

Linking Climate Change Negotiations and Disaster Risk Reduction

12-13 November 2008
Venue: The 1001 Hall, Islands Brygge 89, Copenhagen S

CONCEPT NOTE

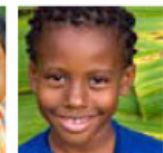
Events related to the revision of Denmark's Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance

Following up on recent policy developments and meetings, the Government of Denmark will be hosting a Policy Forum on how to bring the two tracks of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) more closely together. The Forum is held in cooperation with the Danish Red Cross/Red Cross-Red Crescent Climate Centre, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) of the World Bank, and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). Supporting the commitments of the Bali Action Plan (December 2007), and building on the related policy forums in Stockholm (October 2007) and Oslo (February 2008), this event will explore the issue of the humanitarian consequences of climate change in further detail and the options for establishing closer links between policies related to adaptation and humanitarian action with a particular focus on disaster risk reduction. The results of this conference will also feed into the ongoing revision of the Danish Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance.

The purpose of the Copenhagen Policy Forum is to identify opportunities and build joint efforts, especially as input to the 14th UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP-14) to take place in Poznan, Poland; and for providing input to the COP-15 in Copenhagen 2009 to effectively address the urgent challenges of disasters and climate change.

The 1½ day Policy Forum will be held on 12-13 November 2008. It will be hosted by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation Ms. Ulla Tørnæs. The Policy Forum is intended as a platform for joint reflection drawing on previous policy developments, including the guidance arising from the processes and meetings of the UNFCCC, such as the Nairobi Work Programme and the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, June 2007, and the recommendations of the Stockholm Plan of Action (gfdr.org/docs/StockholmPlanofAction.pdf) as well as the Oslo Policy Forum (www.oslopolicyforum.no). The joint reflection will lead to the formulation of joint initiatives to support the COP-14 and COP-15 preparations.





This Draft Concept Note is a working document, intended to be further developed and refined in a consultation process with key stakeholders. Therefore, we encourage you to submit comments and questions to Michael Andersen (miande@um.dk) and Elsebeth Krogh (elkr@cowi.com).

Background

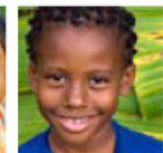
The numbers and impacts of disasters have increased over recent decades, largely as a result of unsustainable development practices, and now climate change is beginning to increase the frequency and intensity of weather hazards. These trends are likely to continue, creating significant challenges for humanitarian actors at the operational level and for policy makers. Humanitarian resources, both human and financial, are already stretched and to prevent the situation from worsening, new approaches to humanitarian response are urgently needed.

Considerable progress has been made within the humanitarian community in the past decades to improve the quality of disaster response. Among other things, this has led to a significant reduction of the numbers of people being killed by disasters. Yet, in the last couple of years, the positive trend has stagnated. The number of people being affected by disasters - both large and small - in the last thirty years has gone up in a dramatic curve. Humanitarian actors are acutely aware that risk reduction strategies and programmes are crucial to address the vulnerability of people to disasters. There is increasing documentation of the link between climate change and future human vulnerability (e.g. Humanitarian Futures Project 2007, IPCC 2007), and recent disaster trends underline the urgency of effective and coordinated action (e.g. ISDR Disaster Figures for 2007).

Risk reduction is a challenge for humanitarian as well as development actors when it comes to response and aid modalities. Climate change further increases the urgency to adjust modalities to better address the identification and reduction of vulnerabilities and risks. In addition, and given the current trend in weather related disasters - in particular floods - additional resources will be needed for disaster management, early warning systems, public education and training, community-based initiatives and improved risk transfer systems such as insurance.

In 2005 at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan, the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted by 168 countries as the key global strategy to implement disaster risk reduction. Climate change was acknowledged as an important underlying risk for disasters. The HFA was adopted by the UN General Assembly later that year.





The Bali Action Plan, adopted at the 13th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) in Indonesia in December 2007, acknowledged the role of “risk management and risk reduction strategies” in climate change adaptation strategies. The Copenhagen Policy Forum is intended to provide additional momentum to support follow up on the Bali Action Plan, and explore the synergies and complementarities of disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change. Since there will be an in-session workshop on risk management and risk reduction strategies at the UNFCCC COP-14 meeting in Poznan (1-12 December 2008), this provides a unique opportunity for strengthening the focus on disaster risk management in climate change adaptation policies and vice versa. The challenge ahead lies in ensuring that the new climate change agreement, to be adopted in Copenhagen in December 2009 at COP-15, gives a real push politically and financially to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management, based on the extensive available experience and proven practices of countries.

There is great scope for increasing the effectiveness of, and synergies between, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction while recognizing that the two agendas have different concerns and policy processes. There is considerable overlap in the objectives and approaches between the two and it is increasingly acknowledged that both communities can mutually benefit from each other, ensuring effective adaptation to climate change. Success in adaptation to climate change needs to take account of changes in disaster risks, and at the same time disaster risk reduction must take account of climate change. The case for interlinking the two is currently gaining broad support among stakeholders. The idea of establishing financing channels for joint initiatives for both agendas is also gaining support, and it is desirable to concretize this further and explore ways of strengthening the financing element in a coordinated manner.

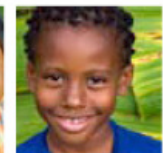
Participants in the Oslo Policy Forum in February 2008 stressed the urgency to act in response to the increase in climate-related humanitarian disasters and developed a set of recommendations based on the basic assumption that the reduction of vulnerability to climate hazards and prevention of recurrent disasters must be cornerstones of future efforts to build the resilience and adaptive capacity in vulnerable communities. Similarly, the Stockholm Plan of Action identified the need to bring these themes more closely together and mainstream them into development policy and practice.

