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Virtual Dialogue Series for Enabling Resilience and Scaling-up Action on Climate Change Adaptation October – November 2020

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The Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, the flagship event of the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN), is the primary regional platform for adaptation practitioners to meet, share their learning and experiences, and work together towards the relevant outcomes and practical solutions needed to address the challenges of climate change. In preparation for the 7th APAN Forum, five webinars were streamed to introduce the Forum's themes. After the opening session on urgency to scale-up adaptation action to build resilience for Asia and the Pacific, the following four webinars addressed: inclusive resilience; economic resilience; nature-based resilience; and resilience of people and communities. This short brief summarizes the content of the five webinars streamed.

Opening: No Distinct 1.5°C Warmer World and Its Impact: Urgency to Scale-up Adaptation Action to Build Resilience for Asia and the Pacific

This webinar, organized by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, the APAN Secretariat and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), was held on Monday, 19 October 2020. Key messages included:

- Climate change's uneven impacts could still be mitigated by building the resilience of local communities and relevant actors to withstand detrimental effects;
- Climate change impacts are transboundary and thus multi-stakeholder cooperation and multilateralism are key to adaptation; and
- Climate adaptation and resilience must be part of post-pandemic recovery plans, including through mobilizing private sector support.

Mozaharul Alam, UNEP, opened the webinar on behalf of the APAN Secretariat. Yuko Hoshino, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, highlighted the Ministry's [Platform for Redesign 2020](#), an online platform on sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19. He noted it also aims to

showcase knowledge on climate adaptation within the region. She underscored the synergies between adaptation action and disaster risk reduction. She also highlighted the [Asia-Pacific Information Platform](#) (AP-PLAT) to help participants formulate adaptation measures and implement action plans in the region.

In keynote remarks, Anand Patwardhan, University of Maryland, underscored the four areas of a successful COVID-19 response to address the climate crisis: plan, prepare and invest; focus on those most vulnerable; science matters; and learn by doing.

Saleem Huq, Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), introduced the panel discussion. Joyashree Roy, Asia Institute of Technology, discussed linking science with practice, highlighting that the science behind climate change is now clearer making the scientific information more usable for policy-makers. She emphasized increased outreach, noting, however, that major gaps exist with reaching out to vulnerable groups and marginalized communities.

Filomena Nelson, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, emphasized the impacts of COVID-19 on Pacific island states with marginalized communities, which, she said, has led to even more marginalization.

Batjargal Zamba, Special Envoy on Climate Change of Mongolia, described examples of actions taken by his government with respect to climate change and COVID-19, including developing a comprehensive and integrated umbrella document as a long-term development strategy to move towards 2050.

Oyun Sanjaasuren, Green Climate Funds (GCF), highlighted the GCF's portfolio on adaptation and its approach to the COVID-19 recovery initiative, including its three pillars on: adaptability to existing projects; readiness to craft green stimulus measures; and the incoming pipeline of projects that focus on co-benefits.

Antoinette Taus, UNEP Goodwill Ambassador for the Philippines and Founder, Communities Organized for Resource Allocation (CORA), called for urgent action and accountability. Stressing that climate change induced natural disasters are impacting livelihoods in the Philippines, she also underscored the importance of nature-based solutions.

The panel then addressed questions from the online audience. In response to a question on how to communicate science and translate scientific reports into messages useful for the general public, Roy emphasized that the new available knowledge needs to be mainstreamed in educational programmes and climate change embedded into all curricula. On the question on scaling-up action, Zamba called for harnessing the traditional knowledge of local herding communities. Nelson called for a roadmap to guide the development of a post-pandemic recovery. Taus called for greater inclusion of youth in the global dialogue.

Closing the panel discussion, Huq stressed the importance of cooperation and society's concerted efforts to facilitate adaptation as well as the need to continue these conversations.

Isabel Louis, Deputy Regional Director, UNEP, in closing the webinar, noted this is the time to "build back better" and enhance resilience, lamenting regression on the implementation of several Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 13 (climate action). She thanked participants for their insightful contributions and closed the session on behalf of the APAN Secretariat.

