Addressing Vulnerable Indigenous Communities through National Adaptation Planning
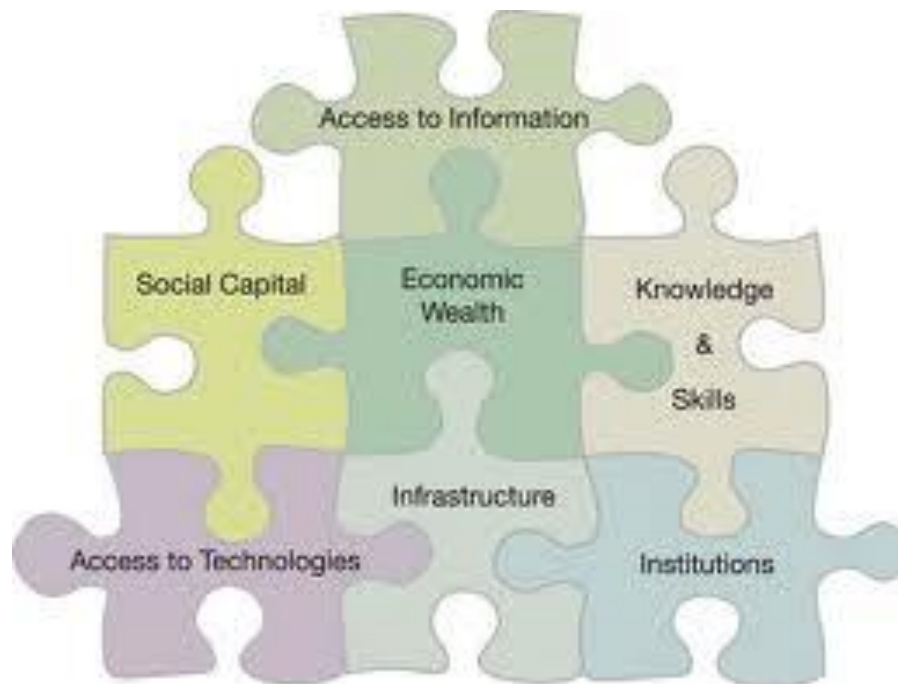
LEG Regional Training Workshop

20-24 August 2013

Siem Reap, Cambodia

Vulnerability and Adaptive Capacity

Vulnerability is a function of the sensitivity to change and the capacity of a system to adapt to that change.

Enhancing **adaptive capacity** is crucial to successful, long-term adaptation.
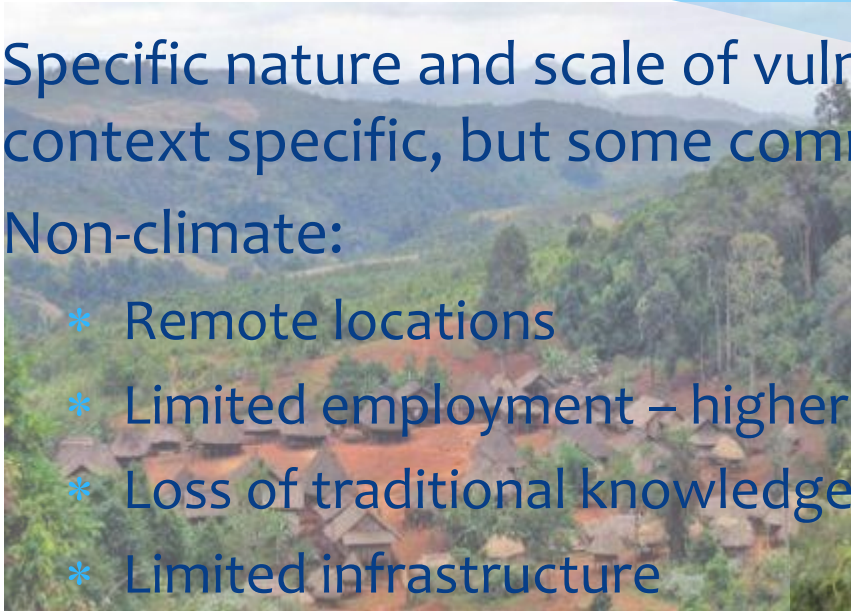
Vulnerabilities of Indigenous Communities

Specific nature and scale of vulnerability is location and context specific, but some commonalities exist:

Non-climate:

* Remote locations
* Limited employment – higher rates of poverty
* Loss of traditional knowledge, practices and value systems
* Limited infrastructure

Climate:

* Shifts in traditional food availability and accessibility
* Shifts in climate variability/seasons

Capacities/Strengths of Indigenous Communities

* Strong social networks
* Traditional systems of governance
* Traditional knowledge, culture and value systems (embracing principles of sustainability)
* Long histories of adapting to change
* Desire to combine new technologies/ "western" science with traditional knowledge

