

Title	<i>No Distinct 1.5°C Warmer World and Its Impact: Urgency to Scale-up Adaptation Action to Build Resilience for Asia and the Pacific</i>
Date and Time	19.10.2020, 14:00 (GMT +7); 16:00 (GMT +9)
Lead organiser	Government of Japan / Ministry of the Environment; APAN Secretariat, UN Environment Programme

Event Summary

On October 19, 2020, over 160 participants from Asia-Pacific and beyond attended the opening session of 7th APAN the virtual dialogue series, representing various sectors from multilateral organizations, government, and academia to civil society and the private sector.

After the welcoming remarks from the Host Government, Ministry of the Environment of Japan and APAN Secretariat, Prof. **Anand Patwardhan**, delivered an inspirational talk on the urgency of scaling-up climate adaptation for resilience, and Ms. **Antoinette Taus** enchanted the audience with a song. The panel discussion was then moderated by Prof. **Saleemul Huq**, and with Ms. **Sara Libera Zanetti, APAN Secretariat**, as a rapporteur.

Welcoming remarks

Mr. **Mozaharul Alam**, *Regional Climate Change Coordinator, UNEP*, opened the webinar on behalf of APAN Secretariat, which leads the coordination of the planning, preparation and management of the 7th APAN forum. Ms. **Yuko Hoshino**, *Deputy Director, Climate Change Adaptation Office, Global Environment Bureau MoEJ*, greeted participants on behalf of the Host Country and of the Climate Change Adaptation Director. She expressed her gratitude to the APAN Secretariat and UNEP-ROAP for leading the preparation of the forum. MoEJ has been part of the APAN since its starts and it is now looking forward to hosting its 7th forum.

MoEJ recently launched a new hub, the [Online Platform Redesign 2020](#), in the context of sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19, supported by the UNFCCC, to showcase successful policies and actions taken at the national level. Ms. Hoshino stressed the necessity to fully redesign our economies and societies, transitioning to a decarbonized and decentralized society; and a circular economy. While these transitions require drastic system changes, effective climate adaptation can play a significant role of the redesign process. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Information Platform ([AP-PLAT](#)), established by MOEJ and partners provides opportunities for sharing scientific knowledge and developing human resources, aimed at helping participants formulate adaptation measures and implement action plans in the region.

Keynote

In his keynote speech, Prof. **Anand Patwardhan**, *Professor, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland* highlighted four key aspects of a successful COVID-19 response that would also tackle the climate crisis:

Plan, prepare and invest. Investments in adaptation and resilience-building have high payoffs. As the Global Commission on Adaptation report last year showed, whether it is investments in early warning and preparedness, or improving dryland crop production or protecting mangroves or making water systems and infrastructure more resilient – these investments have an average 4:1 benefit-cost ratio. The GCA estimated over 7 trillion in net benefits coming from investments in adaptation and resilience.

Focus on those most vulnerable. The burden of the pandemic itself and the fallout of the response measures to the pandemic has fallen disproportionately on the poor and the marginalized – exactly the same communities and people who are most affected by climate hazards. When we build strong social safety nets and address underlying structural issues, we are not only supporting resilience, we are directly contributing to immediate development goals. Indeed, the overlap between the goals of social policy and the goals of climate adaptation is perhaps one of the most under-appreciated aspects of adaptation.

Science matters. Developing and deploying solutions requires a very different approach to research and knowledge generation, such as action-oriented and user-centered research where the research community engages with policy and practice in a process of co-production. It is critical to scale-up investments in research and knowledge that directly support action

Learn while doing and by doing. Uncertainty is the hallmark of climate change, just as in the case of the pandemic. Uncertainty requires us to be flexible and adaptive – even as we scale-up action. The only way forward is to embed learning into our actions – learn while doing and learn by doing.

Panel discussion

The webinar panel presented views from a broad range of stakeholders from communities, science and technical perspective, civil society, government, and finance. In her intervention, Prof. **Joyashree Roy**, *Bangabandhu Chair Professor at Asia Institute of Technology (AIT)* discussed the role of science, the interface with the policy and decision-making, and how to link it to the practice on the ground. While there has been improvement and good progress in understanding the science behind climate change, and the IPCC report made it very clear where action needs to be taken, what really matters is how to make this scientific information usable. There has been advancement in this respect, in terms of knowledge dissemination to communities and technology adoption, for instance within early-warning systems. There is also a common understanding on the necessity to pro-active responses. On one hand, a vast research has been undertaken in terms of risk, but on the other hand it remains unclear who is responsible to take decisions, and while governments, financial institutions, insurance companies and the like are already involved, who is still been neglected are the vulnerable groups and communities. Information at this level is where the major gap is.

