

# Making the Adaptation Fund Work for the Most Vulnerable

ASSESSING PROGRESS IN THE ADAPTATION FUND



Briefing Paper December 2010

**Brot**  
für die Welt  
Ein Stück Gerechtigkeit

GERMANWATCH

**PRACTICAL ACTION**  
Technology challenging poverty



# **MAKING THE ADAPTATION FUND WORK FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE**

ASSESSING PROGRESS IN THE ADAPTATION FUND

**Brief Summary**

Climate change is already threatening many poor people and their chances of development. Unless these particularly vulnerable people are enabled to adapt to climate change they will fall further into poverty. Effective and sustainable adaptation addresses the physical risks occurring with climate change by reducing vulnerability, increasing resilience and enhancing adaptive capacity. Ensuring that the Adaptation Fund (AF) established under the Kyoto Protocol works for the most vulnerable people is rooted in international human rights obligations and enshrined in the strategic priorities of the AF. The innovative features of the Fund provide the potential for achieving this objective.

Although the Fund has only just begun its concrete implementation phase, this paper identifies entry points where the Board of the Fund must focus its attentions in order to ensure it meets its priority, and makes recommendations.

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<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>AF</b>	Adaptation Fund
<b>AFB</b>	Adaptation Fund Board
<b>ANII</b>	Agencia Nacional de Investigacione Innovacion of Uruguay.
<b>BAP</b>	Bali Action Plan
<b>CCM</b>	Country Coordinating Mechanism
<b>CDM</b>	Clean Development Activity
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>CSE</b>	Centre de Suivi Écologique de Senegal
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>EFC</b>	Ethics and Finance Committee
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>MIE</b>	Multilateral Implementing Entities
<b>NIE</b>	National Implementing Entities
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PIOJ</b>	Planning Institute of Jamaica
<b>PPRC</b>	Project and Programme Review Committee
<b>RBM</b>	Results-based management
<b>SBI</b>	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
<b>SBSTA</b>	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nation Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nation Environment Programme
<b>WB</b>	Word Bank
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

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## Executive Summary

Climate change is already threatening many poor people and their chances of development. Marginalisation (political, social, economic and geographic) pushes people to the highest risk areas and limits their capacities and access to the resources required to cope with external shocks. As a result, those in these situations are considered to be vulnerable. Unless these people are enabled to adapt to climate change they will fall further into poverty. Effective and sustainable adaptation addresses the physical risks occurring with climate change by reducing vulnerability, increasing resilience and enhancing adaptive capacity.

Ensuring that the Adaptation Fund (AF) works for the most vulnerable people is rooted in international human rights obligations and enshrined in the strategic priorities of the AF. The principle of giving special attention to the particular needs of the most vulnerable communities was adopted by the Adaptation Fund Board and subsequently approved by all 193 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Proving itself in this area will be crucial to establish the AF as a lasting and trusted pillar of international climate finance architecture.

The innovative features of the Fund provide the potential for achieving this objective. Although the Fund has only just begun its concrete implementation phase, it is possible to identify where the Board of the Fund must focus its attentions in order to ensure it meets its priority:

### **Direct access**

The accreditation of National Implementing Entities is a key element of the AF's direct access approach. By choosing NIEs which have a good track record in projects addressing the community level, as well as in adaptation, governments can lay the foundation for appropriate project oversight, monitoring and evaluation. In addition to this, developing countries should set up a multi-stakeholder process within their countries to include the widest range of voices in adaptation planning and link this process to their search for adaptation, as well as for mitigation, funding. The Country-Coordinating Mechanisms under the Global Fund provides a useful model of such a process.

### **Project design and implementation**

The project proposals submitted so far reveal that there is a lack of guidance to governments on how to describe the process of identification and inclusion of particularly vulnerable communities, as well as the overall consultative process. Both processes are linked, and it is important to show how the inputs from vulnerable communities during the consultation phase are reflected in the projects. The AFB should address this shortcoming through guidelines which ensure the meaningful inclusion of vulnerable communities, and through highlighting good-practice examples from the projects submitted. The fact that the two projects approved so far perform relatively well in these two aspects is a signal that the Adaptation Fund Board is aware of the importance of these criteria.

### **Governance and transparency**

While the AF has a unique and innovative governance structure, with a developing country majority and additional seats for vulnerable countries, it lacks institutionalised inclu-

sion of non-governmental stakeholders and thus lags behind other international Funds.<sup>1</sup> Although the AFB has taken decisions to establish a continuous exchange with observers, it should work towards formal inclusion of representatives from local communities and the NGO community in its decision-making process.

### **Cost-effectiveness and monitoring**

The AF seeks to use its resources cost-effectively. Often, small-scale, locally-adapted adaptation solutions can be much more cost-effective than large infrastructure approaches. The AFB should examine project proposals thoroughly in this regard. It can also highlight good practice examples from projects submitted. Furthermore, indicators related to vulnerable communities should be included in the project's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

The guidelines and the features of the AF provide a good basis for generating serious contributions to meet the adaptation needs of the most vulnerable people through the Fund's resources. By realising this potential, the Fund can position itself as a model for other Funds, for the sake of those people most in need.

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience under the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



# 1 Introduction

The impacts of climate change are already tangible all over the world and will continue to occur in the medium and long term. However, the impacts will be felt in countries least responsible for climate change and least able to face them, hitting hardest those sectors linked to natural resources - such as agriculture, on which high percentages of the populations in developing countries depend – and those in poverty unable to protect or alter their livelihoods in response. Linked closely to poverty, the impacts of climate change threaten to exacerbate current challenges in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Adapting to cope with future insecurity is the most significant climate challenge facing these countries today. Although adapting to climatic variability has been a feature of human life since the beginning of time, climate change will become an ongoing challenge affecting the way people live and determining how they develop. Being prepared to manage near and long-term impacts is therefore particularly important.

Effective adaptation requires adequate institutional structures, coordination and cooperation between institutions, and in particular, strong participation of vulnerable groups.

Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), Germanwatch and Practical Action bring together their complementary experience into this paper. All three development organisations are working with some of the most marginalized and vulnerable communities whose lives and livelihoods are already being threatened by increasing climate variability as a result of global climate change; our organisations have closely followed the development of the Adaptation Fund since its inception. Our concern is that the current focus on the mechanisms to secure and allocate funds for adaptation must also address these key issues of governance in the receiving countries.

The Adaptation Fund (AF) established under the Kyoto Protocol was set up to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes<sup>2</sup> that are country-driven and based on people's needs, views and priorities in eligible vulnerable developing countries. The first steps towards establishing this Fund were taken in 2001 at the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in Marrakech. Six years later in 2007 at the Climate Summit in Bali (CMP 3) the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol agreed on the institutional arrangements of the Adaptation Fund (AF), which allowed the Fund's governance structure, the Adaptation Fund Board, to start its work and make the Fund fully operational.

The AF is unique in the way it is funded, primarily through revenues from the monetisation of emission reductions issues under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Given the limited predictability of the carbon market and the insufficient ambition of developed countries emission reduction policies, the expected revenues are in the range of approximately US\$ 317 million to US\$ 434 million by 2012. Some developed countries have recently pledged or already transferred resources to the Fund:

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<sup>2</sup> According to the Adaptation Fund Board, "a concrete adaptation project is defined as a set of activities aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of and risks posed by climate change. Adaptation projects can be implemented at the community, national, and transboundary level. Projects concern discrete activities with a collective objective(s) and concrete outcomes and outputs that are more narrowly defined in scope, space, and time; an adaptation programme is a process, a plan, or an approach for addressing climate change impacts that is broader than the scope of an individual project", see AFB, 2009a: 4

Spain: €45 million; Germany and Sweden €10 million, Monaco €10,000. Nevertheless, it is only a drop in the ocean compared to the overall adaptation funding needs.<sup>3</sup>

Some of its further innovative features promise to provide vulnerable developing countries with a more appropriate institution for disbursing finance. Through its work, the Adaptation Fund Board has set some significant milestones in 2010, such as the concrete operationalisation of direct access and the approval of first projects and programmes. The present paper outlines the state of play in the Adaptation Fund with regard to the key innovative features. Where appropriate, it will also reflect the potential and actual role of the Fund's performance with relevance to the needs of most vulnerable communities.

