



Development and Climate Days

Global ambition
Local action

Climate resilience for all
#DCdays18

Over the last decade, Development & Climate Days (D&C Days) has built a reputation for providing stimulating and interactive debate of topics and issues at the interface of development and climate change during the middle weekend of the UN climate change talks.

In 2018 host partners will continue to build on the topic of 'Global ambition. Local action. Climate resilience for all', aiming to influence the 'ambition mechanism' processes under the UNFCCC – particularly the Talanoa Dialogue and global stocktake – and to inform climate action on all levels, looking ahead to 2020.

Resilience through empowerment will be one of four key themes explored at this year's D&C Days.

1. Resilience through empowerment

Adaptation Network/Environmental Monitoring Group

To be resilient and sustainable, global society must move towards greater social justice and address the multiple poverties that limit people's ability to act in the face of climate impacts. To reach the goals set by Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, we must empower the most vulnerable when responding to the emerging opportunities and risks of our world and its rapidly changing climate.

The IPCC fifth assessment report *'Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability'* introduced the concept of climate-resilient development pathways and advocated their transformation into greater social and environmental sustainability, equity, resilience and justice. Climate-resilient development pathways combine adaptation and mitigation to reduce climate change and its impacts, addressing structural, intersecting inequalities, marginalisation and multidimensional poverty.

The 2018 IPCC special report *'Global warming of 1.5°C'* focused attention on the need for urgent, comprehensive action to mitigate climate change and ensure that we can progress

transformational developmental pathways that "encompass joint, iterative planning and transformative visions", enabling people to create liveable and sustainable futures. With its emphasis on sustainable development, resilience and transformation, the report explores how to reduce societal vulnerabilities and address entrenched inequalities while also breaking the circle of poverty. It also argues that social justice and equity are core aspects of climate-resilient development pathways for transformational social change.

To address the challenges and widen opportunities between and within countries and communities, we need to achieve sustainable development and limit warming to 1.5°C without making the poor and disadvantaged worse off.

Identifying and navigating inclusive and socially acceptable pathways toward low-carbon, climate-resilient futures is a challenging yet important endeavour, fraught with moral, practical and political difficulties and inevitable trade-offs. But with deliberation and problem solving, we can negotiate societal values,

wellbeing, risks and resilience to determine what is desirable and fair and to whom, developing pathways that encompass joint, iterative planning and transformative visions.

Issues at stake

The main issues under this theme are eradicating poverty while empowering and ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable.

Material **poverty** limits people's options and ability to act. But it is not just material poverty that influences wellbeing. Poverty is multidimensional and poor people experience deficits in accessing assets and capabilities at individual (health, education and housing) and collective levels (the ability to organise and mobilise to take collective action).

These multiple poverties act in concert to reduce people's adaptive capacity and increase their vulnerability. Poverty of identity, protection, understanding, participation or affection are as oppressive as material poverty. Feeling powerless in relation to the political and/or economic systems they live in can make people feel like victims, leading to

apathy and increasing their vulnerability to extreme climatic events.

The Sustainable Development Goals seek to address many of the causes of such poverties. The first goal is eradicating extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030, while enhancing resilience and reducing exposure and vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, including climate-related extreme events.

In its preamble, the Paris Agreement emphasises “the intrinsic relationship that climate change actions, responses and impacts have with equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty”. The agreement recognises the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, as well as how food production systems are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. As such, it aims to advance sustainable development and strengthen efforts to eradicate poverty in the face of climate change.

Empowerment refers broadly to the expansion of freedom of choice and action. In the context of enhancing resilience, it involves expanding poor people’s assets and capabilities “to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives”,¹ as well as their ability to anticipate, act with imagination and confidence and actively learn from emerging experience and evidence.

Empowerment enables people to minimise the institutional barriers that limit their options and prevent them from taking action to improve their wellbeing. In the context of enhancing resilience, this includes formal institutions such as

organs of the state, markets and donor and development agencies, as well as informal institutions such as irrational, unproductive, unjust and unsatisfying social structures that limit people’s self-development and self-determination, leading to social exclusion, exploitative relations and corruption.

In the context of adaptation to the impacts of climate change, empowerment lies in enabling people to increase or broaden their ability to take appropriate actions and adjust these in the light of new information, challenges or emerging opportunities. Ideally, people will take these actions in collaboration with others on an individual or collective level to maintain or improve the position of others in the community.

All too frequently, interventions designed to alleviate distress – such as refugee camps providing subsistence needs and medical care – reduce people’s ability to act, fostering long-term dependency. Adaptation financing is typically made available within funding frameworks that are risk-averse, imposing conditions and demands to promote fiduciary responsibility that are not necessarily enabling. Access to adaptation funding is usually via time-bound projects with limited objectives that cannot address the unpredictable nature of ongoing adaptation, which by its nature must evolve and adapt to the increasing impacts of the warming climate.

Our misplaced targets culture, uncritical acceptance of projectification and collective failure to be open to circumstance and its contingent nature are all placing constraints on adaptation.² As a result, many adaptation interventions are reduced to delivering material benefits

via disempowering transactions with no transformational outcomes that deepen existing unequal relationships of patronage or even corruption.

Participation is frequently seen as a method or means to an end. But pseudo-participation creates the illusion of inclusivity and ownership of processes and their outcomes. Genuine participation enhances individual and collective resilience, empowering people to further influence and change the course of events in response to emergent experiences and evidence.

The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of integrated, holistic and balanced non-market approaches in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication to promote mitigation and adaptation ambition, and seeks to enhance participation in the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions. To empower and foster greater resilience, participation must take place within open, equitable contexts and encourage self-mobilisation.

Developing key messages and influencing strategy

The inclusion of this theme in the 16th D&C Days will build on the central topic of ‘Global ambition. Local action. Climate resilience for all’. This paper aims to stimulate debate and challenge orthodoxy around resilience. Participants in the D&C Days discussions around this theme will use their experience, evidence and learning to develop key messages to influence the climate negotiations on how to advance the resilience of human communities and the ecosystems with which they coexist.

¹ World Bank (2002) Empowerment and poverty reduction: a sourcebook. Washington.

² Ison, R (2010) Systems practice: how to act in a climate-change world. Springer.