risk management and climate adaptation into social and economic development, including, political support, policy backing, institutional arrangements, public pressure etc.

The discussions in the second session made clear that considerable strides have been made in establishing the case for prevention. There was a call to “act now and stay the course”. Some speakers felt that the main challenge lies in getting the message to those who need to act on prevention about what they need to do and how to do it. The opinion was expressed that considerable information is available regarding the benefits of prevention and about what needs to be in place for prevention. There is even currently a significant degree of political will both at local levels, where awareness is growing, and internationally, where climate change adaptation is stimulating new interest in DRR. Policies are being put into place.

Gaps still exist, however, and as yet there is not much happening on the ground. Awareness has not been translated into financial commitments, most notably in agriculture and health where action can have greatest impact and where the situation in many respects continues to deteriorate. These are ‘no regrets investments’ as the benefits in terms of both well-being and economic stability should be glaringly obvious. Examples were presented from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) which showed that increasing attention on a macro level has not resulted in more funding for the environmental health and food security investments that are perhaps the most concrete manifestations of a genuine commitment to reducing risk and adapting to climate change. There is a



need for more concrete targets and agreed outcomes in order to move from words to action. Policies are just the first step.

Better application of existing understanding of the implications of disaster risks is needed if both policies and practice are to evolve. More effort is needed to point out the co-benefits that will come from the needed investments. It is also essential to more effectively highlight existing lessons about what works and what doesn't in DRR. The findings regarding the challenges ahead in making the case for prevention can be summarised as follows:

- Make it possible: address capacity gaps
- Make it real and concrete: focus on specific outcomes in programmes
- Make it relevant: link it to political momentum (now) and target advocacy to different audiences
- Make it law: this is the only way to stay the course

### ***Session Three: Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction at the National Level***

Objectives of the panel:

- to present practical examples on the experience to date at country level in relation to mainstreaming risk reduction into policies and planning.

The third session also found that experience indicates that overall policies are beginning to reflect DRR principles, but that this has yet to filter down on a significant scale into sectoral decision-making and fiscal (re)prioritisation. This draws attention to the importance of delving more deeply into the nature of governance if national authorities are to be held accountable for acting on the policies they have ostensibly adopted and for addressing the risks facing their populations. There are problems in the way DRR efforts are structured, which hinder widespread and sustainable impact. The prevailing assumption in heavily aid dependent countries (e.g., Malawi) that disasters are humanitarian issues to be addressed by donors has been an obstacle to mainstreaming. Furthermore, the nature of political processes is often not conducive to bringing risk awareness into mainstream national development debates.

Examples from the Philippines highlighted how this can be addressed by 'opportunistic approaches', such as focusing on meso-level actors who may become political champions who can mobilise DRR efforts. Decentralisation is underlining the need for more efforts at meso-levels since it is at these levels that decisions must be made if policies are to be transformed into practice. It is also the local politicians who are most likely to be held to account by their constituencies for failures in DRR. The process of confronting disasters directly creates pressures to explore how to "turn practice into policy", which was noted by Tearfund as an area in need of further attention.

A problem exists in that the prevailing timeframe of commitments from political actors at provincial and district levels often stretches only to the next election. They are

overwhelmingly focused on immediate issues facing their constituents. An additional problem is that there is a tendency to only pay attention to the risks associated with the most recent disaster, rather than basing approaches on the actual landscape of risk. Furthermore, there is a major need to 'downscale' advice on climate change adaptation and DRR to the scale being addressed by provincial and district level political structures. Our concentration on national frameworks and community-based approaches has left a conceptual gap at a level where political commitment is absolutely essential.

There is thus a need for both more effectively targeted evidence-based approaches to inform the political process as well as greater political savvy in order to understand what is likely to encourage politicians to engage in DRR. Policies are important to create an enabling environment. But policy change is just the first step. Appropriate policies must be supported by practical guidelines and operationalised through plans at all levels, with associated budgetary commitments. In addition there is a need to understand and track DRR investments across the range of cross-cutting activities that have relevance for effective risk reduction. Such tracking has proven difficult.

#### ***Session Four: Donor agency engagement in mainstreaming***

Objectives of the panel:

- to identify how practically development organisations are dealing with the challenge of integrating risk reduction and climate adaptation into their structures, policies, programmes.
- to identify opportunities and challenges in moving forward.

The fourth session moved beyond merely calling for mainstreaming, to look critically at the challenges that need to be addressed within donor agencies in introducing 'yet another' mainstreaming agenda. Experience indicates that pressure from above for new approaches must be combined with pragmatic and practical measures to build skills, understanding and above all ownership among the staff of the various departments that need to change their ways of working if mainstreaming is to become a reality.