During its 11<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Adaptation Fund Board approved the first two concrete adaptation projects from Senegal and Honduras. At the dawn of the implementation phase, it is imperative that these projects sustainably enhance the capacity and the livelihood of the intended recipients.

This paper is intended for all interested stakeholders, and aims to stimulate the discussion on how to prioritise the most vulnerable people in developing concrete adaptation projects under the AF. Germanwatch has previously produced a paper for negotiators outlining how to successfully access the resources of the Fund.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this paper is to consider in greater depth how to identify and engage particularly vulnerable people as key stakeholders within developing countries. It aims to provide useful ideas with a view to contributing to the realisation of the strategic priority of the Adaptation Fund, to give "special attention to particular needs of the most vulnerable communities" in the identification and execution of adaptation projects.

The fact that this priority is a key part of the Fund reflects its development. Shortly before the AF decided this priority in its September 2008 meeting, Germanwatch and Bread for the World released the paper "Making the Adaptation Fund work for the most vulnerable people". This paper draws on the earlier one and updates it.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, the first part of this paper provides a short introduction into the concepts of adaptation and vulnerability in the climate debate and the prioritisation of particularly vulnerable people (chapters 2 and 3). The Adaptation Fund will be introduced, and assessment made on the potential of its institutional features to provide funds for benefit the most vulnerable communities, and how this ability is reflected in the current development of the Fund (chapter 4). In the last part of the paper we answer the question about how to use the Fund's mechanisms and guidelines effectively for the benefit of both vulnerable countries and the people within those countries. We place strong emphasis on participatory approaches and mechanisms.

Within the UNFCCC process, the focus in discussing vulnerability to climate change is on *countries* that are vulnerable. Various definitions have been developed in the Convention, the Bali Action Plan, and in more recent versions of the text still under negotiation. They include some of the following groups: Least Developed Countries, Small island Developing States, countries in Africa prone to drought and floods and most recently,

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<sup>3</sup> A recent World Bank study estimated the adaptation needs in the group of low-income countries – which largely overlap with the AFB eligibility criteria - to be in the order of US\$ 25 billion annually during the coming decade 2010-2019 and rising to almost 40 billion in 2050 . These figures do not take account of community level activities, nor the cost of preparing for and recovery from climate related disasters; see World Bank, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Harmeling, S. and A. Kaloga, 2010

<sup>5</sup> Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2008a

fragile mountainous ecosystems. Vulnerability here is about two aspects: physical vulnerability to extreme weather events, and capacity to deal with climate related disasters, both rapid onset and slow onset. Lack of capacity is strongly correlated with poverty and poor governance.

Within these and other countries that are vulnerable to climate change, it is the poorest communities, and the poorest members of communities, who suffer the effects of climate change first and worst. Poor people are vulnerable to climate change because they have few assets and little to fall back on; they have little access to new knowledge or opportunities for learning new skills; and they tend to have poor access to and influence over the institutions and policies that control resource flows. If the international funding that is to be made available is to support these people, it will be necessary first to identify those communities that are vulnerable to climate change, especially in traditionally marginalized groups or locations, and support their participation in decision making processes. As Daze and Chan<sup>6</sup> (CARE) suggest, this establishes three conditions that need to be in place if adaptation financing is to support community based adaptation:

- Systematic identification of vulnerable communities and groups
- Inclusive and transparent decision-making
- Engagement of civil society and local institutions.

## 2 Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change: definitions

There is no uniform definition of the term adaptation in academic literature. For purpose of this paper we limit our definition to the context of adverse effects of climate change.<sup>7</sup> According to the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of the IPCC, adaptation is “*adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities*”.<sup>8</sup> The IPCC applies a very broad definition. Academic literature differentiates between autonomous or spontaneous adaptation, where adaptation is “*not ...a conscious response to climatic stimuli but is triggered by ecological changes in natural systems and by market or welfare changes in human system*” and planned adaptation, “*which is the result of a conscious political decision*”.<sup>9</sup> This paper deals with planned adaptation rather than an autonomous or spontaneous adaptation, because it focuses on the efficient implementation of projects within an existing public policy framework, rather than the adaptation by households and communities acting on their own without public interventions. A further distinction is made between proactive or anticipatory adaptation – measures taken before the consequences of climate change have become apparent – and reactive, or ex-post, adaptation, measures implemented after the consequences are known.<sup>10</sup> The Adaptation Fund and development

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<sup>6</sup> Dazé and Chan, 2009

<sup>7</sup> The UNFCCC Convention defines “adverse effects of climate change” as “changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of a socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare.” (UNFCCC, 1992)

<sup>8</sup> Parry et al., 2007: 871

<sup>9</sup> Fankhauser et al., 1999

<sup>10</sup> Parry et al., 2007

organisations are seeking to support proactive adaptation but, depending on the needs of the recipients, some reactive adaptation measures will also be needed; for example, if droughts are already becoming more frequent, but people have not adequately adjusted their agricultural systems to reflect the new climate reality.

To identify appropriate adaptation measures for the adverse effect of climate change requires an understanding of the impacts on the communities and countries in question. Pre-existing vulnerability is a key issue, as is a community's sensitivity and exposure to climate risks, and their resilience and adaptive capacity.

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, "*Vulnerability is the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate change and variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity.*"<sup>11</sup>

Hence vulnerability to climate change has geographic aspects - due partly to the fact that changes in temperature and precipitation will occur unevenly and also because climate change impacts will be unevenly distributed around the globe - but also social, economic, and political dimensions for different groups.<sup>12</sup> The latter occur because resources and wealth are distributed unevenly. Though vulnerability differs substantially across regions, it is also recognized that "[e]ven within regions... impacts, adaptive capacity and vulnerability will vary"<sup>13</sup>. Vulnerability therefore represents the interaction between exposure to physical threats and the capacity of people and communities to cope with those threats. The adaptation measures that will be appropriate will depend to a great extent on the adaptive capabilities of a group. Box 1 describes an example from Practical Action's work in Bangladesh.

Vulnerability is a core concept in both disaster risk reduction (DRR) and poverty reduction work in understanding a population group's overall susceptibility to any negative consequences that will throw them deeper in poverty or even tip them into destitution. Vulnerability to a disaster is considered to be the "*diminished capacity of an individual or a group to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man made hazard*".<sup>14</sup> The physical aspects of a hazard, and a group's relationship to them, determine a proportion of vulnerability and this aspect can be reduced by decreasing sensitivity to the hazard. For example, a community exposed to losing their crops in a flooding can increase their flood protection and develop alternative livelihood options.

Even for individuals or families exposed equally to the same hazard, differences in sensitivity can alter the level of vulnerability. As such, vulnerability can be expressed as the relationship between hazard, exposure and capacity. In this relationship vulnerability can be reduced by limiting the hazard potential, decreasing exposure and/or increasing capacity.

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<sup>11</sup> Parry et al., 2007

<sup>12</sup> Action Aid, 2005

<sup>13</sup> IPCC, 2001: 15

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/about/vulnerability.asp> as

### **Box 1: Vulnerability and capacity Assessment in Sirianganj district of Gaibandha, Bangladesh**

Bangladesh, the largest river delta in the world, is prone to several types of disasters like floods, cyclone, tornado, tidal surges, riverbank erosion, and even drought. The country's 30% of landmass is inundated by normal flood, which rises up to 60% during severe flooding. The frequency and intensity of natural disasters has grown substantially over the last few decades.

Though the physical and environmental characteristics of the country is the major factor contributing to the people's vulnerability, other factors are also very significant, including socio-economic conditions with underemployment prevalent, underdeveloped infrastructure, inadequate institutional capacity, lack of political will and commitment, together with people's ignorance about their basic rights and entitlements. Risk is highest among poor and the disadvantaged people especially women, children and the elderly.

