

Climate Change and Poverty

UNFCCC COP12 / MOP2

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***Tearfund, Oxfam GB, Practical Action and ActionAid** are UK-based development agencies. We offer recommendations for action on climate change based on our experience of working with communities and through partners in Latin America, Africa and Asia.*

The impact of climate change on poverty

As development agencies working with and for poor people, we are extremely concerned about the impact of climate change on the world's most vulnerable communities. The effects of climate change include food insecurity, water scarcity, ill health, migration, loss of biodiversity and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, all of which hit the poorest hardest.

Climate change is already adversely affecting human lives and livelihoods in developing countries. Our partner organisations in Latin America, Africa and Asia report that seasons are changing, there are more droughts, water is becoming scarcer and crop yields are declining. Climate change is having a devastating effect on lives and on development, threatening attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and, according to World Bank estimates, placing 40% of international poverty reduction investment at risk.

Public awareness of the seriousness of climate change is increasing in the North, and as a result there is greater potential for public support for bolder government action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. This lies in stark contrast to the situation in most developing countries where public awareness is very low, and where much needs to be done to alert vulnerable people and communities to the threat of climate change.

Recommendations for action to COP12 / MOP2

1. Article 3.9: post-2012 emissions reductions

In 2005, in accordance with Article 3.9 of the Kyoto Protocol, discussions began on emission reduction commitments post-2012. These discussions, led by the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, will continue at COP12.

The Kyoto Protocol is a first step towards addressing the threat of climate change, but it does not go far enough. The emissions quotas decided under the Protocol will not deliver the level of cuts needed to prevent dangerous climate change. The EU has recognised, based on current scientific understanding, that to avoid catastrophic climate change the average global temperature increase must be kept under 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels. A high probability of meeting this target correlates with keeping emissions below 400ppm (CO₂ equivalent), with a peak and irreversible decline in global emissions by 2015. Worryingly, at discussions in Bonn in May (SB24), some states including the EU were advocating '...seeing a peak in global emissions within the next couple of decades, and to reduce them by 15-50% by 2050'.¹ Based on latest scientific analyses, we believe that even the upper limit of this range of targeted reductions by 2050 will not be sufficient to stay below a 2°C limit. If emission levels continue to rise after 2015, then even steeper emissions cuts will be needed to safeguard lives and livelihoods in all countries.

¹ Statement of the European Union, the Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention. Bonn, 15-16 May 2006.

Failure to achieve adequate climate stability will disproportionately harm poor people and poor countries, dependent on already damaged and vulnerable ecosystems, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This will result in additional costs of humanitarian aid, conflict response and political and economic instability.

Recommendations on Article 3.9: post-2012 emissions reductions

- Success for the Ad-hoc Working Group on Article 3.9 at COP12 will require that a timetable be agreed so that negotiations on a post-2012 framework can come to successful conclusion as soon as possible, and certainly no later than 2008. It is crucial that there is no gap between the first and second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Further, the agenda for discussions around a post-2012 framework must specifically include:

- *Concentrations target:* discussions on the post-2012 framework must be based on scientific understanding, and seek agreement on a long-term stabilisation goal to avoid dangerous climate change. The international community must set a cap on greenhouse gas concentrations consistent with what scientists believe is not dangerous, and then decide a plan of action for how to remain below the level that is decided.
- *Equity principles:* A global problem requires a global solution, and developing countries must ultimately participate in mitigating climate change within a managed and equitable framework. This means that any viable post-2012 framework must include explicit principles relating to equality (to the benefits of the global atmosphere), responsibility (polluter pays), capacity (to address common threats) and need (for realisation of human rights – economic, social, civil and political).
- *Development threshold:* Based on equity principles, a viable post-2012 framework must include a clear threshold grounded in indicators of human development and well-being that separates those countries with emissions reductions obligations from those without.

2. Adaptation funding and the 5-year Programme of Work

In Marrakech in 2001, countries agreed that the key issue related to adaptation and impacts in the foreseeable future would be the fair provision of adequate and reliable funding. The Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Adaptation Fund were established. However, there is a long way to go before these funds are functioning effectively and are sufficiently resourced. Funding for adaptation under the LDCF and SCCF consists of donor contributions, and these have been inadequate, far from reaching necessary levels:

- The World Bank estimates the cost of 'climate-proofing' investments in developing countries as being between \$10 and 40 billion a year.
- At COP7 rich countries originally pledged \$450 million a year for adaptation, a tiny fraction of what is needed.
- Of this small amount only \$67 million in total has been formally pledged - a fraction of a fraction.