Suggestions for how to address this included avoiding an overload of checklists and instead concentrating on 'selective mainstreaming', i.e., a focus on countries and aspects of portfolios with high levels of risk, where the need for mainstreaming is relatively self evident. Political events in donor countries, such as the release of the Stern Review, can create opportunities to drive change in donor agencies. Staff training is important, but only if it is part of a comprehensive approach of building ownership and knowledge. Ad hoc awareness-raising efforts have little impact.

It was also noted that special efforts need to be taken to avoid letting DRR become a parallel agenda to climate change. Parallel structures lead not only to missed synergies but also contribute to mainstreaming fatigue. The earmarking of resources from humanitarian budgets has proven to be a mixed blessing in this regard. It has increased

funding (and with that an awareness that it is time to take DRR seriously) but may further encourage seeing DRR as a separate area from mainstream development.

Mainstreaming agendas generally come together within the mindsets of individual programme officers (usually generalists) who become the nexus of the varied concerns of the development agency and the political process in host countries. The 'boutique examples' of successful small projects have done little to help these individuals find ways of realising the intentions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in terms of DRR. Programme officers need to think beyond finding ways to climate-proof the specific projects they are responsible for. More attention to the fiduciary aspects of risk programming may be a way to ensure that the case for mainstreaming is genuinely accepted by both the donor agency and the host, and is not just tacked onto programming in response to a checklist.

Discussions on this issue highlighted that the donor community is still generally unprepared to effectively and appropriately absorb the greatly increased funding levels that will come for climate change adaptation and DRR. Although there are examples where progress has occurred, there are also examples of the opposite, where the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and even the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative have resulted in donors pushing greater projectisation pressures onto NGOs and other implementing partners. Solutions do not lie with mainstreaming in projects, but rather in making these concerns routine within the new architecture of aid and in the new ways that agencies work with governments. This is not yet a reality.

### ***Session Five: The relationship between DRR, Poverty Reduction and Chronic Vulnerability***

Objectives of the panel:

- to take a practical look at how disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change is being integrated into poverty reduction strategies and programs.
- to explore the practical links between disasters and chronic vulnerability including food insecurity, etc.

There is consensus that the community level should be the starting point for dealing with the relationship between DRR, poverty reduction and chronic vulnerability. Several agencies presented the tools they are developing with which to build on the skills, knowledge and strategies of communities and which derive from a recognition that people have their own DRR and climate change adaptation strategies. Bringing together DRR and climate change adaptation does not mean coming up with new lists of what poor people should do. It means empowering them to do what they want to do more effectively. It also means creating an environment which encourages private sector investments that support these processes.

This acknowledgement of the centrality of ongoing community processes will not have an impact on actual programming if we do not break out of project thinking. The DRR community seems to be behind the times in terms of transcending the project disease. In order to move beyond the project approaches of the past, national political budgetary

processes must be recognised as the basis of priority setting. Linking DRR to the reduction of poverty and chronic vulnerability means much more than just trying to expand the wish-lists of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and making more grand calls for coordination. Past experience from other sectors has repeatedly shown that overall coordination and mainstreaming has not worked. It would be a mistake to assume that it will work with DRR.

Instead, the link to reduction of poverty and vulnerability must be based on a move from a technical to a political agenda. It is within the national level political process (especially within participatory budgetary planning processes) that these links must be found. This means finding ways to ensure that the rights of excluded and vulnerable groups are part of the national political debate and not just a discussion about insertion of token phrases in policy documents.

This will only happen if analyses of aggregate impacts of disasters and climate change are refined to better reflect the different needs of different groups in society. The magnitude of gender dimensions in disasters and chronic vulnerability are known, but nonetheless tend to be ignored in the macro-models that are dominating the climate change discourse. There are huge disparities in impacts and these injustices must be analysed as a starting point to understand where scarce resources should be invested. Aid cannot do everything. Targeting should not be a dirty word since results are reliant on concentrating investments on where they can achieve greatest impact on those members of society who are most at risk.

### ***Session Six: Governing climate change & DRR: conflict or co-operation?***

Objectives of the panel:

- to focus on different aspects of how governance systems deal or fail to deal with disaster risk through practical examples related to processes including decentralisation, institutional capacity building and strengthening the social contract between state and citizen.
- to look at where and how disasters and climate change impact on conflict and peace-building.

Aid to DRR and climate change adaptation will only yield results if anchored in effective governance. But countries with chronic conflict and fragile institutions provide few pointers for how 'to get from here to there' when effective governance is a distant dream. We need to determine what 'good enough governance' means in extremely challenging contexts.

