



Count down to Copenhagen: global adaptation

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CANA International Climate Summary Sheet #3

Questions

- Should adaptation finance be linked to overseas development aid?
- How can we ensure that finance is secure and predictable? Any mechanism established to fund adaptation must be sufficiently robust to ensure that the money is not just promised, but delivered.
- How can adaptation programs ensure that indigenous rights are upheld and biodiversity is protected?
- Should untested (or ethically dubious) technologies, such as genetically engineered crops, be introduced to assist adaptation?

Background

Climate change is already affecting many people and ecosystems around the world. The Global Humanitarian Forum released a report this year, *Anatomy of a Silent Crisis*, which documents the current and predicted impacts of climate change on people. It found that "every year climate change leaves over 300,000 people dead, 325 million people seriously affected, and economic losses of US\$125 billion. Four billion people are vulnerable, and 500 million people are at extreme risk."¹

The Global Humanitarian Forum articulated the global imbalance whereby developing countries bear the least responsibility for climate change, yet bear the brunt of the impacts: "Developing countries bear over nine-tenths of the climate change burden: 98% of the seriously affected and 99% of all deaths from weather-related disasters, along with over 90% of the total economic losses. The 50 Least Developed Countries contribute less than 1% of global carbon emissions."

Estimates for finances from public and private sources needed to help developing country adaptation vary, but most estimate tens of billions of Australian dollars annually.² Under the Kyoto Protocol, an Adaptation Fund was established to help pay for projects and programs in developing countries. It is financed from a share of the proceeds of CDM projects, amounting to 2% of the certified emissions reductions generated by the project.

The UNFCCC oversees National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that identifies priority activities for urgent and immediate adaptation needs. Activities included and covered by NAPAs include flood prevention works, wetland and other ecosystem restoration, research and adoption of more adaptable food crops and even relocation of communities at risk of flooding.

¹ http://www.ghfgeneva.org/Portals/0/pdfs/human_impact_report.pdf

² See for example UNFCCC (2007) *Investment and financial flows to address climate change*.

http://unfccc.int/files/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/application/pdf/background_paper.pdf; UNDP (2007) *Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting climate change. Human solidarity in a divided world*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>

The preparation of NAPAs is funded by a Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF), administered through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Most LDCs have now prepared their NAPAs, but many actions and projects proposed under NAPAs have not been established because of the challenges of accessing funding and the inadequacy of available funds.

In December 2008, CAN International estimated that of the approximately US\$1.6 billion total cost of implementing NAPAs submitted so far, only \$172 million has been committed to the LDCF. Although COP15 in Copenhagen this year may make decisions about finance and other mechanisms in a post-2012 framework, many of the adaptation projects in LDCs require funding much sooner.

Australia's position

- The Australian Government has made a submission to the UNFCCC³ that adaptation strategies and implementation should be country-driven. It proposed two mechanisms through which the UNFCCC could support national adaptation planning.
- The Global Environment Facility manages four funds for climate change adaptation, among them the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund. The former assists the 49 countries defined by the UN as "least developed" in the preparation and implementation of National Adaptation Programs of Action. Australia contributed \$7.5 million to this fund in 2007.
- Australia has committed funding, via AusAid, to an "Adaptation to Climate Change initiative" for climate adaptation works in the Pacific. The commitment is for \$150 million over three years, with \$35 million in 2008-09.
- There needs to be much more, however. The Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, a least developed country, has this year announced its intention to relocate its community, following a similar decision by the Maldives last year, and is asking for help from Australia⁴.
- Australia has been criticised by some NGOs for failing to recognise climate change refugees.

Further information:

This is CANA Summary Sheet #3. See the other 'Count down to Copenhagen' summary sheets in our international climate series:

Summary Sheet #1 What to look for, What to expect

Summary Sheet #2 International finance for climate mitigation and adaptation

Summary Sheet #3 Global adaptation to climate change

Summary Sheet #4 Legal architecture

Summary Sheet #5 Mitigation

Summary Sheet #6 LULUCF and REDD

Summary Sheet #7 International climate acronyms

³ http://www.climatechange.gov.au/international/pubs/AWG-LCAsubmission_adaptation.pdf

⁴ http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/40789/title/First_wave

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