

SESSION VI: MOBILIZING FOR ACTION
SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 11:45-12:45 P.M.

MOBILIZING ACTION FOR ADAPTATION IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

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(A draft version of a chapter forthcoming in the book, *Development in the Balance: How Will the World's Poor Cope with Climate Change?*, to be published by the Brookings Institution Press)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Linking climate change impacts with global poverty and development outcomes in a way that resonates with ordinary citizens is essential if we are to galvanize the public around climate change adaptation. To set the stage for widespread mobilization, the first order of business will be accurately delivering a compelling message of urgency to constituencies who are currently unengaged in the climate debate. To do so will require action utilizing five strategies: linking scientific evidence with anecdotal accounts of destructive weather events; drawing on climate and global insecurity concerns; linking the adaptation and mitigation agendas; disseminating adaptation success stories; and carefully tailoring language to appeal to the broadest swath of people possible. In addition to delivering a persuasive message, we must also engage actors through distinct avenues calling on civil society, government, and business to participate in unique and effective ways. The most challenging task of all will be rallying sufficient financial support to meet adaptation needs. If addressed strategically, the recent global food crisis presents an opportunity to bridge the short- and long-terms by establishing synergies between the food crisis and climate change. Effectively linking the two issues to build a coherent communications and mobilization strategy that will address both simultaneously would be a step in the right direction. Above all, climate change and

development most no longer be treated as separate issues. We must comprehensively integrate our efforts to dramatically reduce the levels of green house gas emissions with a firm commitment to address the harm faced today by the world's poorest people.

The challenge that climate change poses to global poverty reduction and development is both broad and deep. The consequences of climate change will have ramifications through the entire economic, political, and social fabric of developing countries in ways that extend far beyond the environmental arena, and it will affect those countries in profound ways that will alter their development paths and place substantial obstacles in the way of their ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The task before us is to recognize and act on the full breadth and depth of these climate realities. Ultimately, the linkages between climate change and the many dimensions of global development and poverty present both a crisis that we must tackle, and an opportunity that we must seize.

To do so requires us to focus our attention on the troubling outlook for developing countries and the need to help them adapt to the severe impacts they face—from water scarcity to floods, from declining agricultural productivity to increased threats of disease, from natural resource conflicts to refugee crises. That is, a comprehensive climate response must—and this is no easy task—address the adaptation challenge as strenuously as it addresses the emissions reduction challenge. It cannot be a matter of ‘either/or.’ To borrow a medical analogy, prevention is critical to curb the disease, but the patient is already suffering, making it urgent that we take action to heal the damage already done and arrest any further harm. We must maintain a powerful focus on emissions cuts. Meanwhile, the principle question on the minds of civil society groups and local communities in many developing countries is how to effectively tackle the dramatic climate-related impacts they are already seeing.

These realities create a serious challenge at the global level. Developed countries—particularly the United States—have a responsibility to generate new resources on a large scale to support adaptation initiatives in poor countries to assist those who are least responsible for causing climate change. At the same time, our perspective on adaptation responses should originate from the ground up and focus on building the indigenous capacity of local communities to manage the adaptation challenge. Taking these actions should be seen not only as responses to harsh circumstances, but also as opportunities with widespread consequences. This is a chance for the U.S. to demonstrate leadership on the global stage, to show those in the poorest and often most volatile parts of the world that we are engaged beyond our borders. By helping developing countries build their ability to cope with the climate crisis, we can also assist them in becoming more economically, socially, and ecologically resilient in the broadest sense.

But how do we get there? What is needed to generate such action? In this paper, we sketch out some of the key challenges that lie before us in mobilizing the political will, financial resources, business leadership, and technological prowess that will be needed if we are to meet the challenge that climate change poses for the poor in many of the most vulnerable countries and regions of the world.

