



# 4 Difficult Environments

**Bridging Concepts and Practice for Low Carbon Climate Resilient Development**

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The IDS–DFID Learning Hub aims to improve knowledge and information flows between DFID practitioners and experts in the field of low carbon climate resilient development. It is a new approach that combines practitioner learning networks, knowledge management capacity and reflective learning processes with bespoke research and analysis. The Hub has four interconnected ‘learning cycles’ (*Approaches to planning for climate change; tackling poverty in a changing climate; low carbon energy and development; and difficult environments*). Each cycle hosts a learning event which are safe, supported spaces for DFID staff who work on climate change and development to share individual learning and skills; engage experts in dialogue; develop new ways of thinking and working together; identify where there are knowledge and learning gaps and contribute to the co-creation of a common knowledge base around ‘low carbon climate resilient development’. All the learning cycles are linked through various inputs and outputs that create an ongoing flow of knowledge and will lead to the development of theories of change for Low Carbon Climate Resilient Development.

This is the fourth Bridging Paper from the Hub’s fourth learning cycle; *difficult environments*.

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# Acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CTF	Clean Technology Fund
DAC	Donor Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FSF	Fast Start Finance
GCAP	Global Climate Adaptation Partnership
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GSM	Global Circulation Models
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LCCRD	Low carbon climate resilient development
LCD	Low carbon development
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRB	Niger River Basin
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCDMB	Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch
PPCR	Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SCF	Strategic Climate Fund
SREP	Scaling-up Renewable Energy Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WB-CIF	World Bank Climate Investment Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WKG	Westhill Knowledge Group



# Introduction

The fourth cycle of the Learning Hub aimed to bring together theory and practice on climate adaptation and development in difficult environments and fragile states. Approaches to working in difficult environments are increasingly on the agenda of donor agencies and development organisations. Experiences from countries such as Sudan, Nepal, Somalia, Afghanistan and several others point to the need for a better understanding of the specific context difficult environments present.

There is a growing literature on fragile and failed states, the focus of which is still on security and peace issues. Literature, which addresses development problems, is still characterised by the drive to find a ‘one size fits all’ solution for countries and situations that – if seen from angles other than ‘instability’ – are radically different. However, despite the growth in literature, analytical frameworks, policy and strategy documents, adaptation and development in difficult environments are still relatively new.

Difficult environments include a broad set of contexts: conflict and post-conflict, post-disaster rehabilitation and rebuilding, and states with weak governance and low levels of political will. The fourth cycle of the Learning Hub undertook a review of current approaches, tools and narratives, and captured experience and lessons from tackling climate change in difficult environments. It examined the inter-relationships between climate change, development, conflict/peace-building and specifically the nexus in which all three overlap. This paper sets out the critical dimensions of adaptation and development programming and policy engagement that emerged through the dialogue between DFID practitioners, advisers and the authors.

This paper bridges the concepts and review of the state-of-play set out in the background paper prepared for the learning event with the learning outcomes from the fourth cycle. In the next section the paper unpacks narratives of difficult environments, going beyond definitions or conditions of fragility to deepen our understanding of the specific context within which policies and strategies need to be set. The paper then progresses, in sections three to six, to explore how a climate resilient state can be achieved in an unstable and difficult environment. It asks:

- **What are the impacts of climate change in difficult environments beyond what climate science modelling says?**
- **What are the challenges in planning and delivering low carbon resilient development in difficult environments and how should an LCCRD agenda be set?**
- **How can climate change adaptation contribute as a vehicle to building a peaceful state, and what institutional capacities need to be in place to reach the goal of becoming a peaceful resilient state?**
- **How does that translate into tangible key tasks for all stakeholders involved?**

The paper concludes by stressing the importance of ‘contextualisation’ in difficult environments, of allowing ‘home grown’ approaches and methods to evolve and of the need for ‘experimenting’ where conditions are uncertain and situations are in a constant state of flux.



# Setting the scene: unpacking narratives of fragility and adaptation

Difficult and fragile environments are generally characterised by vulnerability to humanitarian crises (including slow and rapid onset disasters resulting from natural hazards); underdevelopment; political instability; lack of security; lack of legitimacy and authority; lack of political commitment of a government to perform its duties; lack of capacity to deliver basic services; and in some cases but not necessarily a condition, conflict and post-conflict environments (Faria 2011). In summary, whether on a national or sub-national scale, this particular context can be characterised by three dimensions: **authority, service and legitimacy failure**.

While the discourse on fragility has been criticised on various grounds – from being a reductionist term to failing to acknowledge the differences between social and political organisation that differ from the Western/Weberian model of state – it nevertheless has become mainstream terminology (see Faria 2011; Woodward 2004).

However, when climate change impact became an issue and cause for concern in difficult environments the ensuing narrative was largely driven by a security agenda, rather than ‘process accelerator’ or ‘threat multiplier’ concepts. What

appears in the media, and some political discourses, as a direct link between climate change and conflict, or indeed state fragility has no substantiated empirical evidence. Even when presented in an analytical way much of the literature is speculative and based on either anecdotal evidence or possible future scenarios that are difficult to prove or test.<sup>1</sup> Direct causal links largely originated from the ‘securitisation’ of climate change impact – for example, the popular and common belief that climate change will lead to ‘water wars’.

The post-Cold War era’s new political landscape demanded a broader and a wider approach to the term security. A 1994 report by the UN Development Programme articulated the term ‘human security’, shifting the emphasis towards a focus on securing individual people. This created the space to incorporate non-traditional threats, such as environmental degradation (slow-onset disasters), extreme events (rapid-onset disasters), and health and human rights, into the security agenda, alongside longstanding issues of defence and state interests (Schoch 2011; Woodward 2004). Reports from the EU, the US, the UK and Germany were aimed at mobilising more policy attention to climate change, and an April 2007 UN Security Council session was entirely

devoted to climate change, peace and security, further emphasising such security linkages.

Securitising climate change in difficult and fragile environments in a way that didn't explicitly acknowledge and investigate added pressures caused by climate change, focused the world's attention on 'responding to a threat' rather than 'dealing with and mitigating against existing complex factors that exacerbate such threat'. In other words, a narrative that follows a 'threat specific analysis' based on climate change causing conflict doesn't connect to a policy agenda that is broader than a threat specific security response. It fails to acknowledge that whatever impact climate exerts on natural environments, such impact is always mediated through existing socio-political power dynamics and institutional factors. It also fails to recognise that the configuration and combination of problem issues (climate impact interacting with power structures, resource distribution, etc.) in each context is singular and specific to that context. These failures ignore the importance of contextualising not just approaches and policies, but analysis and problem identification in the first place. 'Context-specific approaches' are a main focus of this paper and will be further elaborated later.

Whilst climate change does present new challenges for development; power and influence remain enduring considerations. Newsham *et al.* (2011: 23).

Furthermore, there is still evidence to suggest that even where resource scarcity is the main issue, appropriate mediation and resource management mechanisms can be key to conflict resolution and even conflict prevention. The Nile Basin Initiative is one example, albeit not without its problems and challenges.<sup>2</sup> Another example is the Israeli-Jordanian initiative dubbed 'Picnic Table Talks' where in times of active conflict, water managers acted as the mediators across lines of a highly volatile environment (Dabelko 2008). UNEP's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) is undertaking what it calls 'environmental

diplomacy'. Such approaches emerged from slow, local and appropriate learning processes that guided an incremental pathway to mediation – a pathway that wasn't dictated or driven by a pre-determined and rigid outcome.