Inclusive Resilience: From Words to Action: What More Should Be Done to Ensure Resilience for All in Asia and the Pacific?

This webinar, organized by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, was held on 22 October 2020. Key messages included:

- Climate change impacts different people in different ways;
- Climate adaptation action in one country could increase vulnerability in a different country; and
- Inclusion of marginalized communities is key.

Niall O'Connor, SEI, introduced the key themes and moderated the webinar.

Angie Mead King, CEO, Victoria Court and Founder, King Tower Farms, presented a keynote address emphasizing the importance of inclusive resilience. Albert Salamanca, SEI Asia, highlighted how the five enablers of inclusive resilience (policy and governance, planning and processes, financing and investing, science and assessment, and technology) play a crucial role in addressing power dynamics and resilience.

The ensuing panel discussion highlighted the perspectives of marginalized communities' perspectives on why inclusive resilience is important and how it can be achieved.

Yugratna Srivastava, Plant-for-the-Planet and UN Major Group for Children and Youth, India, emphasized that the challenges facing children and youth, especially those in least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), are greatly impacted by climate change and engage in climate action. She urged not letting their narrative be co-opted by other actors. Dharini Priscilla, the Grassrooted Trust, noted that marginalized communities are always on the frontlines of every disaster, including climate change.

Somchai Rungsilp, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability, stressed that inclusion of marginalized communities

is key for driving change. Tony La Viña, lawyer, educator and environmental expert, noted that inclusion of indigenous communities and all vulnerable groups in implementing climate change resilience on the ground will be a challenge.

Katy Harris, SEI, discussed transboundary climate risks, noting that climate adaptation action in one country could increase vulnerability in a different country. She emphasized that to build resilience for all, these connections must be recognized and managed.

O'Connor then engaged the panelists and online audience on what inclusive resilience means; and who at the 7th APAN Forum should be engaged in the discussion.

Through a poll, many in the audience responded that critical steps towards inclusive resilience should include: participation and stakeholder engagement; addressing skewed power dynamics; inclusive and transformative governance; equitable access to information; finance and education; recognizing vulnerable groups; and ensuring social justice and co-production of resilience. Topics proposed for discussion included justice and equality, finance, action, and governance.

Srivastava highlighted that inclusion and rights of marginalized communities are already recognized in various global agendas and processes. Rungsilp and Priscilla called for community-based resilience to be a de facto part of development processes. JC Gaillard, University of Auckland, New Zealand, emphasized that resilience is about recognizing interest groups and sharing equal power.

All panelists then provided input as to whether we are on the right path to inclusive resilience. Many agreed that this webinar and the focus on inclusive resilience at the 7th APAN Forum are proof of progress.

Dhrupad Choudhury, ICIMOD, closed the webinar highlighting that resilience practices cannot be effective without the voices and actions of marginalized groups and called for the alignment of climate resilience with other developmental and livelihood priorities.

Economic Resilience: Inclusive Economic Development through Resilience: Opportunities for Doing More and Doing Differently

This webinar, organized by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was held on 29 October 2020. Key messages included:

- Urgent actions are needed to scale up investments in climate resilience, including in the context of post-COVID-19 recovery;
- Investing in climate resilience is necessary to advance sustainable economic development; and
- Harnessing resilience opportunities requires long-term commitment.

Preeti Bhandari, Chief, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Theme, ADB, moderated the webinar.

Carlos Dominguez, Secretary, Department of Finance, the Philippines, provided opening remarks, highlighting interventions

undertaken by the Philippines to strengthen resilience. He mentioned catastrophic risk modelling to identify and assess risk, measures to strengthen food security, and adoption of national disaster risk financing and an insurance strategy to improve financial preparedness to deal with disasters.

In his keynote speech, Yasuyuki Sawada, ADB, emphasized that: increasing climate risk is slowing development gains; actions in climate resilience provide the opportunity for advancing inclusive economic development; and harnessing the opportunities from climate resilience will require moving away from business-as-usual.