In achieving the needed levels of mobilization, we believe that we will need to do several things well and quickly. First, we need to get the message right and intensify the transmission of the message through global electronic media and social movements. Such messages will need to be directed towards constituencies who are not necessarily engaged in the climate issue to date; these are people who may be compelled to act through a sense of moral obligation and who have not yet been moved by climate change as an environmental crisis. Second, we need to sort out the appropriate roles for civil society, business, and government, including those in developing countries. Finally, we will need to find the money to make a serious difference in advancing any and all of these other agendas. This last may be the most challenging task of all.

GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

If we are going to build the kind of public support needed to achieve our goals in both developed and developing countries, we will need to overcome some challenges in delivering our message to the public. What are some of these challenges?

First, our public discourse on climate change has for 30 years been a highly scientific discourse. This is understandable given the level of scientific controversy that has swirled around this issue. However, now that the scientific debate has been largely settled, we need to increasingly move this conversation into the mainstream of public discourse in a way that is comprehensible to the person in the street—that is, to put a human face on climate change.

As has often been the case with other major events in the past, such as the Asian tsunami or the crisis in Darfur, the need to address international adaptation may only begin to resonate with the public and spur them to action when they begin to learn about the real life stories of communities in vulnerable regions. Just as images of polar bears have alerted many to the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on the Arctic region, images of poor communities struggling to respond and adapt to the increasing frequency and force of climate shocks will hopefully have the same impact on the public consciousness in making the case for a bold response to the challenge of adaptation to climate change—or perhaps better put, “investing in climate-resiliency.”

The reports of international institutions, like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have outlined in very stark detail the likely impacts of climate change on poor communities in developing countries. This scientific evidence, combined with anecdotal accounts of recent unpredictable and destructive weather patterns affecting regions across the globe, can provide a compelling and sobering portrait. Heightened attention to food security in the wake of the recent food price crisis provides a critical messaging space we must occupy: highlighting the long-term threats, and in many cases the immediate challenges, that climate change poses to agricultural productivity in poor parts of the world. On the data side, a few examples make the case:

- By mid-century, more than a billion people will face water shortages and hunger, including 600 million in Africa alone. According to the World Health Organization, climate change may already contribute to more than 150,000 deaths a year.

- Ninety percent of all insurance claims for climate-related disasters are paid out to clients in developed countries, while 97 percent of all natural disaster-related deaths already take place in developing countries.
- Food and water scarcity, decreased agricultural productivity, and climate-related public health threats are projected to displace between 150 million and one billion people as climate change unfolds. By 2020, up to 250 million people across Africa could face more severe water shortages. In some countries, yields from rain-fed crops could be halved during this same period.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and their funders have not yet placed adequate attention on making the human face of climate change recognizable to the broad public. Foundations that care about global development issues are only beginning to fully recognize that climate change will exacerbate the challenges that poor communities already face. Several funders are moving towards supporting advocacy and awareness-building efforts and developing country-based programs focused on climate-resilience, but from our vantage point, that movement is not yet rapid enough.

Second, mobilizing broader public engagement will require us to highlight the broad ramifications that climate change will have for the interests of the United States—both in the narrow security sense, as well as in terms of broader benefits to civilization. Policy makers, businesses, and the American public will be compelled to mobilize around this cause once the broad impacts of climate change and the imperative to provide support for climate adaptation are understood not in the traditional environmental sense, but rather in terms of their critical importance in determining global economic development, stability, security, and public health.

For instance, a recently released National Intelligence Assessment, “National Security Implications of Climate Change by 2030,” adds to the chorus of high-profile studies in the past several years that have described the broader security and stability implications of climate change. The assessment frames climate change as a significant ‘threat multiplier’ to national and international security by worsening existing problems of poverty, social tension, environmental degradation, ineffective leadership, and weak institutions.¹ Such underlying problems may lead to increased domestic instability and conflict and may force mass migrations in some of the most politically volatile regions of the world. Not only emissions reductions, but adaptation strategies as well, will be needed to address these dynamics.

Meanwhile, in the public health community, climate change is reigniting concern for the spread of diseases like malaria, cholera, and other tropical diseases. Warming temperatures are expanding the habitat for disease vectors—like mosquitoes and other insects—causing the spread of insect-borne diseases to more northern latitudes as well as to communities living at higher elevations.