Framing climate change as a 'threat' rather than focusing on opportunities and adaptive capacity, while engaging only a limited pool of security specialists, runs the risk of missing crucial issues such as disaster or conflict mitigation, development, poverty reduction, economic growth, equity, justice and resilience – none of which figure on the priorities of the security agenda (Schoch 2011).

Experience from engaging with DFID staff in the learning hub event indicates that open but 'safe' forums for creative thinking are essential...this thinking needs to involve interaction with actors beyond the 'adaptation' and 'mitigation' experts who can bring very different perspectives to the table; without them, there is a real risk that critical and practical insights may be missed. Hedger *et al.* (2011: 32).

- 1 Where a link between climate change and conflict in IPCC reports is mentioned, it is weakly substantiated with evidence. The *Stern Review*'s references to how conflict 'may' occur as a result of climate change are mostly based on second hand sources of the same nature as those used by the IPCC. Some recent econometric work on the relationship between internal conflict and rainfall changes (as a proxy for economic instability) is also cited, but the implications of this work are not discussed at any length (Gleditsch *et al.* 2007).
- 2 Many of the Nile Basin countries are characterised by high levels of instability and even civil conflict. The nine basin states – Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda – have developed an initiative that centres around eight 'Shared Vision' projects including: Regional Power Trade, Water Resources Management, and Efficient Water Use for Agriculture projects.



# Climate change impact in difficult and fragile environments

It is one thing to look into the physical or ecological impact of climate change. It's another to look into the social impact. Coupled socio-ecological impact is a recognised and agreed term for climate change impact. No more this is the case than in difficult and fragile environments. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation cannot be seen in isolation of or outside the context of state-society relationships. It is, for example, naïve to attribute the conflict in Darfur to mere environmental factors. We can discern *five major social effects of climate change that mediate the physical impact and affect adaptive capacity*. It is precisely these effects and factors that need attention and commitment if we are to work on the root causes rather than the symptoms.

**1** First, economic problems, reduced state income, health and mortality, along with recurring disasters may hinder the state's ability to provide basic goods and services, further reducing the state's political legitimacy and inviting opposition and challengers (Homer-Dixon 1999). In stable and viable democracies, challenge and opposition take the form of coming up with solutions and alternatives in a peaceful manner. In less than stable conditions, the outcome could be radically different.

**2** Second, increasing resource competition between groups and when ethnic, national, or religious fault lines are aligned with such competition whether domestically or across borders, could intensify social cleavages, heighten ethnic identity and increase the risk of radicalisation and conflict (Kahl 2006). As noted earlier, resource scarcity or competition can also be a catalyst to conflict prevention and resolution with the right tools and mechanisms.

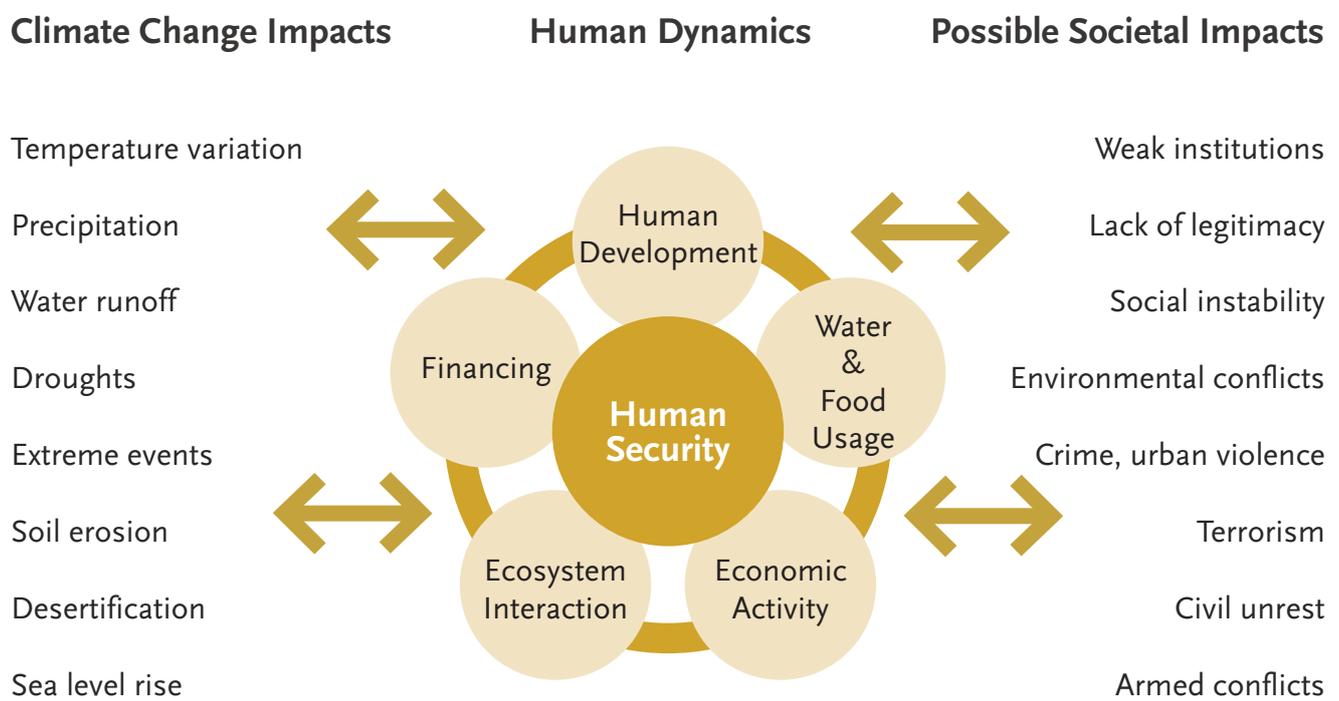
**3** Third, increasing unemployment, loss of livelihoods and economic activities would reduce state income and its ability to provide services (Ohlsson 2003; Homer-Dixon 1999). A focus on sustainable livelihoods will be key in this context.

**4** Fourth, efforts to address effects of climate change and deteriorating environment through, for example, large-scale adaptation and mitigation measures (dams, or forced population displacement), austerity measures and cutting expenditure on basic services because of investment in climate adaptation could also inadvertently stimulate tension (Buhaug *et al.* 2008). Top-down vs. bottom-

up adaptation or state directed vs. autonomous adaptation are major issues that will need to be carefully addressed in difficult environments.

**5** And finally, where environmental degradation could have an impact on population movement (Reuveny 2007; Warner *et al.* 2009); monitoring, early warning and supporting sustainable ecosystem services and addressing resilience rather than simply migration issues will be key and requires proactive action.

**Figure 1 The relationship between climate stress, human dynamics and societal impacts**



Source: Adapted from Scheffran and Battaglini (2010).

What is more or less common and important to acknowledge is that in situations of fragility, the political and economic elite are often organised in such a way as to give themselves privileged access and control over resources and opportunities. Climate change impacts could compel elite groups to further tighten their grip on resources and/or manipulate climate change funding to their own benefit (patronage and clientelism where contracts provide both licit and illicit money-making opportunities).

There is a danger of specific interests capturing the adaptation agenda – to the detriment of poor people. Agriculture for example...poorer farmers have been pushed off land by members of the agri-business sector which, at the same time, is often positioning itself to receive climate finance. Newsham *et al.* (2011: 23).

And this is where climate impact assessment in difficult and fragile environments needs to adopt a different approach from the one that's entirely or exclusively scenario based on Global Circulation Models (GSM) for example. This high resolution level of analysis (let alone prediction) fails to capture micro-level vulnerabilities, social and political dynamics, state-society relations, power structures, and everything else that's not necessarily unique to conditions of fragility, but highly determines ultimate impacts of climate change. In other words, what Smith and Vivekananda (2007) label 'the consequence of the consequences'.