Arghya Sinha Roy, ADB, opened the panel discussion with a presentation highlighting the way integrating climate resilience, adopting a resilient system approach in economic sectors, resilience infrastructure systems delivering economic services, and improving financial systems to deliver resilient investments can further sustainable economic development.

Mariyam Anaa Hassan, Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environment, the Maldives, highlighted several initiatives, such as the Maldives biosphere reserves, as steps towards strengthening resilience. In this regard, she noted the need for further technical and financial support. Kazuaki Takahashi, Director, Climate Change Adaptation Office, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, highlighted three initiatives in Japan aimed at promoting a green and resilient COVID-19 recovery, namely advancing to a decarbonized society, circular economy and decentralized society.

Kisa Mfalila, International Fund for Agriculture and Development, noted that financial services targeted at farmers, digital technology, and partnerships are key to the resilience of rural small holder farmers. Amit Prothi, Resilient Cities Network, highlighted the importance of focusing on cities for building resilience. Clare Shakya, International Institute for Environment and Development, highlighted large-scale climate and nature debt swaps to support countries dealing with poverty, climate change, and COVID-19.

In the following engagement with the online audience, Bhandari took a question on examples of policies that can expedite climate resilience while ensuring economic growth. Shakya stressed the need to look at a set of policies which considers longer-term thinking.

The session ended with poll questions asking what type of institutions and discussions should be included in the 7th APAN Forum. Respondents highlighted the importance of engaging government, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Nature-based Resilience: Ecosystems, Climate Change and People: Strengthening nature to enhance resilience in Asia-Pacific

This webinar, organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UNEP, was held on 5 November 2020. Key messages included:

- The need to share what makes nature-based solutions socially, economically, and environmentally effective for adaptation;
- Existing climate mitigation and resilience programmes should highlight and promote nature-based solutions; and
- The important role of traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples' knowledge systems in driving nature-based adaptation action.

Maeve Nightingale, IUCN, moderated the event. She highlighted the need to explore key enabling conditions, such as climate governance, science, technology, and financing, in the context of nature-based solutions to advance resilience in the Asia-Pacific region.

Takahashi Kazuaki, Director of the Climate Change Adaptation Office, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, provided opening remarks. He emphasized that in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Japan recognized the need to shift from the status quo to adaptive recovery by learning from historical wisdom and properly managing nature through nature-based solutions.

Ashok Khosla, Development Alternatives, noted that mitigation and adaptation are two separate issues but explained that when addressed together they provide greater co-benefits.

Following Khosla's presentation, participants viewed a video on "What is Ecosystem-based Adaptation?" The video illustrated examples of benefits from ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions.

Raphael Glémet, IUCN Asia Regional Office, discussed the IUCN definition of nature-based solutions—actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. He introduced a draft of the Resilience Outlook, including the strengths and weaknesses of the enablers of nature-based solutions for resilience, including governance, planning and processes, science and assessments, technology and practices, and financing and investments. He highlighted weaknesses, such as lack of: community inclusion; mainstreaming and scaling up of nature-based solutions; and ecosystem service valuation and knowledge sharing.

During the following panel discussion, Fatema Rajabali, UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), highlighted that traditional knowledge and indigenous peoples' knowledge systems should drive adaptation action. She also cited the [Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative](#) as an example of closing the adaptation knowledge gap.

Sesimani Lokotui, National Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Programme, Tonga, underscored Rajabali's comments on the importance of traditional knowledge, noting it must be considered and merged with scientific knowledge. She also underscored the need for solutions to be culturally appropriate and community involvement and ownership.

Joshua Wycliffe, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Waterways and Environment, Fiji, emphasized challenges faced in Fiji in relation to climate change and sea-level rise, noting that applying nature-based solutions can be effective. He cited the example of planting vetiver plants which stabilize the soil and slow down erosion, strengthening the coastline against storm surges.

