

**Regional Workshop on
Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into Developmental
Planning**

**Welcome Remarks
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Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you to the ADB Institute here in Tokyo and the *Regional Workshop on Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into Developmental Planning*.

I would like to thank our partners for this event, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

As we all know, global warming is becoming a major challenge to economic development. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that "warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global temperatures, widespread melting of glaciers, and rising sea level." Increases in temperatures could lead to lower crop yields and melting glaciers in many parts of the world which will increase flood risks, alter trade routes, and reduce water supply, while hundreds of millions of people may be facing permanent displacement due to rising sea levels.

In the Asia-Pacific region, global warming could reduce crop yields in Central and South Asia by a half while more than one billion people in Central, South, East, and Southeast Asia (especially in large river basins) will face decreasing fresh water supply by 2050. Rising temperatures will irreversibly damage fragile eco-systems from the Himalayas to the tropical forests of Southeast Asia and threaten the livelihood of the vast majority in the Pacific islands. Populations in the costal zones are becoming

vulnerable to more severe natural disasters, less fresh water availability, greater health risks, and declining crop production. According to scientists, by the end of this century, sea levels could rise up to one meter, putting more than one-fifth of Bangladesh under water.

The agriculture and water sectors in many developing countries are most at risk from the impact of climate change. A recent report by FAO states that in some poor developing countries, with a combined population of 2.45 billion undernourished people, production loss due to climate change may drastically increase poverty and worsen food security.

While mitigation measures are being taken to reduce GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions which are the main cause of global warming, these measures are expected to have limited impact on the climate with a long lead time of half a century. In the mean time, as highlighted in the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*, “adaptation is the only response available for the impacts that will occur over the next several decades before mitigation measures can have an effect.”

Adaptation is the process of coping with the potential impacts of climate change that encompasses both planned and reactive strategies. Although the adaptive capacity is strengthened through greater resource allocation and socio-economic development, it also comes with factors such as experience and knowledge. The majority of current climate policies adhere to a management approach where planned adaptation is central. Such top-down climate change policy is necessary for all countries. However for developing countries with limited financial and technological resources, a stakeholder negotiated approach that builds on existing knowledge systems, local coping strategies, and international support is crucial.

As a multilateral development institution that fosters inclusive and sustainable growth of the Asia-Pacific region, ADB has been actively supporting capacity building of developing member countries through loans and technical assistance programs as well as facilitating policy dialogue among key decision makers. In the context of climate change adaptation, ADB conducted a study in 2005 on *Climate Proofing: A Risk-based Approach to Adaptation* to help Pacific island member states cope with the impacts of climate change. In 2007 and 2008 ADB conducted another study, called the *Review of the Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia* which is now being expanded to cover the entire Asia-Pacific region. ADB also provides technical assistance to South

and Southeast Asian countries to strengthen the resilience of their agriculture to climate change.

ADB's 2007 report on *Climate Change: Strengthening Mitigation and Adaptation in Asia and the Pacific* called for vigorous adaptation measures to be put in place over the next few decades to improve the resilience of vulnerable communities. The report also highlighted the need for shared understanding of long-term goals, effective leadership, and an ability to build and facilitate concerted action among all players, at every level.

ADB, as a research and capacity building subsidiary of ADB, is very happy to organize this workshop. This is part of ADB's overall efforts and contributions to address climate change by exploring one critical dimension of adaptation—that is, how to mainstream adaptation into developmental planning. In addition, the workshop will identify both structural and non-structural measures of adaptation that are applicable to the region and encourage participants to share country experiences and good practices in their implementation.

To be effective, development and adaptation need to be considered in tandem for key sectors. Otherwise development will result in maladaptation—an unintended increase in vulnerability. One way of ensuring an integrated approach to adaptation and development is through mainstreaming. This means integrating policies and measures addressing climate change into ongoing sectoral and multi-sectoral country development programs and decision making. Mainstreaming will ensure long term sustainability of investments and reduce the negative impact of climate change on economic development and poverty reduction.

Thank you and I look forward to your fruitful deliberations.