

Mountain People Adapting to Change

**Solutions Beyond Boundaries Bridging
Science, Policy, and Practice**

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Daily Conference Brief

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Adaptation strategies must be comprehensive

The core message of the plenary session on 'Enhancing Compatibility: Connecting National Adaptation Plans with Global Strategies' was that adaptation plans must aim to integrate strategies that take global knowledge to local level.

Addressing key questions around global programmes that supported adaptation efforts, session Chair Zafar Hasan Reza, Member of Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, said National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) should have linkages with global strategies and sub-national plans, and should be integrated with the realities of local communities.

Dr Dhruvad Choudhury, ICIMOD Regional Programme Manager, took note of the opportunities the UN system has offered through its various programmes to address climate change adaptation. However, the efforts must trickle down to communities, and one of the challenges in doing so is to ensure these efforts are helping communities to build their capacities to adapt.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr Atiq Rahaman of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies said good communication must bridge scientific knowledge and people's inherent knowledge. Calling for a good coordination between different tiers of government, he highlighted good science, effective policy, adequate finance, good governance, and robust implementation as the most important aspects of climate change adaptation.

Rojina Manandhar of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) talked about



the need to engage institutions and transfer ownership to regional centers and networks. UNDP Nepal's

“No country can have stand-alone strategies and plans” Zafar Hasan Reza, Pakistan

Vijay Singh said community level processes should be integrated with the national level, and this must be reflected in the budgetary provisions.

Dr Batu Krishna Uprey, an Expert Member of the Climate Change Council, asked the participants to reflect on two important questions: How are the sectors affected by climate change informed about climate change and adaptation? How can climate change adaptation be integrated into development planning?

Dr Arabinda Mishra of TERI University said the focus should be on speed of implementation, scale of adaptation projects, and scope of comprehensive adaptation action.



Communication and coordination: twin blocks for partnership

Poor communication and coordination poses some of the bigger challenges in fostering regional cooperation and partnerships for climate change adaptation in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region. This was the broad consensus reached at the dialogue café 'From Mountain to Mountain: Lessons for the HKH from Other Regions'.

In a lively discussion, participants pointed out the increasing disconnect between global, national, and local level. They said this disconnect must be addressed in order to share good climate change adaptation practices from around the world.



Keynote Speaker Yuri Badenkov of the Russian Academy of Science emphasized the need for better coordination to foster transboundary cooperation and partnerships for climate

“Taking the mountain agenda to international forums remains a challenge” **Basanta Shrestha, ICIMOD**



change adaptation. He pointed out the important role institutions like the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) can play in building bridges across institutions and countries.

Participants agreed that responsibilities for the implementation of adaptation plans need to be shared among various stakeholders at different levels. However, for this to happen, the capacities of those involved have to be built.

Talking about partnership between government and non-government actors, Manfred Seebauer of GIZ-Nepal gave an example from India where the government partnered with an NGO in sustainable land management and climate change protection methods.

The participants pointed out that climate change adaptation also needs specific communication mechanisms, such as using mythological figures to convey important messages. They also said policy development is about finding allies.

Winners of the poster competition

Nazmun Naher Mita,
Bangladesh

Ou Xiaou, China

Anneqa Azeem, Pakistan

Sujata Bhattacharya, India

Dilli Bhattarai, Nepal



Improve access to insurance for the poor

Recognizing insurance as a useful tool for post-disaster recovery and improving access to formal insurance mechanisms for the rural poor could reduce disaster risks considerably.

The panel on 'Insurance and Risk Mitigation Strategies: Ensuring Recovery after Climate-induced Loss' agreed that in spite of current and future adaptation and mitigation efforts, climate change will cause several long-term irreversible losses through slow and rapid onset of change. Hence, risk reduction and recovery measures must be explored.

Panellists provided examples of some insurance programmes from India, Indonesia, and Japan. However, they cautioned about several other constraining factors involved with insurance such as delayed payments, insufficient coverage, affordability of insurance schemes, lack of data for pricing the risk, and lack of public-private partnerships that is required to promote insurance services.