The history of climate impacts assessment is rooted in 'what if' and 'so what' approaches that follow a fairly linear progression, from a climate scenario, to an impact receptor, to a set of consequences. This vector serves well in narrowly defined model-based studies but does very little to aid the understanding of climate impact in difficult environments, let alone informing policy on adaptation. A shift has already occurred in the adaptation-policy world to a framing based on real-world pathways. Often this is under a rubric of Act-Learn-then-Act again, or similar concepts of social learning and actor-institutional change. This poses a

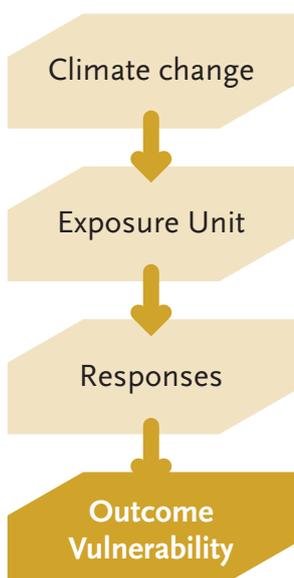
great challenge in difficult environments and fragile states where the conditions are not conducive to an 'act-learn-act' pathway, as the current overall development approaches do not take into account the complex political economy of such fragile contexts.

Beyond evaluating current vulnerability, what does future vulnerability look like? This is critical in fragile situations characterised by fluidity and a constant state of flux. Social vulnerability is embedded in relations among people and is multi-scalar – the links between people jump across space – therefore, as both social relations and spatial configurations change, the reference system for understanding vulnerability also changes over time. It is absolutely essential that such issues are recognised and addressed. They are not only relevant to fragile situations, but even more so because of the timescales of climate adaptation in general.

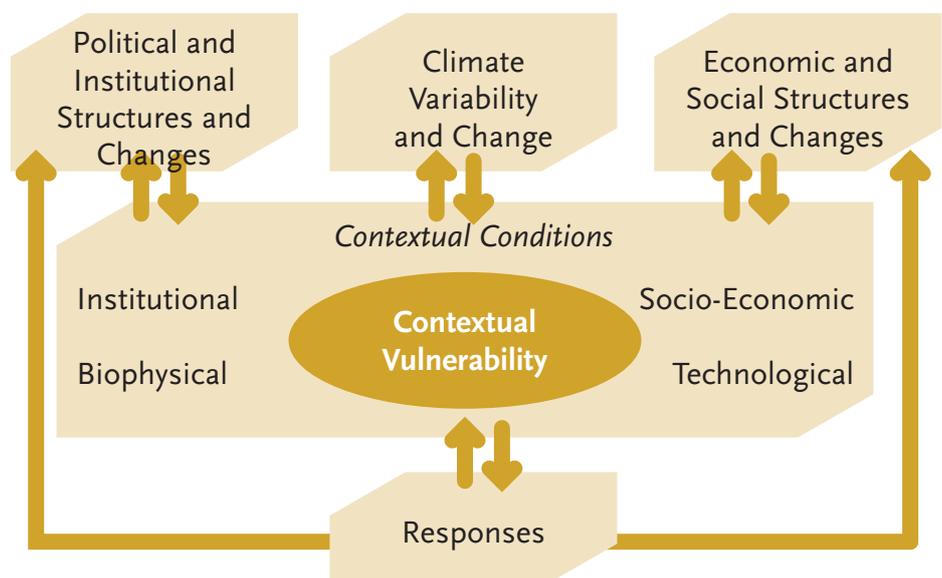
There is also the complexity of outcome vs. contextual vulnerabilities (Füssel 2010). Climate impact assessments tend to focus on the former, while difficult and fragile environments require a greater depth of understanding of the latter.<sup>3</sup>

## Figure 2 Frameworks depicting two interpretations of vulnerability to climate change

### Outcome Vulnerability



### Contextual Vulnerability



Source: Adapted from O'Brien *et al.* (2007) cited in Füssel (2010).

Given the trans-disciplinary, multi-sectoral nature of adaptation and the characteristic uncertainty of climate science and predictive scenarios, adaptation in such a complex area as difficult and fragile environments needs to be primarily shaped around the specific needs, challenges and existing capacities of the context in question, and situated in the demands of organisations and state-society relations.

Early climate change studies tended to rely on a couple of climate scenarios for, say, the 2050s and 2080s and then seek to reduce the projected (as modelled) impacts through some adaptation actions. This notion of our ability to predict the complex evolution of vulnerability impacts through decades into the future is misplaced and there is a need to progress beyond Predict-and-Provide approaches. Yet they persist – note the seemingly unending stream of global studies of the cost of some hypothetical state of adaptation. This falls apart even more drastically in fragile states.

The belief that society can project future conditions with some level of certainty has underpinned approaches to managing risk across society. New generations of computers are not removing the uncertainties associated with climate change where there are many unknowns, some that we are aware of and others yet to emerge. Hedger *et al.* (2011: 10).

Two progressions are in play. The first is to focus more adequately on current vulnerability – the interplay of social dynamics, environmental-economic baselines and current climate events. The second progression is to adaptive management, or more generally resilience (although that is a less focused field). While this is the foundation of much practical work, it is not fully developed in the climate adaptation world as yet.

Actors are central to adaptation strategies and measures. But so many strategies start with idealised systems or generic lists of actions without any understanding of the actor-networks that define decision spaces. This is a ripe field in social and political sciences. Actor-network theory with a practical focus on the nature of decision-making, the stakeholder-knowledge networks that govern the scope of action and processes of social learning is more relevant and appropriate to fragile situations.

In difficult and fragile environments, unless adaptation strategies consider the additional element of not just conflict sensitivity, but ‘context sensitivity’, adaptation efforts could unintentionally contribute to further instability. Therefore adaptation needs to be framed, conceptualised and planned in not just a top-down fashion since it will largely alienate local communities where the impact of climate change is most severely felt. Top-down planning fails to grasp micro-level vulnerabilities, the intricacies of community relations and tensions and focuses more on national interests. Top-down adaptation will also come across to local communities as an external imposition especially when there is a history and legacy of heavy-handed government intervention. *The real danger is when different strands of policy start undermining each other and when policies and strategies for development, peace-building and climate change adaptation are disconnected or divergent* (Smith and Vivekananda 2007).

3 Contextual vulnerability – rooted in political economy is determined exclusively by internal characteristics of the vulnerable system that determine its propensity to harm for a wide range of hazards. Outcome vulnerability – also known as end-point interpretation or integrated cross-scale vulnerability – represents an integrated vulnerability concept that combines information on potential climate impacts and on the socio-economic capacity to cope and adapt.



# The LCCRD agenda in difficult and fragile environments

## 4.1 identifying the overall development goal

One of the challenges of working in difficult environments is the need to maintain a balance between development, state-building, peace-building, and climate policy, human rights and gender equity. Too often, these have been understood as a set of separate, albeit connected, goals and priorities. Because they are different, and because appreciation of the importance of each has arisen at different times in the evolution of international development assistance over the past six decades, they are often seen as potentially competing goals. Tradeoffs and prioritisation between goals easily enters the discourse. Where an outright choice between these goals is not openly envisaged, the discussion often shifts to the question of the appropriate *sequence* for addressing them. The Learning Hub shared concerns about the tendency witnessed by participants to 'sequence-iate' climate change to the end of the queue. This reflects the concern that sequencing is sometimes polite code for de-prioritising.

