

One of five summary briefs for decision-makers, produced from the outcomes of the Lessons for Future Action conference: access to key insights, lessons learned, good practice and the gaps and needs for future action

Lessons for Future Action: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

National Planning and Policy Frameworks



Introduction

Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are significant challenges to sustainable development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In recognition of this SIDS are making significant progress in developing national strategies to manage risk from these threats.

As response activities addressing risk and increasing resilience, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction have many similarities. There is significant scope for increased coordination, particularly in terms of risk assessment methodologies and risk reduction strategies

Strengthening coordinated national planning and policy frameworks requires the involvement of a diverse set of stakeholders as well as the careful balancing of short and long term risks. When done successfully limited resources can be effectively mobilized to build more resilient islands, people and economies.

"The complementarity between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation provides a strong basis for a closer collaborative relation between the two which could lead to more efficient use of scarce resources (human and financial) and the avoidance of duplication of effort." Gita Chandrapal and Ulric Trotz, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)

Benefits

Currently both national and regional plans for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction have been developed to respond to international policies arising from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR) Hyogo Framework for Action.

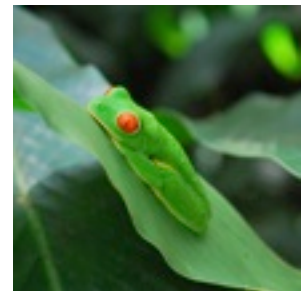
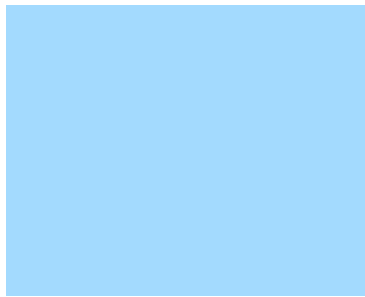
In some cases national climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction plans and policies are fully integrated, and other examples reveal separate plans that are carefully coordinated. In those cases, such planning and policy frameworks tend to be coherent and avoid overlap thereby facilitating coordinated action on the ground.

However in some cases the links between climate change and disaster plans and policies remains weak. In such cases, resources tend to be inadequate or duplicated and capacity constraints are commonplace.

Likewise, some national planning and policy frameworks adequately reflect local needs, national development plans and international commitments while others would benefit from stronger vertical linkages. National plans and policies that consider both top-down and bottom-up approaches can better build on existing coping mechanisms and traditional knowledge.

Overall, a multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder approach to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction can streamline institutional arrangements, ensure consistency in policy frameworks, make the case for strengthened links to long term development planning processes and allow for efficiencies in financial and human resources to be realized. Such benefits can only be achieved if there is an appropriate governance and institutional architecture supported by legislation and policy.

Finally, ensuring that plans and policies are flexible allows for the integration of new knowledge and information as well as the continued engagement of stakeholders. As such, national plans and policies can better respond to rapid changes in local situations ensuring the continued relevance of investments and actions.



Benefits from a Regional Approach

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency is currently developing a program for Mainstreaming Climate Change into Disaster Risk Management for the Caribbean Region. This program aims to support the integration of climate change adaptation into disaster risk reduction through:

- Improved coordination and collaboration between disaster management organizations and other research/data partners including climate change entities for undertaking comprehensive disaster risk management;
- Enhanced community awareness and knowledge on disaster management and climate change adaptation procedures; and
- Enhanced preparedness and response capacity for sub-regional and local level management and response.

In doing so the program will strengthen regional collaboration between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction communities with benefits for national and local level collaboration. Through this regional program common methodologies can be applied across the region, data and information can be centralized and shared, and lessons learned can be captured and disseminated both within and between nations.



Challenges

In the background of continuing negotiations in the international policy arena concerning climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, there are many challenges associated with translating international commitments into on the ground actions. Furthermore, the applicability of international policies to national planning and policy frameworks may not always be evident.

“We need to make more and more linkages between actions to address climate change impacts and sustainable development, while reducing poverty.” - Tuilaepa Lufesolai Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa

Policy challenges

Developing and linking national climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies and plans requires the streamlining of different institutional arrangements. On many occasions this requires not just the coordination of different ministries or government agencies, but also the coordination of institutions at different levels of policy-making from local to national to regional and to international. Such coordination is necessary if consistent policy frameworks are to be developed and linked to national development planning.

The success of national plans and policies is also dependent upon strong political support. This may occur through placing the plans and policies within a strong ministry, such as the Office of the President or Prime Minister, or through ensuring that responsible ministries have sufficient capacity and resources.

At the national and sub-national levels streamlining arrangements and ensuring consistent policies requires the identification and engagement of relevant sectors. This often includes sectors as diverse as agriculture and fisheries and oceans with different spheres of influence and expertise but which face common threats from climate change and natural disasters.

Implementation challenges

Effective national planning and policies for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction require a clear understanding of vulnerabilities and threats. As such, conducting comprehensive risk assessments is often a criterion for success. At the moment there is limited information on risks to community well-being and productivity and, in many SIDS, baseline data is not fully available.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate adaptive planning, robust monitoring and evaluation systems are required. Such systems require inputs from ecological, social and economic systems and, as such, have significant data and resource requirements.