Key Issues and Outcomes

The Copenhagen Policy Forum will take stock of key debates in this field and attempt to focus and concretise the main humanitarian challenges into specific pointers for action. The pertinent questions which the Forum will address are:

- How will or should humanitarian assistance adapt itself to the increased risk from more frequent and more intense climate related natural disasters?





- How can development, humanitarian and climate change actors be a joint force for expanding the focus from disaster response to prevention?
- What are the future perspectives for addressing disaster risk reduction and management and climate change adaptation in a coherent manner?

During the process in the Policy Forum these issues could be addressed in the following manner:

- Make as full use as possible of the UNFCCC reports and in effect act as a consultation forum on the main themes that they wish to raise;
- Explicitly support three relevant themes of the Bali Action Plan, namely: risk reduction strategies, risk management and risk transfer (including insurance);
- Explicitly address the recommendations of the Stockholm Plan of Action and the Oslo Policy Forum;
- Consider a limited number of critical crosscutting issues, including gender and capacity development;
- Provide consultative support for (i) climate change negotiators, (ii) national actors in humanitarian and emergency response, and (iii) decision makers in the supporting community (UN, technical groups, donors);
- Agree on specific joint initiatives to provide inputs to COP-14 and COP-15 supported by a directional plan of developing these including assignment of responsibilities among relevant actors.

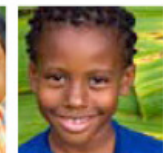
The main *outcomes* of the Copenhagen Policy Forum are expected to be:

- DRR/CCA discussion papers as input to COP-14 in Poznan;
- A roadmap on the further streamlining of DRR and CCA towards COP-15;
- A number of drafting groups formed to develop specific inputs on CC and Humanitarian Response to be considered in the agenda of COP-15;
- Enabling national bodies in addressing DRR issues in a climate change context and at COP-14.

Disasters and Climate Change Event – concept outline

Based on the thematic elaborations above and considering the great public interest in the issues of the event, we are planning an open public seminar on the morning of the 12th November, followed by a closed policy forum for selected key stakeholders on the afternoon of the 12th and morning of the 13th November.





Public Seminar – 12 November (half-day)

The Public Seminar will draw up current trends and latest developments in climate change, disasters and humanitarian responses. The focus will be on *challenges* as well as possible *solutions*. The half-day seminar will cover the following issues:

Trends in climate-related (disaster) risks and related humanitarian responses – key note speaker(s)

To describe the current context of the discussion there will be speakers from the IPCC/climate change community as well as the disaster response and humanitarian community. Speakers will describe in their presentations how science and policies have developed over the last 20 years and the current status. A presentation on climate change science and policies will describe the impacts of greenhouse gases on the earth system and focus on scenarios for 2050-2100. It will furthermore describe how GHG mitigation strategies initially having little attention on adaptation have developed a stronger focus on knowledge and policy needs to address the impacts. Presentations on humanitarian science and policies will focus on addressing disaster response and addressing hazards and establish the link to addressing risks and vulnerabilities as confirmed in the HFA.

Focus on Solutions - panel debate(s)

The panel debates will focus on possible solutions and strategies. The panellists will include climate change experts and humanitarian experts.

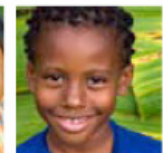
The discussants will kick off the debate by addressing 1) the current level of implementation and successes of RR strategies, in particular in the context of weather related natural disaster risks, and 2) how existing mechanisms in the humanitarian system can be adapted to future risks, with special attention to the risks of complex emergencies and mega disasters.

Following up on the key note speeches and the brief presentations of the discussants an open debate will follow allowing participants to raise questions and comments to the panel.

Policy Forum - 12 and 13 November (two half days)

The Policy Forum will be organised around a number of round table discussions. The intention is that each round table group should produce a set of proposed initiatives to provide inputs to COP-14 - and in turn COP-15 - within the themes identified.





The workshop participants will be well selected ensuring a right balance between climate change negotiators and humanitarian and development experts. Additional resource persons may be added to the workshops if any specific expertise is needed.

Proposed workshop themes

1. Joining forces: one unified approach for Disaster Risk Reduction?
2. The Climate Change adaptation roadmap (the next process milestones for DRR and the convergence of CCA and DRR);
3. DRR follow-up on the Bali Action Plan: Providing technical support on DRR to UNFCCC COP 14 in Poznan;
4. Development of high quality climate related information in support of climate change adaptation and DRR". Work in this regard is currently being done also by the Bank, and together with WMO;
5. Combining mechanisms for climate change adaptation with humanitarian measures for reducing vulnerability and build resilience;
6. Future financing mechanisms for effective responses to preventing and managing disasters related to climate change related natural disasters.
7. Incorporating human rights, gender and other cross-cutting issues in future policies and approaches related to climate change adaptation and humanitarian responses;
8. Join and build capacities from relevant technical, managerial and political fields in developing comprehensive and affective approaches to meet future complex humanitarian impacts of climate change.

Workshop sessions

1: Focus on Prioritisation

Each round-table group identifies 2-3 main urgent priorities and formulates a brief justification and description of what the major challenges are for each priority.

2: Focus on Ideas

Each round-table group formulates ideas for short- and long-term actions to be taken on each priority. It is proposed that the ideas presented could be supporting negotiators, covering national and international response, and supporting the technical community.

Policy Forum Steering Committee

The following organisations have been contacted and have accepted to participate to the degree that they can: WB/GFDRR, IFRC Climate Centre/DRC, OCHA/UNISDR.