It is part of the thinking that underlies this paper, that making choices between these priorities is unnecessary, counter-productive and artificial. This is both a normative stance – an argument about what is right – and, as evidenced through experiences shared at the Learning Hub event, a position in evidence-based policy. Seen from this perspective, the challenge of maintaining a balance between disparate policies is actually a challenge to keep all the different components of policy in sight. Nonetheless, sequencing may be necessary but, seen in this light, *the policy objective that comes later is not lesser; rather, the one that is taken first may be seen as a means to an end.*

There are imperatives to reduce poverty and carbon emissions quickly, and discrete projects can deliver significant results. However, ultimately the low carbon development agenda is about putting the whole economy on a different growth path, and this transformation requires major political and policy changes. A balance must be struck between these objectives, levels of ambition and timescales. Lockwood and Cameron (2012: 5).

In looking at the low carbon climate resilient development agenda in difficult environments, the first task is to take the specific context as the starting point and identify the overall goal of development in the specific country and region. In general terms the goal of development policy is that people make progress in terms of their general level of prosperity, their access to the country's birth right from nature and to goods such as education and health care, and their participation in the benefits of internationally agreed standards of human rights. *Development, in short, is not only about economic growth, or environmental sustainability, or the quality of life, or political freedoms. It is about all of them. Put the other way round, they are it.*

But from one developing country to another, needs and priorities are different. To generalise across a range of diverse environments linked by their instability and propensity to conflict escalation but differing in many other aspects is necessarily to deal in an abstraction. But research in recent years provides a basis in evidence for this abstraction and tethers it firmly to policy and practice. Based on the analysis in the World Development Report (2011), which reflects, supports with evidence and strengthens successive DFID and HMG policy positions over the years,<sup>4</sup> the key development goal in difficult environments is to build a peaceful state with a web of institutional (formal and informal) links to society at large.

One way of understanding this abstract goal is to come directly to the question of policy on climate change. As the discussion of impacts in the previous section indicates, this is an area of considerable complexity. It is hard to see how it is possible to get policy traction on these issues without the existence of a state that is both committed to and capable of taking action to protect and improve the condition of the country's citizens in the face of the challenge of climate change. To do this, *there must be information input to the government, which it is able to digest, and information throughput to citizens, which they are also able to digest, discuss and absorb with confidence.* This in turn can only be available if information can be questioned without risk and if questions receive answers that will be regarded as honest. This requires

exactly that web of institutional links between state and society, some formalised through accountable departments of state and lines of communication between different levels of government from national structures to local councils, some informal in the shape of social networks and information media. Forward motion in this broader context makes it possible to get traction on climate issues – and others. Failure to get forward motion in this broader context condemns development, adaptation and much else to stasis or worse.

This implies that the first key task in order to operationalise the LCCRD agenda in difficult environments is a mapping of the institutional environment, re-expressed in section 4.3 below as an assessment of legitimacy. Before getting to that point, however, we need to look more deeply into the relationship between the broader international agenda on LCCRD and the situation in countries we are calling difficult environments.

## 4.2 Finding the international LCCRD agenda its national pace and shape

The LCCRD agenda knits together the prosperity and sustainability components of development – sustainability as understood through the lens of climate change, and the need to de-carbonise economic output – into a long-term strategy. There are, however, countries – primarily, fragile and conflict-affected – in which an LCCRD agenda for their own economic output is of marginal relevance to both their own economic development and to the global level of carbon emission, and in these countries, moreover, the capacity to design and implement such a strategy – often, any long-term economic development strategy – is signally lacking.

In some settings, low carbon development will be difficult not so much because of factors that are specific to mitigating carbon emissions, but because basic institutions, policies and practices are so weak that any kind of development is difficult. Lockwood and Cameron (2012: 14).

It is in this context that the primary goal for development is to develop much needed institutions – see above. However, as the web of institutional links between state and society beds in and begins to work and to enlarge, it is also necessary to work to prevent climate change from destabilising the situation and undermining prospects of progress.

To see what this means in practice, consider the Arab Spring of 2011 and the situation in Egypt. Some commentators cite evidence that climate-affected deficiencies in food security helped spark the original revolt early in the year (Werz and Conley 2012). As the country now tries to make progress on economic, life quality and human rights issues simultaneously, the impact of climate change on water levels, the flow of the Nile and rainfall could all affect food prices and food security. Were this to happen and deprivation increase as a result, there could be a repeat of the original uprising, but with the Egyptian military more committed to the new order under its leadership than it was to the old under Mubarak. This in turn may push large numbers, especially in the major cities, not only towards more desperate actions but also towards more radical politics. And a further consequence of this is increased risk of a new authoritarianism.

In other words, the LCCRD agenda in difficult environments is primarily directed at defensive actions to prevent climate change consequences from unfolding in a way that destabilises politics, hinders economic advancement and threatens human rights. This directs attention at *adaptation* and addresses *problems generated by rich countries' efforts to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions*. Both of these can be demanding policy goals for fragile states to handle.

The interaction of different causal factors in the climate/insecurity relationship has to be borne firmly in mind when identifying adaptation measures. For example, migration – vacating an area where the human habitat is no longer so habitable – is a means of adaptation that may impose a burden on those communities to which migrants move. Equally, sand used from riverbanks for improved construction of houses to make them more robust in the event of storms and flooding weakens the riverbanks and increases the risks of flooding. These are both examples of potential mal-adaptation, and the point of these and other illustrative examples is really quite simple – not only does climate change have consequences, but there are also consequences of adapting to those consequences.

The same is true about mitigation of carbon emissions in rich countries. In an inter-connected world, the knock-on effects of policies need to be interrogated with great care. The classic example of this is the shift by the EU in 2007–8 towards greater emphasis on biofuels, resulting in land being taken out of food production into profitable biofuel crops; and out of common and customary ownership into profit-seeking private hands. Studies suggested that the push for biofuels negatively affected land access for ordinary people in large areas of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific region, knocked about 30 million people into poverty and threatened the livelihoods of almost 100 million, and was responsible for about one-third of the food price rises that triggered violence in over 30 countries in 2008 (Mitchell 2008; Gallagher 2008).<sup>5</sup>

Identifying this kind of knock-on consequence of both adaptation and the mitigation of carbon emissions and getting preventive measures in place will impose heavy demands on weak state institutional capacity. Governing groups that have credibility and legitimacy may find they have to expend considerable political capital both with national populations and with international actors, including companies and rich governments, ending up being caught in the middle between conflicting demands they cannot meet. The burden of making progress on more forward-looking LCCRD goals such as

progress on de-carbonising the country's economic output may simply put too much strain on available state institutional capacity and on other aspects of governance. Only if forward momentum is registered and the state begins to make some progress in building peaceful and stable relations can the more demanding policy goals be taken on. This is an example of sequencing, within an overall LCCRD agenda, in which the defensive measures on adaptation and rich country mitigation are means to the more ambitious end of low carbon development.

## 4.3 Key issues

A number of key issues need careful consideration when working out how to activate as much as possible of the LCCRD agenda. We briefly outline six key issues here, which are also threaded into the discussion on building a resilient state in section 5. We also look at four dilemmas that are specific to international donors.

In principle, all partners – international, regional, national and local actors alike – should join together in exploring the key issues and the donor dilemmas. But a complicating factor in difficult environments is that partnerships may not be straightforward and the motives of local and national actors may often be mixed at best and covert. Without being naïve it can be productive to take stated interests and objectives on trust, at least to test out the depth of commitment of local actors, bringing them into the process of analysing options, making policy and implementing it. But it is also true that in all aspects of work in difficult environments, a good partner analysis is an essential part of context analysis, of knowing who you are working with and against, and what you are working towards.

