

Human Settlements and Adaptation

11th Focal Point Forum of the Nairobi work programme

8 November 2017

Focus Group Discussion 2: Integrating both short-term and long-term climate considerations (including both extreme and slow onset events) into planning



The discussion in group two focused on challenges, successes and opportunities that relate to integrating both short-term and long-term climate considerations into planning

- I) Overview of the key challenges met by the participants in relation to the focus area:
- Relevant time horizons:
 - National Adaptation Plans focus on the period up to 2030, but the life of infrastructure investments extends far beyond that;
 - There is a poor understanding outside the private sector of long-term planning, because the private sector use life cycle planning in risk assessments, but city level administrations tend to lack understanding of the long-term.
 - Access to climate information:
 - Who provides it? Is it in the format that I need? There should be opportunities for local authorities as well as civil society to ask experts to better interpret data;
 - To have good planning we need good data.
 - Uncertain data: prognosis is uncertain, which gives low incentives to private sector companies to implement adaptation projects;
 - It is impossible to adapt within the broad range of possible futures. There is a need to narrow down uncertainty regarding the long-term perspective. This can only happen by committing to what we agreed in Paris.
 - Use of natural resources:
 - With high population growth, water is a big challenge, both in terms of water quality and water availability;
 - Natural resources are fast degrading.
 - Climate change planning.
 - Is a part of local urban development planning

- Especially in the global south, the private sector takes the initiative in urban development, focusing their attention on areas likely to generate profits and leaving planning authorities playing catch-up. This makes it challenging for planners to engage in holistic urban development planning that incorporates climate change concerns.
 - The challenge is exacerbated because of a lack of capacity in planning institutions, at both local and national levels;
 - Similarly, there is a lack of policy integration as a result of low levels of institutional and planning capacity.
 - For example, there is a tendency to address emergencies and focus on DRR, which is often not well integrated with long term planning. This leaves space for maladaptation.
- Adaptation financing:
 - Governments do not always have enough funding for adaptation projects.
 - Lack of private sector being engaged in adaptation financing, partially because of a lack of financial incentives for them to do so;
 - Local governments find it challenging to raise money via innovative techniques.

- II) Ideas in terms of possible response measures that could be undertaken, including through collaboration and/or by the participants in the group, to address such challenges:
- Particularly in the global south there should be public sector capacity strengthening for planning, and particularly in relation to regulating private sector activities;
 - Planning should incorporate resilience approaches, and as such should be done holistically and include different levels and institutions;
 - By focusing on resilience strategies, we can act now, even though the future is uncertain;
 - Adapting to a changing climate means a long-term commitment:
 - While public awareness raising is important, there is also a need for climate change curricula in schools;
 - Parents can be involved in teaching their children, but children can also educate their parents.
 - Public participation:
 - Public awareness can be used to apply pressure on the political level to act:
 - Raising awareness needs to be accompanied by answers on how to manage and control climate related risks;
 - There is a need to coordinate both public awareness raising and application of pressure on the political level. The coordinating entity should take the local context and circumstances into account, and may be an NGO, civil society organization or a public agency.

- Champions can be used to engage people, thereby strengthening public participation;
- There is a need for scientific communicators who can share knowledge across sectors and levels;
- Where there is grassroots support for action, it is easier for local government to develop and implement adaptation regulations and measures;
- Involving citizens in discussion of problems, options and actions will build grass roots ownership of adaptation measures:
 - There may be windows of opportunity to engage the people at the community level (such as immediately following an extreme event, when the population is keen to make sure they are better prepared in the future);
 - There should be more research into ways to encourage community involvement prior to extreme events.