Inuit in the Canadian Arctic

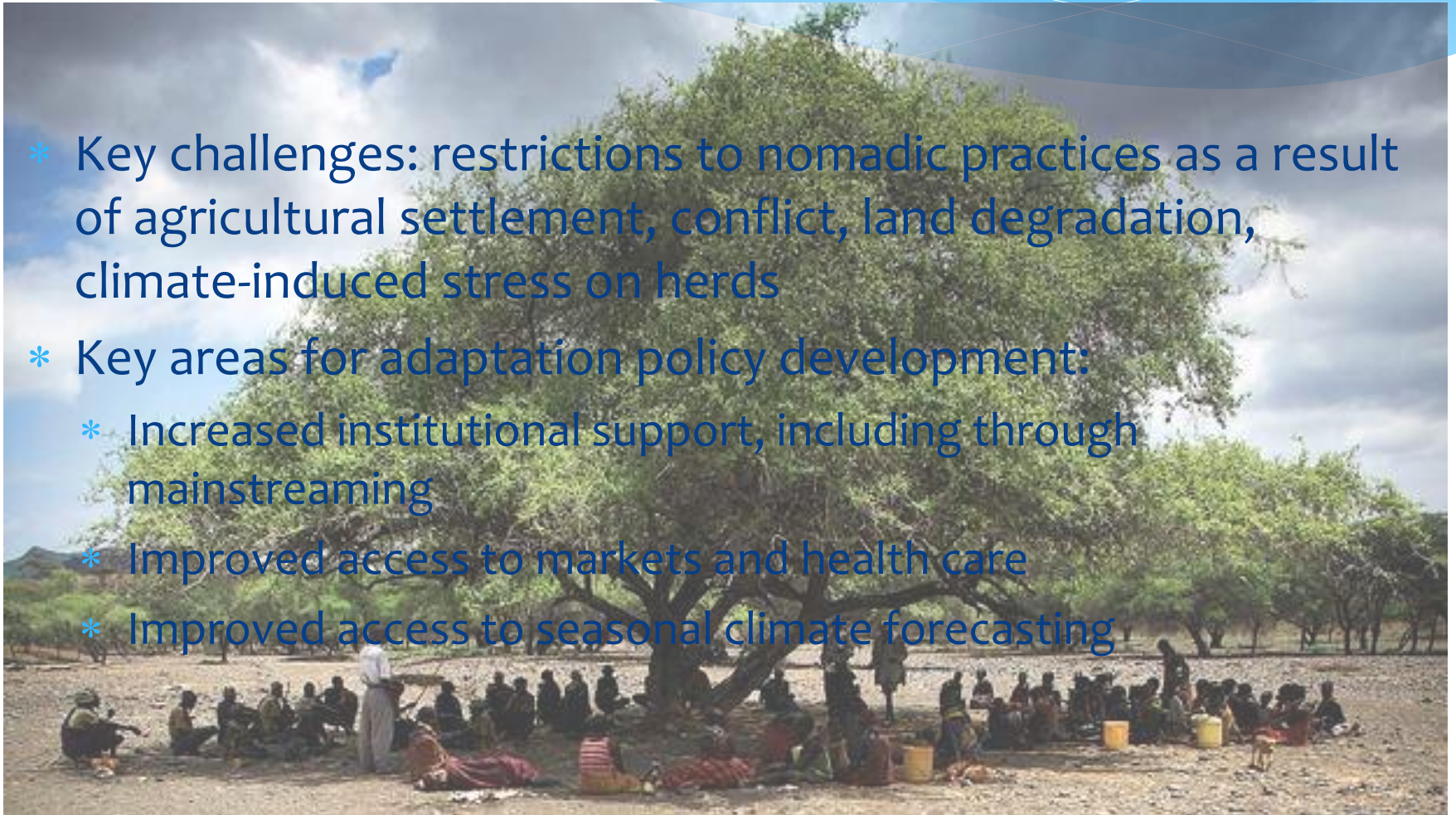### (J.D. Ford et al., 2010. Global Environmental Change, 20, 177-191)

* Key challenges: Shifts in climate variability, and seasons; Loss of traditional skills; Limited financial resources; Remoteness; Pace of other changes

* Key areas for adaptation policy development:
  * Harvester support programs and co-management of wildlife resources
  * Land skills training
  * Emergency preparedness/search and rescue
  * Food system enhancement
  * Infrastructure protection
  * Facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge exchange

Example: Pastoralists

(IDRC, 2011. Climate Change Adaptation in Africa Program 2009-10 Annual Report)

* Key challenges: restrictions to nomadic practices as a result of agricultural settlement, conflict, land degradation, climate-induced stress on herds

* Key areas for adaptation policy development:
  * Increased institutional support, including through mainstreaming
  * Improved access to markets and health care
  * Improved access to seasonal climate forecasting

Example: Andes and Amazon
(World Bank, 2012. Latin America Regional Study: Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Knowledge)

* Key challenge: seasonal variability and unpredictability that is influencing their traditional knowledge of the land; underlying vulnerabilities.