### 4.3.1 State-society relations and state legitimacy

At its heart, state legitimacy is the acceptance in society that the organisations that make up the state have the right to rule. Legitimacy, in other words, is an attribute of the relationship between state and citizens and it can ebb and flow. Sources and definitions of legitimacy vary from one context to another and change over time. The intricacies and complexities of state-society relations and state legitimacy have to be highly contextualised in any attempts to address climate change impact.

State-society relations are mediated – or, put another way, legitimacy is won and lost – through the country's political processes. Against the background of recognising that strengthening the web of institutional relationships linking state and society is a crucial element of climate policy in difficult environments, this means that climate actions – adaptation and guarding against the effects of mal-mitigations in rich countries – cannot be thought of as essentially technical and managerial and, thus, largely apolitical, however heavy their technical content may be. Further, it would be the height of naivety to fail to recognise that for many actors, adaptation is of interest because of the huge sums of money attached to the term in international policy discussions. These are two reasons why a new political economy of climate change and development is apposite (Tanner and Allouche 2011). Without an in-depth understanding of the political economy, balance of power and local politics, international climate finance could easily produce highly undesirable outcomes. Care must be taken to avoid promoting and empowering a narrow elite at the expense of the common interest.

Political economy encompasses not only actors and interests (including material and political interests) but also the ideas or ideologies that legitimise actions and policies (Tanner and Allouche 2011). It also involves thinking about how coalitions can be formed to produce change, and how the political settlement within a country's elite will affect the likelihood of pro-poor outcomes. Lockwood and Cameron (2012: 21).

### 4.3.2 Expectations

Donor intervention invariably affects social expectations of the state, because it either channels resources through the state or, in some extreme circumstances such as state collapse and massive humanitarian emergency, channels resources right round the state. The first eventuality raises expectations of the state, sometimes to impossible heights, while the second dumps expectations down in the depths, from which they may not ever recover. At its most benign and productive, the influence of ODA on expectations is to foster demands within society that put positive social pressure on the state to improve responsiveness and accountability. This can go so far that the fundamental view of what the state is about and for is altered.<sup>6</sup> This can be a key component of development but donors must exercise care about how explicitly they come out in favour of a model of the state that replicates their own experience and preference. Overloaded expectations of democracy, for example, when the machinery and the political culture for an electoral democracy either do not exist or only barely can be deeply destabilising; while democracy is proven to be a more peaceable form of government than autocracy, the process of democratisation has proven to be fraught with danger.<sup>7</sup> The particular negative contribution that donors can make to the potentially explosive brew of democratisation, despite best intentions, is to support expectations that destabilise and delegitimise one set of institutional relationships without there being a viable alternative ready to supplant them (North *et al.* 2009).

### 4.3.3 State and non-state actors

The understanding of the politics of legitimacy advanced above and the caution that donors must show in relation to expectations leads to a nuanced view about the role of non-state actors. They are crucial for state-building; it is no exaggeration to say state-building is impossible without non-state actors, not only as agents of change but also because of their role in enlarging the civil society space. However, to equate civil society with the sum total of non-state actors or those voluntary organisations known as NGOs is mistaken. Civil society is not the actors as such but the space in which they operate, but not they alone; it is the sphere in which politics happens. Donors can pay attention not only to which NGOs they offer grants to as well as the funding they provide for the government, but also to the question of how that civil space is protected, whether it is enlarging, how free political exchange is, and whether the news media are genuinely free.

But while non-state actors are crucial, so is the development of the institutions of the state as such. Concentrating only on civil society is as misleading for development as concentrating everything on the state. Aid systems have shown a tendency to work around state structures in some difficult environments, underlining them by over-focusing on the non-state sector. In Afghanistan, for example, a few years after the Taliban had been ousted, approximately 28,000 civil servants worked in government earning \$50 a month on average pay, about 50,000 Afghans worked for the UN, other IGOs and NGOs earning up to \$1,000 per month (Ghani *et al.* 2005). The result was to undermine the state structure that the international community was attempting to support and develop. There were many sources of error behind this ill-judged approach, of which one of the most benign may have been focusing on the quality of delivery of projects, which today might be called the results agenda, at the expense of attempting to strengthen state-society relations and state legitimacy, which is a much bigger but tougher result to aim for.

#### 4.3.4 Response to external shocks

One of the defining characteristics of fragility and difficult environments is the state's inability to manage external shocks. With potential increases in the magnitude and frequency of natural hazards linked to climate change putting greater stress on already weak institutions, one of the most serious consequences will be the state's ability to recover after a disaster, and its ability to manage changing risks in agro-ecological and hydrological resources in the long term. This calls for creating closer links between the governance of climate change adaptation and the governance of disaster risk reduction. The place in which to develop these links is, again, in the institutional linkages and

networks that combine to make up the state-society relationship.

#### 4.3.5 Information and education

A key characteristic of a resilient society is its capacity to handle information – to contribute to information flows, to receive, evaluate, digest, disseminate and act upon. People must both understand and trust the climate information they receive if they are to respond in an adequate manner. The case study of the ants and the floods in 2000 in the Limpopo river basin are an object lesson (see Box 1). The issue here was simple: which source of information would people trust if their lives depended on it – the government, or insects?

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### Box 1 Waiting for the ants is not enough in Mozambique

In 2000, the Limpopo River Basin in southern Africa experienced a very substantial rainfall for many days as a result of unusual cyclone activity. Experts knew that it would result in serious flooding – of a magnitude never experienced before by rural communities in Mozambique. Yet very few villages were informed about it.

Most communities had no electricity or radio, yet people were usually able to successfully predict floods by observing ants. Ants build their homes underground; when groundwater rises, they leave their nests – and people know that the water is rising. On this occasion, the flood came so rapidly there was no time for the groundwater to rise, or for ants to react before the river overflowed. When someone who had heard the experts' prediction drove to a certain village to tell them to evacuate, the local chief asked him, 'Who are you and why should I do what you say? Since the times of my ancestors, floods have only occurred after ants leave their homes. Now the ants are not moving and you come and ask me to leave?' As in most of the Limpopo Valley, many people did not evacuate. About 700 people drowned.

Source: Smith and Vivekananda 2009.

With climate change, traditional knowledge is increasingly not enough because our past experience does not necessarily apply to present and future risks. There is no point in generating advanced climate models without also developing ways to communicate this new knowledge in ways that are sensitive to the context and that can be understood and trusted – especially among marginalised communities where trust of the local government may be low.

#### 4.3.6 Cross-border and regional relations

There has long been concern that environmental pressure on river systems such as the Niger

Basin, the Ganges-Brahmaputra, the Blue and White Niles, and the Tigris and Euphrates among others could be the source of violent conflict not just between communities but also between governments. A major study of 1,831 instances of interactions over international freshwater resources between 1948 and 1999 found that 67 per cent of these were cooperative, 28 per cent were conflictive, and the remaining 5 per cent were neutral or insignificant; there were no formal declarations of war over water during this period (Barnaby 2009). While this reveals a strong record of cooperation predominating and conflicts being

peacefully settled, the reservation must of course be entered that the study covers a period before the impact of climate change. There has, nonetheless, been considerable climate variability and there are good reasons for believing that cooperation is the more likely outcome.

