

A Pro-poor and People-centered Response to Climate Change

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World Resources Institute (WRI)

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Work relates to Adaptation X Mitigation X

1. What is your organization doing to advance pro-poor and people-centered climate change?

WRI has four streams of work that promote pro-poor and people-centered responses to climate change:

- Causes of Vulnerability Project: Explores the causal structure of vulnerability so as to identify the appropriate scales of causality/responsibility and related potential points of intervention for vulnerability reduction and adaptation enhancement.
- Vulnerability and Adaptation Project: seeks to develop models and metrics for ensuring that the adaptation of vulnerable communities is addressed in national development planning.
- Climate and Forest Governance Project: aims to ensure that “REDD” and other emerging international mechanisms to reduce carbon emissions from forests do not undermine the provision of important benefits by forests to poor communities.
- Mainstreaming Ecosystem Services Initiative: seeks to integrate ecosystem services – a major source of resilience for poor and vulnerable communities – into developing country policy, planning and investment frameworks for poverty reduction and pro-poor growth (including climate change adaptation strategies).
- Sustainable Development Policies and Measures (SDPAMs): promotes the creation of mechanisms within the climate negotiations to facilitate developing country policies and measures that simultaneously promote mitigation and development.

2. What is, in your view, the most critical gap or unaddressed issue in the international negotiations towards a pro-poor climate regime?

While many elements of the climate agreements pay good lip service to the need for sustainable development, there is little in the negotiations that can assure that funds generated through the international climate regime will actually reach the poor. Mechanisms for this assurance are needed if a new agreement is to be successfully implemented. Moreover, recognition is needed that climate does not cause vulnerability, but that people are differentially vulnerable due to an array of underlying economic and social conditions that are not ‘climate generated.’ These conditions shape people’s differential experience of climate change and the outcomes of climate events. Searching for a “climate increment” steers attention away from underlying conditions which may be the most effective targets for reducing vulnerability.

3. Do you plan to address this issue? If yes, how?

WRI’s Climate and Energy Program has launched a stream of work to inform the development of metrics to be used in developing commitments within the agreement, and to monitor implementation, with regard both to adaptation and mitigation. This work draws heavily on the first of the three projects listed above,

together with past work within the Climate Program on Sustainable Development Policies and Measures (SDPAMS), which was taken up in the Bali agreement in the form of “developing country actions.”

We will also use analytic approaches to identify root causes of vulnerability so that these causes can be included among potential means of decreasing the negative outcomes commonly associated with climate change projections.

4. What are the challenges you see in addressing this gap?

The first challenges are analytic. How do we understand causes of vulnerability in order to accurately weigh different factors—such as climate variability, climate change, economic variability, exploitation, violence, marginalization—that may contribute to negative outcomes such as hunger, famine, dislocation or economic loss? A framework for causal weighing is needed so that contributions to solutions can be accurately calculated and funding can be allocated accordingly.

The second set of challenges are operational. How can existing institutions and policy tools -- at global, national, and local levels -- be used to channel resources to where they can best reduce vulnerability? Where existing institutions and mechanisms fail, are there opportunities to create new structures that could fill the gaps?