

Climate Resilient Development Mainstreaming Climate Change Concerns into Planning Processes

Climate Change is happening and it is here to stay

Climate change is an issue of growing concern and has moved from sidelines to the centre-stage of discussions on global development. There is increasing evidence of countries grappling with a wide range of impacts, many of which are unpredictable causing disproportionate damage and pushing back development gains by decades. Climate change has raised serious questions regarding the business as usual development paradigm and has forced governments, corporations, and civil societies to look at the interdependencies of sectors and initiatives to bring social, environmental and economic issues on the platform.

India is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, with a high-dependence on climate sensitive economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock and forestry. Consequences of climate change threaten to affect food security, water security and energy access, all of which are crucial for lifting our marginalised out of extreme poverty and maintaining the living standards of the present well-off. Even within India, the poorest are especially vulnerable to weather variability and projected climate change.

It is clear that technology, investments, policy and regulations alone will not be able to provide the solution. A multi-stakeholder engagement of all concerned parties, on a sustained basis, starting at the community, sub-national, national and regional levels, is required to arrive at a consensus, convergence and compact on the principles, content and metrics of what needs to be done and who should do what. Enlisting the active cooperation of local groups, communities, local institutions and stakeholders, building up their capacities and empowering them as active participants in decision making processes are a foundational pre-condition for efficient and effective response measures. This is because the effects of climate change are experienced locally by communities, local institutions and stakeholders and they are best suited to address them.

Mainstreaming Climate Change: an effective way to achieve climate resilient development

A widely accepted means of preparing for climate change is to mainstream adaptation into development planning processes. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation involves systematically assessing and incorporating information and measures related to climate risks and vulnerabilities into development policies, plans, institutions, programs and projects (OECD, 2009; SPC & GTZ, 2010). It means building a culture in which consideration of potential climate risks, and strategies for addressing these risks, is embedded into everyday decision-making. Multifold impacts of climate change, evident sectoral overlaps and analogous co-benefits of response indicate that climate resilience and development planning have to be seen in tandem. This approach allows climate concerns to be simultaneously addressed through multiple avenues focusing on resilience, adaptive and simultaneous move to lower carbon planning; leveraging existing technical, human and financial resources; enhancing capacity to identify trade-offs between adaptation needs and other priorities; and greater cost-effectiveness. The decentralised bottom-up process defined for development planning in India provides a robust frame and platform for mainstreaming climate concerns into village and district plans and synergizing with state and national level sustainable development agenda.

Why Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in Development Planning of India?

- **Key Sectors Affected by Climate Change:** Agriculture, Infrastructure, Forests, Fisheries, Biodiversity, Water, Tourism, Human Health
- **1.2 billion people** live in areas vulnerable to hazards such as floods, cyclones and droughts
- **700 million people** living in rural areas are dependent on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, forests, fisheries and natural resources such as water, fodder, and biodiversity for their livelihoods
- **1.7% of GDP** loss predicted, if the annual mean temperature rises by 1 degree Celsius compared to pre-industrialisation level
- **US \$7 billion** loss in agriculture in India by 2030 due to decrease in seasonal mean rainfall and an increase in mean and extreme precipitation during monsoon
- 1m rise in sea levels will displace more than **7 million people**; destroy more than **5000 sq. km. of land** and **4000 km. of roads**

Mainstreaming Climate Change: Transition to a Resilient Future

Climate responsive development aims to promote adaptation solutions and strategies that work to build resilience to current and future climate variability and mitigate risks while promoting greener low impact development action. "Climate responsive planning principles" need to be identified that will help guide development planning in the future. Climate smart development planning will need to integrate across horizontal and vertical institutional levels of planning, working across departments (agriculture, water resources, rural development etc.) and vertical bureaucratic levels (national, state, district, block, village). It also necessitates a transformation in our technological and communication systems which will provide the essential tools for mainstreaming climate change concerns. And most importantly, it may need to redefine metrics of development, bringing in indicators related to climate risks and resilience into metrics of measurement.

The round table meeting on, "**Climate Resilient Development: Mainstreaming Climate Change Concerns into Planning Processes**" on 15th of October, 2014 at Development Alternatives World Headquarters in New Delhi aims to identify key transformations that can increase the resilience of communities, institutions and planning systems to manage response to climate change. The round table will be preceded by field visits to rural areas of Orchha, Madhya Pradesh. Field visits will provide include discussions with village local governments involved in development planning and provide the required insights to debate the transformations required for mainstreaming climate change concerns into planning.

The objectives of the round table are:

- To deliberate on the issues and challenges for mainstreaming climate change adaptation
- To identify systems and processes for integrating climate change concerns in development agenda
- To provide recommendations on transformative linkages for climate resilient development