



Parallel session: Adaptation to climate change in Least Developed Countries – challenges, experiences, and ways forward

In connection with the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP15) at the end of 2009, the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) is organising the scientific congress entitled: "Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions" to be held in Copenhagen on March 10-12, 2009.

The congress aims to provide decision makers with the research-based knowledge on climate change they need for informed debate on new policies. All findings will be compiled in a book on climate change, and an executive summary with the main findings from the congress will be handed over to policy makers at the COP15 in Copenhagen. Further information on the congress is available at: <http://climatecongress.ku.dk/>

As a contribution to the theme "Preparing for Impacts: Adapting to the Inevitable", the three Danish research networks: Danish Development Research Network (DDRN), Danish Water Forum (DWF) and Danish Research Network for International Health (ENRECAHEALTH), have taken the initiative to organise the session entitled: **"Adaptation to climate change in Least Developed Countries – challenges, experiences, and ways forward"**. The main purpose the session is to contribute research-based input to COP15 on the establishment of effective and pro-poor adaptation strategies in Least Developed Countries.

1. Background

Least developed countries (LDC) are predicted to be most severely affected from the consequences of climate change. Yet these countries are the ones least prepared, and various factors make LDCs generally less resilient to the impacts. COP13 meeting in Bali in December 2007 highlighted the need for funding and support of measures related to adaptation to climate change and for technology transfer to developing countries. Acknowledging the costs for developing countries related to adaptation to climate change, one of the challenges for COP15 in Copenhagen will be how to address adaptation policies.

LDCs recognise the need for appropriate adaptation measures at all levels, through mainstreaming efforts and related policies. Identifying pro-poor adaptation strategies and activities, as well as the capacity building needs for adaptation to climate change in LDC, demands a better understanding of adaptive capacity and of traditional adaptation strategies. Support to local adaptation must pay attention to the differentiated impacts of and responses to climate change among different groups in society. The poorest are more deeply affected than those with more resources and their response is also different. However, there is a series of issues to take into account in order to implement these policies in an effective and equitable way.

- Large uncertainties persist about the permanence of observed short-term climate effects. The session will present evidence to support the need for integrating risk management and mechanisms of knowledge sharing into adaptation policies.
- Assessing adaptation activities in isolation from other development strategies may involve serious risks, whereas taking a broader agenda into account can generate great opportunities for general development. There is a need for reviewing current experiences and identifying challenges related to how to gear policies to address or accommodate local adaptation strategies, issues which the parallel session will address.
- Climate change is not a new situation and local communities have developed local adaptation strategies that can serve as a basis for support and development of local adaptation. The session will focus on successful experiences with 'slow, adaptive modes' in order for these to be properly recognised.

2. Objectives

The main purpose of having a parallel session for Least Developed Countries is to contribute research-based input to COP15 on the establishment of effective and pro-poor adaptation strategies in LDCs. This will be done by:

- Reviewing country experiences with climate change screenings, NAPAs, and related activities,
- Identifying and prioritising gaps and capacity building needs, and
- Discussing potential mechanisms to support and enhance the adaptation capacity in LDCs at various levels, including transfer of existing knowledge and strategies related to ongoing climate change.

3. Organising Committee

- **Chair:** John Christensen, UNEP Risoe Centre
- **Co-chair:** Fatima Denton, Team Leader Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA), West and central Africa Regional Office (WARO), IDRC

- Karen Grothe Villholth, Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland, GEUS
- Callist Tindimugaya, Directorate of Water Development, Uganda
- Richard Taylor, University College London, UK
- Jens Raunsø Jensen, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen
- Niels Ørnbjerg, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen
- Ole Mertz, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen
- Mikkel Funder, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)
- Thorkil Casse, Roskilde University (RUC)
- Mogens Buch-Hansen, Roskilde University (RUC)
- Signe Marie Cold-Ravnkilde, Roskilde University (RUC)
- Ole Bruun, Roskilde University (RUC)
- Steffen Johnsen, Nordeco
- Casper Harboe, Nordeco
- Lluís Armangué, Danish Development Research Network (DDRN)
- Miriam Feilberg, Danish Water Forum (DWF)

4. Practical details

The organisation of the parallel session will be carried out by the secretariats of DDRN and DWF in consultation with the scientific committee. For questions and/or suggestions please contact DDRN coordinator Lluís Armangué (la@ddrn.dk) or DWF coordinator Miriam Feilberg (mfe@dhigroup.com).