

This is the Facilitator's summary of the Global Dialogue Series on Climate Change, prepared by Dr. Crispian Olver, Director, Linkd, and Facilitator of all GDLN sessions during the series.

The Road to COP17: WBI Global Dialogue Series on Climate Change

In the build up to the 17th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP17), the World Bank Institute organised a global dialogue series on topical climate change issues. Linkd Environmental Services facilitated the dialogues and provided technical support. Our goal was to encourage reflection and knowledge sharing between practitioners from developed and developing countries on key topics with relevance to discussions at COP17. Five round-tables were structured around the topics of climate resilient cities; adaptation, and food security; climate finance; scaling up mitigation actions in cities; and human resources and technology for climate change.

During the dialogues many participants talked about how climate change is already affecting their lives, how ecological integrity is beginning to unravel, and at the same time the most vulnerable peoples in developing countries are being hardest hit. According to Ann Sirengo from the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya, exposed women, children, and pastoralists are already witnessing reduced food production and increasingly limited forage and water for their livestock.¹ While Africa has contributed the least to global greenhouse emissions, it faces immediate threats to human livelihoods in terms of food insecurity due to climate change. Cities in developing countries also face challenges. “The cost of adapting to climate change...is estimated at \$70–100 billion per year. Eighty percent of this cost will be borne by developing country cities,” said Dan Hoornweg, Lead Urban Specialist, Cities and Climate Change, at the World Bank.

In the dialogues we discussed a “business unusual” approach that prepares for climate-related disasters, protects social and natural systems, arrests and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and restructures economies towards activities with low carbon footprints. City managers described innovative projects with positive environmental and economic benefits that can strengthen city finances sheets though generating long-term savings. Such projects include integrated waste management which reduces waste to landfill, investments in public and non-motorised transport, energy and water efficiency programmes, and greening buildings.² Sarah Ward, from the Energy and Climate Change branch at the City of Cape Town, described a data-driven research approach to altering its carbon profile, which indicated that interventions for electrical and transport efficiency, and deployment of renewable electricity could make the highest contribution. City managers are now focusing on scaling-up successful climate mitigation and adaptation projects.

Similarly in the food security and adaptation roundtable, participants called for a paradigm shift in approaches to ensuring food security. A shift to “climate smart agriculture” underpinned by “triple win” technologies³ can lower agricultural emissions, boost agricultural yields, and ensure crops are more resilient to climate change. Hans Herren, president of the Millenium Institute, spoke of a new paradigm of “multifunctionality” where links between the environment, society, and the economy of agriculture provide the necessary levers of change.

¹ 29 June, 2011. WBI Global Dialogue on Adaptation and Food Security: Summary of main issues

² 28 July 2011. WBI Global Dialogue on Scaling Up Mitigation Actions in Cities; Summary of Emerging Issues

³ 29 June, 2011. WBI Global Dialogue on Adaptation and Food Security: Summary of main issues

At the same time, practitioners face many practical constraints - the lack of legal and constitutional mandates to undertake climate change initiatives, regulatory constraints especially in regards to energy distribution, external factors such as global economic instabilities, poor financial management and limited resources, weak administrative capacity, lack of awareness and inadequate buy in from key stakeholders.

Building long-term climate resilience and lowering the carbon intensity of the economy requires visionary political and business leadership supported by critical enabling factors, such as governance, technology, investment, and finance. Investments in green technologies must be supported by a robust education and skills base, reforms to national tax regimes, domestic research and innovation, regulatory reform, and intellectual property protection.⁴ Such domestic reforms need to be accompanied by technology transfer, capacity, and financial support to developing countries and cities.⁵

In developing countries, the estimated costs of *additional* investments to finance mitigation and adaptation efforts are estimated to be \$175 billion by 2030.⁶ The onus is on developing countries to participate in shaping the design of emerging international climate finance institutions so that it “fuels transformational change,” said Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In order to attract private capital, and in preparation for increased international climate finance flows, developing countries should focus on the appropriate national mechanisms and arrangements.⁷

National governments have been conservative in agreeing on the required ambitious and binding greenhouse gas targets and measures. Nevertheless COP17 is an important milestone in global efforts to avert the climate crisis and hopefully negotiating parties will be informed by a sense of urgency. As many cities around the world are showing, pioneering efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions are being undertaken by many different social actors, who are at times outpacing national governments. Change is being driven from the bottom up, and will continue to grow whatever the outcome at COP17. As Debra Roberts, Deputy Head, Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department at the COP17 host city, said, “Key transformative elements for adaptation and mitigation are households and individuals. Changing household mindset and reaching an individual should be our priority.”

⁴ 8 September 2011. WBI Dialogue on Human Resources and Technology for Climate Change; Summary of Emerging Issues

⁵ 28 July 2011. WBI Global Dialogue on Scaling Up Mitigation Actions in Cities; Summary of Emerging Issues

⁶ 26 May 2011. WBI Global Dialogue on Climate Resilient Cities: Summary of main issues arising

⁷ 6 July, 2011. WBI Dialogue on Climate Finance; Summary of Emerging Issues