

# DEVELOPMENT and CLIMATE

A project summary

*Bridging the Gap between National Development Policies and Dealing with Climate Change*

## Background

Climate change has been universally recognised as a global problem. While historically the preponderance of greenhouse gas emissions has been in the developed countries, emissions will increase rapidly with expected and needed economic growth in developing countries. Both the Framework Convention on Climate Change and independent scientific analysis have reiterated that strong and inclusive global co-operation will be needed to realise the deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions necessary over the longer term to control climate change. Yet, in the years since the constitution of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, North-South co-operation on climate change has not developed adequately. Worse, the discussion on how to address climate change in the longer term has become polarised. One reason for this lack of progress is that industrialised countries did not make an effort to broaden the debate to sustainable development issues. Another reason is that climate change in developing countries is not a politically important focus of economic or development policy and is only recently being considered among national environmental policy objectives in some of these countries. Climate change remains marginal to the pressing issues of poverty, natural resource management, food security, energy needs and access, or urban transport or land use that capture the attention of leading actors.

Current co-operation efforts and analyses of climate change policy have been driven mostly by concerns about climate change. From this perspective, related ancillary benefits in energy efficiency or health impacts of local air pollution may be significant, but they are only of secondary importance. They are only seen as potentially reducing the total costs of compliance with climate change commitments. This approach has had limited success in driving global action. At the same time, it is increasingly recognised that developing countries are pursuing development policies and programs that contribute to sustainable development. In many countries, energy initiatives and other climate favouring activities emerge as side-benefits of sound development programmes. Price reform, agricultural soil protection, sustainable forestry, energy sector restructuring - all undertaken without any reference to climate change- can mitigate environmental risks while they enhance economic and political development. However, due to other international influences such as trade liberalisation and policies of international financing institutions, less environmentally benign development patterns can emerge.

The challenge for integrated development and environmental policies is the practical question of how best to choose and stay on the paths that minimise the local and global environmental costs of relieving poverty, providing adequate food, getting electricity to households and industry, providing employment and transportation facilities consistent with the needs of developing country people. To reframe global environmental policies as deriving from development priorities does not make climate change easier to solve. Rather, it suggests that global collaboration on climate change

should be approached on multiple levels through local and national development programmes, as well as through multilateral efforts to establish co-operation mechanisms within an equitable and efficient global climate change regime.

### **A New Approach**

The development and climate project explores the idea that a less polarised way of meeting the challenges of sustainable development and climate change is to build environmental and climate policy upon development priorities that are vitally important to developing countries. It focuses on the potential that contributions by developing countries to the management of the risks of climate change should be seen not as a burden of legal commitments to be avoided, but as a side-benefit of sound and internationally supported development. Instead of starting with the question how to generate political attention to climate change risks among key political decision makers and the public, it suggests starting with development problems that are already politically central and based on that investigate how these problems can be solved in the most climate-friendly or most sustainable development friendly way. And this could then lead to an alternative strategy for establishing co-operation between developing and developed nations.

The implications of a “development first” strategy are several:

- New tools and methodologies are required to analyse consistency of alternative paths towards (development) goals with economic, social and environmental sustainability constraints (including addressing climate change). Where there are mismatches between current development trends and these sustainability constraints, such an analysis would point to critical areas for international collaboration to create the conditions for getting on a sustainable trajectory.
- New actors who have not been central to the current climate change process should be involved. An important focus should be on the local level where practical synergies between sustainable development and climate change actions are being developed. Actors have to come from government agencies, the research community, national and international business, NGOs (development and environmental) and other stakeholders that are considered to be important actors in shaping or constraining reforms and in restructuring vital development sectors. In addition to bringing expertise on climate change, it is also essential to engage public and private actors who bring expert knowledge on how effectively to implement new political and economic projects. In this way actors from complementary and needed support activities like finance and law could be included in the discussions.
- Analytical capacity needs to be built in all countries, but particularly in developing countries research institutions to compare alternative development scenarios and strategies for high priority sectors and to describe their link to climate change and other environmental impacts.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the project are to:

- explore national development strategies and policies that both meet development priorities of individual countries and address climate change;
- identify promising policy options and projects that assist in the transition to long-term sustainable development patterns including addressing climate change and facilitate the formation of networks of actors that are capable of promoting such options;
- establish a partnership between centres of excellence in developing countries and industrialised countries in order to promote cross-country discussions and share experiences about integrated development and greenhouse gas reducing policies. This will particularly promote the analytical capacity in developing country research institutes; and
- distil the lessons and experience from international co-operation towards a global regime addressing climate change.

## **Scope**

The project is focused on two priority areas of the sustainable development agenda of developing countries, which in many cases centres on poverty eradication issues:

- (1) energy supply for development and access to electricity;
- (2) food security/ fresh water availability and the interrelated aspects of land use and forest management.

The reason for zooming in on certain key development issues that are important for poverty eradication, is that in relation to such more specific development issues it becomes easier to agree on what sustainability means (bottom-up approach) and what the relationship with climate change is, while maintaining a strong linkage between the issues.

The project involves five developing countries and one region and takes their local development priorities as its starting point by defining specific development objectives and current trends and important plans and initiatives. Development projects that are evaluated are in Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, South Africa and West Africa.

In terms of the linkage to climate change, both local climate change impacts, possible local adaptation to climate change as well as local options for a low emissions development path will be considered. Adaptation policies seem to be in particular important to a number of least developed countries and a number of specific issues facing adaptation in this context will be considered in the projects. A number of lessons will be drawn from the national studies as a basis for addressing global co-operation in addressing climate change.

### **International Support**

The Development and Climate project is co-ordinated by the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and the Environment (UCCEE), the Netherlands Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

The Partners from developing countries are: prof. O. Davidson, EDRC (South Africa), prof. P.R. Shukla, IIM/IIT (India), dr. Z. Dadi, ERI (China), prof. E.L. la Rovere, COPPE (Brazil), dr. Y. Sokona, ENDA (West Africa), and dr. A. Rahman, BCAS (Bangladesh). The Partners from industrialised countries are: prof. T. Heller, Stanford University (USA), dr. J. Drexhage, IISD (Canada), dr. R. Klein, PIK (Germany), and prof. J.C. Hourcade, CIRED (France).

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### **Structure**

The project will operate over two years and in two phases:

#### *Phase 1:*

The first phase runs until April 2003 and includes the development of a conceptual framework for analysing the connections between development and climate change. Additionally in this phase specific case studies are analysed in close partnership with key actors and stakeholders in the six developing countries. The analyses vary to account for the unique development situation in each country. The case studies try to answer the questions such as:

- What is the impact of climate change policies on the development of coal resources?
- What is the impact on food production and what adaptive measures can help?
- How can a regime of regional co-operation help development, including the competitiveness of regional industry in global markets, and food/ energy security?
- How can energy services be supplied to the poorest 50% of the population?
- What is the impact of land-use changes?
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### *Phase 2:*

The second phase will run from mid 2003 until 2005 and will give detailed analyses in close partnership with key actors/stakeholders of national strategies that both meet (energy and food security) development goals and address climate change. More specifically, Phase 2 activities include:

- Integration of sectoral development trends and climate strategies at the national level.
- Identification of key initiatives at the policy and project level that would be crucial for the necessary transitions towards a sustainable development trajectory.
- Implementation of a capacity building programmes in local research partner institutions.
- Drawing lessons for global co-operation to address climate change.

Phase 2 funding is being sought from organisations that can benefit from the project.

### **References:**

Halsnaes, K. And A. Olhoff, Proceedings from the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Workshop, Paris 24-25 October 2002, UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment, Risoe, Denmark, 2002.

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