How to engage in the policy dialogue on climate change adaptation in your country?
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Introduction
Policies and actions to support countries and in particular developing countries to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change have been developing in the last years, and accelerating since 2007.

At the UN level this process led to the establishment of the Cancun Adaptation Framework at the UN Climate Conference in Mexico, December 2010. See annex 1 for the main elements of the agreement. To support climate change actions in developing countries the industrialized countries reconfirmed in Cancun their commitment to provide $30 billion for fast start finance in 2010-2012, to be divided ‘in a balanced way’ between mitigation and adaptation. In addition it was agreed that by 2020 $100 billion should be mobilised annually in support of climate actions in developing countries through a Green Climate Fund that was established in Cancun. In many developing countries climate change adaptation (CCA) programmes and policies have already been set in motion, often supported by UN agencies, bilateral donors or the World Bank. Civil society organisations are also increasingly developing and implementing CCA programmes and projects.

At COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, a decision was taken on the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs see annex 2 for the main relevant elements of this decision). Governments are invited to develop these plans while UN institutions and others (like the Least developed Countries Expert Group, LEG) will support the development of these plans and develop more concrete guidelines for them.

Climate change will likely lead to more, and more intense, weather extremes, resulting in disasters. Humanitarian actors have much experience to address and reduce these risks. Yet, in many countries humanitarian actors are not fully aware of, or engaged in, climate change adaptation policies and programme development.

The COP 17 decision on the NAPs is an invitation to civil society actors to become engaged in the development of the NAPs and to assure that the interests of the most vulnerable people are well covered.

Establishing the first steps of a dialogue with your government on the topic can be a bit challenging. This document has been produced at the request of National Societies and Federation staff worldwide. It aims to help get that dialogue started. To start with, we listed some ‘leading questions’ to assist RC National Societies (and others) to step up their engagement in the policy dialogue on climate change adaptation.

1. Does your country have a national climate change adaptation policy, or is it developing one?

In most countries the leading ministry on climate change is often the Ministry of Environment, or Natural Resources or Energy. On the website of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) you can find the contact information of the national focal points of the governments (This is the Ministry where you can find out about the adaptation policy of your government).

Please note that addressing the causes of climate change is commonly called “mitigation”. This is mostly about the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (easy to get confused because in the humanitarian sector we use the concept of “disaster mitigation” - be wary of this term when talking to people working on climate change). The RC/RC focus is on addressing the impacts of climate change, notably those leading to disasters, food insecurity and deterioration of health commonly called “adaptation”.

2. Who is the leading official of your government responsible for adaptation policies?

Experience in many countries have demonstrated that it is always helpful to establish a good contact with the leading official(s) on a subject of interest, in this case the national adaptation policy. Formal ways of communication (like letters in which you explain the RC position) are helpful, but with informal ways of communication you can often get a better idea of the reasons behind a certain policy position. When you have a good relation it is also easier to ask a question on subjects that are not clear to you or give informal suggestions on certain issues, notably the humanitarian consequences of climate change.

Try to find out what has been published in terms of strategies and policies by your Government. Within the UNFCCC framework, some least developed countries have written a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). These NAPAs can be seen as the ‘first generation’ of NAPs, addressing short term adaptation needs. The NAPs are defined as addressing medium and long term needs. Most countries submitted National Communications to the UNFCCC. Even though the main parts of these reports are about greenhouse-gas emissions (of less relevance for the Red Cross and Red Crescent), they also describe the vulnerability of your country to climate change impacts in the coming decades.

When your government does have an adaptation policy go to question 4.

3. What do you do when there is no adaptation policy?

Contact the leading official and try to find out why the government does not have an adaptation policy. If they are in the process of drafting one, try to find out whether there is room for consultation to which the Red Cross/Red Crescent and other humanitarian and development actors can participate. All countries agreed in Cancun that “relevant multilateral, international, regional and national organizations, the public and private sectors, civil society and other relevant stakeholders are invited to undertake and support enhanced action on adaptation at all levels” so you can refer to this if necessary.

In a growing number of developing countries there are initiatives to set up so-called ‘multi-stakeholder groups’ on climate change, involving NGOs, government bodies, private sector, researchers and donors. Find out if such an initiative exists in your country and whether it is relevant for you to join.

