

BRIEFING NOTE: LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION: 14 NOVEMBER 2017

This high-level event convened on 14 November 2017, in Bonn, Germany, on the sidelines of the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The event was organized by the Government of the Netherlands with participants highlighting the need for knowledge sharing and analysis for effective climate adaptation.

OPENING REMARKS

Event moderator Vivienne Parry, Genomics England, applauded the “extraordinary leadership” shown by the launch of the Global Centre of Excellence on Climate Adaptation (GCECA), and shared a video highlighting the GCECA’s mission to accelerate climate adaptation by recognizing, building and promoting excellence in all relevant stakeholder groups globally.

Cora van Nieuwenhuizen, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands, stressing that climate adaptation is in her country’s DNA, highlighted examples of innovation in adaptation, including: a floating farm in Rotterdam; mangroves being replanted on the Indonesian coast; and the use of big data by the World Meteorological Organization to inform African farmers via text message when to plant and harvest crops. She called on the GCECA to share and manage knowledge, develop new insights, highlight best practices, and connect the public and private sectors. She outlined examples of the GCECA’s work, including a project on creating a climate-resilient financial sector. She underscored that “preparedness pays off” and adaptation is equally as important as mitigation.

Ovais Sarmad, UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary, recalled the need to collect data about adaptation activities already occurring worldwide to create a solid evidence base. He suggested that the GCECA: use its knowledge and experience to help parties implement the Paris Agreement; devise a strategic



Ovais Sarmad, UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary



Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson, GEF

framework on adaptation and resilience; assist in addressing parties’ adaptation needs through channelling the support of international networks into innovative approaches on the ground; and ensure coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals. He stressed the UNFCCC Secretariat’s willingness to work with the GCECA.

Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF), said the GCECA’s work will be “absolutely crucial,” noting challenges for scaling up adaptation, including that adaptation knowledge is fragmented, context-specific and highly localized. Emphasizing the need for mainstreaming adaptation, she expressed hope that the GCECA can assist the GEF to integrate resilience into all its portfolios.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment, said climate adaptation is “all about water,” noting that climate change is impacting on lives through water-related events. He stressed the need for private sector support, particularly regarding insurance for the most vulnerable people.

Elhadj As Sy, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, stressed that people are at the heart of adaptation, and that communities’ coping mechanisms are already being stretched by climate impacts. He called for: early action and capacity building in vulnerable communities; partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society; addressing the credibility gap in public sector climate finance commitments; and recognition of local knowledge and local actors. He emphasized that not all people



L-R: **Erik Solheim**, Executive Director, UN Environment; **Yasuaki Hijioka**, Director, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan; **Cora van Nieuwenhuizen**, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands; **Elhadj As Sy**, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and **Vivienne Parry**, Genomics England

are equally vulnerable to climate impacts, noting that women, people with disabilities, the elderly and children require more attention, in addition to those living in pockets of vulnerability.

Yasuaki Hijioka, Director, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan, reported on his country’s climate adaptation policies and programmes, stressing that Japan has been a world leader in adaptation and is “going to the next stage” in supporting local governments in their own adaptation programmes.

Highlighting that the Netherlands is known for cooperation between the private sector, the public sector, and scientific and knowledge institutions, van Nieuwenhuizen called for similar cooperation in the work of the GCECA. Noting developments in international financial reporting standards, she noted the need to measure the effectiveness of adaptation in terms of financial results.

Josué Tanaka, Managing Director for Energy Efficiency and Climate Change, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), highlighted intersections between his work and that of the GCECA, including: the need to climate-proof his organization’s projects by examining the potential implications of climate change on each new project; ongoing work to rebalance his organization’s strategy towards adaptation; and efforts to develop metrics for adaptation.



Josué Tanaka, Managing Director for Energy Efficiency and Climate Change, EBRD

Matthias Garschagen, Institute for Environment and Human Security, United Nations University, called for sharing knowledge on, *inter alia*, climate risk insurance, how effective adaptation can be measured, and how the global stocktake can support effective adaptation.

Ton Schroor, Alderman, City of Groningen, the Netherlands, emphasized his city’s commitment to hosting the GCECA, stating that his city is attempting to move away from natural gas.

David Jackson, UN Capital Development Fund, noted the need for private finance to enable cities to grow in an adaptive way, cautioning against lock-in of maladaptation in cities such as Houston.



Ton Schroor, Alderman, City of Groningen, the Netherlands