The strengthening of institutions of accountable governance is the obvious place to start. Risk reduction must be part of the social contract between states and citizens and part of how the MDGs are interpreted at national and local levels. This social contract should provide a basis for building institutions of joint decision-making, most notably among isolated communities which experience high levels of vulnerability but which are often forgotten in national political processes. More effective decentralisation is an

important aspect of how to increase spatial inclusiveness. New fora for local management of ecosystem services are providing innovative ways to bring the governance agenda closer to those who are themselves managing risk and adapting to climate change. In all of these aspects it is important to remember that governance is not just about governments, but involves new ways of engaging with the private sector and civil society. Good governance is also needed within international agencies and donor governments to ensure that their own policies and actions are transparent and adaptive.

There are a myriad of governance assessments underway around the world which can provide a basis for deciding how to confront the challenges ahead. These may provide a better understanding of where entry points exist for more effectively promoting DRR and climate change adaptation. Capacity development has been repeatedly pointed out as essential for including these factors into the modalities of how agencies work. People in local government and national technical agencies need the skills and institutional frameworks to work together. The gap between the skills levels needed for engaging in climate change adaptation efforts and the current situation is enormous.

Despite journalistic tendencies to place flashy and simplistic labels on long-standing phenomena, links between climate change and conflict remain hard to verify. Pressures on scarce resources are real, and these pressures can either lead to conflict or can also force people to cooperate. There are many examples of both, but little solid understanding of why the pendulum may swing in one direction or the other. Similarly, we know little about how additional factors, such as HIV/AIDS impact on this nexus.

Migration is another issue that is partly related to the climate-conflict nexus, but also has its own implications for the spatial development trends that affect the environment. Rapid urbanisation is changing the nature of governance for climate change adaptation, but an understanding of the repercussions of massive changes in how human settlements are governed is still often seen as secondary to the search for technical solutions to immediate problems. Research is needed to better understand how similar factors of migration, conflict and the spread of HIV/AIDS are leading to such different outcomes in different parts of the world.

### ***Session Seven: Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation***

Objectives of the panel:

- to look at the interface between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, and explore the opportunities and challenges presented by the overlap of the two areas.
- to look specifically at the issue of financing for DRR and climate change and how to ensure greater coordination including at national level.

Things are changing fast and we need to integrate efforts through more funding, more capacity development, more research and development and tighter partnerships. The current ecosystem crisis suggests that we cannot allow things to continue on separate

tracks. We need to focus on specific sectors and identify actors in the affected communities to work with.

Climate change adaptation is only just getting underway. There is an opportunity to take advantage of this early phase to consider how the DRR community can proceed in an integrated manner. We have a long way to go to see how to jointly approach governments and promote change. So far there is not a clear agreed methodology for this. Economic models are important but not enough. There are also many interesting projects, but we lack consensus and approaches to apply these experiences on a wide scale. Some rallying points between DRR and climate change adaptation could perhaps be found based on the following entry points:

- Land use
- Land tenure
- Livelihoods
- Legal aspects for the poor

This is particularly true in Latin America. Increasingly inequitable distribution of resources is forcing people into more disaster prone areas. The most vulnerable areas are where the indigenous people have been forgotten. Climate change adaptation can easily miss the point of how we need to increase the capacities of these people to adapt to their circumstances.

National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) have been a useful experience for introducing climate change adaptation into national debates, but they are only a small start. Neither the advocates of DRR nor those promoting greater investments in climate change adaptation have been able to convince ministries of finance to earmark resources, and these ministries' ownership of these new agendas is at the crux of genuine change. Uncertainties remain about the costs of climate change adaptation. The underlying challenge is to ensure that these uncertainties do not become an excuse for paralysis, but rather a spur for action and learning.

These findings point to the need to break out of the 'either-or' discourse. Climate change adaptation and DRR must proceed in tandem and mitigation should contribute to achieving these aims and not be seen as a competitor for funding. Governance is central, but so is harnessing the main resource flows, i.e., those of the private sector and the market, for these aims.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The meeting closed with broad agreement on the need to act swiftly and constructively to ensure that DRR is a central theme in the discussions leading to COP-15. In order to continue the momentum towards this outcome, discussions were used to develop a set of recommendations that summarise the views of the Forum participants. An initial draft was agreed upon in the final discussions of the meeting and this was subsequently edited and finalised. The agreed recommendations are presented below.

Steps ahead include building on the findings of the Oslo Policy Forum in the upcoming Copenhagen Policy Forum in November, the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2009 and the ongoing work of the Commission on Climate Change and Development. These events will hopefully provide opportunities to proactively build joint efforts to influence COP-15 in an appropriate manner.