The Red Cross/Red Crescent, together with other humanitarian and development organisations, have repeatedly called on countries to make it a leading principle of the Cancun Adaptation Framework that it should serve the most vulnerable people. Countries agreed to give particular support to the most vulnerable countries, but not to the people. Now that national adaptation strategies and programmes are developed, the humanitarian community can again inform governments of the view that adaptation should protect the most vulnerable people.

Be clear what the RC and humanitarian actors can contribute to the national adaptation policy. In particular community based disaster risk reduction, early warning/early action approaches and health and care services are good adaptation programmes when connected to climate change related risks. The IASC document for UNFCCC COP 14 in Poznan (Title: “Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies and Risk Management Practices: Critical Elements for Adaptation to Climate Change” see: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc) and the Climate Change Advocacy toolkit (https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw184125.asp), can be helpful.

In case you would like to approach other stakeholders in your country on climate change adaptation you could read a ‘stakeholder analysis’ at the Climate Centre website and a list of questions on what to ask

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2 It is recommended to look for ‘likeminded’ actors in this process, like IASC-members in the country, or the national disaster risk reduction platform and operate in an coordinated manner.
different stakeholders in your country.

4. If your government has an adaptation policy, are the humanitarian consequences addressed?

Read through the adaptation policy of your government and find out whether the humanitarian consequences of climate change are acknowledged and addressed. Look for key words like: disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, community based adaptation, most vulnerable people, food security, health, water and sanitation.

Make your judgement whether the humanitarian consequences are sufficiently addressed. In case you would like advice whether or not the humanitarian consequences are sufficiently addressed in relation to the expected trends of risk occurrence in your country, do not hesitate to contact the helpdesk of the IRI-IFRC: ifrc@iri.colombia.edu.

When you are positive go to question 6.

5. What do you do when the humanitarian consequences are not sufficiently addressed in the adaptation policies of your country?

From what we have seen so far there is a great variety of national adaptation policies. This depends very much on the agencies and ministries that have been involved in the development of the plans. For example in many countries water management, infrastructure and coastal protection or agriculture are key elements of the policy. Also in many countries it is not clear what the criteria are for the selection of sectors or regions for adaptation. Sea level rise is often overstated and extreme weather events understated as threats to coastal countries. In countries with a high cover of forests, forest conservation is often a key element of adaptation policies. And often the ‘hardware’ (concrete visible measures like seawalls) tend to dominate the ‘soft ware’ (like capacity building of the most vulnerable people, DRR and health programmes).

When you believe the humanitarian consequences are not sufficiently addressed, find out what could be the best ways to raise this concern. Contact the lead official of the government to get more information and find out whether there are possibilities to include the humanitarian concerns. Bring concrete suggestions. A paper with these suggestions may be helpful at this stage, the Climate Centre can advise you on the elements of such a paper you wish to write. Find likeminded organisations. Use successful examples from other countries in the region to make your case.

6. What can you do when the government addresses the humanitarian consequences of climate change in its national adaptation policy?

Congratulations! You can move to the most essential phase: implementation. Find out how the government and other actors envision the implementation of the policy. This is often dependent on international funding and those machines don’t move fast. Maybe you can use the international network of the RC to speed up the process. The RC is well connected to the different actors in this field.

Last but not least develop plans and programmes on how the RC can contribute to the implementation of the policy. In some cases you can mobilise your own resources, by referring to the national adaptation policy. Of course much of the work that National Societies does occur at the branch level: involving local government in understanding and acting on climate change is important too!

Good luck!

For more information and support:

- The regional IFRC DM Coordinator
- The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre: www.climatecentre.org or climatecentre@climatecentre.org.
On line resources:

- Red Cross/ Red Crescent Climate Guide
- UNFCCC submissions: www.unfccc.org
- Potential adaptation funding sources for disaster preparedness activities: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/14454_OCHAFeb2010.pdf (this is a background paper from OCHA on potential funding written in 2010, so it may contain outdated information, but it is still very relevant reading)
Annex 1. Summary of the Cancun Adaptation Framework

Overview

The objective of the Cancun Adaptation Framework (paras 11-35 of the Cancun Agreement) is to enhance action on adaptation, including through international cooperation and coherent consideration of matters relating to adaptation under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Ultimately enhanced action on adaptation seeks to reduce vulnerability and build resilience in developing country Parties, taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable.

The Cancun Adaptation Framework includes the following five clusters:

1. Implementation
   - All Parties (countries) to plan, prioritize and implement adaptation actions and to use existing channels to provide information on support provided and received for adaptation actions and on activities undertaken;
   - A process to enable Least Developed Countries Parties-building upon their experience with the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)-to formulate and implement national adaptation plans and an invitation to other developing country Parties to employ the modalities formulated to support those plans;
   - A 2-year work programme to consider approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

2. Support

Developed country Parties to provide developing country Parties, taking into account the needs of those that are particularly vulnerable, with long-term, scaled-up, predictable, new and additional finance, technology and capacity-building (paras 95-137) to implement adaptation actions, plans, programmes and projects at local, national, subregional and regional levels, including activities under the Cancun Adaptation Framework.

3. Institutions

   - At the global level: establishment of an Adaptation Committee to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention;
   - At the regional level: strengthening and, where necessary, establishing regional centres and networks, in particular in developing countries;
   - At the national level: strengthening and, where necessary, establishing and/or designation of national-level institutional arrangements.

4. Principles

   - Be undertaken in accordance with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
   - Follow a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems;
   - Be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge;
   - Be undertaken with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions.

5. Stakeholder engagement

   - Relevant multilateral, international, regional and national organizations, the public and private sectors, civil society and other relevant stakeholders are invited to undertake and support enhanced action on adaptation at all levels.
The Climate conference in Durban: countries continue talking while time is running out.

The UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties (COP) have developed a tradition of spectacular final hours. In Copenhagen this lead to a clash and disaster. In Durban it was close to one. However and well in extra time consensus was reached on a roadmap for further negotiations that should lead to an agreement (‘protocol, legal instrument or outcome with legal force’) on further reductions of greenhouse gases by all countries in 2015 to be implemented as of 2020. Scientists say that 2020 is the year in which greenhouse gas emissions should have their peak to be followed by a steep decrease to avoid global warming beyond 2 degrees. They also say that Durban still keeps the world on the pathway of 3.5 -4 degrees…

These sobering conclusions highlight how difficult it is to reach global consensus and how urgent it is to step up our actions.

In the package deal was the commitment of the EU, Australia, Norway and New Zealand to start a second commitment period for the Kyoto protocol. However these countries only contribute to 15% of global emissions. Few days after Durban Canada announced officially to step out of the Kyoto protocol, following the US. Japan and Russia have not accepted a second commitment period.

The Green Climate Fund that was established last year to generate annually 100 billion US by 2020 for climate actions in developing countries was in Durban further framed in rules and regulations, but the fund was not filled with resources. 2012 is the last year of the fast start financing commitment, made in 2009 in Copenhagen by the industrialised countries of 30$US Billion in 2010-2012. To make the next COP in Qatar successful additional resources for after 2012 will have to be mobilized in the coming year. Another decision of relevance to the humanitarian community was the decision on national adaptation plans. This sets in motion the process to support developing countries, with a focus on the least developed countries, to develop and implement their national adaptation strategies. It is quite a descriptive process, with a heavy role for the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) but it also explicitly invites international organisations to engage with their expertise and actions.

The Durban decision on the national adaptation plans therefore provides a helpful context in the coming years for national engagement of civil society partners in this process. Organisations in developed countries can in addition to supporting colleague organisations in developing countries engage with their own governments on the issue of mobilisation of the much needed resources for the implementation of the NAPs.
Annex 2
Key paragraphs of the decision on National Adaptation Plans, UNFCCC COP 17, Durban

Underlined are summaries by Climate Centre

A. Framing national adaptation plans
1. The UNFCCC agrees that the objectives of the national adaptation plans are as follows:
   (a) To reduce the vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by building adaptive capacity and resilience
   (b) To facilitate the integration of climate change adaptation (…) into relevant new and existing policies, programmes and activities, in particular development planning processes and strategies within all relevant sectors and at different levels, (…).
2. Further agrees that enhanced action on adaptation (…) should follow a country driven, gender-sensitive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional and indigenous knowledge, and by gender-sensitive approaches, (…)

B. A process to enable least developed country Parties to formulate and implement national adaptation plans
1. Guidelines
   6. Decides to adopt the initial guidelines for the formulation of national adaptation plans contained in the annex:
   Para 7, 8, 9 address the first evaluation of these guidelines through submissions by Parties and relevant organisations before 13 February 2012 and discussions at Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) meeting in May or June 2013. At COP 19 (2013) a revision of the guidelines, if necessary, may be on the agenda
   10. Invites least developed country Parties to use the guidelines and modalities contained in this decision, in accordance with their national circumstances, in preparing their national adaptation plans:
   11. Also invites Least developed country Parties to strive to implement institutional arrangements to facilitate their national adaptation plan process, building on existing institutions and consistent with their national circumstances.

