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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

SEALING AN **EQUITABLE** DEAL IN COPENHAGEN AND
BEYOND BY **INTEGRATING**
POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS
WITH **CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS**



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SEALING AN **EQUITABLE** DEAL IN COPENHAGEN AND BEYOND BY INTEGRATING POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS WITH CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS

If we don't put our global fight to eradicate poverty at the heart of any international climate change agreement, we are effectively leaving the world's poor to "sink or swim" by themselves as Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said. The international community has a collective responsibility to ensure that this does not happen.

—Helen Clark, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

We stand collectively at an important crossroads in our planet's future. Indications are that climate change is taking place faster than previously projected. Climate change has the real potential to undermine development progress in different parts of the globe. For this reason, fighting poverty and protecting our planet must go hand-in-hand—and the new climate change deal must also be a deal for **development**.

Climate change will hit the poorest and most vulnerable first and hardest. The poorest people—those 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. Research indicates that climate shocks worsen existing gender inequalities and the effects of climate change will weigh heavily on women and children.

Despite the profound and lasting impacts that climate change will bring to those who have contributed least to the problem, all too often responses to climate change remain far removed, or even completely detached, from poverty reduction efforts. Indeed, the adverse impacts of climate

Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Human Well-Being and Economic Development: Selected Examples

- » Up to 600 million more people in Africa could face malnutrition as agricultural systems break down.
- » An additional 1.8 billion people could face water shortages, especially in Asia.
- » More than 70 million Bangladeshis, 22 million Vietnamese, and 6 million Egyptians could be affected by climate-related flooding.
- » Due to altered rainfall, humidity, and temperature patterns caused by climate change, malaria—which currently claims some 800,000 children’s lives each year—will spread to areas from which it had previously been eliminated, such as the highlands of Kenya and Jamaica.
- » Increased flooding is likely to exacerbate sanitation problems, especially in densely populated urban areas, increasing the threat of waterborne diseases, including cholera.

change can seriously impede progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aimed principally at reducing extreme poverty.

If vulnerable people and countries are to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, first and foremost, they must have what they need to lift themselves out of poverty and create a decent life. Without basic access to energy, food, water, and sanitation—as well as institutions that work and give people a say in decisions affecting their lives—poor communities and countries will not be able to cope with the additional burden of a changing climate. Therefore, increased access to sustainable energy services for the world’s poorest countries and communities should be fully integrated into actions to reduce extreme poverty and address global climate change. However daunting the task, the international community must no longer ignore it.

Moreover, poor countries and people need targeted support to adapt to climate change—

from the poor farmer who wants to grow more resilient crops, to the family whose home must be able to withstand increased flooding. There is also an urgent need to support small and medium-sized enterprises to help them harness modern energy sources and services for the benefit of their communities. Innovative, low-cost, low-emission technologies and services—particularly those developed and facilitated by South-South cooperation—can help pave lower-emission routes to accelerated development and fulfill a key role in our collective global energy future.

Clearly, the time to act forcefully is now. A new global climate change deal is urgently needed, but the ‘deal’ needs to be an **equitable** one. It needs to support low-emission routes to growth and energy access, and to support adaptation and the building of greater resilience to climate-related natural disasters. Let us work together to ensure that we do not seal just ‘any deal’ in Copenhagen and beyond, but instead seal an **equitable** deal that is positive for our climate and for poverty reduction and development.

INTEGRATING POVERTY REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE: **TRANSLATING IDEAS INTO PRACTICAL ACTION**

While climate change presents great challenges, it also offers opportunities to assist the world's poorer countries in creating and sustaining inclusive, low-emission pathways out of poverty. As the leading global organisation in the fight against poverty, on the ground in 166 countries, UNDP is responding on the front line of climate change—where it hits the poorest people the hardest.



PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS. 1



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INFORMED DECISION-MAKING FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change adds new levels of complexity and stress to the already complex, multi-dimensional global challenge of poverty alleviation. The sheer scope and dynamic nature of global climate change makes it difficult for many developing countries—particularly the least developed and most vulnerable countries—to take effective action. But avoiding or postponing responsive action could be more catastrophic in the longer term. Building resilience and addressing vulnerabilities with poor and marginal communities are critical factors in any climate-change response strategy.

For decision-makers in developing countries, addressing climate change needs and poverty reduction in an integrated manner offers new opportunities and challenges. Recognising the importance of decision-making tools and approaches that can enable developing countries to respond more effectively to context-specific, country-driven climate change concerns and national poverty reduction objectives, UNDP has

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