Dr SVRK Prabhakar, whose works have focused on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, said people often forget insurance is a post disaster recovery tool because of the overwhelming focus on the relief activities.

A matter of mutual trust

The interactive panel on 'Transboundary River Basins: Management and Benefit Sharing as an Adaptation Mechanism' called for out-of-the-box solutions to promote the sharing of benefits of transboundary river basin cooperation.

The panel noted that adapting water management to climate change concerns require prudent sharing of the benefits that arise from water use between the major production sectors of agriculture, energy, and industry in transboundary river basins of the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH).

In his keynote speech, Professor Asit K Biswas, a water expert, said it was very important to design water management programs as a catalyst for economic development and wellbeing of local people to inspire actions grounded on the commitment of decision-makers.

The panelists noted that building transboundary cooperation requires mutual trust, which can be a basis for identifying common values, or threats, in a basin. They said regional transboundary strategies must be anchored on national development plans.



“Insurance focuses on risk transfer rather than risk reduction”

Anamika Barua, SaciWater

The panel highlighted the need to broaden the definition of insurance, looking beyond formal insurance to non-traditional mechanisms for risk mitigation. Further, insurance does not prevent the loss of lives or assets.

Dr Giovanna Gioli of University of Hamburg pointed out that remittances constitute a self-insuring financial mechanism which is often ignored as an option by policymakers.

Participants also noted that insurance companies are not the only private sector actors that can contribute to risk mitigation, and that broader private sector engagement should be encouraged.

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“Attending to energy security in the river basins and developing consensus-based frameworks for disaster risk reduction offers ample avenues for water cooperation in river basins,” said Ramesh Anand Vaidya of ICIMOD, giving the examples of a recent power trade agreement between India and Nepal and the landslide-induced dam break in Sun Koshi River.

The cooperation between India and Bhutan in hydropower development was pointed out as an excellent example of transboundary cooperation. The interactive discussions highlighted the importance of trust building and finding common interest among stakeholders and political commitment for shared resources. Continuous dialogue between stakeholders, policymakers, and communities was also underscored.

Is the message getting through?

The dialogue café on 'Connecting the Dots: Translating Science to Policy through Effective Communication' revealed that it is vital to understand local values and structures of power and politics in communicating science to policymakers.

The keynote speaker, Ashok Gurung, asked if communication is the real problem, since the key messages of climate science are available and not very hard to understand. "The real question is about power and politics," he said. "Climate change also involves questions of ethics and values that go beyond science. This is where the arts and humanities can play a role."

"As a researcher, once you put your findings out there, you lose control over how it's used. But you can control how you reach your results"

Trude Rauken, Norway

A simple, easy-to-understand, and evidence-based scientific message is more attractive for both media and the general public. Professionals need to understand both traditional and scientific statements. For scientists



to influence the policy making process, they must understand the policy formulation process.

The panelists also emphasized the role of civil society in bridging the gap between scientists and policymakers.

"Two and two become five when synergies between scientists, communities, and policymakers effectively bridge the gap between science and policy," said Dr Batu Krishna Upreti, an Expert Member of the Climate Change Council.

"Everything about climate science goes against how politics and the media function"

Kunda Dixit, Nepal

Key points from 'Connecting the Dots' dialogue:

- We need to think about who controls the production of knowledge;
- The history of power relationships (colonialism, imperialism) must be taken into account;
- There should be a balance between quantitative and qualitative research, and;
- Scientists need to have a better understanding of policy processes.

Tweets of the day

TV Padma @tvpadma Everything about climate science and its communications goes against how local politicians and media functions, says @kundadixit #adaptHKH

bhrikuti rai @bbhrikuti "need 2 reframe the debate frm saving the planet to saving money,energy efficiency" @kundadixit on communicating climate science #adaptHKH

om astha rai @omastharai Beauty of #adaptHKH conference. Has skeptics like Anand Sharma,too. Says #KedarnathFlood isn't due to #climatechange

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