2. Modalities
   Para 12-17 addresses a number of requests to the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, this group of 13 persons from developing and developed countries was established at COP 7 (2001) to support the development of the National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs, the ‘first generation’ of NAPs) their mandate was extended at COP 16, last year.
   In these para’s the LEG is among others asked to give technical guidelines for the development of NAPs, elaborating on the guidelines in the annex.
   18. Invites national and regional centres and networks to strengthen their programmes and engage in support of the national adaptation plan process in least developed country Parties, at the regional, national and subnational levels (…) in a manner that encourages cooperation and coordination between regional stakeholders;
   20. Requests developed country Parties to continue to provide least developed country Parties with finance, technology and capacity-building (…)

3. Financial arrangements for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans
   23. Also invites United Nations organisations, specialized agencies and other relevant organizations, as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, to support the national adaptation plan process in the least developed countries and, where possible, to consider establishing support programmes for the national adaptation plan process within their mandates (…) which could facilitate financial and technical support to least developed countries and to submit to the (UNFCCC) secretariat, by 13 February 2012, information on how they have responded to this invitation.
24. Invites Parties and relevant organizations as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, to submit to the secretariat, by 13 February 2012, information on support to the national adaptation plan process in least developed countries.

(…)

The UNFCCC secretariat will prepare a synthesis report, based on these submissions, which will be discussed at the SBI meeting in May 2012. The SBI is requested to consider guidance on policies and programmes to enable support for the national adaptation plans process for LDCs.

C. An invitation to developing country Parties that are not least developed country Parties to employ the modalities for national adaptation plans

(…)

4 paragraphs in which these countries are invited to join the system set up for the LDC and in which bilateral and multilateral organizations are invited to support these developing countries

D. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

(…)

All Parties and relevant bodies under the UNFCCC are invited to report on their actions related to the NAPs, in particular:

35. Invites United Nations organizations, multilateral, intergovernmental and other international and regional organizations to provide information on their activities to support the national adaptation plan process.

(…)

The UNFCCC secretariat will monitor and evaluate progress on the implementation of the NAC process. The SBI will discuss this at the 42nd meeting (May/June 2015) in order to make recommendations to COP 21 in 2015.
Annex 3
Draft Initial guidelines for the formulation of national adaptation plans by least developed country Parties

A. Introduction
(…)

B. Elements of national adaptation plans
1. Laying the groundwork and addressing the gaps
2. Activities undertaken under this element would be planned with a view to identifying weaknesses and gaps in enabling environments, and addressing them as necessary, to support the formulation of comprehensive adaptation plans, programmes and policies through, inter alia:
   (a) Identification and assessment of institutional arrangements, programmes, policies and capacities for overall coordination and leadership on adaptation
   (b) Assessments of available information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, measures taken to address climate change, and gaps and needs, at the national and regional levels;
   (c) Comprehensive, iterative assessments of development needs and climate vulnerabilities.

2. Preparatory elements
3. In developing NAPs, consideration would be given to identifying specific needs, options and priorities on a country-driven basis, utilizing the services of national and where appropriate, regional institutions, and to the effective and continued promotion of participatory and gender-sensitive approaches coordinated with sustainable development objectives, policies, plans and programmes. Activities may include:
   (a) Design and development of plans, policies and programmes by considering decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 14 (a) (the CANCUN adaptation Framework), to address the gaps and needs referred to in paragraph 2 above;
   (b) Assessments of medium- and long-term adaptation needs, and (…) development needs and climate vulnerabilities;
   (c) Activities aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into national and subnational development and sectoral planning;
   (d) Participatory stakeholder consultations
   (e) Communication, awareness-raising and education

3. Implementation strategies
4. Activities carried out as part of the implementations strategies would take into consideration:
   (a) Prioritizing work according to development needs and climate change vulnerability and risk;
   (b) Strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks to support adaptation
   (c) Training and coordination at the sectoral and subnational level;
   (d) Public dissemination of information on the national adaptation plan process, to be made available to the public and to the UNFCCC secretariat;
   (e) Considering other relevant multilateral frameworks and international programmes and initiatives, with a view to building on and completing existing adaptation planning.

4. Reporting, monitoring and review
(…)