### *Recommendations for Dealing with Disasters and Climate Change*

The participants attending the Oslo Policy Forum 2008 share a sense of urgency with regard to the increase in climate-related humanitarian disasters. The participants recognise that the higher frequency or intensity of natural hazard events such as floods, droughts and hurricanes threaten to reverse progress made in sustainable development. The case for prevention has been made and now is the time to act.

Building on the *Hyogo Framework for Action* (2005), the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the *UNFCCC Bali Action Plan* (2007), the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (2007) and the *Stockholm Plan of Action for Integrating Disaster Risks and Climate Change Impacts in Poverty Reduction* (2007), the participants see that there is a critical need for a better integrated approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and adaptation to climate change.

The participants believe that a primary objective of both adaptation to climate change and DRR efforts must be to build resilience and adaptive capacity in vulnerable communities, based upon people-centred activities that provide simple, proven cost-effective ways to reduce damage and losses within relatively short time frames. The reduction of vulnerability to current climate hazards and the prevention of recurrent disasters are the cornerstone for building future resilience. The alignment of related development initiatives, including maintaining healthy eco-system services and harnessing the existing capabilities of women within these communities, is essential to ensuring the sustainability of these efforts.

The participants see opportunities for better links between climate change mitigation efforts and DRR in order to provide comprehensive multi-hazard protection, maximize the efficiency of investments and further strengthen sustainability by ensuring that investments in these areas are not themselves vulnerable to other types of risk.

A gap exists between the political and financial commitments to climate change and DRR. This gap needs to be bridged in order to achieve the objectives stated in the processes and documents referred to above. Climate change adaptation and DRR have evolved through different processes, use different methodologies and are institutionally

separated. Recognising that DRR is a fundamental element to achieve climate change adaptation, the Oslo Policy Forum provided guidance on how we can best ensure the systematic co-ordination of these two communities as we move from Bali to Copenhagen in 2009.

The participants recognise that the current funding of DRR and climate change adaptation should be less fragmented in order to meet the short, medium and long-term climate risk reduction needs. A further challenge is posed by the short-term nature of current funding sources, which do not reflect the longer-term nature of the issues under discussion.

Exploring how developing countries can allocate greater levels of on-budget funding to both adaptation and DRR will provide important opportunities to address these issues. Further, it is important that innovative investments and coordinated financial mechanisms are adopted by all development partners, as well as within ongoing national processes, in line with core humanitarian and sustainable development principles.

The participants have agreed on the following:

1. that existing national development plans and related local development plans must be the starting point if climate change adaptation and DRR are to be jointly integrated at national level and gain ownership by national and local decision makers;
2. that the mainstreaming of an integrated approach to climate change adaptation and DRR into key sectoral policies, such as agriculture, energy, natural resource management and urban development, is essential, and that the primary objective should be to improve the situation of the poor and the most vulnerable groups, including children;
3. that a proactive, multi-stakeholder approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the national and local level must focus on capacity development with a strong role for civil society, including community-based organisations;
4. that climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction be treated as integral parts of the development process consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that both are fully reflected in the UNFCCC post-2012 agreement to be adopted in Copenhagen in 2009;
5. that the expected increase in exposure to climate-related events over the coming years makes it imperative that DRR and climate change experts to communicate better, both in the lead up to and in the implementation phase of the COP 15 in Copenhagen, as DRR has to be a significant part of this process;
6. that there is a need for strengthening the international system to build on existing collaborative initiatives such as South-South networks, private-public



sector partnerships and diverse multi-stakeholder platforms and alliances, towards improving the dialogue between climate change and DRR communities;

7. that it is crucial for climate change and DRR initiatives to work in tandem and that synergies between the two be further articulated, so that they can better exchange knowledge and benefit from each other's experiences, in order to avoid maladaptation and unsustainable policies;
8. that national governments and the international community ensure that the principles of good governance and conflict prevention are at the centre of disaster and climate change interventions, including supporting research into the nature of climate-change induced conflict and related opportunities for peace-building;
9. that donors work with affected countries, including in policy formulation, to actively seek harmonised approaches to international development decisions for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction to further enhance aid effectiveness, and that the actions and policies must be in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005); and
10. that governments and other partners at all levels must explore and adopt innovative financing mechanisms, such as market-based solutions, to ensure consistent support for longer-term programming and to draw effectively on private sector and other resources.

We recognise the broad nature of these recommendations. A primary purpose of the Oslo Policy Forum is for participants to build on these recommendations and identify concrete steps that can be taken. We welcome the opportunity to advance these recommendations and further strengthen the linkages between climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable development at the Copenhagen Policy Forum in November 2008 and at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2009.