Barney Dickson, UNEP, called for a more holistic approach and greater collaboration between governments and other sectors when applying nature-based solutions.

In the following session, moderated by Lis Mullin Bernhardt, UNEP, panelists addressed several questions from the online audience. Regarding balancing the possible negative impacts of ecotourism in Fiji, Wycliffe stressed responsible tourism development requires a proper impact assessment and analysis. Rajabali answered a question on the role of regional cooperation in terms of scientific and technical knowledge sharing, citing the UNFCCC Climate Dialogues as an opportunity to exchange regional perspectives, knowledge, and findings. Lokotui, in response to how to motivate the public to own nature-based solutions especially in rural and developing communities, stressed that communities need to be involved by having a say in overall project design, for example.

Finally, Dickson, responding to a question on the financial mechanisms available to incentivize nature-based solutions, cited the imminent launch of the [Global Fund for Ecosystem-based Adaptation](#), to be jointly implemented by IUCN and UNEP.

The session ended with poll questions asking what type of institutions and discussions should be included in the 7th APAN Forum. Respondents highlighted the importance of engaging government, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Nightingale closed the webinar asking participants about priorities for implementing nature-based solutions for resilience, with urban planning, integrating indigenous knowledge and solutions, community involvement, partnerships across sectors, and holistic and integrated approaches emerging as key responses.

Resilience of People and Communities: How Far Have We Come? How Should We Build the Road Ahead?

The final webinar, organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), was held on November 12, 2020. Key messages included:

- The perceived disconnect between national level efforts in enhancing local adaptive capacities and local actions in building the resilience of local communities; and
- Using Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as leverage to empower communities.

Rohini Kohli, UNDP, welcomed participants, highlighting the key questions for discussion, including: how has research and knowledge on adaptation contributed to changing the way adaptation is promoted at the community level; and how can NDCs and national adaptation plans (NAPs) be used to empower communities.

Chandra Tripura, Hill Resource Centre, Bangladesh, called for the world to embrace the knowledge of indigenous and local communities in addressing climate change. Yusuke Tahishi, UNDP, introduced the Resilience Outlook draft, highlighting the ways in which adaptation has evolved over the years.

Kohli kicked off a panel discussion with some questions. Saleemul Huq, ICCCAD, discussed the question on the challenges faced by remote and local communities. He lamented that little funding goes to support vulnerable local communities impacted by climate change.

Alicia Ilaga, Climate Resilience Agriculture Office, the Philippines, highlighted government-supported programmes to support community-resilience and the need to develop local capacity to advance community-resilience. Justina Aurea da Costa Belo, Secretary of State for the Environment, Timor-Leste, discussed her country's plan to foster community resilience by building local capacity, as well as facilitating climate change adaptation in processes and policies in all relevant sectors.

Osamu Mizuno, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, discussed efforts in translating research into community interventions, noting that capacity building at the community level is critical to accelerate community adaptation. Jon Padgham, START, shared examples where universities have fostered opportunities to work with local communities to generate local level action.

In the following panel discussion on questions from the online audience, Huq addressed the question of capacity building and the role of national governments in fostering local action, noting that the “top down” people need to change and learn how to listen to local communities. On what has to change in the governments to better support local communities, Ilaga emphasized that governments must provide regular services to local communities and create a permanent office to coordinate activities between national and local governments. Mizuno addressed the question on collaboration with local communities and international organization, citing the need for an enabling permanent platform.

Da Costa Belo reflected on changes required to make investments more sustainable and scalable, noting that building capacity would help build community resilience. Padgham emphasized that lessons are learned through shared dialogues between national government and local communities, as well as through the engagement of scientists from developing countries in international processes, who can help bridge the communication gap between governments and local communities.

During the brief polling session with the audience, on the question concerning what holds back local action on resilience, many pointed to lack of finance and top-down approaches. In closing the webinar, Kohli summarized the discussions and invited Tripura to provide brief remarks. Tripura underscored the role of young generations in leading change.