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IS YOUR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ADAPTABLE?

Climate change is one of the main challenges of our time and the negative consequences are felt across the globe. The poor countries are expected to suffer the most and in order to effectively help these countries, the development cooperation must be climate-proof.

To work towards the overall goal of poverty alleviation, Denmark has acknowledged its responsibility to climate-proof its development assistance. However, all partners must be committed, if long-term sustainable development is to be achieved.

A strong message

The Assessment Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) leaves no doubt: by affecting the natural environment and the world's ecosystems, global warming will seriously influence agriculture, the water supply and the livelihoods of millions of poor people in developing countries.

By 2020, up to 250 million people in Africa are projected to suffer from increased water-stress due to climate change. Coupled with a rising demand,

this will have an adverse impact on livelihoods and exacerbate water-related problems. Agricultural production and food security in many African countries are also expected to be severely affected by climate change.

The path to progress

In 2005, Denmark launched the "Climate and Development Action Programme", which is an integral part of the Danida Aid Management Guidelines (AMG). Along with the mandatory environmental screening process, a climate change screening is conducted in order to define the need for either adaptation or mitigation measures.

Adaptation of crops

Adaptation involves coping strategies in relation to climate events; examples in the Danish development cooperation include assessment of the effects of extreme weather on infrastructure, e.g. road construction and risk management in agriculture. For instance, crops in Africa are improved through grafting to mature faster and to better cope with droughts.

Reducing CO₂ emission

Mitigation means reducing human-

caused emission of greenhouse gasses in order to avoid development action becoming future global warming. Denmark therefore strives to identify opportunities for its partner countries to pursue, for instance, sustainable energy methods and land management to reduce CO₂ emission.

Negotiations on climate

Poor developing countries are severely affected by climate change, while hardly contributing to the problems. Denmark, therefore, assists these countries in strengthening their capacity in order for them to play an active role in the international debate and negotiations, for instance at the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen (COP 15) in 2009. The aim is to ensure the best conditions for continued economic and sustainable development.

Climate proofing is expensive, but ignoring climate change in development will become even more costly in the long run, economically, socially and environmentally.

For more information visit: www.um.dk

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CASES

COPING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Denmark mainstreams climate change adaptation in its development cooperation in order to help effectively fight global poverty and promote sustainable economic and social development. Each geographical location, naturally, presents its own challenges.

Water management in Ghana

In Ghana, as in other countries, water resources are vital for the continued socio-economic development and betterment of the population's livelihood. Simulations using projected climate change scenarios indicate an overall reduction in river flows in Ghana by 2050.

The impact of such changes on water resource availability can put the country's development at risk and lead to regional conflicts. Hence, sound and pragmatic approaches to water resource management and sustainable resource utilization are called for - especially for a regionally shared river system like the Volta Basin.

Handling water shortage

Denmark has supported Ghana through its Water Resources Commission to introduce and mainstream the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM) at various levels of society. IWRM seems the proper way to manage and develop water resources in a sustainable way: at a national level through, for instance, formulation of an IWRM policy, introduction of water abstraction permit regulations and preparation of a policy for river bank

zoning (creation of buffer strips); and at river basin level, through establishment of basin-based organizations to guide and oversee the management of the water resources.

Excess water in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the people cope with overflowing rivers, as these rivers are literally the drainpipes of the Himalayas. The problem will be worsened by a rising sea level and an expected increased number of severe floods and cyclones due to climate change.

Under such conditions, the infrastructure is fragile and roads built in Bangladesh without considering the effects of climate change could be severely damaged by ever more frequent and violent floods.

On the other hand, sustainable roads built on embankments contribute to controlling the water and providing shelter to people and animals.

Therefore, Denmark and Bangladesh are engaged in development cooperation to climate-proof road constructions to withstand floods and allow drainage. This involves coordination with other aspects of the practical planning, such as the construction of embankments, the placement of the roads, the building materials used, construction principles and future maintenance.



Bangladeshi women are building a road with support from Danida. Small as well as big projects are sought adapted to climate change. Photo: Jan Møller Hansen, Danida



The Ghanaian people depend on their water-supply for betterment. This water pump is elevated to facilitate the work. Photo: Jørgen Schytte, Danida