



Bridging the Divide Between Poverty Reduction and Climate Change Through Sustainable and Innovative Energy Technologies

**SCALING UP SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INNOVATIONS THAT CAN ADDRESS
CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS AND POVERTY REDUCTION NEEDS**

December 2009

Expert Paper

Cover photographs: World Bank/Dominic Sansoni, 2002; Practical Action/Zul, 2004

Design and layout: Kimberly Koserowski

Printing: Phoenix Design Aid

This desk study is written independently by the author. It is financially supported by the Environment and Energy Group of UNDP. The author is an independent consultant who has worked on a range of sustainable development issues for UNDP, UNDESA and the World Bank-Global Environment Facility, UNFCCC, and other non-profit organisations, including the MacArthur and Rockefeller Foundations. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UNDP, or their Member States.

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That Can Address Climate Change Concerns
and Poverty Reduction Needs

Expert Paper

Prepared by Dr. Anilla Cherian
December 2009

Foreword

World leaders who gathered in September 2009 in the context of the UN General Assembly, and also in various fora all over the globe, have called for a comprehensive and forward-looking international climate change agreement at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen, 7–18 December 2009. The process leading to Copenhagen was launched in Bali, December 2007, when all Parties agreed on the Bali Action Plan—a 2-year process leading to an agreed outcome on climate change in Copenhagen. Although it now appears that a comprehensive agreement will not be reached at Copenhagen, negotiations are sure to continue in 2010.

Building on this 2-year process of global meetings and media attention calling on world leaders and intergovernmental negotiators to ‘seal the deal’ in Copenhagen and beyond, much remains to be done to achieve an ambitious and equitable climate change agreement. With the clock ticking fast, one key question that remains largely unanswered is: How will the climate change agreement of Copenhagen and beyond Copenhagen impact the lives of millions of poor and vulnerable communities and countries around the world?

There is a broad global consensus that the severity of the climate change problem will have profound and lasting impacts on human well-being and economic development, particularly amongst those countries and communities that have contributed the least to the problem, and have the least capacities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. Despite global agreement that poverty reduction is central to achieving

sustainable development goals, and the growing consensus on the gravity of the climate change crisis, global, regional, and national actions and discussions focused on these two challenges have unfortunately remained distinct. Within the rubric of the international climate change framework, there have been insufficient concrete policy and programmatic inputs to ensure closer linkages between the poverty reduction and global climate change policy agendas.

UNDP, as a member of the UN Development Group and manager of the Resident Coordinator system, recognises that its continued support of nationally driven poverty eradication objectives at the country and local levels is directly impacted and influenced by the gravity of the climate change crisis. UNDP recognises that embracing a new development paradigm that links poverty reduction efforts with climate change goals necessitates that climate change considerations be fully integrated with national plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and that national climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and projects be directly linked with poverty reduction goals. It also necessitates that investment and development decisions have a consistent climate change focus built in at every step from project idea to design, implementation, and monitoring.

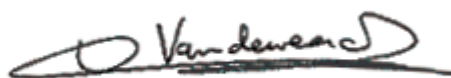
Increasing and improving access to cost-effective, innovative, and sustainable energy technologies for the poor is critical for addressing both climate change and poverty reduction concerns in many developing countries. Any post-2012 climate consensus needs to focus on concrete mechanisms and frameworks that

can support energy innovations that directly improve the well-being of poor communities and countries that are most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of global climate change.

In the framework of global action to address climate change, the development community as a whole has a unique opportunity to integrate climate change and development concerns/goals by putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable at the front and centre of any future global climate change agreement. Focusing on ways and means that can

enable the research, design, development, and implementation of innovative energy technologies that address climate change needs and the needs of the poor is a very important element in any future, equitable global climate change deal.

It is my hope that this report will contribute to the current discussions on the issues raised above, and help bridge the divide between poverty reduction and climate change through sustainable technological innovations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vandeweerd', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Veerle Vandeweerd
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Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for all the valuable support and inputs provided by Veerle Vandeweerd and Minoru Takada of UNDP, as well as the inputs of members of UNDP's recently convened Poverty and Climate Change Network who reside all over the world. The comments provided by Leena Srivastava of TERI are thought-provoking, and

merit a follow-up report focused on providing evidence and analyses of the institutional and regulatory frameworks/mechanisms that facilitate energy technology innovations. Last, but never least, I am particularly grateful to my family— my husband, our sons Rohan and Arman, and my parents—for all their support and encouragement.

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Executive Summary

Efforts to eradicate poverty and to tackle climate change cannot be separated. The experiences of the poor families across the Asia and Pacific region who will wake up this morning in shelters, without homes, or having lost their means of making a living, remind us that the poorest people—those who are least equipped to cope with natural disasters—are most likely to suffer the most severe impacts of climate change. A person living in a developing country is 79 times more likely to suffer from a climate-related disaster than someone living in a developed country... When they meet on climate change in Copenhagen this December, the negotiators could do a deal which is positive for our climate and for poverty reduction and development.

—Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP

There is a broad global consensus that the severity of the climate change problem will have profound and lasting impacts on human well-being and economic development, particularly amongst those countries and communities that have contributed the least to the problem, and have the least capacities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. Clearly, failure or delay to secure an effective and equitable consensus for climate change action is not a viable option. The tragic reality is that for millions of poor and vulnerable living in diverse areas of the globe, climate change

inextricably linked to the broader global quest for sustainable development for all; and that efforts to address global climate change need to more effectively linked with poverty reduction efforts at all levels. Toward this end, it is imperative that any post-2012 climate consensus focus on concrete elements such as increasing access to low-cost, sustainable energy technologies and systems that can directly improve the well-being of millions of poor and vulnerable people that live in areas estimated to be the most adversely impacted by the effects of global climate change.

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