

Climate Vulnerable Forum Regional Workshop: Asia Manila, May 2015

CONCEPT NOTE v.1

Overview

The Asia Climate Vulnerable Forum Regional Workshop aims to identify headline climate change policy priorities for vulnerable developing countries of the region. It also deliberately facilitates the exchange of knowledge to share on challenges, successes and experiences in climate change policy implementation between countries regionally. The event provides an opportunity for states to discuss collective policy priorities for the region outside of formal negotiation or institutional channels, and for other stakeholders to interact with these discussions. The Workshop will additionally host a preliminary national consultation for the creation of a new South-South centre of excellence on hydromet emergencies to be based in Philippines. The outcomes of the Workshop will feed into the Climate Vulnerable Forum's global deliberations and serve as the input for countries from Asia towards its forward work.

Background

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is a semi-formal and non-exclusive cooperation mechanism for vulnerable developing countries focused specifically on climate change policy. The CVF is hosting regional workshops during 2014-15 in Africa, Asia, Central America/Caribbean, the Middle East and the Pacific to inform its global advocacy efforts ahead of UNFCCC COP21 on the basis of a more representative understanding of climate change policy priorities for developing countries vulnerable to climate change. These workshops are also a key input to the future collaborative work of countries through the CVF itself, including in the run-up to and during COP21, as well as for the period beyond 2015.

The Asia Regional Workshop is the input mechanism for countries from the region to these initiatives. Its conclusions will directly inform a Global Consultation of the hosts of all the CVF regional workshops of 2014-15 taking place in Bonn in June 2015 during the UNFCCC inter-sessional there.

Regional Context

A microcosm of the global challenge of climate change Asia spans diverse geographies with land-locked, island and atoll, as well as high- low- and varied- elevation nations. It includes tropical, sub-tropical, arid, temperate, continental and alpine climates. Developing countries vulnerable to severe climate effects, moreover, include least developed, low- and middle- income countries.

Multiple regional entities in Asia are increasingly active on climate change, such as the Asian Development Bank, ASEAN, APEC, and SAARC, including joint targets and action plans among other efforts. At national level, a number of countries have achieved considerable progress in addressing various aspects of the climate policy challenge, including a great deal of highly innovative and successful responses to climate change. Select examples of these include Bangladesh's risk reduction efforts and solar home systems, Maldives's national adaptation programme for safer islands, Philippines's unique climate change commission-based governance framework and Vietnam's national climate change strategy and development partner support framework.

Nevertheless, the region continues to present some of the most significant vulnerabilities of any in the world to global sea level rise, tropical cyclones, heat extremes, flooding, ocean warming, and health condition climate sensitivity. Forest degradation, agricultural production risks and growing energy demands are also major pan-regional concerns, as are the interrelated issues of urbanization, fast-paced industrial development and surging food and water resource demand. Significant opportunities for climate mitigation co-benefits due to serious degrees of ambient outdoor and indoor air pollution are also a feature special to Asia.

Outputs, Outcomes & Follow-Up

The CVF Regional Workshop for Asia will draw on country experience to identify an up-to-date understanding of the types of challenges, successes, needs and gaps experienced by developing nations as they strive to implement climate change policies across the region. In doing so the workshop will identify more effective responses to climate change pertinent to Asia together with recommendations for actors at different levels (national, regional and global). It also aims to expand involvement in this policy dialogue beyond the eight countries from the region that are currently members of the CVF – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Vietnam – including three current/previous Forum Chairs (Bangladesh, Philippines, Maldives).

Key **outputs** from the two days of the CVF workshop will include clarity on the experience of developing countries in Asia in implementing national/regional climate change policies, in terms of:

- The most significant challenges faced in the implementation of climate action (whether programmatic, geographic, governance, finance, technology or in other respects), inclusive of adaptation and mitigation
- Projects, programmes or aspects of climate policy that have met with the most success at national or regional levels – knowledge that other countries within and beyond the region could benefit from
- Chief needs and priorities for achieving further progress and the advancement of the response to climate change on the ground (adaptation and mitigation), including a discrete set of policy recommendations for enhanced climate action targeting national, regional and global progress

Expected **outcomes** of the CVF workshop include:

- Shared understanding of lessons learned from adaptation and mitigation work in the region and how these might be applied to future projects/programmes
- Identification of the most important risks, solutions and needs for vulnerable countries of the region
- Shared agreement on future climate change policy priorities
- Identification of promising new areas for international and South-South collaboration in addressing climate change building on exchange of knowledge on policy response success
- Promotion of local/regional public awareness, increased representativeness of CVF efforts and inputs from Asia to the CVF's work focused on COP21 and other climate-relevant policy domains during and post-2015

As a part of the workshop, a half-day preliminary national consultation will also capture the views of wide-ranging stakeholders on the creation of a new South-South centre of excellence on hydromet emergencies to be based in Philippines.

The workshop is **followed-up** through a Global Consultation in June 2015 in Bonn will review the findings of all the regional workshops collectively and inform global level

actions and advocacy of the Forum ahead of COP21 with the objective of ensuring strong and representative inputs of vulnerable countries. Consultations on the new Centre of Excellence will also feed directly into Philippines government initiatives for its establishment.

Structure, Participants & Methodology

The **structure** of two-day Workshop will consist of open public as well as closed segments, with a balance of presentations with question and answers together with group working sessions for the detailed examination and synthesis of issues. Opening and closing sessions will engage and inform broader groups of stakeholders, the public and the media. A third and final day will be devoted to an optional field site visit to relevant climate projects/initiatives within reach of Manila.

Participants in the Workshop are to include:

- Government officials responsible for climate change policy implementation (inclusive of adaptation and mitigation) from CVF members and other developing countries vulnerable to climate change from across Asia
- National and local government officials from relevant Philippines entities
- Relevant international organizations, agencies and assistance actors active in Philippines and Asia
- Representatives of academia, private sector, NGOs and other civil society groups based in Manila
- Members of the diplomatic corps and information media (for open sessions) based in Manila

Participants in the preliminary national consultation are to additionally include:

- Meteorological institutions and experts based in Philippines and relevant international and regional organizations, including the World Meteorological Organization

The CVF Trust Fund is sponsoring a limited number of designated national representatives from members and other countries within the region to attend the workshop. International organizations and other international participants are kindly requested to defray their own travelling expenses.

The Workshop **methodology** follows a three-step process of:

- 1) Presentations from different countries and organizations on lessons-learned and experience in climate change policy implementation
- 2) Facilitated breakout group brainstorming of key challenges, successes, needs and forward priorities
- 3) Reporting back and facilitated group synthesis in plenary formulating a discrete set of recommendations for enhancing the response to climate change through actions at national, regional and global levels

A limited number of focused sessions will also enable in-depth examination of additional specific topics of special interest. The national consultation, moreover, will comprise expert presentations, question and answer sessions with government authorities and plenary discussion.