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Session Proceedings

**Climate-change adaptation as a critical approach to
minimizing disaster risk: Insights from the field**

5th October, 2021



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This document is an outcome of the session organised by IRADe in the 6th International Climate Change Adaptation Conference hosted by The Energy Research Institute (TERI) , 5th October 2021 for the project Climate Adaptive Heat Stress Action Plans supported by International Development Research Centre, Canada (IDRC Canada)

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Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe) successfully conducted a Session on Impacts of Heat Stress Management in South Asia" at the 6th International Climate Change Adaptation Conference hosted by The Energy Research Institute (TERI), 5th October 2021. The session was supported by The Energy Research Institute(TERI)

The session was chaired by Lisa Bornstein, McGill University, Montreal, Canada & Melanie Robertson, IDRC. The speakers included Emma Porio, Ateneo University, Philippines , Rohit Magotra, Deputy Director, Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe), India, Gonzalo Lizarralde, Université de Montréal, Canada, Dicta Ogisi, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria & Researcher, Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Nigeria, Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Chair:

Lisa Bornstein, McGill University, Montreal, Canada & Melanie Robertson, IDRC

Panelists:

- Emma Porio, Ateneo University, Philippines
- M. Rohit Magotra, Deputy Director, Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe), India
- Gonzalo Lizarralde, Université de Montréal, Canada
- Dicta Ogisi, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria & Researcher, Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Nigeria
- Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University, Thailand

Climate-change adaptation as a critical approach to minimizing disaster risk: Insights from the field

Background

There is growing evidence now that the disaster risks are increasing, and the aspects of climate change are further compounding it by sudden climatic fluctuations. It has a severe impact on the communities, and their livelihoods and its effects vary over the years or generations. This calls for linking vulnerability and adaptation measures to the resilience development process. The policy-making should be comprehensive and include communities and especially the vulnerable sections of society by adopting climate change adaptation (CCA) strategies.

About the Session

The session was conducted to present the findings of work done by IRADe on the Impact of Heat Stress (Health, Productivity & Livelihood) on Vulnerable communities and how to develop response mechanisms through Climate Adaptive and Gender-Sensitive Heat Stress Action Plans. The session also focussed on developing a monitoring mechanism to implement the action plan in short-, medium- and long-term time frame of the preparedness, mitigation and response. It deliberated on the various methodologies and approaches, potential adaptive measures like heat adaptive urban infrastructure, nature-based solutions and early warning systems. The session addressed the need for capacity building among municipalities, regional and national administrative bodies, hospitals, policy-making bodies and the public.

The session was designed to get different perspectives, looking at case studies from various parts of the world on adaptation action targeted at disaster risk reduction. There were five presentations, and each presentation followed the idea of differences and commonalities among researchers', practitioners', stakeholders' and communities' understanding of adaptation and implementation of adaptation on ground for disaster risk. Three questions were put in front of the panelists, asking them to highlight insights from the projects; the opportunities and obstacles present on ground for greater integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; and the gaps and success points in transforming good intentions on the ground or practical changes. The panelists presented their country case studies, highlighting different success stories

around the world, and the gaps and challenges they face when looking at disaster risk reduction and adaptation.

- **Emma Porio, Ateneo University, Philippines**

Emma Porio, presented her case study of 'Coastal cities at risk in Philippines: Investing In climate and disaster resilience'. The project's goal was to link climate science to policy and practice by institutionalizing the resilience agenda through trans-disciplinary action research, tools, partnerships, networks and coalitions.

- **Rohit Magotra, Deputy Director, Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe), India**

Rohit Magotra presented the case of 'Climate adaptive action plans to manage heat stress in Indian cities', building on the increasing global heat stress, especially in the Indian sub-continent. Heat stress action plans made for some Indian cities, designed on research based evidence, highlighted how better preparedness can be translated into adaptation action.

- **Gonzalo Lizarralde, Université de Montréal, Canada**

Through his project presentation on 'Climate change adaptation in informal settings: understanding and reinforcing bottom-up initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean', Gonzalo Lizarralde, mentioned how risk is differently perceived in different areas, and hence adaptation action needs to be contextually defined.

- **Dicta Ogisi, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria & Researcher, Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Nigeria**

Dicta Ogisi, presented a community perspective on adaptation, through her case study on empowerment of women- 'Empowering women as key leaders in promoting community-based climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies in the rural committees of Niger Delta region'. She mentioned how targeting behavioral change through adaptation action, in terms of allowing gendered participation could be achieved by engagement of policymakers.

- **Louis Lebel, Director, Unit for Social and Environmental Research, Chiang Mai University, Thailand**

Louis Lebel, presented his case on 'Climate change adaptation and innovation in Mekong aquaculture', highlighting institutional gaps at ground level because of sector or cross-sectoral problems, that need to be addressed.

The presentations were followed by an interactive discussion among the panelists. The discussion followed on the possible ways of having good ideas and translating them into action and implementation. Two common ideas among all the presentations were

summed up by Gonzalo Lizarralde- 1. Lack of vertical coherence between national policy and subnational/local policy; 2. social transformation as a challenge when looking at mainstreaming transformation through adaptation action. Emma Porio, built on this emphasizing contextually driven risks but how they are negated at different levels through different interventions. She mentioned the dissonance between national and local can be harmonized with relationships of trust, or “nets of resilience” or “nurturing nests of resilience”. Louis Lebel raised a question on whether there is a difference between incremental change and transformational change, and whether one can trigger the other. Emma Porio replied to this by mentioning the need of transformational change to be intentional, where action has to shift from being reactive to being risk informed. Rohit Magotra furthered this idea by mentioning how intentions have to draw transformation, going on to say how transformation can also be scientifically driven. This will lead to greater awareness and greater demand for action by the communities in need for adaptation. Dicta Ogisi, mentioned the need of making response to uncertain and highly probable climate change sustainable that will allow transformational change in the system.

Quotes:

Gonzalo Lizarralde: *“Dealing with climate change requires much more than technical solutions”*

Lisa Bornstein: *“(when looking at adaptation action) what's rational is emotional”*

About the Project

To manage the mounting heat stress risk in Indian urban centres, IRADe is spearheading an inter disciplinary research study on “Climate Adaptive Heat Stress Action Plans” is funded by IDRC Canada. The project aims to improve the management of heat stress risks in Indian cities by developing spatially differentiated and gender sensitive HSAPs. It will support medium term development planning for climate resilient smart cities. Learn More: www.climateandcities.org

About IRADe

IRADe is an independent advanced research institute that aims to conduct research and policy analysis to engage stakeholders such as government, non-governmental organizations, corporations, academic and financial institutions. Energy, Climate Change, Urban Development, Poverty, Gender Equity, Agriculture and Food Security are some of the challenges faced in the 21st century. Therefore, IRADe research covers these, as well as policies that affect them. IRADe's focus is effective action through multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder research to arrive at implementable solutions for sustainable development and policy research that accounts for the effective governance of techno-economic and socio-cultural issues.

About IDRC

Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world. The research we support builds evidence to break the cycle of poverty, reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities, and help people live healthier and more sustainable lives. Learn More: www.idrc.ca

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