

Regional Conference
“A Scoping Study on
the Impact of Climate Change and Food Insecurity on Poverty in South Asia”
January 11, 2011, Magnolia, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Climate change is expected to affect human and animal life in various ways. Rise in temperature and decline in rainfall may create difficult environmental conditions unsuitable for life forms. Agricultural yield, especially in the developing countries, may fall heavily under such circumstances due to heavy dependence of their (developing countries) agriculture on rainfall, and inadequate adaptive mechanisms. Decrease in land productivity and overall yield will have a direct impact on the food security owing to reduced physical availability of food. High demand unmatched by equivalent supply will lead to high food prices and hence, reduced access to other basic needs (including food). Thus, climate change may result in significant food insecurity, particularly in the developing world given their low/inadequate adaptive capacity and preparedness.

Climate change induced food insecurity will have severe implications for the people, particularly those who are poor. Small and marginal farmers (constituting the bulk of the poor in developing countries) will face impoverished conditions due to possible fall in their agricultural productivity and output. Farmers along the coastline may even lose their lands with rise in sea level. Number of urban poor may also rise with fall in purchasing power resulting in higher rural-urban migration. Consequently, magnitude of food insecurity and associated poverty, which is already a daunting problem faced by the poor countries will increase with further negative effects of climate change.

Given this background, CUTS has undertaken a research-based advocacy project entitled “A Scoping Study on the Impact of Climate Change and Food Insecurity on Poverty in South Asia”. In partnership with local organisations, it is being implemented in four South Asian countries, viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The project is supported by Oxfam Novib, The Netherlands.

A long-term objective of the project is to have a better understanding of linkages between climate change and food security, and associated policy and practice changes which are necessary to address possible negative consequences of those linkages. An immediate objective is to understand the real causes of the decline in crop yields in these countries in South Asia and ascertain their linkage with climate change through literature review, analysis of secondary and primary data including by gathering perception among farmers (primarily small and marginal ones) and other stakeholders about those impacts.

Based on the findings of the project, CUTS International has drafted a preliminary report collating the available information from secondary and primary sources.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this event is to gather feedback from among the project partner, experts and other stakeholders on the findings of this report including deliberating on learning from four South Asian countries regarding the issues about climate change, food insecurity, and associated poverty.

Tentative Agenda

0930 - 1000	Registration
1000 - 1030	<p>Opening Session</p> <p>Welcome Address: Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International</p> <p>Keynote Address: Kirit Parikh, Chairman, Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe)</p> <p>Overview of the Project: Bipul Chatterjee, Deputy Executive Director, CUTS International</p> <p><i>A brief introduction of CUTS and overview of the project – its relevance, etc in the present situation when climate change is a key concern all over the world.</i></p>
1030 - 1100	Tea/Coffee
1100 - 1300	<p>Session 1: Climate Change and Livelihood Concerns of Farmers: Learning from South Asia</p> <p><i>This session will showcase some insights about the impact of climate change on livelihood concerns of farmers in four South Asian countries, viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Such insights will bring forth inter-country comparison and highlight possibilities for integrated efforts to address such concerns through adaptation as well as mitigation.</i></p> <p>Chairperson: Ilona Porsché, Senior Technical Advisor, Natural Resources Management Programme, GTZ</p> <p>Presentation by Project Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghulam Habib, Afghan Development Agency • Faruk Ul Islam, Practical Action Bangladesh • Alka Awasthi, The Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society (CECOEDECON) • Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) <p>Discussion</p>
1300 - 1400	Lunch
1400 - 1600	<p>Session 2: Discussion on the Draft Report on "Impact of Climate Change and Food Insecurity on Poverty in South Asia"</p> <p><i>A detailed discussion of the methodology, content and quality of the report prepared by CUTS and its project partners along with a summarised overview of the key findings of the study will be presented. The discussions will mainly focus on collection of views and comments of experts, partners and other participants.</i></p>

	<p>Chairperson: V. Arivudai Nambi, Principal Scientist, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinod Kumar Sharma, Disaster Management and Environment, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) • Veena Khaleque, Country Director, Practical Action Bangladesh <p>Presentation of the Draft Report: Suresh P Singh, Policy Analyst, CUTS International</p> <p>Discussion</p>
1600 - 1630	Vote of Thanks – Shruti Mittal, Research Assistant, CUTS International