The issues can, however, be extremely tangled. The Semliki River that forms the border between the DRC and Uganda has faced increased flooding in recent years and has changed course, which has effectively taken land from each country and given it to the other. On balance, Uganda is currently the loser. Farmers who used to tend the same land as their grandparents now have to rent that land in a foreign country. Raising the stakes, there is oil, which has been discovered on the eastern bank of Lake Albert; there is prospecting on both the Congolese and Ugandan sides of the Semliki where it flows into the lake. And raising the stakes yet further are unresolved tensions left by Uganda's military involvement in eastern Congo around the turn of the millennium. Climate change is not the only or even the major cause of the Semliki's flooding but it is part of the story because it is fed from the Rwenzori Mountains where the glaciers are melting (Randerson 2010).

In this and similar contexts, implementing the necessary defensive measures of adaptation to climate change not only require state-society relations to be in good order on both sides of the Semliki border, they also require good state-to-state relations across the border. Cooperation through a regional body such as, in the case of the Niger, the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), could be the best way to support cooperative resolution of such issues (Goulden *et al.* 2009). With respect to transboundary relations between riparian countries sharing the Niger increasing development and abstraction of river water, both at a large and small scale, could interact with climate variability to exacerbate existing latent tensions between countries. The extent to which this tension develops depends in part on the effectiveness of the cooperation between countries, in particular through the NBA.

## 4.4 Donors' dilemmas

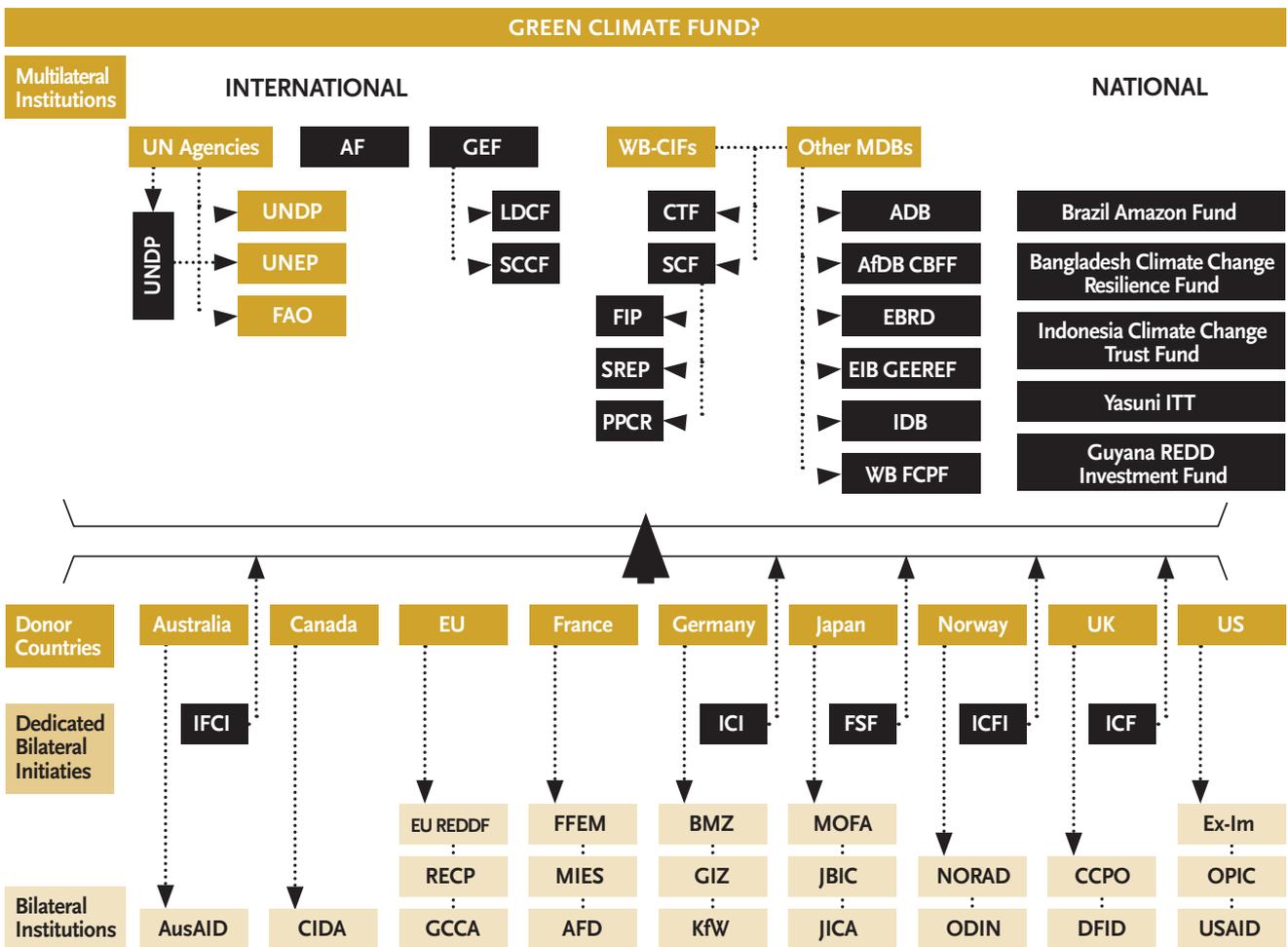
International ODA donors have some specific challenges to face in assessing how to support LCCRD in difficult environments, organised here under the rubric of four dilemmas:

### 4.4.1 Ownership and alignment

Ownership is a vague term with little agreement on what it actually means or entails, and when we can ascertain that true ownership has taken place, let alone how we achieve it. It is helpful to think about the difference between ownership as control over policies, on the one hand, and ownership as commitment to policies regardless of who chooses and shapes (Whitfield 2009). The problem – familiar throughout the international donor community but not always welcome – is the nature of the owner at national and local levels with whom it is donor orthodoxy now to align. Where these actors are seeking the best interests of communities they represent and lead, there is little problem; where they represent their own best interests against those of communities they lead, problems are rife. While donors may discuss ownership as a form of commitment, the most rapacious of national and local partners will routinely seek ownership in the form of control and further seek donor alignment with their control. That makes it quite possible that donors will fund actions in the name of adaptation that either have little to do with it or actively undermine the goal.

The way climate funding is structured through its various mechanisms (GEF, SCCF, LDCF and AF) is highly complex as Figure 3 (see over) illustrates. How donors and governments negotiate climate funding and work out the modalities will determine the form and degree of ownership. State ownership of the agenda, policies and outcomes of climate adaptation is a core issue in current climate finance and no more so than in fragile contexts. Donors have to navigate and negotiate their way around a number of rocks on which adaptation can founder.

**Figure 3 The complexity of the evolving climate finance architecture**



Source: Adapted from Nakhooda *et al.* (2011).

### 4.4.2 Strategic dilemmas

These are usually manifest in the difficulty donors face trying to juggle and reconcile their government’s strategic objectives, be they geopolitical, trade, or low carbon development and emissions reduction (for example, biofuels) with state-building and development objectives of the recipient country. When these objectives clash or become diametrically opposing the likelihood of aid doing harm becomes higher. Understanding these dilemmas is crucial to assessing aid effectiveness in any country.

The nature of these dilemmas often relates to short or long-term priorities. Adaptation is seen as being urgent. Yet building resilience and the capacity to adapt is not something that can be achieved quickly. Its components include

education, good governance, jobs, household asset accumulation and protection, gender equality and the qualities of trust and self-esteem that grow from these. These take decades to build. Providing precautionary emergency help could mean doing the job for the local communities, which would get in the way of their long-term resilience. The dilemma is between the two contrary risks of treating adaptation as an emergency issue and undermining what resilience is already present in local communities there, and on the other hand taking a long-term purist approach and failing to provide enough immediate help when that is what is needed.