Ms. **Filomena Nelson**, *Climate Change Adaptation Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)* shared some insights on what is happened in the Pacific within the most vulnerable communities, which are unfortunately not always consulted. The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe repercussions on the Pacific island states with marginalised communities now even more marginalised because of the pandemic.

Dr. **Batjargal Zamba**, Special Envoy of Mongolia on Climate Change, former Minister for Environment of Mongolia provided some examples of actions taken by the government with respect to climate change and COVID-19 response to ensure horizontal coordination among sectors and agencies. Mongolia has established

the National Development Agency in Mongolia reporting directly to the Prime Minister, to promote a more efficient streamlining of sectoral policies and international ones and to ensure coordination of stakeholder activities during the implementation of policies. However, this did not prove useful. In fact, the Government analysed more than five hundred national and sectoral division policy documents and found out that there were both several overlapping and gaps. Thus, they developed a comprehensive and integrated umbrella document as a long term developing strategy to move towards 2050. Such overarching document, was adopted by the Parliament on the condition that future Governments will embrace it, regardless of their political orientation. The National Development Agency has been repurposed to a think-thank, rather than a decision making body, working closely with the cabinet instead of with the Prime Minister. The Minister of the Environment made use of such transition to improve the capacity of the National Development Agency on inter-agency coordination and to propose amendments to climate change laws and intends to capitalize also on existing GCF projects, as well as innovation and technologies.

Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, *Director of External Affairs, Green Climate Funds (GCF)* shared insights on the GCF portfolio on adaptation. GCF works with more than 100 countries with 143 approved projects, of which 70% are in their implementation phase (6.2 billion dollars). GCF's policy is to fund equally adaptation and mitigation projects, with many projects being crosscutting. 42% of GCF total climate portfolio is allocated to adaptation projects, and 58% to mitigation; but from a grant equivalent perspective, this translates to 56% to adaptation projects and 44% to mitigation with UNEP as a GCF's key partner in implementing adaptation projects. There is a growing consensus that the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic must embed climate resilience measures as part of the stimulus package. Climate finance should be used to incentivize green stimulus packages, but also to fund the co-benefits. GCF's approach to COVID-19 recovery initiative is thus founded on three pillars: adaptability to already existing and running projects; readiness, to craft green stimulus measures; incoming pipeline of projects to highlight co-benefits.

Ms. Antoinette Taus, *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Goodwill Ambassador for the Philippines, and Founder of CORA* discussed how to reach out to the broad audience and especially the younger generations. She feels that what young people need to start from is asking and taking action for the things they care about. Anyone can start where they, that's the best place to start from. Online activities, including social media provide a good platform for knowledge sharing and thus young people' empowerment, but fact checking is crucial, so it is important to rely on the work delivered by accredited institutions. Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing information and disseminating knowledge. Partnerships can be transformative, especially for marginalised communities to provide them with the capacities and tools to be the drivers of resilience. What is needed right now is accountability, especially in global pacts to build back better.

Q&A Session

Following the panel discussion, Prof. Saleem Huq *Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCD)* moderated the Q&A session. The first question was addressed for Prof. Joyashree Roy on how to communicate science and translate scientific reports into messages useful for the general public. All the new available knowledge needs to be mainstreamed in the educational programmes and climate change embedded into all curricula. Furthermore, most action is delivered with a project modality, with not much follow-up after the end of the project. Climate change adaptation requires a long time horizon and time-bounded projects are not the right vehicle for delivering that. Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren also confirmed the

necessity to move beyond projects life span; to this end, the GCF has widen its portfolio with projects that have a programmatic approach, are multi country.

Prof. **Saleem Huq** invited all panel members to share their thoughts on how to scale-up action. Dr. **Batjargal Zamba** thinks that financing is key; adaptation measures and related technologies are quite expensive. Local communities are to be mobilized to bring back traditional knowledge. Ms. **Filomena Nelson** thinks that what is mostly needed is a whole government and whole of society approach as well as regional cooperation to scale-up action and guide the development of a post-pandemic recovery. Ms. **Antoinette Taus**, stressed the fact that youth want to be included in the global dialogue, they can share fresh ideas and they can inspire world leaders. Transformational change needs to come from everyone, as a concerted effort.

Ms. **Isabel Louis Deputy Director, UNEP**, closed the session on behalf of APAN Secretariat and invited the APAN community to maintain their engagement and interest in the 7th APAN forum.

Videos and other resources

The recording of the webinar can be accessed through [this link on the APAN website](#).

All the questions asked during the webinar have been posted on the [APAN Slack channel](#) where the discussion continues.