¹“National Intelligence Assessment on the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030,” statement of Dr. Thomas Fingar, House Permanent Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming, June 25, 2008.

Third, we must strike the right balance between discussions of mitigation and adaptation. To date, mitigation has dominated the public discourse and adaptation has been its weak sibling receiving little attention by media, funders, and governments. Even though the long-term future of investment in developing nations is closely linked to those countries' ability to pursue climate resilience strategies, adaptation is largely a new concept for many, even those sympathetic to environmentalism.

Why is this the case? For many years, many in the environmental movement did not even mention the need for adaptation strategies fearing that this would signal to those opposed to climate change policies that the environmental movement had, in effect, surrendered and was prepared to live with climate variations. Hence, the issue was put on the back burner. Research agendas on adaptation strategies were largely shelved, and attention was focused on winning the battle in the debate over emissions. This was a mistake, and the environmental community is increasingly recognizing the importance of stressing the climate impacts taking place today.

The third and fourth assessments of the IPCC, clearly acknowledged that adaptation was going to be necessary and in effect, placed the issue at the center of the debate. At Bali, developing nations agreed to the Bali Roadmap on the very specific condition that there would be funding and support for them to implement adaptation strategies, as well as for clean energy technologies. For those countries outside the small number of major emitting developing countries, this issue is fundamental to negotiations. As a result, addressing the issue of adaptation has been made a condition for advancing towards a post-Kyoto agreement, raising the stakes around an adaptation agenda even higher.

We believe it is critical that clear links be established between the emissions and adaptation agendas. For example, increasing levels of adaptation financing could be triggered by specific temperature increases or levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Moreover, as the IPCC fourth assessment noted, emissions reduction and adaptation can go hand in hand at the ground level in developing countries. Clean energy technologies and forest and ecosystem protection can be critical elements in building climate resilience in local communities.

Fourth, we must balance our sense of urgency in presenting these stories with the need to ensure that we do not create such fear that the public feels overwhelmed and inconsequential in shaping a positive outcome. If the problem appears beyond reasonable solution, there is a danger that the public will presume a passive and fatalistic attitude and will not engage and push for change.

Putting a human face on climate change doesn't just involve highlighting the negative impacts of climate change on poor communities. Our messaging must also help people understand how vulnerable communities are already building resilience in the face of these impacts. We must provide hope for how these communities will survive this global challenge.

Here's one example of how a community in Gambia is already coping and how we might begin to tell these stories from the ground up:

Oxfam has provided support to help people in 51 villages in Gambia's North Bank Division on the Sahelian fringe. Here, food shortages are a constant threat as people struggle to manage the delicate balance between their needs and what the environment can provide. Oxfam's local partner, the Agency for the Development of Women and Children (ADWAC) came up with a simple solution; if villagers had a way to save some of their food and seeds at the end of each harvest, they could have a reserve to fall back on during times of shortage.

ADWAC's plan called for building and stocking four cereal "banks"—tidy white structures the size of small houses that can hold up to 33 tons of cereals—located at strategic points around the communities. Villagers then formed committees to manage the stored supplies. Those who borrow from the storehouses during a food shortage are obliged to repay the loan in kind and tack on a little extra, too, so that the project can grow. Now, if drought should shrivel their crops or pests consume them, villagers can turn to those banks of grain, avoiding the need to eke out what they can from an overstrained environment. The banks will help them weather tough times.

Building awareness about the impacts that poor people around the world face and providing inspiring stories like this one to describe how they are already coping will help build public support and the political will to take action. Citizens in developed countries must understand that while they have largely contributed to this global crisis, it's not too late to reverse the trend and respond appropriately. Moreover, there is extensive evidence that disaster risk reduction approaches—from early warning systems to improved agricultural practices—can save significant money in the long term. Adaptation is a way to build economic resilience.

