

# Benefits Sharing: Blending Climate Change and Development in National Policy Efforts

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The recently released Rural Poverty Report 2011 (IFAD, 2010) notes that some 1.4 billion people continue to live in extreme poverty, struggling to survive on less than US\$1.25 a day and that more than two-thirds reside in rural areas of developing countries. Climate variability and change is likely to worsen their situation, including the further entrenchment of gender inequalities, and is no longer a matter of debate. The policy dilemma remains in “how” to reconcile the complexities and multiple dimensions of this “*problematique*”. The intensity of the need for action comes amidst the reverberating impacts of a global economic crisis and the preceding fuel and food crises. Systemic vulnerabilities arising from income inequality and volatility, lack of opportunities, unequal distribution of and access to resources and a high dependence by the poor and vulnerable on climate-sensitive sectors (Perch et al, 2010) add to the urgency to define the right “mix” of actions in addressing immediate and long-term impacts. How then can adaptation serve not just climate change imperatives but development needs?

## Short-Term versus Long-Term

“Co-benefit approaches” provide a critical part of the solution. Alongside the possibilities of achieving multiple benefits from one intervention (or co-benefits), they potentially help to resolve tensions between immediate development concerns and the long-term nature of climate change (Zusman, 2008); thus enhancing effectiveness.

This delicate balance between climate change and development considerations, however, increases the demand in terms of defining and achieving “benefits”. A critical examination of the existing two-dimensional framework (climate change-development-climate change) highlights two key flaws:

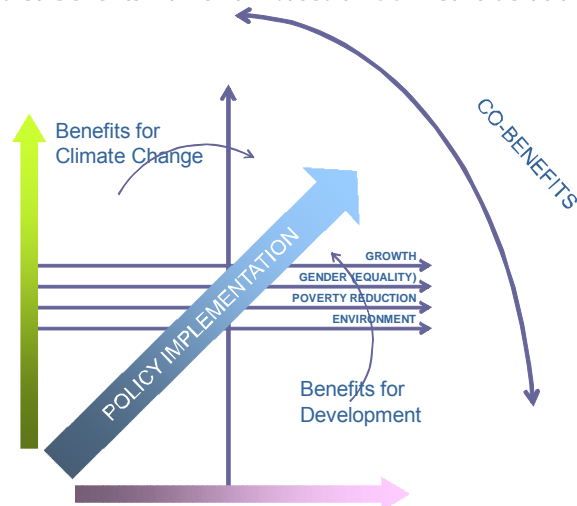
- that all “development” actions may be assumed to be pro-poor, empowering and engendered; and
- that “beneficial to climate change” automatically means “beneficial to the environment” (Perch et al, 2010).

## Adjusting the Frame of Analysis: Making Co-Benefits Work

Moreover, detailed analysis of National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs), select project proposals and an overview of other policy documents, suggests that current efforts fall short of a true alignment between development and climate change imperatives. While efforts have been made to expand the consideration of social dimensions, much seems to be “lost in translation”. Even good practices in the South (India, Brazil, South Africa and Ethiopia) which have secured high-value co-benefits in other policy areas, represent innovations rather than structural reforms (Ibid, 2010).

In response, we recommend the expansion of the conceptual and analytical framework for by focusing on optimizing “co-benefits” (see the figure right).<sup>1</sup> By linking the dimensions (growth, gender, poverty and the environment—GGPE), the focus is also shifted

## Adjusted Co-Benefits Framework based on GGPE Considerations



towards anticipatory and responsive frameworks, including a more systematic approach to vulnerability.

Moreover, an enabling environment will be afforded by additional elements including:

- integrated poverty, social and environmental impact analysis which should be applied, ex ante and ex post, strengthening specific actions; and
- greater accountability in the global climate-finance architecture in prioritizing effectiveness as well as efficiency.

The success of adaptation efforts, locally and globally, will more likely be defined by the extent to which economic, social and environmental systems, equally and mutually, resile in the face of crisis as well as by individual and collective capacities to navigate an uncertain future. Co-benefits potentially play a critical role in making both a reality.

## References:

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- Zusman, Eric (2008). 'Recognising and Rewarding Co-Benefits in the Post-2012 Climate Regime: Implications for Developing Asia' in Ancha Srinivasan (ed), *The Climate Regime Beyond 2012: Reconciling Asian Priorities and Global Interest*. Hayama, Japan, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. IGES website, <[http://enviroscope.iges.or.jp/modules/envirolib/upload/1030/attach/split06\\_chapter5.pdf](http://enviroscope.iges.or.jp/modules/envirolib/upload/1030/attach/split06_chapter5.pdf)>.

## Note:

1. Prepared by the author; adapted from World Bank framework (see Perch et al, 2010: 5).