

2nd Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum

12 March 2012

FORUM GETS A ROBUST START

Overview: Day 1 highlights

The Second Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum started on a high note with scientists, development workers, government officials, academicians, international organizations, students, and representatives from civil society coming together to discuss climate change adaptation topics that cut across issues of governance, management, and technology replication.

Two plenary sessions presented participants with thought-provoking insights about climate change adaptation strategies and practical experience from adaptation practitioners.

Riding on the momentum of the plenary sessions were twelve panel sessions that allowed participants to choose meeting groups that tackled subjects from government-led policy interventions to corporate private sector initiatives. Gender practice and community-based adaptation were also among the topics discussed alongside food and agriculture, ecosystems management, and disaster mitigation. Mainstream and alternative media were given as much exposure as “anti-fragility” climate resilient cities.



In the Market Place, where at least thirty organizations set up exhibits and information booths, the common theme was how adaptation varied from one context to another. Keith Alverson, Head of Climate Change Adaptation and Terrestrial Ecosystems Branch of UNEP in Nairobi, echoed this theme in his opening plenary remarks, saying that there was no “cookie-cutter solution” to adaptation. The Market

Place showcased community-based solutions that were often integrated with technology and ecosystem-based approaches.

At the end of the day, an award ceremony was held for the winners of the best film competition and the best media reporting on climate change adaptation. A book launch on climate resilient cities and social reception was sponsored by The Rockefeller Foundation.



Plenary 1 highlights and key messages

Speakers from the Embassy of Sweden, Ministry of Environment Japan, and the Asian Development Bank opened the first plenary session that focused on actions related to climate change adaptation.

Anna Lindstedt, Ambassador for Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment Sweden, called upon everyone to recognize that beyond ecosystems and infrastructure, people are the most affected by climate change. Deputy-Director General of Global Environment (Ministry of Environment Japan) Shigemoto Kajihara responded that this is why Japan focuses on supporting national and regional strategies that achieve sustainable development.

Keith Alverson, remarked that local information is important, and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner affirmed this in his video statement about why the UNEP is keen on supporting regional knowledge platforms, ecosystem management, mobilizing finances for national adaptation.

In his ministerial statement, Thailand’s Vice Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, His Excellency Pithaya

Pookaman looked back at the country's experience with extreme floods in 2011, and said that the national response to climate change adaptation is low carbon growth and resilience using the sufficiency economy philosophy from His Majesty the King (moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity).

Bindu Lohani of the Asian Development Bank called for an integrative and transformational approach to climate change adaptation, saying that infrastructure must be designed to support this transformation approach. While saying that finance mechanisms remain a priority of ADB, Lohani remarked that for Asian society to move closer to resilience, an understanding of the social dimensions of climate change is crucial. This means appreciating how climate change affects migration, livelihood security, and public health.

Johan Kuylenstierna, Executive Director Designate of the Stockholm Environment Institute, shared a quote that reflected everyone's thoughts: "The future is not what it used to be". Kuylenstierna said that we can learn a lot from history, but the future doesn't tell us everything. Hence, he said, climate change adaptation practitioners must understand who the stakeholders are. Knowing the stakeholders will allow adaptation messages to reach intended audiences.

As a final remark, the youth representative from Nepal asserted that the inclusion of climate change adaptation is crucial in development activities. "Climate change is the biggest challenge of our generation," said Dipesh Chapagain, co-founder/program coordinator of the Nepalese Youth for Climate Change (NYCA), Clean Energy Nepal. He concluded: "The youth from this region have realised that climate change adaptation is an issue of survival."

Highlights from panel sessions

Spot interviews from civil society, including health professionals, emphasized how local cultures and contexts should be considered when designing adaptation projects. Gender practitioners concurred, and Bernadette P Resurreccion of the Gender and Development Studies Department at the Asian Institute of Technology voiced that governments should have a more inclusive approach in order to understand the drivers that make both women and men vulnerable to climate change.

Upland dwellers recognized how present-day climate change concerns were more intensive and human related. Damdin Davgadorj, Special Envoy for Climate Change, Mongolia called for urgent international funding, technical transfer, and capacity building to cope with the intensive climate change in his country. Urban residents also understood the need for building resilience to climate change, especially in cities. Anna Brown of The

Rockefeller Foundation, however, shared that while it is important to look at the intersection between climate change and urbanization, there are no silver bullet solutions. Artists and the media joined in, calling for courage and vigilance when monitoring and evaluating adaptation activities.

Finally, response from the youth succinctly capped off Day 1 of the Climate Change Forum by calling for better coordination in the adaptation work to avoid duplication. "It also needs better monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the current projects are taking the right direction. Monitoring and evaluation also leads to better documentation, which is essential for replication of good adaptation work." (Tian Wang, youth representative from China).

Today's activities

9:20 - 10:20 Plenary 3: Governance of adaptation (ESCAP Hall, second floor). The third plenary will focus on the governance of adaptation, addressing issues such as how decisions should be made, who should pay, and what is fair.

11.00 - 12.30 Parallel Session III: Panel meetings with a focus on governance of adaptation. Topics include decision-making and participation; climate proofing infrastructure; public health; financing adaptation; options for small islands states; migration and livelihood security.

13.30 -15.00 Parallel Session IV: Panel meetings with focus on linking knowledge and action. Topics include experiences in the IPCC; South-South learning; local and experience-based knowledge; toolkits and methods; information management; and youth involvement.

15.30 - 16.45 Plenary 4: Linking knowledge to adaptation actions - What are the effective ways of better linking knowledge and action for adaptation to climate change?

16.45-17.30 Closing ceremony