“We could set up the best policies but if we don't have enforcement it can all go to naught.” - Kenrick Leslie, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)



Good Practice Examples

Tonga – Joint National Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (the JNAP)

In Tonga, the JNAP process began with high-level political commitment and was immediately linked to the National Strategic Planning Framework. The JNAP established multi-disciplinary teams consisting of task forces on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction who hold regular coordination meetings.

The JNAP is also based on consultations with communities as well as vulnerable sectors and resulted in the establishment of a JNAP Secretariat and a Parliamentary Standing Committee on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.

This first ever JNAP process involves the following steps:

1. Planning for engagement;
2. Situational analysis;
3. Action development;
4. Costing and development of an implementation and monitoring and evaluation plan;
5. National approval process;
6. Country and donor discussions; and
7. Implementation and monitoring.

Samoa – Climate Early Warning System (CLEWS)

In recognition of the risks from climate change and natural disasters, Samoa developed CLEWS to better understand projected impacts. CLEWS will provide more timely and targeted climate information including sector-specific information on potential adverse impacts from climate change. In addition, CLEWS focuses on ensuring that relevant information can be delivered more promptly, enabling quicker responses.

Overall CLEWS aims to:

- Strengthen existing climate monitoring networks by upgrading monitoring facilities and installing new climate monitoring stations;
- Install a new database to archive and deliver climate data; and
- Develop a range of climate information reports and warnings for regular use by government departments and relevant sectoral organizations.

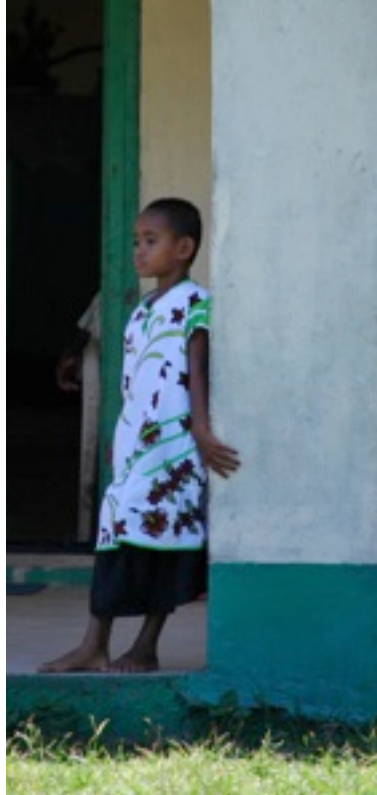
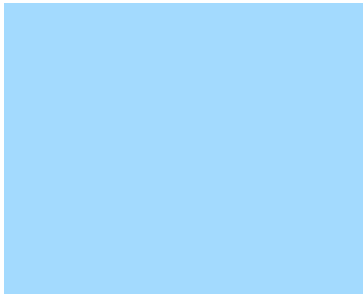
Lessons Learned

The Conference agreed that among planning and policy frameworks there are many options that can deliver effective results for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. It is important to ensure that national plans and policies are modifiable, dynamic and responsive to changing conditions.

In order to ensure that national planning and policy frameworks are designed to contribute to sustainable development through increased resilience, policy-makers and practitioners may wish to:

- Explore opportunities for regional coordination to share lessons learned and build on existing knowledge;
- Base policies and plans in comprehensive risk assessments considering environmental, economic and social considerations;
- Support plans and policies with appropriate legislation; and
- Assess and integrate the full cost of implementing plans and policies within national budgets and coordination with donors.

"Regional programs on climate change have significantly boosted action on the ground." Prime Minister of Samoa



Areas for Further Investment

In order to ensure that national planning and policy frameworks are targeted, adaptive and able to capture efficiencies, investments in coordination, information and long term planning are important.

When considering coordination activities, information exchange, data management and awareness raising among and between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction communities should be established. Such coordination, in addition to capturing efficiencies, can target policy coherence to minimize overlap and avoid contradictory responses.

When considering investments in information, access to high-resolution climate data as well as climate projections linked to socio-economic datasets are required. Information from local communities, including women, is also important when designing national plans and policies. Such information must then be put to use through comprehensive and inclusive risk assessments. Risk assessments should identify and target vulnerable sectors and include community consultations.

Finally, with regards to long term planning, investing in strategic funding frameworks will avoid discontinuity in implementation, ensure that programs are country-driven rather than donor-driven and minimize the divergence of funds from long-term risk reduction to short term emergency responses.

The Lessons for Future Action Conference identified a number of good practices as well as gaps and needs concerning national planning and policy frameworks. A variety of different systems for planning and policy were examined and the common threads defining success were identified.

Rather than presenting a prescriptive method for national planning and policy frameworks for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, the Conference recognized the need to respond to national circumstances and presented a number of key issues for consideration concerning coordination, costing, participation and information needs.

The Conference also placed national planning and policy frameworks within the broader regional and international context. In doing so, it identified opportunities to ensure efficiencies and consistency in order to make best use of limited resources when addressing the escalating challenges to sustainable development in SIDS as a result of climate change and natural disasters. Such opportunities include streamlining institutional arrangements, developing consistent policy frameworks linked to long term development planning, and linking resourcing where appropriate.

“A critical success factor is the recognition of plans and frameworks as living documents that are modifiable, dynamic and responsive to changing conditions.” - Edward Greene, Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC)





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