The Adaptation Fund is financed through a 2% tax on CDM projects, but has yet to be operationalised. Agreement must be reached on the management of the Fund at COP12 so that funds can be released to finance urgent, on-the-ground adaptation work in developing countries and to ensure that the poorest communities and countries can avert the worst adverse impacts.

At COP 11 a five year Programme of Work on adaptation was also adopted, aimed at providing poor countries with adaptation tools and research. Agreement on the Programme of Work will help build practical experience and inform future major programmes of work on adaptation. At present, the 5-year programme places too much emphasis on more research and piloting. As development NGOs, we have evidence from our programmes of approaches, technologies and processes that can work for community-

based adaptation. The issue is not so much *more* research, but how to disseminate this knowledge to those who need it most, and how to mainstream community-led approaches into national adaptation planning.

In many developing countries climate change is a question of human security and survival, rather than quality of life. The water sector is a priority for adaptation - water resources are increasingly threatened as a result of climate change, directly undermining all other development sectors. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), governments agreed to set up Integrated Water Resource Management strategies by 2005, but only 12% of countries have met this target to date.

Recommendations on adaptation funding and the Programme of Work

- Finances for adaptation should be significantly increased, and used to leverage maximum adaptation results within existing development activities and investments (see section 3)
- At COP 12 the management and operation of the Special Climate Change Fund and the Adaptation Fund should be finalised. The detail of the Programme of Work for the next two years should be decided, and should receive full and immediate funding for its implementation.
- The water sector, and in particular Integrated Water Resource Management plans and initiatives, need to be given priority in allocation of adaptation funds. Water resource management plans should complement and learn from existing efforts in this area, and be developed with full stakeholder participation.

3. Adaptation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

3.1 Sustainable development

Climate change risks should be assessed and reduced within the design and implementation of development initiatives if these are to be sustainable. Funds for adaptation should not segregate climate change as a separate issue: responding to climate change should always be linked to, and 'mainstreamed' within, development processes.

The process of mainstreaming climate change adaptation in developing countries has recently been reviewed in a joint report by Tearfund and the UK Institute of Development Studies (IDS), highlighting a number of barriers and opportunities. Issues that need to be addressed include generating 'intelligent' information for awareness raising, assessing institutional frameworks to enable effective co-ordination, engaging a wide range of stakeholders and providing incentives (see report for more detail).

Recommendations on adaptation and sustainable development

- Developing country governments should ensure that climate change risks are addressed within the design and implementation of development initiatives such as national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral policies and strategies such as water and sanitation, agriculture, health and education and disaster management.
- Institutional donor organisations should make climate variability and climate change risk factors an integral part of their project planning and assessment by 2008, as recommended by the Commission for Africa in its report *Our Common Interest* (2005).

3.2 Disaster risk reduction

The number of disasters, exacerbated by climate change as well as other factors such as poverty and population growth, is steadily rising. A single disaster can set back a country's development by decades. Reducing vulnerability to changing climatic conditions through disaster risk reduction (DRR) is an excellent method of building adaptive capacity both now and for the future. For the most vulnerable communities it is the many small-scale disasters, that do not make the headlines, that can undermine and destroy their livelihoods. Community-based programmes for DRR can strengthen their resilience.

The climate change community needs to recognize that disaster risk reduction is a vital component of climate change adaptation. It needs to work with the disaster management community, to advance both fields and avoid duplication of activities. Moreover, disaster reduction approaches offer practical, well-established tools for application in adaptation strategies. At COP 11, the link between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction was formally acknowledged – but this must be reflected in implementation of adaptation agreements.

Recommendations on adaptation and disaster risk reduction

- Adaptation initiatives agreed at COP12, especially the 5 year Programme of Work, should take into account the tools and methodologies of the disaster management community, including the priorities and activities agreed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005 and presented in the Hyogo Framework for Action. These activities can support and strengthen implementation of Articles 4,5,6 and 12 of the UNFCCC, Article 10 of the Kyoto Protocol, and COP decisions on implementation of Article 4.8 and 9 of the Convention, in particular 5/CP.7 and the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) process. These activities should also contribute to the SBSTA programme of work on scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of climate change.

Useful resources

Just One Planet, Practical Action 2006

Adapting to Climate Change: challenges and opportunities for the development community, Tearfund, 2006

Dried Up, Drowned Out: voices from the developing world on a changing climate, Tearfund, 2005

Africa Up in Smoke? Working Group on Climate Change & Development, 2006

Gender, Development and Climate Change, Oxfam, 2002

Climate Change in the Asia Pacific Region, Oxfam

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