* Key areas for adaptation policy development:
  * Revalorization of elders, traditional knowledge and customary systems of governance
  * Facilitate knowledge synthesis, documentation and exchange
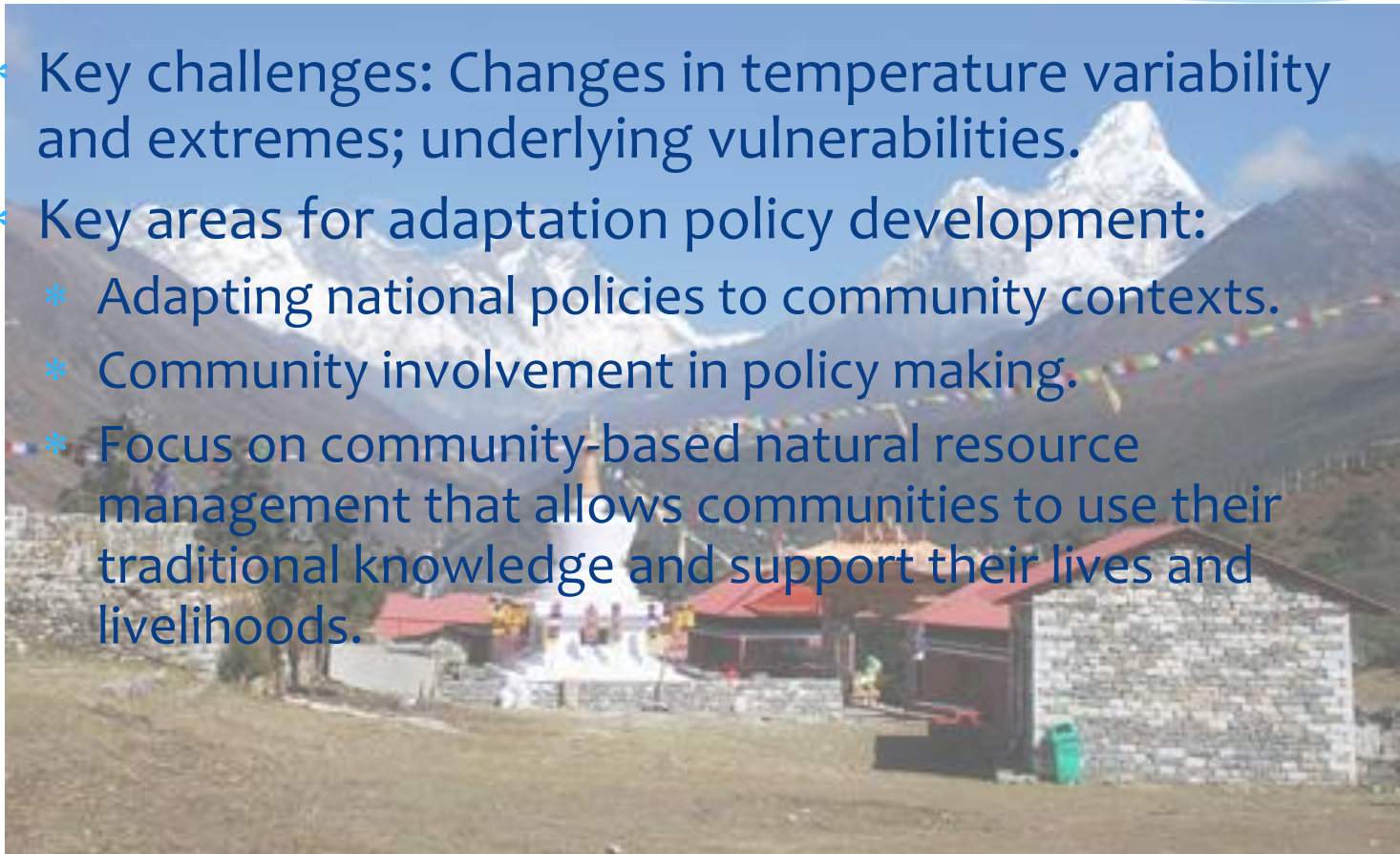 * Encourage adaptation planning and programming

photo: JohnnyReyes

Example: Nepal

* Key challenges: Changes in temperature variability and extremes; underlying vulnerabilities.
* Key areas for adaptation policy development:
    * Adapting national policies to community contexts.
    * Community involvement in policy making.
    * Focus on community-based natural resource management that allows communities to use their traditional knowledge and support their lives and livelihoods.

Relevance to NAP Process

* Element A: Lay the Groundwork and Address Gaps
  * Stocktaking (identifying vulnerabilities)
* Element B: Preparatory Elements
  * Assessing vulnerabilities and identifying options
  * Reviewing and appraising options
  * Integrating adaptation into national and subnational development and sectoral plans
* Element C: Implementation Strategies
  * Developing a long-term strategy
  * Enhancing capacity for planning and implementation
* Element D: Reporting, Monitoring and Review

LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS

Successful Approaches:

* Address existing non-climate related challenges, and integrate adaptation into these efforts.
* Respect traditional knowledge, values and systems of governance.
* Focus interventions on enhancing adaptive capacities.
* Engage community members directly and in an ongoing manner in the development of policies or programs.
* Combine "western" science with traditional knowledge.
* Facilitate peer-to-peer exchange

Thank you