#### Methodology

The Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) developed by Practical Action is an approach that enables communities to identify their vulnerability and capacity. The process included collection of information on causes and extent of communities' vulnerabilities, their strengths in terms of local resources, livelihood options etc. and identification of opportunities such as their access and rights to public resources, entitlements, mobilization and utilization of the resources towards risk reduction.

The approach of vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) uses similar tools to participatory rural appraisal (PRA) including:

- Transect walk
- Seasonal calendar
- Time trend
- Risk and resource mapping
- Focus group discussion and personal interviews

#### *Findings from the VCA*

#### Environment & Geo-physical

The depth of river in these villages is decreasing due to siltation. The environment of all the villages is polluted due to lack of a proper poor sanitation system. There is a lack of ground water and inadequate tree cover.

#### Socio-economic condition and Livelihood

The overall socio-economic conditions of these villages are very poor. Most families are landless, and have no work or income during floods. There are very limited options for alternative livelihood measures. Many men migrate to other parts of the country for food and work.

#### Infrastructure

Most of the homesteads are made of mud and thatch and are on low-lying land, which have little resistance to natural hazards. Most of the roads are earthen. There are few markets, very few primary schools, and no clinics or telephone services.

#### Community Support

Schools, mosques and temple committees do not take any action at the time of disaster; even the Imams take no initiative to respond to or warn of a disaster.

#### Gender

There is minimum opportunity for women to earn money. Women usually do not work outside their house and are not encouraged to take part in family decisions or community processes. Cultural norms mean that women, children, disabled persons and old people are not given priority during any disaster situation.

#### Conclusion

The findings indicate clearly that the adaptive capacity of these riverine communities is extremely low, and without significant capacity building as well as cultural and policy change, vulnerability particularly of women and children will not be addressed simply by improving infrastructure or improved access to agricultural extension services on flood tolerant crops. A full understanding of pre-existing vulnerabilities and capacities therefore is essential before designing programmes for adaptation.

Assessing the ‘capacity’ to deal with a disaster broadens the concept of vulnerability from a focus on the physical hazard. The ability to deal with a hazard is influenced by – or, as is for the case of those with high vulnerability, limited by - many social, political and economic conditions. Amongst other attributes, strong livelihoods, access to credit, and influence in disaster preparedness planning form part of the capacity to deal with a disaster; however, these capacities are often absent in those communities most vulnerable disasters.

According to the IPCC, vulnerability depends on the level of economic development and institutions. Socio-economic systems “typically are more vulnerable in developing countries where economic and institutional circumstances are less favourable”.<sup>15</sup> There is evidence that development indicators like per capita income, literacy and institutional capacity are associated with lower vulnerability to climate events.<sup>16</sup> This means that vulnerability is the highest where there is “*the greatest sensitivity to climate change and the least adaptability.*” The bottom line is that poverty is a key contributor to vulnerability; it limits the capacity to deal with a hazard and increases exposure for those forced to live in the most high-risk places through a lack of financial capital or civic rights.

**Table 1: Defining adaptation**

Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerability to climate change is assessed in reference to a particular hazard, for example vulnerability to flooding, and considers underlying human and environmental factors</li> <li>• Vulnerability reduction targets a particular hazard, and should aim to be ‘no regrets’: meeting short term needs whilst addressing potential climate change</li> </ul>
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined as the ability to absorb shocks or ride out changes</li> <li>• Reduces vulnerability to a wide range of hazards</li> <li>• Supported by diversity of assets or livelihood strategies</li> <li>• User input in decision making supports resilience by reducing the chance of damaging policy developments</li> </ul>
Adaptive capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined as the ability to shape, create or respond to change</li> <li>• Enables resilience strengthening and vulnerability reduction to a wide range of hazards</li> <li>• Amount, diversity and distribution of assets facilitates alternative adaptation strategies</li> <li>• Requires information plus the capacity and opportunity to learn, experiment, innovate and make decisions</li> </ul>

Source: Ensor and Berger, 2009

While climate change will undoubtedly increase the vulnerability of many people already vulnerable to weather related disasters, the key reasons for vulnerability relate to marginalisation of people within their country: poor access to resources, inability to afford safe places to live, inability to access information and technologies to strengthen and diversify their livelihood options. Unless finance for adaptation leads countries to prioritise addressing the underlying factors leading to marginalisation and poverty, then it will not succeed in enabling adaptation by vulnerable communities.

<sup>15</sup> Watson et al., 1996: 24

<sup>16</sup> Noy, 2009

### **Box 2: Assessing vulnerability to Changing Climate and associated hazards in Chitwan District, Nepal**

Weather data show that annual precipitation has increased at the rate of 14.2 mm per year and mean daily temperature has increased by 1.3°C between 1976-2005. As a result, local communities are experiencing warmer and foggy winters, hotter summers, and more intense rainfall interspersed with dry spells. Floods, shortages of water for irrigation, invasive weeds, new pests and diseases in agricultural crops are major hazards linked to impacts of climate change that affect livelihood assets individually and collectively.

While different hazards have specific effects, the ultimate impact of each hazard on livelihood outcomes is similar: each reduces livelihood assets, access to remaining assets, peoples' capacities and their rights. Indigenous knowledge and coping mechanisms have not been sufficient to deal with the compounded impacts of multiple hazards. Prevailing poverty and low levels of awareness (and preparedness) is a major constraint to building communities' resilience.

#### Future Vulnerability

In the future, vulnerability to these hazards will be exacerbated by increasing human population, the continuation of unsustainable agricultural practices in river catchments, and limited livelihood options, and the increased adverse impacts of climate change. Communities are more aware of and prepared for events that occur suddenly, that have visible impacts and that damage assets faster. Preparedness for slowly occurring hazards such as drought, invasive species and loss of habitat for wildlife is less, although losses from such hazards are likely to be greater over the long term. Increasing awareness among vulnerable communities is important to reduce their vulnerability to and increase their resilience capacity to cope with such hazards.

#### Identified Adaptation Strategies

Communities' vulnerability to disasters can be minimized through integrated approaches of managing local resources and increasing local resilience capacity. These strategies include building shallow tube wells and water collection, raising awareness and skills, providing extension services in agriculture and livestock, constructing flood embankments along rivers, installing flood warning mechanisms, and providing disaster management support and emergency funds through local governments. All of these mean an injection of resources into the community, prioritising their needs in a manner that has not hitherto occurred. While local communities would be able through these interventions to minimise the risks of some hazards and improve existing resilience capacity, many initiatives would need additional effort over larger geographical areas, such as improving watersheds management and policy reforms at national level to address these issues through holistic approaches.

## **3 Prioritising the most vulnerable people and communities**

Even if developed countries met the undertaking contained in Paragraph 4.3 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of supporting developing countries to adapt to climate change, thereby redeeming their financial debts to poor countries, the effectiveness of this finance in enabling vulnerable people to adapt would be strongly dependent on how the needs of the particularly vulnerable groups in those countries were taken into consideration, as well as on the way the funds were governed, disbursed and managed. While prioritising adaptation support to those most in need is in principle generally agreed, the UN climate negotiations are still struggling in agreeing a definition of 'most vulnerable *countries*', and what their prioritisation would mean in detail. It seems the nearer negotiations proceed towards an agreement on funding, the more developing countries seek to grab a piece of the "adaptation cake", fearing it could stay very small.

