

Annex to Costa Rica 2013-15 Action Plan of the Climate Vulnerable Forum Concept Note: Third Report on Climate Vulnerability

October 2013

Background

The *Climate Vulnerability Monitor* (hereafter: the Monitor) series of reports have been the CVF's flagship publication and a major contribution to the literature on the contemporary socio-economic ramifications of global climate change. The Monitor is an independent report that assimilates this field's latest research and data and presents the implications of that knowledge in terms of current effects of climate change, including by providing country-specific impact and vulnerability data. The latest Monitor also expanded that focus to include analysis of the inter-related direct socio-economic consequences of carbon-intensive development.

The first two editions, issued in 2010 and 2012, were developed by the Madrid-based humanitarian research organization, DARA, together with inputs from extensive external advisory bodies. The first Monitor was commissioned in mid-2010 by the Maldives as initiating CVF Chair and issued in conjunction with the UN Climate Change Conference at Cancun, Mexico (COP16). The 2nd Edition of the Monitor was commissioned by the CVF ministerial meeting at Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2011 and issued in conjunction with the 67th UN General Assembly opening in New York in September 2012, marking a significant expansion, update and improvement over the initial report.

Principal Findings of the Latest Monitor

The latest Monitor agglomerated latest and leading science, research and data to form 34 indicators of current and near-term impact of climate change and carbon intensiveness for 184 countries. Key findings from this comprehensive database included that:

- Inadequacies of action tackling climate change already hold back global economic growth;
- Effectively addressing climate change will generate net economic benefits for the world economy and for all its regions;
- The most ambitious response to climate change entails the greatest benefits and the least harm in human and economic terms; and,
- Lower and middle-income countries experience the greatest share of the negative consequences of climate change, with the most severe effects confined to the lowest income and emitting nations.

Objective in Mandating a Third Edition

A third edition of the Monitor could provide a substantive and crucial input to the 2015 process of UN climate negotiations in addition to ensuring another important update to the foremost country-level database of current climate impact information that the report provides. In particular, a third Monitor could capture the general update to climate science brought by the publication of the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report (during 2013-2014) and serve as a major contribution to the 2013-2015 Review within the UNFCCC negotiations of whether to strengthen the current 2 degrees Celsius temperature goal.

Key Advantages of the Monitor

- *Advocacy Impact:* Repeated success as an advocacy tool with a proven track record of strong global media coverage and public attention at the time of issue.
- *Data:* The most comprehensive national-level database of climate change impact estimates with statistics for 184 countries for 2010 and 2030 based on latest and leading research as a helpful input for communication and policy calibration.
- *High-Level Economic Analysis:* Global net benefits analysis on the economic advantages of undertaking climate action for all regions based on latest knowledge and important input to global debate on responding to climate change.
- *Country Focus:* Country studies included in the Monitor reports provided useful opportunities for national exchanges on domestic policy responses to climate vulnerability and informative report examples.

Main Areas for Further Improvement

- *Networking & Process:* While more than 50 experts took part in the previous Monitor's advisory bodies, they served in a personal capacity triggering only limited wider engagement of their organizations with the report project. The Monitor project would enrich its development and enhance dissemination and outreach prospects with more formal collaboration and engagement of key institutions.
- *Authority/Technical Accuracy:* DARA, the organization mandated to develop the first two editions of the Monitor was not a specialized scientific institution but a humanitarian research institute focused on field-based knowledge. While this approach added a fresh perspective to understanding climate change, the Monitor could see technical improvements and would gain in authority if developed by a scientific organization (or group thereof) and with a deepened involvement of scientists in the project.
- *Outreach:* Use of the Monitor as a regular reference tool for national and international policy development has not achieved the level of traction the reports managed in immediate-impact advocacy terms. Furthermore, beyond the initial report launch, media commentary of the report and its prominent use by other key stakeholders, such as universities, think tanks and politicians has not materialized to the fullest possible extent. No previous Monitor included an outreach and dissemination plan in the project's design, which should form an integral component of any third Monitor, nor has a Monitor been published by a commercial publishing house.
- *CVF Member Participation:* Only two country studies were included in the latest Monitor (focused on Ghana and Vietnam) and CVF countries were only involved in a limited way in the report's development, publication and dissemination process, foregoing potentially important knowledge capture and exchange opportunities.
- *UNFCCC Formal Input:* The Monitor has never been presented as a formal input into the UNFCCC negotiations. In the context of the 2013-2015 Review of the global temperature goal of 2 degrees Celsius, the Monitor could provide an important missing contribution, since IPCC reports are less specific as to the estimated socio-economic implications of current knowledge.

The Approach to a Third Monitor

- *Retain Basic Objectives:* Provide an assessment of country or sub-regional level estimations of the impact of climate change and associated carbon intensiveness issues for the current and near-term based on latest and leading scientific

information and data; ground the assimilation of varied data in interactive policy exchanges across CVF member countries; articulate headline policy conclusions that stem from these findings.

- *Scientific Lead Organization and Collaborators:* One or a group of respected scientific institutions should be identified to lead the development of the third Monitor. The direct involvement of specialist scientists should be sought as collaborators in the context of the report's development and dissemination.
- *Partner Organizations:* Additional leading academic institutions or think tanks should be identified for substantive engagement in the report's development and dissemination from all top economies and regions of the world.
- *Sub-Regional/Regional Activities:* Core report development and dissemination phases should include activities to take place in CVF member countries, with activities in each key region.
- *Dissemination and Outreach Strategy:* The Monitor project should include a detailed strategy for maximizing the reach achieved by the report, its data and conclusions.
- *Formal Publication:* The third Monitor should be issued for publication by a reputed commercial publishing house for distribution also via conventional publication channels (book stores, libraries and universities).
- *Formal UNFCCC Submission:* CVF lead governments to seek and ensure a formal presentation and introduction of the third Monitor into the UNFCCC negotiations, such as via the 2013-2015 Global Review process.

Next Steps

An Inception Report should be developed that provides further clarity on the architecture, timelines and budget considerations of different project scenarios for a third Monitor. The project should proceed on the basis of key conclusions of a stakeholder review of the Inception Report, resources permitting.