In order for poor people to be resilient in the face of climate change impacts they need infrastructure, services and local governance processes that prevent natural hazards becoming disasters; access to adequately paid climate-insensitive or resilient employment opportunities; institutions that respond quickly in emergencies, and so on. Newsham *et al.* (2011: 25).

The only way to resolve this dilemma is through working in an inclusive way at the level where the problem resides. And this, we suggest, is the key to a much broader approach to the strategic dilemmas with which donors grapple – to identify, through as cooperative a process as possible, the appropriate level at which to act and the appropriate actors at that level. Local communities can often find practical answers to local problems when they have the chance to; provincial authorities are required both to handle a profusion of localised problems and to mediate between local communities and national government, which must itself increasingly have the capacity to set the framework within which actions are undertaken locally and at provincial or city level. Regional organisations can support, coordinate and focus on cross-border issues, while from the international and global level, there is a need for technical expertise, international frameworks of law and cooperation, and financial support.

#### 4.4.3 Funding

The way aid is delivered in general can have a profound effect on state functioning and state-building. The global climate finance architecture is structured in a way to interface with mainly state structures. The effects of finance for adaptation will depend on the situation at the end of the pipeline; where aid is being delivered through public agencies and/or voluntary bodies, much depends on their effectiveness and their legitimacy. These reflections indicate that how the money is spent on adaptation and other LCCRD agenda items is quite as important as how much is spent.

If arguments so far have indicated how adaptation finance could go wrong if delivered to rapacious partners, it must be added that even without that element, it can go badly wrong. The uncoordinated approach and lack of harmonisation in aid flows has led over time to increased demands on recipient countries – aid as burden: Tanzania, for example, has to prepare 1,200 reports a year on the ODA it receives (Ghani *et al.* 2005). Harmonisation is echoed in declarations by the Donor Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD in Rome and Paris, but actual practice is still lagging behind. Climate change adaptation finance may simply add yet another layer of complexity of project design, funding applications, reports and evaluation. The value for money of all this becomes increasingly difficult to grasp.

One thing that may help is to focus a little on predictability of funding flows. While most countries have been receiving aid for several decades, the allocation and transfer cycle is still a yearly one for most donors and aid flows to fragile states have been twice as volatile as to other low-income countries. Moreover, the urgency to dispense funds quickly, coupled with the need to experiment and learn makes fragile states a high risk for Fast Start Finance (FSF) and deprives them from such a vital mechanism. Unpredictability is also damaging in fragile states where results take longer to materialise.

#### 4.4.4 Programmatic directions

In difficult environments, adaptation is a major priority in the LCCRD agenda. However, the discourse of adaptation is by now indelibly associated with very large amounts of money. Considerable effort in international conferences goes into fixing the sum and pillorying rich western countries for not coming up with the money. This reflects a shift in the discourse of likely beneficiary countries some years back of treating adaptation finance as compensation rather than as aid, a vocabulary that also suits the agendas of the NGO development lobby, keen to protect what they see as basic development finance who have willingly argued that adaptation finance should be additional to ODA and given under different rules.

The compensation discourse is understandable but it is blurring an important issue – which is that unless development is adapted, it is hard to see what adaptation would mean. It may be compensation for past and present injury but it is nonetheless needed in support of the development strategy of recipient countries.

Climate change exacerbates existing development challenges. Adaptation actions at all levels from autonomous to planned have consequences for development strategies and pathways, and vice versa. Climate change closes some development options, but may open others. Hedger *et al.* (2011: 15).

The compensation discourse is also profoundly unappealing to public opinion in donor countries where taxpayers are hard-pressed and facing the prospect of prolonged wage freezes, restricted government spending and stagnant economies. Giving away money is hard to justify in those circumstances, however just it might be. Contributing to a climate-resilient development strategy can be understood as a contribution to global security and wellbeing but providing 'free' money will not work politically among the donors.

Donors are therefore caught between uncertain public opinion at home and beneficiaries who want finance without conditions, while seeking in the middle of this conundrum to support a strategic contribution to LCCRD via adaptation and prevention of negative consequences from mal-mitigation. As above, we suggest that a process of working out issues and problems with potential partners at levels that are appropriate to the actions envisaged, is the best and likely to be the only way to handle the dilemmas.

- 4 See DFID approach to Defining Disaster Resilience, [www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Publications/publications1/Defining-Disaster-Resilience---A-DFID-approach-paper/](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Publications/publications1/Defining-Disaster-Resilience---A-DFID-approach-paper/)
- 5 See Oxfam (2008).
- 6 See OECD (2010).
- 7 See Sida (2003).



# Towards a climate resilient state

Conflict-sensitive responses to climate change are approaches based on peace-building (Smith and Vivekananda 2009). Such responses require the engagement of communities in social processes to work out how to manage change brought about by efforts to adapt to or mitigate climate change and how to handle conflicts as they arise in order to avert the risk of conflict turning violent. The approach brings together the science of climate change and local knowledge, capitalising on communities' autonomous adaptation while providing more information and resources to strengthen and develop resilience. To contribute to building a peaceful state, the key points of conflict- and 'context' sensitive responses to climate change are as follows:

- **Adaptation to climate change needs to be conflict sensitive** where all interventions must respond to people's needs in an inclusive and consultative way taking account of power structures and social order. Bridging top-down and state-led priorities to satisfy national development interests with bottom-up and autonomous adaptation to address community resilience is key.
- **Peace-building needs to be climate proof** where this is reflected in post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction for example, taking into account the limited water and land resources available for construction,

the detrimental implications of timber and concrete production on community resilience, and the reintegration of ex-combatants must take account of the long-term viability of the land and natural resources available for lives and jobs.

- **Mitigation and shifting to low carbon economies must also be conflict sensitive** and supportive of development and peace. The push by developed countries towards low emissions fuelled the rapid move to biofuels, exacerbated the food crisis and drove millions off their land, where there is already instability.
- **Support is required for poor countries' social capacity to understand and manage climate and conflict risks.**
- **A greater effort is needed to understand, plan for, and cope peacefully with climate and disaster-related migration.** Research so far shows that the majority of movement is internal and domestic within national borders.<sup>8</sup> This still requires support and adequate policies.

## 5.1 Linking development and peace-building goals to climate responses

Accordingly, the need to build resilience and adaptability requires that adaptation is not simply seen as a set of techniques and tasks, but rather as a set of inter-linked problems, which require linked solutions. As outlined in section 3, the interaction of climate change impacts with other profound challenges, risks overwhelming countries with weak governance systems, to the detriment of fragile peace- and state-building processes and posing a high risk of political instability. This adds to the political, economic and social burdens faced by vulnerable communities, and makes it harder for them to adapt to climate change. The flip side of these conflict risks is that responding to the root causes of vulnerability to climate change impacts in a context-sensitive way can yield great conflict prevention and peace-building dividends.

A productive approach to both understanding the problems and advancing effective strategies is to focus on the linkages between development, peace and climate *resilience*. Whilst the rhetoric of coherence in development practice is not new, practical measures so far undertaken to address the linked goals of development, peace-building and climate change adaptation have been limited in quality, scale and effect.

Most efforts on climate change adaptation focus on responding to the direct environmental impacts of climate change, for example by switching to drought-resistant crops, building flood defences or constructing storm-proof homes. Important as it is to address the direct impacts, it is the resulting social consequences – such as conflicts between displaced flood victims and host communities, loss of livelihoods and disputes over access to increasingly scarce resources – that ultimately require more attention and resources. These knock-on consequences will be the most pervasive, yet remain the least understood.