### **3.1 Vulnerability assessments as a tool to direct adaptation policies**

Prioritising support to the most vulnerable *people*, however, is not subject to a political debate at that level, which is not surprising given the lack of information that seems to prevail. Nevertheless, the priority is derived from human rights obligations which the vast majority of Parties to the UNFCCC have committed to follow in a legally-binding manner.<sup>17</sup> The restitution nature of adaptation finance furthermore implies that it must be used for those who are harmed by climate change. Finally, it is also a principle with strategic relevance for the negotiations, because it is very likely that developed country governments will only be willing to commit to generating adequate, predictable, sustainable and additional resource flows to particularly vulnerable countries if there is a process to ensure that the resources will be targeted to benefit those people most in need<sup>18</sup>. Besides this aspect, prioritisation of poor communities within poor countries is an essential condition for sustainable development: the level of inclusion of people is a key determinant of the success of development projects. In order to benefit the most vulnerable communities effectively, the preparation of adequate vulnerability assessments (including identifying their geographical location) is the logical first step.<sup>19</sup>

Documents submitted by UNFCCC Parties rarely address this issue in sufficient depth. Germanwatch has screened approximately 120 documents submitted by developing countries and available on the UNFCCC website, including NAPAs, National Communications and Technology Needs Assessments. According to this screening, 60% of the documents have not addressed most vulnerable communities or groups of the population at all. About 20% have identified vulnerable groups in a rather vague way, similar to the following formulation: “the most vulnerable are the women, children, elderly and the sick”<sup>20</sup> or “those who are most affected by climate impacts, that is the rural people and the poor”<sup>21</sup>. Formulations like “Low lying coastal communities in Belize are vulnerable to sea level rise”<sup>22</sup> or “small farmers, urban workers, cattle raisers”<sup>23</sup> belong to the more concrete types of identification. However, the best still fall a long way behind already established and internationally recognised vulnerability mapping systems, like the FAO co-ordinated FIVIMS (Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System, [www.fivims.org](http://www.fivims.org)) which assesses vulnerability to hunger based on a typology of 54 potentially vulnerable groups. Such an approach allows for a more targeted assessment of vulnerable groups and even households and hence provides a good basis for the employment of a human rights approach to adaptation.

In order to develop targeted adaptation policies, geographical identification of most vulnerable communities is very relevant and a more concrete approach than merely identifying vulnerable groups. About 80% of the documents analysed do not have any geographic location for the groups identified as most vulnerable (many of these documents do not list

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<sup>17</sup> See Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2008b

<sup>18</sup> See Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2008a: 7

<sup>19</sup> Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2008a

<sup>20</sup> Bangladesh, 2005

<sup>21</sup> Cambodia, 2007

<sup>22</sup> Belize, 2002

<sup>23</sup> Guinea-Bissau, 2008



such an identification). Around another 10% are vague regarding this issue. Phrases such as “coastal zone” or “areas with great environmental pressure” fit into this category. The following formulation is one of the very rare, relatively concrete ones: “Settlements on the south-western coast were found to be most vulnerable, and much of Barbuda is likely to be inundated under a one metre sea level rise scenario”.<sup>24</sup> The Philippines’ National Communication from 2000 also provides a more concrete example: “Densely populated areas along the coast, especially the squatter areas of Navotas and Malabon, may survive ASLR [Accelerated Sea Level Rise] but will be very vulnerable to severe storm surge(s)”.<sup>25</sup> Vulnerability mappings are almost non-existent in the documents screened. Sudan’s NAPA is one of the few exceptions (see figure 2).



**Figure 1: Particularly vulnerable rural areas in the Sudan**

Source: Sudan, 2007

<sup>24</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, 2001

<sup>25</sup> Philippines, 2000

### 3.2 Procedural lessons from the right to adequate food

A human rights based approach to adaptation is not only relevant for establishing principles, it can also have procedural implications. The adaptation debate can in this regard learn from the debate around the right to adequate food.<sup>26</sup> For this, countries have agreed to procedural guidelines which include an assessment and identification of the most vulnerable groups as a prerequisite for directing policies at the most vulnerable groups of society (see Box 3).

**Box 3: : Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups under the right to adequate food**

Under the “Voluntary guidelines on the implementation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”, governments are requested to develop a national strategy for the implementation of the right to adequate food, which shall encompass the following five elements in particular<sup>27</sup>:

1. Governments must assess and identify which are the most vulnerable groups concerning the right to adequate food, those which are food insecure, malnourished and hungry. Without proper assessment governments cannot properly focus their policy attention to these groups.
2. They have to make sure that existing legislation is addressing the concerns of these groups and that the legislation is not leading “de jure” to discriminations and violations.
3. The governments have to make sure that their policy response and their choice of instruments (“de facto”) is reasonably focused on those most vulnerable under the right to adequate food. Policies shall respect and protect existing access to productive resources, income and food and governments have to prove that they do their best to implement the right to adequate food and to help people coping with risks.
4. Governments are obliged to monitor the outcome of their policies and
5. They must allow for accountability mechanisms including functioning complaint mechanisms and access to recourse procedures.

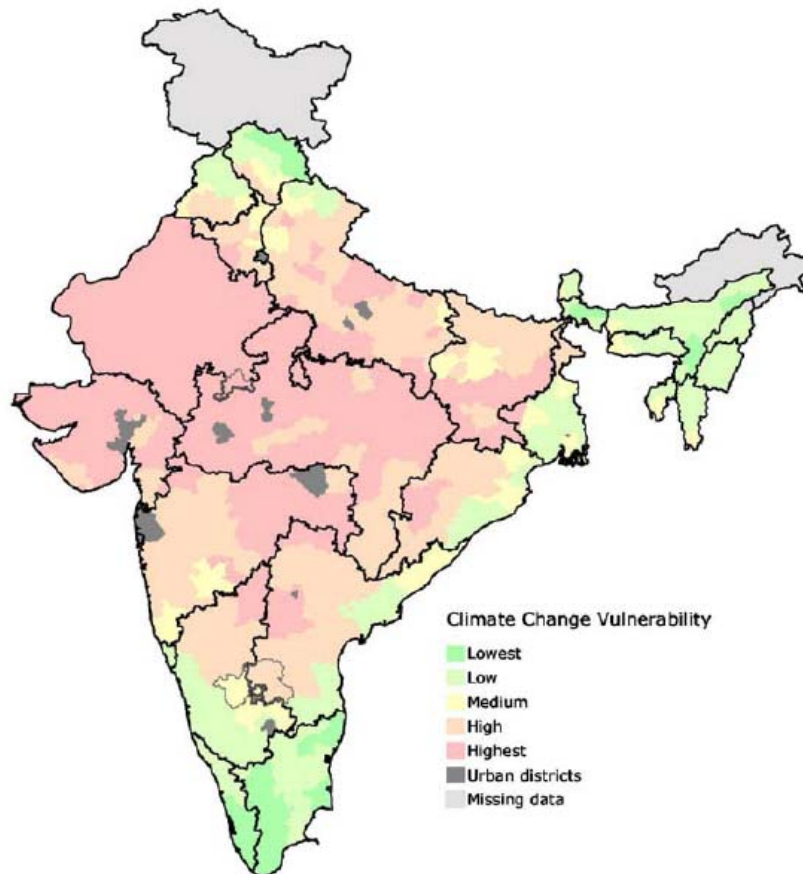
One of the strengths of this approach is that it helps to set up procedural guarantees for the affected communities and people for participation. This includes having access to relevant information (transparency) and the right to complain. A second strength is that a rights-based approach requests a specific outcome. Governments have to prove that they focus their policy and budget decisions toward the most vulnerable groups and that no group is overlooked. Governments have to prove that their own adaptation policies do no harm i.e. deprive people from access to food or water.

An important tool for governments to direct their adaptation policies towards vulnerable communities, households and individuals is the mapping of climate change vulnerability.

<sup>26</sup> see Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2008b

<sup>27</sup> FAO, 2004

In accordance with the concepts of vulnerability described, this mapping should carry out a combined analysis, identifying the adaptive capacity of a certain region or certain communities – a composite of biophysical, social and technological indicators – *and* their specific sensitivity to climate change impacts.<sup>28</sup> Although there are still uncertainties in many regions about the specific changes in climatic conditions in the future, in many cases the knowledge about the general climate trends are sufficiently sound to generate such vulnerability mappings. Figure 2 provides such a district level mapping of India.



**Figure 2: District-level mapping of climate change vulnerability, measures a composite of adaptive capacity and climate sensitivity under exposure to climate change.**

Source: O'Brien et al. 2004

<sup>28</sup> O'Brien, K. et al. 2004

## 4 The AF and the most vulnerable: Innovative features and state of play

Against this background, it is of significant importance that one of the strategic criteria of the Adaptation Fund already states that **“when designing project and programme proposals, special attention shall be given by eligible Parties to the particular needs of the most vulnerable communities.”** This provision was adopted by the Adaptation Fund Board in the context of its “Strategic Priorities, Policies and Guidelines”, and was approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol at CMP4 in Poznan. It is unique in this regard, compared to other international adaptation-related funding mechanisms.

This priority is implicitly strengthened through criteria for the allocation of resources like the *level of vulnerability of the sector or population or the level of urgency*<sup>29</sup>, and criteria for the aims of funding, including *“to strengthen inter alia, national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, national communications and national adaptation programmes of action and other relevant instruments”*.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, assessing the state of play in the Adaptation Fund and reflecting its innovative features will also have to consider how the Adaptation Fund already does pursue this strategic priority and can in the future.

### 4.1 Direct access: new opportunities and responsibilities

A key institutional innovation in the Adaptation Fund is the possibility of direct access for developing countries to the resources of the Fund. This approach so far exists only in the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund).<sup>31</sup>

Many developing countries have in the past criticized multilateral institutions like the World Bank, UNDP and others for causing delays in both delivery of funding and the implementation of projects. This has been the case *inter alia* with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which works only through multilateral implementing agencies.

Direct access is intended to enable developing countries to receive resources more efficiently and with minimal bureaucracy. One envisaged outcome is increased ownership of the projects and programmes by developing countries in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid and the Accra Agenda of Action<sup>32</sup> - , and thereby direct access can contribute significantly to an important objective of development policy.

In the case of the AF, the principle of direct access is relatively simple. Vulnerable developing countries must nominate a (usually existing) national institution, which then is put forward for accreditation by the AF as a National Implementing Entity (NIE). For the accreditation, the NIE should be capable of performing the same tasks and “meeting the

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<sup>29</sup> see AFB, 2009a: para 16

<sup>30</sup> AFB, 2009a: para 6

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.theglobalfund.org>

<sup>32</sup> See: Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action: Full related documentation. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/63/43911948.pdf>

same fiduciary standards<sup>33</sup> that the multilateral implementing entities (MIE) like the World Bank, UNDP and others, usually fulfil in international development finance. Since the NIEs will be the direct recipient of the funds in their countries, they carry responsibility for the overall management of the projects and programmes including financial, monitoring and reporting responsibilities and coordination and management of executing institutions. Countries not wanting to or not capable of designating a National Implementing Entity can use the services of MIEs. They may also nominate sub-regional or regional organisations.

The Adaptation Fund Board has achieved important milestones this year which show that the conditions for direct access are achievable by developing countries, accrediting six MIEs and three NIEs, le Centre de Suivie Écologique du Senegal (CSE), the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and the Agencia Nacional de Investigacion e Innovacion (ANII) of Uruguay.

At the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the AFB (September 2010), the Secretariat reported that 30 applications and expressions of interest to tackle a route of direct access have been submitted by developing countries to the Fund. Unfortunately, only the three mentioned have mastered this process. Therefore, the identification of the right institution able to be accredited as a NIE within developing countries remains a big challenge both for developing countries and the Fund. The AFB has taken up this challenge and has adopted a work programme to facilitate the accreditation process, without lowering the standards. It is expected that this will contribute to more developing countries seriously pursuing the direct access route.

### **Direct access and prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable people**

In addition to the important objective of increased country ownership, direct access should also recognise important principles regarding the community-level, in particular the “principle of empowerment”, which is designed to give the beneficiaries of adaptation projects – ie. the communities and citizens - control over decision making. It could also be seen as a mechanism which ensures access to information, downward accountability and strong participation at the community level.

Thus, direct access should go beyond the simple accreditation of NIEs. Within the countries, it can be understood as the process, which enables local communities or less privileged to directly access to the resources disbursed by the Fund through the NIE, by developing their own skills, confidence and expertise. Facilitating this, the accredited national NIEs, which have a direct access to the AF as well as at the same time directly disburse the resources to the Executing Entities, should act as an interface between the AF and the local communities. The needs of the most vulnerable will likely only be addressed however if the following conditions are also met:

*Firstly*, if developing countries select NIEs which have a good track record in managing projects that address community-level needs, this could be a good basis for an appropriate selection and oversight over project and programme implementation.

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<sup>33</sup> These standards were set with a special caution. On the one hand, the Board wanted to have credible standards which can strengthen its credibility and at the same time bearing in mind not to erect unnecessary barriers for the developing countries. These standards could be summarized into: (a) Financial Integrity and Management; institutional Capacity, Transparency and Self-investigative Powers. AFB, 2009a

*Secondly*, if the NIEs already have experience in adaptation, effective monitoring and evaluating the implementation of adaptation projects is more likely.

Thirdly, if the NIEs enable simple access to the Executing Entities, which articulate the needs of the vulnerable group in concrete adaptation proposals.

With only three NIEs accredited to date, there is no clear single model since different kinds of institutions can in principle fulfil the requirements set up by the Board.

The **CSE from Senegal** is a public institution under the environment ministry which has decades of experience in implementing environment-related projects, including adaptation projects.

The **PIOJ from Jamaica**, according to the website description, seems to play a central role in assisting the government in developing integrated and sector-specific policy and planning approaches, including, but going beyond, sustainable development research and data work.

The **ANII from Uruguay**, according to the website, aims to execute political strategies in the area of innovation, research and development, with a view to advancing the productive and social development of the country. While not set up specifically for the AF context, it is a relatively new institution.

The Senegalese institution appears to be the most-experienced in terms of specific adaptation projects and cooperation with NGOs, whereas the Jamaican institution puts adaptation into a broader context of development policy and planning. Having experience in adaptation as such or in the cooperation with community-level stakeholders is not a requirement demanded by the AFB. No information is available on the other NIE applications not-yet approved. It remains to be seen whether in practice one or the other type of institution will perform better with regard to prioritising the most vulnerable people.

For many National Implementing Entities, their role as administrators of adaptation projects is likely to be a new one. In order to address the needs of the most vulnerable they should consider drawing on the experience of civil society organisations in project development and execution on the ground. Many international and local development NGOs have the capacity and experience to act as Executing Entities (EE), those who actually carry out the work on the ground. NGOs, together with the local community organisations with whom they usually work, have good knowledge of the problems that vulnerable people face in areas impacted by climate change. Because of their closeness to the affected communities, they enjoy a greater acceptance than some government agencies because of their proven commitment to addressing the problems. Involving NGOs and Community-based Organisations (CBO) will enhance local ownership of any project and thereby increase its impact and sustainability.

## **4.2 Project approval and implementation**

In 2010 the Board issued the call for project proposals, marking the start of the long-awaited implementation phase. By November 2010, 23 projects had been submitted to the AFB, with a projected cost of US\$ 158 million. So far, two fully developed project proposals have been approved – in Senegal and Honduras – of which the Senegalese project

is so far the only one under the direct access approach. Six concepts have been approved, six rejected. Nine more project proposals will be considered in December 2010.<sup>34</sup>

The UNDP has so far been the most dominant MIE, having submitted 18 project applications on behalf of the respective governments, including that of Honduras. The submitted projects cover a range of climate change impacts, from glacier lake outburst floods to droughts and floods in Pakistan to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas in Senegal.

Beyond these positive achievements, the way the Board reports on its decision-making over project applications is not satisfactory. The AFB decided at its 11<sup>th</sup> meeting no longer to publish the technical screening report drafted by the secretariat for its consideration. This document highlights strengths and weaknesses of the projects. One reason for this decision was to avoid publicly prejudicing the outcomes of the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) which is responsible for assisting the Board in tasks related to project/programme review.

However, this technical screening was seen as a guarantee of transparency as well as a guide both for the donors and civil society in their appraisal of the funding process. It is against the public interest if the recommendations and remarks made to the countries (or rather, the Implementing Entity submitting the proposal) during the technical review are kept secret. The AFB owes an explanation to interested stakeholders in the targeted countries if a project has been rejected, or why additional information is needed before approval of the project. Furthermore, the quality of the technical screening adds credibility to the AFB, which is central for building the trust of civil society as well of donors. The report from the 11<sup>th</sup> AFB meeting shows that the AFB has failed to address this shortcoming.<sup>35</sup>

### **How far do the decisions on project proposals reflect the need to address the most vulnerable communities?**

The quality of submitted projects and programmes and their assessment through the AFB is the test of how serious the AFB takes the strategic priority of the special attention for the needs of the most vulnerable communities.

The strategic priority requires that economic, social and environmental benefits for particularly vulnerable communities must be proven in each proposal in order for it to be approved. In addition, a consultative process is expected to be followed as part of the design of the project proposal.

In the proposals available to date the way this priority is addressed varies significantly, in length and in depth, and thus in quality. The same is true for the consultative process and the engagement of stakeholders, including local communities, in the project design. There are examples where the only consultation mentioned is with other ministries, so without civil society inclusion.

Both these shortcomings could be addressed by clearer guidelines and parameters on *how* the project proponents should address these two project criteria, since governments give varying attention to local communities when left to themselves.

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<sup>34</sup> See Germanwatch Adaptation Fund Project Tracker: <http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/afpt.htm>

<sup>35</sup> AFB, 2010d

Regarding the project implementation, only a few proposals clearly indicate that local communities, or civil society organisations which often have a close tie to the most vulnerable people, will play a role as Executing Entities (EE). In contrast to the oversight function of the Implementing Entities, the EEs are supposed to carry out the practical project work.

Judging how far the AFB's decisions to approve projects and project concepts are already based on these aspects is difficult to judge, since there are a number of criteria which are taken into account and no transparent and complete reporting on reasons for approval or non-approval of projects.

However, a positive signal is that the two projects already approved rank among those that perform comparatively well in these important criteria. Interestingly, Senegal's proposal, the only project under direct access, is, whilst not perfect, outstanding in this regard. It is described more in detail in Box 4. This proposal provides a solid basis for implementation targeting vulnerable communities. Future project approvals will need to be monitored in this regard to provide a broader basis for assessing the AFB's commitment to this strategic priority.

#### **Box 4: Implementation arrangement of the project of Senegal**

*This box describes the organisational structure of the implementation of Senegal's project "Adaptation to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas". The project addresses an important issue, with which Senegal is confronted in its leading economic sectors: climate change threatens the availability of natural resources which are key for major labour activities and marks an additional stress factor to human activities. According to the table above, the implementation structure of the project could be divided in three parts, which enable both a bottom up and a top down approach of project implementation.*

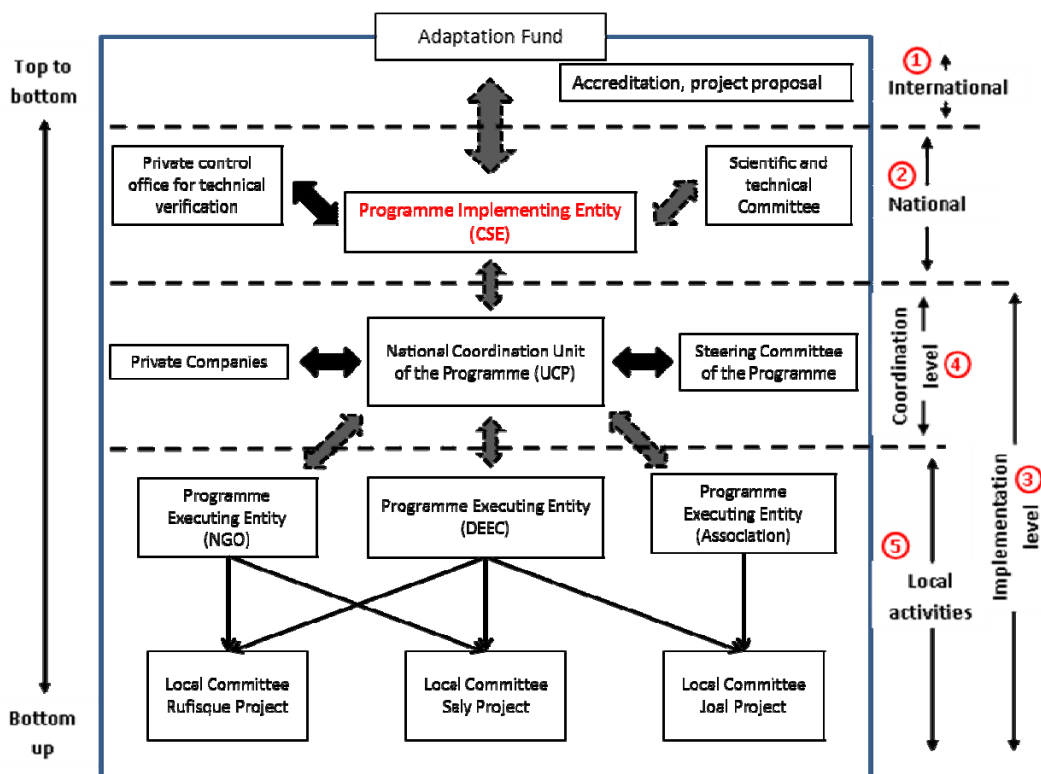
At the **International Level**, is the AF with its Board, its Secretariat and its Trustee. While the AFB is the supreme body, which has the decision-making authority in each stage of the project implementation, the Secretariat is responsible for the communication with national institutions, for drafting contracts MoU and any necessary agreements with the NIE (CSE). The Trustee will disburse funds on the written instruction of the Board.

At the **National Level** the recipient of the funds is the CSE, which is the. It bears the "full responsibility for the overall management of the projects and programmes as well as all financial monitoring and reporting responsibilities". Since the CSE will deal with different institutions - NGOs, private sector and local communities it is quite a window of opportunities for multi-stakeholder inclusion, which is a great chance for ensuring more inclusive and comprehensive bottom up decision-making structures as well as for guaranteeing delivery of transformational concrete adaptation action as compared to activities managed in a top-down manner at the national level. The CSE has primarily a management and oversight function. In doing so, the CSE will be assisted by two committees. The first one is the "Private control office for technical verification" (PCO), which will bear a monitoring and review role. It is a kind of an independent auditing mechanism to assure that the money flows to those it has been intended for. In addition the PCO will regularly review the progress made, in order to ensure that the project achieves the expected outcome. While the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) with experts of the most competent entities, convened by theme in order to evaluate the technical quality of the reports according to the best available existing scientific guidance.

The third tier is the "**Implementation Level**", which has two dimensions: the Coordination Level and the Local Activities. The Coordination Level is led by the National Coordination Unit of the Programme UCP, assisted by an administrative and finance officer, under the responsibility of the NIE. In the present proposal, there is no indication about the composition of the UCP; ideally it would serve as a platform with representation of all stakeholders involved. The institutionalisation of such a multi-stakeholder platform under the UCP would improve the coordination of implementation and enhance the learning-by-doing element of implementation. The UCP is the central link, between the Executing Entities (EE) and the NIE. The success of the project therefore depends ultimately on the capability of the UCP to encourage and increase the coordinated implementation of action. In addition, the UCP will be assisted by the Steering Committee, which, in an ideal scenario, would consist of experts in the fields of development, adaptation, local communities, and the political process.



The last tier of the implementation process is the **Local Level**. Here we have four EEs: the DEEC, private companies, NGOs, like the “Green Senegal” and the Association of Youth. On the one hand, it is expected that different EEs will carry out different tasks in their work with the local communities in the three project regions Saly, Rufisque and Joal. While the selected private companies will set up the infrastructure of protection of sea level, the NGOs will inform and raise awareness, as well as organise training for the different target groups. The local committees, as a last link in the implementation arrangement, are the targeted communities, which, - according to the graphic - will just receive input and instructions from the other institutions. **This is a reason for concern, because it seems that local communities do not have the opportunity to influence the implementation of projects by requesting changes or voicing concerns. Prioritisation of the most vulnerable communities must involve meaningful inclusion and the right to influence the project any time.**



**Figure 3: Implementation arrangements of the Senegalese AF project**

Source: Senegal, Government of, 2010

To address the unfolding challenge of climate change, adaptation needs to be understood as a process, through which communities gain access to resources, information and the ability to shape their lives and livelihoods as the environment changes around them. The ongoing nature of climate change and the inherent uncertainty in weather and climate projections necessitate an approach that empowers communities, building their capacities and opportunities to play an informed role in decision making - over the technologies and strategies that are appropriate to their needs, over which resources are needed, and when.<sup>36</sup>

The AFB has a duty to ensure that such key points are reflected in its project approval decisions as well as strongly implemented in the projects.

<sup>36</sup> Ensor and Berger, 2009

Countries submitting projects and programmes need, as a first step, show how they have identified their most vulnerable communities, in what way they are vulnerable to climate change, and what measures are proposed to address these vulnerabilities. This means supplying some concrete information about the most vulnerable communities, such as numbers of people suffering losses from extreme weather events, and the percentage of households and communities having more secure (increased) access to livelihood assets. This is relevant and important for a project baseline and for future monitoring, and would form part of a vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA). Box 1 gives an example from Practical Action's work in Bangladesh.

In addition, indicators could also be required on; the level of inclusion of the targeted community; the inputs and needs identified during the consultation; and the inputs and needs measured during the implementation process. In addition, the project proposal should aim for meaningful inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the process to ensure a good outcome of their projects, not only at the approval stage, but also what is achieved from its implementation.

### **4.3 Governance structure**

In terms of governance, the composition of the Adaptation Fund Board is quite innovative for an international governance mechanism. The AF works under the authority of, and is accountable to, the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). The AFB has 16 members and 16 alternate members who do not represent their countries, but the constituency to which their country belongs (the five UN regions, Annex I and non-Annex I countries). There is additional representation for the most vulnerable groupings – Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States - giving developing countries an overall majority. This is unique in international climate governance, and not welcomed by many developed countries (in particular their finance ministers). However, this small majority does not provide developing countries with the power to dominate developed countries. Instead, the AFB has developed a constructive working atmosphere with the AFB members pursuing constructively ways to enhance the AF.

#### **How can the governance structure contribute to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable?**

Whilst considered innovative for it developing country majority, the current structure is not, of itself a sufficient condition to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable people are addressed. So far the AFB lacks an institutionalised representation of civil society in general, and more specifically, representation from vulnerable communities. However, the AFB has generally been open to suggestions and concerns raised by civil society, and this has led to the decision to hold regular meetings with observers, starting with the 12<sup>th</sup> AFB meeting in December 2010. In terms of civil society representation at meetings, the Fund lags behind other instruments. Under the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) established under the World Bank, the specific programmes' sub-committees includes civil society observers. In the case of the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), developed countries' civil society is represented through one person, and for developing countries there are four NGO representatives. In the Global Fund to Fight HIV/Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, developed country NGOs and developing country NGOs are represented through one member each. Furthermore, affected communities - in the case affected by the diseases addressed by the Fund – have another seat with full voting rights.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See also CARE International, Germanwatch and Bread for the World, 2009

## 4.4 Transparency

A transparent working mode has developed within the Board of the AF. All relevant documents are available on the homepage to everyone before and after the meeting of the Board. All interested people (provided they are from organisations registered as observers under the UNFCCC), are allowed to attend meetings, and are usually able to sit in the meeting room of the AFB, except for a few closed sessions.<sup>38</sup> While the Board early on decided that all project and programme proposals submitted by Parties would be put on the AF website, it has now set up the facility for commenting on project proposals. During the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting the Board decided to regularly meet non state organisations prior or after each of its meeting in order discuss and share views and concerns with them. This facilitates civil society's oversight in terms of ensuring the interests of the most vulnerable communities are met. However, the lack of detailed information on the evaluation process for proposals and decision-making by the PPCR is needed to enable civil society in the country to raise questions with their government about proposed projects.

## 4.5 Further aspects to prioritise the most vulnerable

According to its Operational Policies and Guidelines the Adaptation Fund Board shall give particular attention to *inter alia* the *cost-effectiveness of projects and programmes*. This could be interpreted as a requirement to favour achievement of a project using low cost technologies rather than large-scale infrastructure, where feasible. Thus, priority should be given to proactive or anticipatory adaptation, which will prevent adverse impacts, rather than reactive adaptation projects, which are more costly.

The Board's Framework for Results-based management (RBM) should ensure in its monitoring and evaluation system, as well as in the preparation of annual project status reports and final evaluation reports, that the views of the most vulnerable populations are heard on whether and how adaptation funding has enabled them to adapt successfully, so that measurable inputs at the international/national level are linked to measurable outputs/outcomes at the local level.<sup>39</sup> The RBM framework defines the intended impact as "increased resiliency at the community, national, and regional levels to climate variability and change." In that regard it is a good starting point that the expected outputs include examples and indicators to show that the situation of the targeted vulnerable situation is improved and their vulnerability reduced.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Observers just have to register in advance via an organisation accredited by UNFCCC; only in the case of debates about the CER monetisation policies sessions have been closed, in order to avoid possible market distortions.

<sup>39</sup> CAN International, 2010

<sup>40</sup> AFB, 2010b

## 5 Community based adaptation and international funding: synergies and challenges

### 5.1 *Improving the knowledge base for targeting the most vulnerable*

The Operational Policies and Guidelines of the AF make clear that project and programme proposals should include not only *information in reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and information generated under the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change*,<sup>41</sup> but also local knowledge and experience. Weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient information and poor governance increase the impact of climate change on poor people. In addition, adaptation without an adequate assessment and consideration of the adaptation knowledge of indigenous people as well as scientific projections could easily turn into maladaptation and, therefore, impact the livelihoods of poor people. As shown before, most of the country reports submitted officially to the UNFCCC pay hardly any attention to the geographical location of particularly vulnerable people.

Recent NGO experience in implementing adaptation projects and programmes has shown how important the participation of the community is in identifying priorities, the appropriateness of technological innovations and administration or control over project resources. Since communities have already had to develop a range of adaptive responses to cope with environmental risks and to safeguard livelihoods,<sup>42</sup> the AF should prioritise Community Based Adaptation as an approach to increase the resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable.

The first stage in prioritizing the most vulnerable communities is to identify which communities in a country are likely to be the most vulnerable to climate change or increasing climate variability, (paying particular attention to including those in traditionally marginalized groups or locations,). These groups must then be supported to participate in decision-making processes. As Daze and Chan<sup>43</sup> (CARE International) suggest (mentioned above) three conditions need to be in place if adaptation financing is to support community-based adaptation:

- Systematic identification of vulnerable communities and groups
- Inclusive and transparent decision-making
- Engagement of civil society and local institutions.

The AFB has the opportunity to strengthen these aspects, e.g. through providing clearer guidelines to the project proponents on how to address this information in the project proposals.

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<sup>41</sup> AFB, 2009a; for 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of the IPCC, see <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/assessments-reports.htm>, and for NWP see [http://unfccc.int/adaptation/sbsta\\_agenda\\_item\\_adaptation/items/3633.php](http://unfccc.int/adaptation/sbsta_agenda_item_adaptation/items/3633.php).

<sup>42</sup> Agrawal et. Al, 2008

<sup>43</sup> Dazé and Chan, 2009

## ***5.2 Improving communities' adaptive capacity through institutional access***

Community access to decision-making institutions is essential for increasing resilience, as participation places a brake on inappropriate policy development through feedback from the local community level to policy makers. Adaptive capacity is built by supporting communities to play a leading role in defining their responses to climate change, through, for example, active participation in policy formation, resource prioritisation and knowledge sharing. Adaptive capacity is found in communities that are engaged in their own governance, and absent in those that are not. Thus, as the Swedish Commission on Climate Change and Development states, improving adaptive capacity demands that institutions offer communities targeted capacity development, inclusive governance, and ownership.<sup>44</sup>

Appropriate institutions will be needed for effective stakeholder participation, consensus building, decision-making and accountability if those affected by climate change are to have a meaningful voice in determining resource allocation - a prerequisite if support is to reach those most in need. Effective and participatory governance of funds for adaptation within a country is also a key issue, but one that the AFB cannot influence directly. What the AFB can do is to highlight best practice in project design, where issues of participation and governance are effectively addressed, and at Board level, encourage national implementation of good practice governance and accountability through peer pressure. This is where enabling NGOs to work in partnership on AF funded projects with governments is likely to be effective at encouraging change from a top-down centralised model of decision making to a more inclusive participatory approach.

The overlap between the need for prioritisation and accountability in fund disbursement on the one hand, and the desired outcome of adaptation support on the other, makes decentralised, democratic institutions a critical criterion when seeking structures through which to disburse adaptation funds. Constructing processes that are responsive to communities will enable institutions to become both the means and the end, providing a mechanism for distributing financial support while building resilience and adaptive capacity.

Decades of centralised management of development processes and cooperation will not be erased with the stroke of a pen. It will take time to adapt attitudes, roles and working methods to the requirements of participatory development approaches. There can be no standard model of how to cooperate with non-state actors. Each country and region will have to find the most appropriate way to implement participation, since the levels of democracy are different in each case.

Participation of non-state actors can be a sensitive matter. This holds particularly true for countries with fragile democratic traditions, where the government may consider non-state actors as 'opposition forces' rather than as 'partners' to be consulted and supported. The rapid increase in donor funding has often had perverse effects, including fierce competition among non-state actors. Governments and the Adaptation Fund should not rely on 'quick fixes' in organising the participation of non-state actors. It will also take time to

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<sup>44</sup> Commission on Climate Change and Development, 2009

put in place support programmes to improve the governance structures and capacity of non-state actor organisations.

In many developing countries, the institutional conditions necessary for the effective participation of non-state actors - including adequate information flows, structured mechanisms for dialogue, functioning platforms of non-state actors, capacity support programmes, etc. - are not (yet) in place. Clearly, the promotion of participatory approaches will be a challenging learning process for all parties involved.

One model from which governments can learn is that of the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The CCM is intended to bring civil society, government and the private sector together to decide and provide oversight on programmes and policy in country.

Echoing the synergies sought between adaptive capacity and adaptation funding, the CCMs have not only improved the sustainability of interventions, but also been 'a catalyst for democratic processes whereby civil society, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, acquires a voice in national decision-making processes.'<sup>45</sup>

The function of the CCM is to coordinate the submission of a single national proposal for funding and to prioritize needs. The CCM is charged with identifying the 'Principal Recipient(s)' of the grant; in the language of the Adaptation Fund, this would be the implementing entity. The CCM monitors and evaluates implementation of programme activities, approving major changes to plans if necessary.

NGOs in Climate Action Network closely following the UNFCCC process have sought to develop a model of the institutional format for disbursement of adaptation funding drawing on the emerging lessons from the Global Fund. A body operating in each country would seek to ensure that programme for adaptation draw up a country-driven process. Its role would be to:

- Represent all relevant stakeholders, particularly most vulnerable communities and civil society, ensuring a bottom-up approach to identify adaptation needs on local, sub-national and national levels.
- Coordinate a range of national level adaptation institutions and actors including national government agencies, local government, private sector and civil society maximising the use of existing institutions and resources.
- Develop, adopt and regularly review and update national adaptation planning, linking to cross-sectoral planning processes, feeding into the national planning and development planning as well as overseeing local level monitoring and evaluation of the funded programmes

At present, the process of accreditation of an NIE requires evidence of good governance since the NIE must meet international fiduciary and other standards. In the context of the operation of the AF, however, good governance goes beyond fiduciary issues to include meaningful participation of the most vulnerable communities within the countries in the development of policies and decision-making. One could argue whether setting up such a broader-based country coordinating mechanism in the context of the Adaptation Fund

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<sup>45</sup> The Global Fund, 2008

should be a requirement, since the volume of funds that one country receives will be limited in the near future and much smaller than some of the programmes under the Global Fund. Nevertheless, each country could decide on its own initiative to set up some kind of multi-stakeholder forum to oversee the implementation of their AF projects. Some countries, such as Senegal, have made use of an existing climate change committee in the identification of the NIE itself, for example. However, the larger the scale of resources channelled to a country through an international fund, the stronger is the argument for a coordination body on the national level. Thus, this is something to consider for the AF in case it grows significantly, as well as for the new Climate Fund discussed under the UNFCCC.

### **5.3 Key principles to follow in project appraisal**

Effective adaptation is strongly dependant on how effective the different actors of the various institutions work together. For adaptation projects and programmes under the AF, there are four sets on which the success of the AF will depend:

- The **NIE**: The National Implementing Entities carry responsibility for the overall management of the projects and programmes including financial, monitoring and reporting responsibilities and coordination and management of executing institutions.
- The **local institutions** - local government and line ministry offices as well as the community-level administration – which will include formal and informal institutions. Despite the central role of local informal institutions in rural communities' adaptation, they are rarely supported by government and external interventions, as finance is channelled through formal institutions<sup>46</sup>.
- The **Civil Society Organisations** include rural producer organisations, cooperatives, saving and loan groups etc. Social organizations allow the implementation of many projects, which would not take place without their cooperation because of their closeness to the affected parties, and a greater acceptance and commitment than some government agencies. NIEs should be expected to cooperate closely with these organisations and ensure that they have the information they need in order to work with the most vulnerable people.
- **Private Institutions as NGOs** and private businesses that provide insurance or loans play a large role in raising awareness on climate change and its effects on a national and international level.

Key to broader participation of civil society will be transparency and flexibility in ways of working on the part of the NIE or MIE, and this could be monitored by the AFB.

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<sup>46</sup> Agrawal, et al. 2008

## 6 Conclusions

There has been criticism from governments that it has taken a long time for the Adaptation Fund to reach the stage of disbursing funds. That time, since it was first established three years ago, has been spent setting up policies, processes and guidelines that have gone further than any climate funding mechanism so far, in promoting transparency, access for civil society, and a focus on concrete adaptation to benefit the most vulnerable people.

As critical friends of the Adaptation Fund, we would like to highlight further steps that would earn goodwill from many governments, and encourage contributions to the Fund.

Key action points are:

- Consider how to institutionalise civil society representation or voice in the Board's activities;
- Review the decision not to publish the technical evaluation reports on proposals;
- Minutes of the PPRC to be more informative as to how decisions on proposals were reached;
- Provide clearer guidelines on identifying the most vulnerable;
- Provide clearer guidelines on participation in adaptation planning and implementation;
- Consider practical ways of operating to focus on the most vulnerable people, notwithstanding the ongoing political debate on defining the most vulnerable countries.

In addition to the Adaptation Fund's responsibilities for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, developing countries also have responsibilities. Direct access offers easier access to finance, and brings with it accountability not just to the Fund, but also to their people. The way the particular needs of the most vulnerable communities are addressed will be one of the criteria which will judge the success of direct access. If this direct access process fails in this respect, it will be much more difficult to establish a direct access system in the overall financial architecture for climate finance, notwithstanding the fact that the track record of Multilateral Implementing Entities in addressing poor people's needs is undisputedly imperfect.



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## Germanwatch

Following the motto "Observing, Analysing, Acting", Germanwatch has been actively promoting North-South equity and the preservation of livelihoods since 1991. In doing so, we focus on the politics and economics of the North with their worldwide consequences. The situation of marginalised people in the South is the starting point of our work. Together with our members and supporters as well as with other actors in civil society we intend to represent a strong lobby for sustainable development. We endeavour to approach our aims by advocating fair trade relations, responsible financial markets, compliance with human rights, and the prevention of dangerous climate change. Germanwatch is funded by membership fees, donations, grants from the "Stiftung Zukunftsfähigkeit" (Foundation for Sustainability), and by grants from a number of other public and private donors.

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## Practical Action

Practical Action is a development NGO that has worked for forty years directly with those communities which are now feeling the impacts of climate change. Practical Action therefore has a unique breadth of knowledge and experience in helping people overcome hardship. Alongside this, Practical Action has extensive knowledge in the field of advocacy, having worked on a number of issues to secure policy change within the EU, and education, working with both teachers and students in the UK for over 20 years to increase understanding of development issues.

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## Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World)

"Brot für die Welt" ("Bread for the World") is a programme of help instigated by the protestant churches in Germany. "Brot für die Welt" works jointly with local churches and partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe on over 1,000 projects, all of which are aimed at helping people to help themselves. The motto behind our work is "justice for the poor".

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