Fifth, we must reconsider our use of the term adaptation. For policy makers and scientists, the term adaptation is quite serviceable. To the general public, however, the term adaptation can be ambiguous and confusing. It is highly abstract and conceptual. For those organizing motivational campaigns to stoke the public imagination and rally them to the cause, adaptation is a crashing bore. It simply does not sell. This creates a real problem for activists and campaigners who are always looking for ways to translate complex ideas into the vernacular.

Add to this the fact that for some in the developing world the term "adaptation" is unwelcome. Seen from a developing country perspective, the term can suggest that affected communities will be passive partners in whatever "adaptation" arrangements are discussed or negotiated, rather than as active agents in designing their own positive future. For these reasons, the term "climate resilience" has emerged as an alternative in many discussions of this subject, though we should keep in mind that "adaptation" is still the term used in international agreements that spell out the responsibilities of developed countries to redress the climate harm they've caused. In any event, the lesson at the end of the day is that we need to improve our ways of building a compelling case for adaptation and resilience.

CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

Once we sort out the kind of message we want and need, we must intensify the delivery of this message to diverse audiences and, ultimately, increase the engagement of

many constituencies in our efforts. Anyone who attended the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations in Bali could attest to the fact that global civil society was represented in force, with a visible and very colorful presence of organizations and coalitions from around the world. This was clear evidence that civil society movements have committed in a serious way to working with world and national leaders in building public awareness of the need for action on this issue.

That said, there are still many gaps and cleavages that need to be addressed regarding the manner in which civil society actors are choosing to engage. As we noted earlier, while there is considerable organizational energy in the U.S. and Europe on climate change, many environmental organizations have only recently come to see adaptation as an area of significant concern. Perhaps more importantly, the U.S. environmental movement is very domestically focused and, in many cases, believes that revenue generated from cap-and-trade legislation in the U.S. should be directed toward U.S.-based conservation and clean energy programs. In Europe, where coalition work among NGOs has led to significant action by European governments on emissions reduction, damage to developing countries is just beginning to get real traction.

While engaging those already working on climate change issues is a part of the challenge, a task of even greater importance will be to engage new constituencies to assertively address climate change and adaptation policy. Many faith-based organizations have already joined in serious ways in advocacy efforts, and have made impacts on developing countries and adaptation needs a core part of their message. Meanwhile, it will be critical to mobilize other important constituencies. Oxfam is working with women's organizations such as the League of Women Voters to highlight the disproportionate gender impacts of climate change, and we are developing a set of video modules called *Sisters on the Planet*, which will include prominent women speaking out on climate change and adaptation to further this effort. We believe it will also be essential to engage with African American and Latino communities to highlight climate impacts in countries around the world with which they often have connections. Public health groups and security experts are other constituencies that can also add their voices to our efforts. And, as we note below, businesses can be important allies in efforts to address climate impacts around the world.

In the developing world, the engagement of civil society around issues of adaptation and climate change is still uneven and spotty. In some countries, such as Bangladesh, where sophisticated NGOs have been working on this issue for the last 15 years, a highly engaged civil society movement has been working with and alongside government to develop appropriate adaptation strategies. In other nations, like South Africa, a highly-developed research base on adaptation exists within its universities, but civil society is just beginning to connect with and advocate around the core issues.

In most parts of the world, there is generally a small group of modestly funded NGOs with limited technical sophistication who have monitored this issue for many years but have had little capacity to act, mobilize, and educate. They now have the opportunity to play a more influential role in advancing public education about adaptation and risk management. But it is still unclear whether there will be sufficient resources to drive this work. So in many contexts, civil society organizations are trying to evaluate what all this discussion about adaptation will mean for them. Is it real? Will it result in hard

commitments? Will it generate the creation of new institutions to manage substantially larger financial flows? Or is all the noise at the international level, once more, much ado about nothing. Many are waiting to see.

ROLE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS

In developing countries, it is vital that efforts to adapt to climate change impacts and to build climate resilience are not viewed as marginal and exotic special initiatives, but rather as core elements of a national risk management and development strategy. National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs), the principle mechanism in the UNFCCC process for adaptation planning in least developed countries (LDCs), have been a useful exercise for engaging governments on the issue of adaptation. Many LDCs have invested significant effort in effective participatory processes—often in very poor, remote areas—as part of emerging conversations about the impacts of climate change in particular national contexts. In this sense, NAPAs have served as useful public education and mobilization vehicles.

