

Climate-Proof Disaster Risk Reduction: Proposed MFS-II programme 2010-2015

Background. Globally, the number of disasters, man-made and natural, has been increasing almost exponentially over the last 20 years. The intensity and the unpredictability of hazards (leading to disasters if combined with vulnerability) has been negatively related to climate change and the degradation of ecosystems. Through loss of lives, assets and production, hazards and disasters have a negative impact on livelihoods and economic growth. It is well-established that poor people are disproportionately affected. Disasters wipe away gains in poverty reduction that took much time, energy and resources to achieve and threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

To ameliorate this situation, five Netherlands-based humanitarian, development and environmental organisations have joined forces in the 'Partners for Resilience' alliance.

Partners for Resilience. The Partners for Resilience consist of the Netherlands Red Cross, CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, Wetlands International and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre. The alliance strongly believes in the central role of *resilience* as the way to effectively deal with development in disaster-prone areas and affected ecosystems. Resilience is defined as people's ability to withstand shocks in their environment and their capacity to secure their livelihoods.

In December 2009, we submitted a concept note for MFS-II funding to the Netherlands Ministry of Development Cooperation. On April 1st, the Ministry invited the alliance to submit a full proposal. The alliance members and partners are now busily preparing this full proposal for July 1st 2010.

From January 2011 onwards, we hope to be implementing our innovative 5-year programme.

Innovation. Innovation is one of the core values of the alliance. The combination of capacities of three worldwide well-connected organisations (Red Cross/Red Crescent, Caritas, and CARE) with technical and research knowledge, extended experiences in policy dialogue and advocacy of Wetlands International and the Red Cross/Red Cross Climate Centre, stands for an integral and ground-breaking approach to address disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation (CCA) and environmental care.

Our reason for being. We aim to reduce the impact of natural hazards on vulnerable communities. We will help 750.000 to 1.000.000 vulnerable community members in nine countries to strengthen their resilience to deal with increased disaster risk, effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Thereto, we will cooperate with local civil society, authorities, governments and other stakeholders.

Nine countries. In Africa, we will work in Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Uganda, in Central America in Guatemala and Nicaragua and in Asia, in Indonesia, the Philippines and India. All of these are countries prone to disasters related to climate change, environmental degradation and/or geological factors (such as earthquakes). Furthermore, the country-based activities will be supplemented by a global strategy to disseminate experiences.

Intervention strategies.

We adopt three strategies for our interventions:

(1) Sustainable economic development and poverty reduction.

Communities are at the front line of disasters and the impacts of climate change. Increased resilience and sustainable livelihoods can avoid a disaster from happening or help to reduce its adverse effects. Our work at the local level include activities such as designing and implementing together with communities livelihood security, water, environmental degradation and poverty reduction programmes; linking organisations with specialist knowledge /resources to communities and providing resources to communities.

(2) Strengthening of civil society and community empowerment

To enhance communities' resilience, the policy context and cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors must be strengthened. Our work for this strategy includes conducting risk analyses together with communities; developing risk reduction plans and early warning tools; supporting communities, community-based organisations and civil society organisations to effectively use their knowledge and experience and express their needs to local authorities.

(3) Policy dialogue and advocacy for stronger DRR/CCA policies and increased resources at all levels.

Advocacy is needed to create a more solid policy context for disaster risk reduction / climate change adaptation at all levels.

The effectiveness of our programme strongly increases if we succeed to make the institutional environment from international to grass-root level more conducive to disaster risk reduction activities. Thereto, we will link and reinforce dialogues and solutions of governments, civil society, relevant knowledge centres and private sector actors at every level (global, regional, national and local). Particular attention will be paid to collecting and sharing best practises and innovations in and beyond our programme countries.

Contribution to global problems. We observe a number of global developments to which we aim to contribute through our field experiences and global networks:

(1) Climate risk assessments and adaptation approaches.

Many organisations, including ours, are developing tools and approaches for climate risk assessments and adaptation. The alliance is an excellent context to attempt to monitor, analyse and evaluate the different methods, and to discuss at national, regional and global level best practices with the aim to bring more synergy in these approaches, leading to a form of standardisation which is essential for cost efficiency and upscaling.

(2) Scaling up of ecosystem-based DRR/CCA.

Addressing climate related risks is a universal approach sealed in global commitments like the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Copenhagen Agreement. We observe that many agencies of the UN, NGOs and

development cooperation ministries and agencies in industrialised countries are in the process of addressing climate change risks in programmes and projects. Many of these activities are labelled 'pilot projects'. These pilot projects are essential for agencies to familiarise themselves with the new approach needed. Yet there is tension between 'best practices' evolving from pilots and the need to upscale climate change adaptation to all vulnerable countries, sectors and people.

The alliance aims to contribute to that dialogue and process. We believe that 'the good enough' may create a lot more opportunities for cost-effective upscaling than the 'best practise'.

(3) Monitoring and Evaluation of the impacts of climate change adaptation.

A key question in the coming years will be around assessing the impacts of climate change adaptation measures. There is certainty that communities will have to adapt, but given the uncertainty of working in a context of a changing climate, it will be a major challenge to measure the impact of development programmes. This is a universal challenge to which the Partners for Resilience want to contribute. We are in a good position to make a valuable contribution to developing monitoring and evaluation criteria for community-based, ecosystem-based DRR/CCA approaches.

Third partners. A key element in our approach is a more intensified cooperation with knowledge centres and private sector parties working on the same themes and in the same areas as we do.

Globally, the Red Cross Climate Centre will lead the alliance in using existing cooperation with, among others, knowledge centres like the IPCC, the UN system and the World Bank.

At the national level in the beneficiary countries, existing cooperation with the line ministries, meteorological offices, the governmental climate change focal point and other relevant governmental institutions and civil society organisations will be intensified and new relations, for instance with private actors, will be explored.

Locally in the field, the alliance members will engage with local governments, regional universities and relevant civil society organisations.

Invitation for collaboration. We seek active engagement with networks of Civil Society Organisations, knowledge centres, private sector parties, governmental and international institutions, in particular to contribute to the development of common approaches. Please contact us at:

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