Social Dimensions of Climate Change

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Green Economy and Sustainable Development: Bringing Back the Social Dimension
CONFERENCE
Social dimensions of climate change

"A people-centred approach"
The UN Task team on SDCC

• Started working as UN task team by June 2010
• Co-conveners: ILO, UNDESA and WHO

• Now composed of 19 UN agencies:
  • FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNISDR, UNRISD, UNU, UN Women, WB, WFP and WHO.
Objectives

Supports Governments and partners to:

- Develop a comprehensive and inclusive conceptual framework on the social dimensions of climate change, drawing on the expertise of the UN system in related fields

- Advocate a multidimensional approach to climate change policies to take into account the potential social co-benefits of effectively addressing climate change as well as opportunities to focus on the most vulnerable

- Develop climate-related policies and measures to provide better living conditions in their societies as a whole
Moving forward

The UN system will continue its joint effort to:

- Set an agenda that recognizes that mitigation and adaptation should be designed to improve living standards for all members of society, irrespective of gender, age or social status;

- Support countries in developing appropriate adaptation and mitigation policies by promoting coherent and holistic climate policies and programmes based on assessments of environmental and social impacts.
Social needs:
- Equity and social inclusion
- Human rights
- Participatory politics
- Governance
- Cooperation and solidarity
- Education

Individual needs:
- Health
- Decent work
- Social protection
- Empowerment
- Mobile assets

Basic needs:
- Water
- Food
- Energy
- Shelter
- Transport
- Security
Social dimensions of climate change:

- Social dimensions reflect the **social, economic, and behavioral aspects** of the human condition as critical components of climate policies’ ultimate success.

- The understanding of social dimensions of climate change builds on the **principles of equity and social justice**, especially for the most vulnerable.

- The aim is to broaden and deepen policy makers’ understanding of the **benefits of addressing and incorporating the social dimensions** of climate change into climate policies.
Social dimensions of climate change:

- People are at the center of a successful transition to a world of far-reaching and balanced global reduction in emissions and enhanced resiliency.

- Specific attention to the most vulnerable groups, and their role in crafting solutions and increasing resilience.

- The goals of this transition must include fulfillment of basic needs, enjoyment of human rights, health, equity, social protection, decent work, equal participation and good governance.
Why Integrate Social Dimensions into Climate Change Policy?

- **Safeguard the rights of the people** — respecting human rights is a prerequisite to adequately address climate change; empowers them as actors.

- **Ensure a successful outcome** — effective policy relies on people changing their behaviours; people as end-users and their willingness to adopt ‘clean’ technologies.

- **It is in accordance with international conventions and declarations** — strong precedent already set by international instruments.
Legal basis

Relevant international instruments include:

- UNFCCC [Articles 1 & 4]
- Agenda 21
- The Hyogo Framework for Action
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The Convention for the Elimination for all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Integration of social dimensions**: ad-hoc and limited in scope

National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)
National Communications to the UNFCCC
Social drivers of Climate Change

- The climate change that concerns the international community is “anthropogenic”.

- It thus derives from human activities and is, indeed, a reflection of the ways in which human societies function and change over time.

- Human societies and the activities that take place within them drive climate change in different ways.

- Sustainable options require an understanding of the social structures that drive climate change – as a set of social problems the solutions to which are also, necessarily, social.
Production

- Production systems “feed” societies in response to their perceived needs.

- While production systems are part of the climate change problem, they are also part of the solution.

- The way in which production systems drive climate change is closely related to a quantitative approach in which “more” serves as a proxy for “better”.

- Hence need for an alternative proposal.
The trend in consumption patterns over recent decades increased.

Not only are there more consumers, but each consumer consumes more.

There is a connection between prosperity and consumption: in many socially relevant areas, improved unit efficiency (e.g. of energy consumption, agricultural production etc.) may be overtaken by a countervailing tendency to consume more for any given level of material prosperity.

Changes need in consumption and productions patterns to reduce climate change will have major impacts on how the whole society "works": on enterprises and workers, migration flows, infrastructure needed, etc.
SOCIAL DRIVERS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

hard infrastructures (plant and machinery, roads, buildings, spatial distributions…)

soft infrastructures (values, beliefs, practices…)

production and consumption patterns

SHAPE

DRIVE

emissions

impact on sinks

POLICIES

Social impacts

MITIGATION & ADAPTATION

RECONFIGURE OVER TIME
A “social dimensions lens” asks:
- What are the socio-economic conditions that make people vulnerable in the first place?
- How does climate change impact peoples’ lives, health and livelihoods?
- What are entry points for adaptation to address impacts on lives and livelihoods?

Vulnerability is shaped by the socio-economic conditions people live in:
- Employment and working conditions, level of education, health, gender equality/inequality
- Access and control over resources/ assets such as food, water, shelter, energy, information, social networks, farming tools, land, technology, infrastructure, financial capital etc.
- Access to social protection and public services and institutions
- Entitlements, human rights, governance, policies
- Cultural and historical factors etc.
The Way Forward: Integrating SDCC in climate change policies

- **Climate change** poses a challenge to established policy frameworks because it **cuts across institutional sectors and issues** that are traditionally addressed separately.

- Compartmentalizing climate change policy responses into a **series of sectoral agendas**, such as energy, transport, water, agriculture, health etc., omits some of the key features of climate change.

- An **integrated approach**, that incorporates the social analysis of causes, impacts and benefits would be a useful way of overcoming this barrier.
Seizing opportunities

- Climate change requires an **unprecedented challenge to international governance**, requiring governments to address traditionally disparate issues in an interlinked manner and transforming the way in which they approach economic and development policies.

- The cross-cutting nature of climate change offers **multiple secondary opportunities**, also known as social co-benefits: job creation, gender equity, access to social protection, food security, etc.
Improving Climate Policy: the framework

- Social policies and institutions must be “inclusive, responsive and accountable” to effectively empower people to be agents in the fight against climate change and to transform “from subjects and beneficiaries into citizens with rights and responsibilities”

- Needed procedural principles for the design and implementation of CC policies and programmes:
  - Participation
  - Accountability
  - Non-discrimination and equity
  - Empowerment
  - Transparency
Some policy recommendations

- Complement global and regional climate analysis with social impact assessments to properly identify how climate change will impact health, employment, gender equity, might trigger migration, increase vulnerability, etc.

- Develop more frequent and better informed social impact assessments, including criteria, methodologies and monitoring and evaluation models.

- Promote inter-ministerial policy coordination/dialogue in order for decisions on climate to be taken in a coherent manner with social priorities.

- Dialogue between decision makers and stakeholders

- Identify research gaps
Some policy recommendations

- **Ensure social safeguards** are in place to protect the interests of all, in particular the most vulnerable when fashioning climate solutions.

- **Invest in human capital**: invest in education and skills.

- **Include Social Dimensions Responsive Budgeting – SDRB** – in climate finance at national and global levels. This should be applied to the different finance windows: adaptation, mitigation, REDD, capacity building, etc.

- Ensure that **climate funding is in addition** to current Official Development Aid (ODA) to avoid funding getting diverted from essential development goals.