The primary weakness of the NAPAs isn't a reflection of the plans themselves, but rather the UNFCCC directive for the plans. The UNFCCC charge to LDCs in developing NAPAs is explicitly to address short-term, immediate adaptation needs. As a result, NAPAs have been largely based on small-scale projects that are co-financed by donors. While these projects are necessary in the short-term to address urgent adaptation needs, they are not sustainable and are susceptible to donor-bias in identifying priorities. They may also fail to help in the development of more resilient, programmatic strategies for dealing with the impacts of climate change impacts that are essential for ensuring that community responses be long-lived and sustainable. Moreover, NAPAs have been grossly under-funded. Of the estimated \$1-2 billion per year needed to implement the NAPAs, only \$67 million has been allocated so far.²

Building on the NAPA experience, multilateral and bilateral international institutions must support both LDC and non-LDC developing country governments to engage in more comprehensive, long-term adaptation planning tied to broader development goals. This need was identified in the recent United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report, which found that adaptation planning is happening on a completely separate track from poverty reduction planning. In Bangladesh, arguably the most advanced LDC in terms of adaptation planning, efforts are currently underway to ensure that any international financing mechanisms are based on a comprehensive national adaptation plan that has been established with multi-stakeholder participation. This effort will likely serve as a model for other vulnerable countries as they begin to address longer-term needs.

The NAPA process has signified an important first step in efforts to identify adaptation needs, but international institutions must start to connect the dots between

² Oxfam International. "Financing Adaptation: Why the UN's Bali Climate Conference must mandate the search for new funds" (December, 4 2007). Estimate generated from the Global Environment Facility.

development and adaptation needs in the longer-term. To ensure that these plans optimize their potential for both advancing resiliency and simultaneously reducing poverty, it is critical that they be tightly aligned with government Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) that should capture long-term, community-level needs and poverty reduction objectives. NGOs have been very active in the PRSP preparation process since the late 1990's and would in many cases be very well-equipped to participate actively in a similar exercise around the preparation of NAPAs. To help move this process forward, NGOs can play a key role in insisting on these linkages and ensuring that adequate attention and support are provided to poor, isolated communities so that they can understand climate impacts and adaptive responses, increase their advocacy, and inform policy processes.

In many respects, the fundamental challenge facing developing country governments going forward is an institutional one. Will they have the appropriate institutions in place to do risk analysis, to manage the inflow of adaptation funding, to intermediate with NGOs, local governments, and community groups to undertake appropriate risk mitigation and/or disaster risk reduction strategies? Will they be able to facilitate awareness and dissemination of indigenous strategies for adaptation and resilience? Will they develop the right policies and strategies of investment to ensure that they are funding the right approaches? For example, will they support appropriate food security strategies in their rural areas or appropriate emergency management institutions in the right regions? Will they have the capacity to tap technological innovations, such as in water and sanitation, which would enable them to strengthen their adaptation and resilience responses?

And lastly, will developing countries be able to find ways to balance adaptation and mitigation strategies in a suitable and sustainable fashion appropriate for their national context? Efforts to integrate climate-resilience with a broader vision of development should also seek synergies between climate adaptation and efforts to limit the growth in greenhouse gas emissions from developing countries. The protection and rehabilitation of natural ecosystems such as coastal mangrove forests or wetlands can act not only as a buffer to climate impacts, but also as an important way of retaining and sequestering carbon. Meanwhile, low-carbon energy technologies, such as community-level windmills used to power water pumps, can be an important tool to help improve the resilience of communities to cope with climate impacts like water scarcity. With some imagination and proper planning, adaptation and emission reductions can be integrated in a comprehensive vision that in the long run will be more effective both in terms of costs and positive returns to the environment.

ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector has important and powerful contributions to make in building the resilience of developing countries. While many companies have begun to recognize their responsibility to track and reduce their emissions, most companies are only just beginning to comprehend their own role in responding to climate change impacts on the ground. Yet there is a strong case for why the private sector can and should also play a role in enabling poor communities in developing countries to adapt to climate impacts.

In today's globalized economy, many companies source primary commodities from developing countries. Additionally, companies rely on suppliers in developing countries for

their basic manufacturing. Still other companies plan to boost their future customer bases in developing countries. For all of these companies, climate change could pose significant risks to their business.

For example, water is vital to growing cotton as well as turning fiber into finished garments. Water is also critical to coffee growers, soft drink beverage bottlers, and mining companies. Water scarcity is a threat to many sectors, just as it is to local communities. The task before us is to mobilize private sector support for initiatives that can find and develop synergies between the needs of poor communities and the needs of companies whose supply chains will be affected. In the case of water, that could mean developing joint strategies for improved water retention and use.

Responding to climate change impacts on poor communities may present new business opportunities and spur economic development in some of the poorest regions of the world. For example, taking adaptation initiatives to scale to address water scarcity challenges in developing countries provide enhanced market opportunities for developers of new technologies—such as low energy water purification systems or water recirculation technology for manufacturing.

In Ethiopia, where 85 percent of the population is dependent on rain-fed agriculture, Oxfam is working to establish an agricultural risk management program.³ As rainfall patterns have become more unpredictable, weather index insurance could help farmers reduce their vulnerability, which may prevent a slide into poverty. The goal of this undertaking is to help communities most vulnerable to climate variability and climate change to adapt and thrive through innovative, rights-based measures integrating both risk reduction and formal risk transfer. Micro-insurance, especially weather index insurance holds promise for rural farmers to gain access to credit and build resiliency. Innovative products like this also open up new markets to insurance providing them with an opportunity to expand their business. The ideal scenario creates a win-win solution for everybody; more local people are able to afford insurance down the line, enabling farmers to hold onto their land and companies to access new markets.

Low-carbon technologies also hold significant economic and business potential, not only for the reduction of emissions but also for building resilient capacity in developing countries. Energy poverty, or lack of access to reliable energy services, affects approximately one-third of the world's population, with 80 percent of those in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Building a new renewable energy future in vulnerable countries can provide the developing world with the infrastructure needed for some critically needed adaptation strategies (e.g. electricity for pumps to provide ground water for irrigation), while also helping developing nations grow along a low-carbon pathway. With proper investment and incentives, companies can assist developing countries to leapfrog over their fossil fuel dependence into a low carbon future—much in the same way they leapt over the analog communications generation to the digital communications generation. There are heads of state in poor nations who would welcome this opportunity and would be eager to work with venture capitalists to enable such a transformation of their economies.

³ Daniel Kassahun, "Rainwater harvesting in Ethiopia: Capturing the realities and exploring opportunities" (Addis Ababa: Forum for Social Studies, 2007), FSS Research Report No. 1, 1-2.

ESTABLISHING ROBUST INTERNATIONAL FINANCING MECHANISMS

The UNDP estimated in their most recent Human Development Report that the adaptation needs of developing countries may exceed \$80 billion annually by 2015.⁴ In the meantime, international funding mechanisms have thus far totaled a mere \$116 million, and the Adaptation Fund established under the Kyoto Protocol, funded by a levy on transactions made through the Clean Development Mechanism, is only expected to raise \$80 to \$300 million each year between 2008 and 2012.⁵

The U.S. government has thus far not committed serious funds to international adaptation, but there has been recent movement in that direction in large part due to increased pressure by NGOs and the religious community in Washington, DC. Adaptation funds are also beginning to benefit from a higher profile in international negotiations. Legislation introduced in the U.S. Congress designates a portion of the revenues generated from the auction of greenhouse gas emission permits to international adaptation assistance. The Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act in the U.S. Senate proposed to generate up to \$1 billion for international adaptation in 2012 and approximately \$2 billion in 2020. If approved in the U.S. soon, this type of mechanism could serve as a model for the kind of adaptation funding mechanisms developed countries could adopt as part of an international agreement.

