

# Inclusive and Sustainable Development: For Whom?

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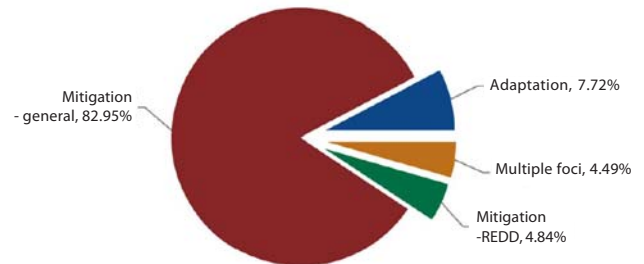
**The focus** of the development policy discourse now seems firmly fixed on “inclusiveness”; as both process and outcome. This is clear from the focus of the UN Secretary General’s Agenda for 2011, the discussions at Davos in January 2011 and the theme of the 2011 UNDP Human Development Report: Sustainability and Equity. As our collective gazes turn towards the roll-out of the Green Climate Fund and the discussions at Rio+20, what lessons can we take forward? We know that:

- Confronting inequality is no longer a matter of choice in global public policy. Adger et al (2006) highlight the influence of structural features at the level of the nation state [related to late development] such as high levels of income inequality, weak property rights and significant rural populations, in shaping climate risk and vulnerability to climate-related disasters.
- We are still struggling to find the right balance between social and sustainable development. Reconciling the imperatives of society and the environment remains one of the weakest areas of development policy.
- Poverty, gender and ethnicity are still not consistently recognized in National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) as factors that shape vulnerability as well as adaptive capacity.
- “Green(er)” or “clean (er)” has not always meant more sustainable. Of the many critiques of sustainable development practice, one looms large: often, efforts have been “tokenistic” in both scope and scale, often belied by efforts to avoid or evade real change. On mitigation, questions have been raised on the consultation of and participation by the poor in the benefits derived and on the development effectiveness of some technology transfers (Perch, 2011).

Hence there is a triple challenge for development. The first is to mitigate the worst impacts of environmental change, in whatever form it takes, including climate change. The second is to safeguard the social and economic progress achieved, including the sharing of the risks and benefits of development actions, avoiding both “free riding” and “overburdening of the poor”. The third is to ensure the compatibility of development actions at various levels. Solutions that cater only to needs such as finance, technology, infrastructure or access and availability, but that do not address “agency” i.e. the capability to deploy such resources when needed, miss a significant piece of the puzzle (Perch, 2011).

Still, equity does not just happen. It is the result of effort through intent as well as application. The absence of clear social-risk management measures, as well as limited action to date on the behavioural aspects of change, means that policy frameworks still rely on weak public arrangements for managing and sharing risk and on the strength and value of informal arrangements among the poor and vulnerable, and between the poor and non-poor (Ibid). For improved development outcomes, particularly for the poor and vulnerable, intensified efforts at the level of scope and scale will be needed.

## Focus of Climate Funds (October 2010)



Source: ClimateFundsUpdate.Org.

### In Scope:

- Poor countries are not the same as poor people. Global policy must begin to distinguish between these related but diverging constituencies.
- Increased coherence between climate change and development at the global level could help to avoid policy traps. Intensified competition over resources, including the increased cost of access to public goods, could lead to conflict within communities, between groups in society, and between users across states (in the case of transboundary resources like rivers or forests).

### At Scale:

- The most direct pathway to international climate finance for assisting the poor and vulnerable is through adaptation and current levels of funding are inadequate (Perch, 2011). Only 8 per cent of the US\$27 billion available in 2010 targeted adaptation alone (see chart).
- Inclusive and sustained development requires dedicated funding for multi-focused actions. Less than 5 per cent of existing climate finance is being targeted to these kinds of interventions (see chart).
- Governance arrangements are pivotal for ensuring real participation and benefit-sharing. Presently, there is limited clarity at the global level on “inclusion”, and few ways to ensure compliance. There is also limited consensus on what constitutes “adequate adaptation”.

As discussions escalate around the shape and scope of the “green economy” and about institutional frameworks for securing sustainable development, the first order of business should be to define what “green” means; particularly in a socially sustainable context. Moreover, an honest discussion on equity in the context of risk-sharing, burden-sharing and benefit-sharing is paramount.

### References:

- Adger, W. Neil, et al. (eds) (2006). *Fairness in Adaptation to Climate Change*. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.
- ClimateFundUpdate.Org (2010). ‘Emerging Architecture for Global Climate Finance’. Accessed August and October 2010 from <<http://www.climatefundupdate.org/graphs-statistics/pledged-deposited-disbursed/>>.
- Perch, Leisa (2011). ‘Mitigation of What and by What? Adaptation by Whom and for Whom? Dilemmas in Delivering for the Poor and the Vulnerable in International Climate Policy’, *Working Paper 79*. Brasilia, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth.