

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Climate adaptation conference:**

26<sup>th</sup> of November 2009

*First session, workshop 1:*

#### **Clouds but little rain - Local perspectives on reducing disaster risk in a changing climate**

Organized by the Netherlands DRR platform (CARE Netherlands, Cordaid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Red Cross, Wageningen University, Wetlands International)

Invited guests: Marcus Oxley (Global Network of civil society organizations for DRR) and Suranjana Gupta (GROOTS International)

Several agencies of the Dutch DRR platform will organize this session based on their experiences with DRR and climate adaptation worldwide. They've invited Marcus Oxley from the global network to present their report on "Clouds but little rain", which indicates that though climate change is discussed widely, still a lot needs to be done at community level. Further, the Netherlands Red Cross will present recent lessons learned on ways to effectively integrate climate adaptation in community based disaster risk reduction programs in Ethiopia, Indonesia and Colombia. Cordaid will show a film where community members from Central America, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia will tell their own stories on how climate change impacts their lives and how DRR can assist them.

Subsequently, several other agencies will provide feedback in a panel discussion, including Suranjana Gupta from GROOTS India, CARE Netherlands and Wetlands International.

#### **Introduction to the programme of the workshop**

*Chairperson: Joris Jurriens (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian aid division)*

At local level the impact of Disasters and Climate Change is similar. Therefore, for local communities the solutions are also similar. The organizations in the workshop share their experience on the local impacts and community based solutions.

#### **Clouds but little rain**

*Marcus Oxley (Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction)*

The publication 'Clouds but Little Rain' from 'Views from the Frontline, A local perspective of progress towards implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action' is the largest global assessment of disaster reduction at the local level. The most important conclusion is that is essential to build resilience on the local level, and build local partnerships.

At the local level people have to deal with many issues, like food security, poverty, social protection, and climate change is just another one. Different problems come together at local level, and therefore the problems are approached in a holistic way, thus addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability is key to DRR, CCA and poverty reduction.

Climate change is not just about the extreme events. The gradual effects may even be more disastrous. It pushes vulnerable people over the edge. In the HFA the least progress is made exactly in addressing the underlying risk factors. They need increasing investment and attention. It is essential to include a ecosystem approach in the solution to the local impacts of climate change, since the earth has lost its capacity to recover from the impact of climate change and disasters.

A balance needs to be reached of top down and bottom up actions. They are both essential, but it is still difficult to bridge the gap. A lot of work on DRR/CCA so far has been done at the top, in policy and agreements. It is unknown however if these high level commitments have any impact at the local level, if the inputs at national level lead to outputs and outcome at the sub national level. To create insight in this impact, good monitoring is important. This starts with a good baseline on the current situation, even before the Copenhagen 2012 agreements starts. Local organizations need to be involved to bridge the gap between policy and grassroots, and they have the legitimacy to dialogue with their local and national governments for the domestic accountability.

#### **Film: "the dove, the duck and the camel"**

*Sasja Kamil (Cordaid)*

This film, produced by Cordaid and its partners, shows examples of community based disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation in Honduras, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. The movie is available with the Cordaid

publication "Towards a Resilient Future", and online at <http://www.cordaidpartners.com/rooms/cmdrr-community-managed-disaster-risk-reduction/posts/472-the-dove-the-duck-and-the-camel>

## **Lessons learned on how to integrate climate change adaptation in DRR in 3 countries**

*Bruno Haghebaert (Netherlands Red Cross)*

The Netherlands Red Cross is involved in Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation activities in multiple countries. With support from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs it currently implements DRR/CCA activities in Colombia, Ethiopia and Indonesia in the framework of the so-called "Pledge Programme". (see power point presentation)

In these three countries the Red Cross specifically focuses on lessons learned and good practices with regard to the integration of DRR/CCA. Depending on the country other fields such as food security, water and sanitation, natural resource management and health and hygiene are also integrated in the project approach..

In Ethiopia the activities focus particularly on drought, and in Indonesia the focus is on coastal erosion and river floods. The focus in Colombia is on sea-level rise, flooding and tropical storms. Local adaptation measures include coastal protection, early warning and a variety of disaster preparedness measures.. Awareness raising is always an important component of the work, in particular with youth, by awareness materials, games, and performances. A popular and successful example in Colombia is the puppet show de la Naturaleza, involving Señora Terra y Doctor Clima.

The key lessons learned are:

- Combine hardware (mitigation works, infrastructure) with a software approach (awareness raising and capacity building).
- Operationalization of climate trends in DRR and public-health work at the community level is possible but depends on the availability of specific information on climate change patterns in the community concerned .
- A good problem analysis on the underlying risk factors is the start of good and appropriate action.
- Health concerns need and deserve a central place in DRR, but are often neglected.
- If uncertainty about future risks can not be clarified, 'No Regrets' measures should be taken, focussing on general resilience of communities.
- On the other hand, the DRR community will have to learn to live with uncertainty.
- Tangible climate induced threats to a community are a strong mobilizing factor.
- Build actions on existing local / indigenous adaptation strategies.

## **Discussion**

### Funding

There is a clear need to have structures and responsible authorities, just as the funds and obligations to invest in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

At local level resilience needs to be strengthened, and the consideration needs to be made if a specific DRR action is needed and possible, or if No Regrets measures should be taken in improving general resilience of a community. Often the obstacle is however the access to duty bearers, and to financing of actions.

### Remoteness

Central areas receive attention, and duty bearers take up their responsibility. However, it is exactly in remote areas where central governments have no interests that support at ground level and investment on trickling down of Adaptation and DRR funds and action are needed most.

### Methodology of research 'Clouds but little rain'

To make sure the same thing was measured everywhere, standard indicators were used, similar to the indicators and related to the 5 priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The exact indicators can be found in the report 'Clouds but little rain'.

At national level progress measurement of the national governments was done through an online self assessment for government officials. Local level "checks" took place by interviewing 3 informant groups :

- local authorities
- local community representatives
- local CSO's

The progress of integration of DRR in education for example, could show a different image at national or local level: How did the government say they have integrated DRR in the school curricula, and is DRR actually taught in schools? Teachers who are more likely to tell the truth about what is taught in the classrooms, and can therefore provide a more accurate image of the local impact of such promises and measures.

#### Dutch Government and Local adaptation

What does the Dutch government do about local involvement in DRR?

The Dutch government has a broad range of possibilities:

1. Humanitarian aid, from which such as the presented project from the Red Cross are financed.
2. Development cooperation of DGIS makes it possible to integrate DRR in sectors, like health.
3. Climate Adaptation policy and funds should include community solutions.

#### Collaboration

Neither the Dutch government, nor the organizations in the DRR platform pretend to know it all, but by collaboration and bringing the collective experience together much can be achieved. This is something the Red Cross, Cordaid, CARE, Wetlands International and the Red Cross Climate Centre are doing in the Resilience alliance, which recently presented a DRR/CCA programme to DGIS in the context of MFS 2.

Contribution by Mrs. Suranjana Gupta: Governments made the commitment to address disasters in the Hyogo Framework for Action, so there is the obligation for governments to adhere to it. National data can be monitored, and there is data at household level. However, the impact at the intermediate level, at community level is often absent.

One of the recommendations from Views from the Frontline is to make funds available, in a disaster resilience fund. Potential successful mechanisms such as community platforms should be used to create impact, and be able to measure it a local level.

The remaining issue is how to scale up best practices, and bridge the gap between national and local level promises, funds and actions.