As previously noted, many developing countries view the provision of financing and other assistance for vulnerable countries facing the impacts of climate change as a central element for reaching a post-2012 global deal. Thanks to the insistence of these countries, the Bali Roadmap includes as a negotiating mandate “improved access to adequate, predictable and sustainable financial resources and financial and technical support, and the provision of new and additional resources” for both adaptation and emissions reduction activities in developing countries. This theme has been underscored by developing countries as the UN climate talks continue to unfold this spring and summer, however it still remains unclear where this additional funding will come from.

It remains critical for NGOs to continue to provide intellectual leadership, in partnership with strong developing country governments, on how these funds will be raised and what the appropriate channels of delivery should be.

DEALING WITH THE GLOBAL FOOD PRICE CRISIS

Just when we thought we were beginning to build the framework for a global climate change movement, we are hit broadside by a global food price crisis that almost no one saw coming. The food price crisis cannot be ignored. Food riots, disruptions in global trade in commodities, and social unrest and instability threaten to topple governments in 33

⁴ The UNDP estimate is based on the costs of integrating climate-resiliency into development activities, such as levees and irrigation systems, integrating adaptation planning into wider poverty reduction strategies, such as providing people with better ways to earn a living, and strengthening disaster preparedness and response capacity and are in addition to ordinary development aid.

⁵ Oxfam International, 2007.

countries in the developing world. Nothing focuses the mind of a head of state like food riots in a capital city and that is exactly what we saw in Port au Prince, Cairo, Dhaka, and numerous other cities. This experience should serve as a serious wake up call to the international community of the urgency for action. For those on the front lines with poor communities, it is already clear that this is not a cyclical bump in the road, but rather a signal of deeper structural challenges in our global food system that will only be exacerbated by worsening impacts of climate change.

Recent rapid increases in food prices give a sneak preview of what might transpire under a more dramatic climate change scenario in the future. Drought in Australia, a rush to create a biofuel market, protectionist policy responses and opportunistic speculation have conspired to give us a glimmer of a possible future in the absence of serious action to address climate change.

How do we manage to continue to stay focused upon the serious planetary challenges of climate change while dealing with the very immediate challenges of the food prices crisis? Perhaps we should assume the view that the food crisis is both a threat and an opportunity for those seeking to mobilize popular support and resources for the climate change challenge. Seen in that way, we can link the two issues and look for the synergies between the two to build a communications and mobilization strategy that will address both issues simultaneously and coherently. For example, the food price crisis has already highlighted the shortsightedness and inefficiency of linking biofuel production to primary food crops. The debate that has emerged around this only hastens the awareness of the need to accelerate investment in second and third generation biofuels. Similarly, higher oil prices only heighten the interest in many developing countries to rebuilding a much depleted agricultural sector using alternative agricultural techniques (e.g. low-input agriculture and low-greenhouse gas management practices), all of which can be linked in important ways to adaptation and resilience strategies for rural livelihoods.

CONCLUSION

The urgency of the challenge of climate change requires drastic action both in preventing further harm by reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and treating the damage already incurred. By delivering simple human stories grounded in people's every day concerns, we can expand the base of support on climate change and facilitate action. The global food crisis is a good example of an opportunity that should be seized upon for more sophisticated, targeted messaging on climate change—one that could lead to significant mobilization of civil society in both developed and developing countries.

Our success in generating significant funds for adaptation will also depend on how much engagement there is from a broad set of constituencies—including the business community—especially as allies on the political front. But none of this will have much meaning if we don't work closely with developing country governments to make sure the institutional support and integration exist to allocate a new inflow of funds effectively to the poorest, most vulnerable communities.

And above all, we must address climate change in a truly comprehensive manner, closely integrating our efforts to dramatically reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions

with a firm commitment to address the harm faced today by the poorest communities on the planet. It is past time to tackle one of the most important issues for development and poverty reduction in the 21st century. We cannot afford to see it as an enterprise left only to those concerned with one aspect of the problem or another, or to be solved by one constituency or another. Rather it is for all of us to leap in and do our part.