



Lilongwe Declaration

We, the participants of the first Global conference on learning and sharing on Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) and Climate Change Adaptation in Lilongwe, Malawi, June 8th – 12th, 2009

ACKNOWLEDGE that the effects of climate change and disaster risk are the most urgent human security, ecological and development challenges of our time—exacerbating poverty, food insecurity, forced migration, the spread of HIV/AIDS and conflict;

EMPHASIZE that the major cause of climate change includes unsustainable patterns of development, oppressive power structures and consumerist lifestyles;

NOTE the global ignorance on the issue of climate change and its impacts and lack of appreciation to community managed disaster risk reduction as a strategy in addressing impacts and effects of climate change and disaster risks;

UNDERSCORE that communities are vital learning agents of change, holders of indigenous practices, knowledge and skills, and can be powerful drivers of their own development and resilience;

RECOGNIZE that CMDRR is a crucial element of climate change adaptation and mitigation, and human induced hazards. CMDRR is development, with hazard as the focus and disaster risk as the entry point, when communities are motivated for change;

HIGHLIGHT the importance of inclusion of the most at risk and marginalized groups, providing a platform for both genders;

ASSERT that all nations and every individual have a moral obligation to reverse the effects of climate change. We all need to be better stewards, to take responsibility to transform current practices and lifestyles towards environmentally sound actions;

WE HEREBY DECLARE THAT

Climate change and disasters are results of unsustainable patterns of development, thus all processes addressing climate change and disaster impact must begin and end with people. The impact of climate change is global, and cuts across all sectors, regardless of gender, culture, economic or political position; but it must be recognized that the impact is greatest on the poor, the most at risk, and the marginalized. Therefore a global plan of action to address climate change and disaster risk must be undertaken using community managed disaster risk reduction as the strategy.

Climate change and disaster risk must be understood as a development issue and concerted efforts are required by all stakeholders to ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction measures are gender responsive, built upon indigenous knowledge systems, revitalize lost practices and respond to gaps to increase capacities towards resilience.

Building resilient communities means ensuring access to basic services which guarantee the right to safety by reducing disaster risk. It means awareness through community managed disaster risk assessment, analysis and implementation of disaster risk reduction measures.

All development actors have a critical role to play in;

- Recognizing and building upon community's voices, knowledge and expertise, such as early warning systems. This will accelerate the momentum of local and sustainable disaster risk reduction measures, through systematic documentation, advocacy, action and good practice;
- Promoting, facilitating, developing and implementing awareness campaigns, education and training programs on the causes, effects and long term forecasting of climate change and disaster risk; enabling communities to be aware of policies and innovation in climate adaptation and risk reduction measures;
- Linking resources to facilitate knowledge management and transfer, research, documentation and capacity building;
- Recognizing that action must start immediately, although adequate time and resources to enable communities to lead resilience building are essential; there are no quick fixes. Funding appropriate and environmentally sound technologies and supporting community initiatives in sustainable use of natural resources;
- Recognizing that climate change adaptation and resilience strategies require diversified approaches in social protection; in livelihoods and income generation, saving and insurance, simple technologies such as rain water harvesting;
- Developing a favorable policy framework for immediate action.

Networking at all levels is essential; communities must engage with governments and other stakeholders to work together to develop solutions. There is a critical need for joint efforts.

All actors are accountable and must work towards maintaining transparency in reducing disaster risk and climate change, and the devastation it is causing on natural environments.

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of strategic national action plans under the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 to better protect our societies and economies from current and future hazards;

WE DECLARE OUR FULL COMMITMENT to contribute to these goals and to cooperate with each other and all relevant stakeholders—including UN bodies, national governments, regional inter-governmental bodies, parliamentarians, international donor communities, multinational and corporate institutions, universities and research institutions, the private and financial sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, academia, faith-based institutions, religious and influential leaders, and individuals—with the intent to carry this declaration forward to all meetings through which decisions on climate change, disaster risk reduction are made, including UNFCCC COP-15 (Copenhagen), the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and beyond.

“Seeing that injustice is done and not combating it, makes us equally responsible” José Martí, Cuban Poet

June 12th 2009
Lilongwe, Malawi