

SUMMARY OF FORUM DISCUSSIONS

A personal selection of take home messages for your reflection from the APAN Forum 2014

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Asia-Pacific Climate Change
Adaptation Forum 2014

1-3 October 2014 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Adaptation solutions

- Adaptation is a process that needs to take place on multiple temporal and spatial scales. Solutions are needed at different levels and for cross-links.
- Solutions are often available, somewhere. Knowledge or technology needs to be shared, accessible and affordable.
- Solutions are often partial, tentative or provisional. We need to learn-by-doing from safe-to-fail experiments, we need more innovation.



Mainstreaming and transformative change

- Are opportunities to mainstream climate change adaptation into spatial planning, disaster risk reduction etc. A key goal should be to minimize policy contradictions.
- Incremental and ‘tinkering’ adaptation can only address a subset of risks, for a while. Ultimately, ‘metamorphosis’ is needed.
- Many innovations and insights are coming from place-based, on-the-ground, initiatives, that learn from doing in the Asia Pacific.



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Inclusive and gender-sensitive

- Women and men have distinct adaptation capacities and needs. Adaptation needs to transform to become much more inclusive and gender-sensitive.
- The key to just or fair adaptation, given diverse interests and values, and unequal power relations, is the empowerment of marginalized and vulnerable people.
 - In particular: women, ethnic minorities, elderly, disabled, youth, extreme poor, landless and combinations thereof.



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Development at the Water-food-energy nexus

- Water, food and energy systems individually face rising constraints, and are increasingly interconnected. Attention to synergies can support adaptation.
- The role in climate resilient development of large-scale hydropower, and land concessions for biofuel, etc. remains controversial in many places, because of its impacts and sensitivities to climate change.
- Governance of “supply chains” through regulations, standards and certification is important for adaptation issues in the nexus.



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Disaster risk reduction and human security

- Floods and droughts already have huge impacts under current climate. Risk management remains critical to adaptation in most sectors.
- Long-term recovery following disasters remains a challenge. A key reason is that interventions often do not address underlying drivers of vulnerability such as political marginalization, and insecure rights.
- Loss and damages can be reduced by adaptation and mitigation. Meanwhile, the residual, will require significant knowledge and resources to address.



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Biodiversity and ecosystems

- Ecosystem-based adaptation brings benefits to communities and countries, and is cost-effective in a wide-range of situations.
- Local governments, however, do not always engage communities closely or take into account roles that ecosystems may play in adaptation.
- Indigenous and local knowledge is useful for both ecosystem- and community-based adaptation
- Innovative instruments that reward stewardship of ecosystem services can facilitate adaptation.



Cities and coastal development

- Building urban resilience requires actions across sectors and city boundaries, and special attention to the disempowered poor.
- Adequate and robust water supply and sanitation provision are fundamental to resilient development.
- On-going migration into vulnerable urban and coastal areas is an outstanding adaptation policy challenge.
- Infrastructure solutions are about getting the right technology in the right place. Solutions should be safe-to-fail, not assumed to be fail-safe.



Money for action

- The finances needed for adaptation are significant but not large in comparison to major investment stocks and flows.
- The potential private finance available for adaptation is huge and uncounted. While governments should enable these flows, so can we as individual investors and shareholders.
- Leverage for action comes from good ideas for adaptation projects, programs and policies.



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Science to action

- Evidence-based decision making on adaptation and climate resilient development is critical. Science and practical experience are important sources of such knowledge.
- Effective ways to improve the links between science, action are known. Most involve building and maintaining relationships in which action or practice can also inform science.
- The challenge from adaptation is for science, practice and policy to jointly become more future-oriented.



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New partnerships for resilient development

- Successful adaptation often requires involvement of multiple stakeholders. Quality multi-stakeholder processes take time and resources.
- New partnerships are needed, and that demands attention to communication, incentives and roles.
- Businesses face increasing risks of damages and losses. Adaptation is also a business opportunity. Businesses will need to work together.
- Civil society organizations are valuable as partners, not just as 'local facilitators' or 'communicators'.



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Reality check

- Adaptation is one of many agendas and not the immediate priority. For many, climate change is still just an environment, not development, issue.
- Mainstreaming adaptation is a decadal project of becoming invisible. It gets harder with success.
- Adaptation planning needs to consider uncertainty, starting with ranges of plausible futures, not just hopeful guesses on what is 'most likely'.
- High-level policy frameworks and international agreements do not give a lot of guidance on trade-offs or priorities in adaptation. That has to come from other work – like ours.

