



## DELTA IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE II INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE, SCIENCE, CITIES AND BUSINESS  
ROTTERDAM THE NETHERLANDS, 24-26 SEPTEMBER 2014

<b>RT 3. Community based adaptation: Bridging of local and global actions, linking of scales</b>	
<b>Moderator</b>	Maarten van Aalst, International Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, the Netherlands
<b>Presentations</b>	• Munish Kaushik, Cordaid India
	• Anju Sharma, Oxford Climate Policy/IIED, United Kingdom
<b>Other Panellists</b>	• Yolanda Kakabadse, WWF International President, Ecuador
	• Michel Rentenaar, Netherlands climate envoy, the Netherlands
	• Atiq Rahman, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Bangladesh
<b>Rapporteurs</b>	Annelieke Douma, Leonie Wezendonk, BothENDS

Munish Kaushik sets the scene of this CBA Roundtable by presenting key challenges and the need for bridging multiple knowledge systems, based on his experience in a coastal village in India: Tandahar. While this village is affected by floods, droughts and cyclones, the main problem as perceived by the villagers is salination of agricultural land caused by a lack of freshwater influx and seepage of salt water. Adaptation measures include salt resistant crops, rejuvenation of freshwater bodies, prawn cultivation (for benefit of the rich only), and embankments.

An important question he raises is the limitation of adaptation: will the village still exist in 5 years? Do we need to keep investing in adaptation, or help them relocate? Other issues he stressed are the importance of a landscape approach to problem definition; the integration of adaptation in development plans; up-scaling lessons to other coastal villages in India; and the connection between local action and climate finance.

Anju Sharma in turn put CBA on the ground in the broader policy and financial context. In Maldha village, in West Bengal, also in India, the vulnerability of communities is not mainly related to climate change, which is not their key concern. They lack land rights and access to government services and credits. Anju calls for a rethinking of adaptation as current adaptation solutions are too often technocratic, not taking the social and cultural dimension into account. This regularly leads to maladaptation. Climate change is not just an environmental problem, but a developmental problem.

Anju stresses the importance of using existing systems and structures of development and government systems to mainstream climate change and ensure up-scaling. She also argues, instead of community-based adaptation we rather talk about community-driven adaptation, allowing communities to plan for themselves and control the way money is spent. This requires flexibility, capacity building at the local level and access to finance. Direct Access in the Adaptation Fund and in the Green Climate Fund now being set up, aims to allow countries to decide on their own priorities. But also in-country devolution to the local level is needed.

Yolanda Kakabadse adds the need for communication and dialogue, for example between upper and lower watershed communities to understand the importance of ecosystem management upstream. Climate change is not new, communities have been adapting for centuries. The speed of change however is changing. On up-scaling, she notes each community is different, but organisations like WWF can draw lessons and share a menu of options with national or local decisions makers.





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Michel Rentenaar emphasises that while adaptation is certainly needed for good development, in the context of the UNFCCC it is highly political, and we should not forget that the 2015 climate agreement is first of all about mitigation. The claim of historical responsibility (Western countries need to pay the bill) does not help international negotiations and does not create bridges. Instead we should make the case that financing adaptation in developing countries can also simply be good development investments, and help solve risks that also have an effect on developed countries, for instance through trade, eventually visible in terms of prices in our supermarkets. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the Green Climate Fund is only a piece of the puzzle. The Dutch contribution will likely be of the order of €100 million, but this is just a fraction of the €340 million per year we already spend on climate change. Finally, he stresses the importance of the link to private sector finance -- governments will not be able to address this on their own.

Atiq Rahman points to the fact that climate change creates an additional problem to many development problems. Many global conflicts will happen due to climate change. Important notion is that the IPCC shows that human beings are going to be affected through extreme events mostly, not the mean average change. Planned adaptation is thus crucial. For example, the mortality rates during cyclones proved much lower in Bangladesh than in Myanmar as a result of improved housing.

### Discussion

A rich discussion covered the role of CBA in adaptation, and the need for up-scaling and access to finance. Some of the key points:

- Linking CBA to academic knowledge can help in strengthening and up-scaling CBA by making communities aware of long term changes and by integrating local knowledge into adaptation planning.
- We need to get away from the doom and gloom, and emphasize that everybody needs to participate, both in the North and the South, - the private sector, local government, urban cities, industrial sector, CSOs and people. In New York for instance, hurricane Sandy created strong momentum for action, bridging scales from local to federal planning, and using partnerships of communities, government, private sector and academia.
- The distinction between Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Community-based Adaptation is artificial, given the strong connection between the climate risks facing local communities and the local environment.
- It is crucial to support CBA but at the same time prevent maladaptation. Investments should benefit the most vulnerable people, not decrease their adaptive capacities. It is about accountability from top to bottom – local communities should have information, a choice, and a redress mechanism to hold governments or companies accountable when things go wrong. In particular, the private sector is being persuaded to invest in climate change, but their investments can come at the expense of poor people, who do not always benefit and may even be left worse off.
- Specifically, it is essential that the most vulnerable have a say in decision-making on sectoral policies and climate finance, to ensure their needs and solutions are taken into account and maladaptation can be avoided at an early stage.

