

Southern Voices on Adaptation - through CARE-International: Submission on the Joint Principles for Adaptation

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Introduction

The Southern Voices Program on Adaptation Project¹ welcomes the invitation to relevant UNFCCC observers organizations to submit views and information on experiences on the application of guidelines for the formulation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process for LDCs as per para 6 of decision 18/CP.19. In this submission (submitted through CARE International) the Southern Voices Project partners share information on Joint Principles for Adaptation, a project aiming to integrate bench mark for good adaptation planning.

As a pilot initiative, the Southern Voices on Adaptation Project launched in Kathmandu in April 2014 the “Joint Principles for Adaptation” (JPA). This is a statement by civil society organisations from across the world of what they consider to be a benchmark for good adaptation planning.² It will be tested over the coming two years by civil society organisations in 10-12 countries through dialogue, advocacy and capacity-building with governments and other stakeholders.

Background

National governments in developing countries are responsible for policies and programmes on adaptation to strengthen the resilience of their societies, economies and local communities to the impacts of climate change. At COP16, a process was initiated to assist developing countries (in particular LDCs) in preparing National Adaptation Plans. So far few resources have been made available by developed countries for developing countries, the process is yet to take full shape. Some governments are already developing national adaptation plans, partially in anticipation of finance. Others have not yet started a specific process for such plans.

Climate change adaptation can mean different things to civil society, grass roots movements and other stakeholders such as donors, government departments, the business community and politicians. A set of agreed principles on what constitutes good adaptation policy and practice can facilitate the dialogue between these sectors, building

¹ <http://www.southernvoices.net/en/>

² http://www.southernvoices.net/images/docs/JointPrinciplesforAdaptation_v1.pdf

on the international decisions that establish NAPs as gender-sensitive, participatory, and taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems.

Process, product and validation

We envisage that the process of developing and testing the JPA will be enriching for those involved in each country. The JPA will serve as tool for civil society to assess the status of national adaptation policy and planning in their countries, and to engage with other stakeholders in setting the direction towards pro-poor adaptation policies. The Joint Principles can be used in one or more of the following three ways:

- To set advocacy objectives for civil society, by identifying necessary changes to national and international policy and practice; (advocacy mode)
- To promote civil society dialogue with government by providing a common language for ongoing dialogue between civil society organisations, government and other stakeholders; (dialogue mode)
- To determine capacity building needs of public institutions (capacity-building Mode)

In addition the final product has many potential uses, such as promoting a coherent approach between different government departments and climate-sensitive sectors, and to identify necessary changes to national and international policy and practice;

The project will work with various experts to ensure quality control and technical advice, will connect with other relevant initiatives and bodies to ensure coherence, and will champion and disseminate the principles once they are finalised.

Recommendations

The Joint Principles for Adaptation (JPA) are envisaged to be a statement by civil society organisations from across the world of what they consider to be a benchmark for good adaptation planning. Whether they are used for advocacy, dialogue or capacity building, a useful starting point is to assess the status of national adaptation policy and planning in the country concerned. This tool is a generic assessment scale based in the JPA criteria. It is not intended to be used in its original form, but rather as a guide for national NGO networks to produce a scorecard adapted for their individual context.

The Draft Principles are presented in this submission to provide inspiration for the dialogue between governments and civil society. We welcome any comments and inputs which can help improve and develop the present pilot version 1.0 of the Joint Principles for Adaptation.

Joint Principles for Adaptation, version 1.0

National frameworks for adaptation planning lead to a more equitable and more effective response to climate change when

- A. The planning process is participatory and inclusive

- B. Public funds for adaptation are utilised efficiently and managed transparently and with integrity
- C. All government sectors and levels of administration have defined responsibilities and appropriate resources to fulfil them
- D. Local adaptation plans developed through community-based approaches are a core element
- E. The resilience of women and men who are most vulnerable to climate change is built
- F. There is a balance between the investment in physical infrastructure and the building of skills and capacities
- G. Plans respond to evidence of the current and future impacts of climate change

For operationalization, each of these principles is complemented with more concrete criteria, as in the following exampleⁱ:

- A. The planning process is participatory and inclusive
 - 1. The knowledge and experience of local communities and indigenous peoples is incorporated
 - 2. Communities affected by climate change participate in defining options and priorities
 - 3. Plans are publicised in ways that local people can understand and engage with

ⁱ The complete JPA version 1.0 including all the complementing criteria, is found here:
http://www.southernvoices.net/images/docs/JointPrinciplesforAdaptation_v1.pdf