It is critical then, to ensure that climate change interventions contribute to reinforcing the pathways of poverty reduction, and to helping people get out of or avoid pathways of poverty reproduction. Newsham *et al.* (2011: 5).

Mitigation tends to be less of a priority in difficult environments given that a stable investment environment and effective political institutions – which tend to be lacking in conflict-affected contexts – are a prerequisite to implementing technical frameworks for supporting low carbon development. However, mitigation and adaptation initiatives are not mutually exclusive. Many small-scale efforts to expand energy access to the poor and promote low carbon energy sources, such as through domestic rooftop photovoltaic kits or clean cookstoves simultaneously reduce carbon emissions, and provide households with greater resilience by reducing their reliance on wood fuel.

However, both small and larger scale low carbon energy initiatives require conflict sensitivity and tailoring to do no harm in the face of the political and economic mutability of conflict-affected contexts. Low carbon policies can only be pursued where there is a deep understanding of the political economy in any given context, including an awareness of the major power holders and the vested interests involved. For example, as illustrated in Box 5 (p 22) of Bridging Paper 3, on the political economy of low carbon development in Indonesia, efforts to reduce deforestation are frequently stymied because access to rainforest is used as a form of patronage by the political elites. The lack of clear land tenure and the inability to implement centralised protection efforts through Indonesia's decentralised forest licensing system means that any REDD efforts that do not simultaneously address governance issues and link the grassroots with the centre will fail.

Be it through adaptation or mitigation efforts, LCCRD needs to be tailored to address the knock-on consequences of climate change in

fragile contexts in order to respond sustainably to development challenges in a peaceful manner, in spite of the uncertainty and variability presented by climate change (see Box 2).

### Box 2 Cooperative management of climate stress in Mali

Stresses compounded by climate change need not necessarily lead to conflict. The need to cope with a common threat can also lead to cooperative coping strategies between conflicting parties. In Selingue, Mali for example, the local government, with foreign assistance, initiated a scheme with local villagers to mark agreed cattle routes to reduce the incidences of conflict between farmers and pastoralists in the area. Increased variability in rainfall was increasing grievances between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists over access to scarce water sources. But the cooperative scheme, in which both groups and local villagers were involved in deciding a route for cattle in which farmers would not plant crops and in marking and enforcing this route created space for communication and building trust between the two hostile groups.

Source: Goulden and Few (2011).

## 5.2 Achieving a peace-positive balance between conflicting priorities

As set out in Bridging Paper 3 from the Learning Hub, a low carbon development agenda entails striking some kind of balance between two, often conflicting objectives: poverty reduction and carbon abatement. Notable examples of conflicts between carbon

abatement and poverty reduction which have lead to violence include the shift from growing food crops to biofuels and investment in large-scale hydro-electric schemes.

Whilst adaptation at first sight seems much more compatible with poverty reduction, where an adaptation response is not appropriate to the specific context in which it is being implemented there is considerable scope for mal-adaptation. This is a risk where donors and practitioners seek to scale up good practice in one context by replicating it in others as a blueprint. There are also risks of conflicting interests where the adaptation priorities might challenge development and peace-building policies.

For example, the imperative for decent work is a priority for all developing countries, and especially so in post-conflict contexts with a high proportion of unemployed youth. Many post-conflict communities are largely dependent on highly climate-sensitive agriculture or livestock-based livelihoods. Best practice in socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants accepts that youth in difficult environments don't necessarily want to continue with agrarian livelihoods but often prefer skilled work or to set up their own businesses (Watson 2009). New jobs for young people in these contexts, as well as the continued promotion of traditional employment issues such as job security, occupational safety and health, child labour, wages, gender equality, etc., need to be compatible with adaptation and mitigation efforts, as well as supportive of a new low carbon development trajectory.

One example given in the Learning Hub LCD event was investments in city-level projects that combined recycling with energy-from-waste. Such projects may remove the livelihoods of people scavenging on waste sites, so it is important to provide new and better alternatives, such as secure employment sorting recyclables.

Lockwood and Cameron (2012: 16).

An example of a conflict of interest would be promotion of new eco-friendly technology, which may be less labour intensive, which necessitates premature laying-off of workers. Another example would be re-training ex-combatants in agricultural skills whilst climate change trends predict that agricultural production will become increasingly unviable in the next five to ten years – thus inadvertently creating increased pressure on existing land and water resources, and in the long run, a trained group of unemployed ex-combatants who have raised expectations but no livelihood options.

### Box 3 Balancing community resilience with political interests

In the mid-hills of Nepal, the World Food Programme has been implementing a Food for Work programme where famine affected communities are given rice in return for work. Years of this programming have created a culture of rice dependency in regions where rice was not, and could not be, the traditional staple due to water scarcity. However, communities which once relied on various less water intensive crops, such as buckwheat and root vegetables have now come to expect and demand rice. With the WFP scaling down their operations this year, this expectation now falls on the local governance providers. Since rice is a highly political issue in Nepal, and indeed across South Asia, political responses seek to promote rice cultivation despite the cost and unsustainability of irrigation in the mountains, rather than to educate and sensitise communities to return to the more sustainable crops, which they used to grow.

Source: Vivekananda (2010).

Conflicting priorities need to be identified and resolved in such a way that promotes win-wins. This requires thinking through the socio-economic implications of climate change responses and linking up with other sectoral approaches to recognise and promote potential co-benefits.

### Box 4 Climate-insensitive adaptation in Nigeria

In the river port of Lokoja, Nigeria, disaster risk reduction initiatives to build flood-proof housing along the flood plains of the Niger River use concrete breezeblocks instead of traditional materials as concrete homes are less likely to be swept away in a flood. Yet the concrete blocks used are a product of the unregulated sand extraction along the riverbanks, which these vulnerable households inhabit. The increased demand for concrete linked to increased construction is responsible for riverbank erosion, and flood surges, increasing the flood risk faced by riverside communities.

Source: Goulden and Few (2011).

There are also potential win-win opportunities where low carbon energy interventions in rural areas can provide cheap energy where conventional grid access is costly. Solar irrigation pumps, domestic solar PV, clean cookstoves and bio waste, for example, all serve the dual purpose of reducing emissions and increasing resilience. However, these examples are small scale and efforts to scale up have been slow, lead by social enterprises and lacking wholesale political support (see section 2.2 in Bridging Paper 3).

Larger scale low carbon energy access efforts will be more costly than high carbon options. However, whilst the short-term financial costs will be higher, expensive abatement initiatives make long-term social sense as they avoid locking the economy into a high carbon path. Unless these costs are subsidised either by climate financing or by private sector investment, such a transition will be unpopular with the public, as the costs will be passed on to them through higher taxation or higher end-user costs. This issue also underlies the political challenges, which impede the removal of fuel subsidies (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 in Bridging Paper 3).

Private sector engagement, however, requires political buy-in, appropriate policy incentives to encourage private financing, and strong governance to ensure stability for private sector investments. Given the short-term nature of

political terms of office, corruption, and the reality in difficult environments that governments, anxious to maintain power and stability, are reluctant to make social changes that could be politically unpopular, private sector engagement in supporting large-scale energy efficiency and low carbon energy initiatives are limited.

## 5.3 Rethinking adaptation, or adapting development

Delivering on the first key points of the conflict-sensitive approach presented earlier – ‘adaptation and mitigation need to be conflict sensitive’ and ‘peace-building needs to be climate-proof’ – would entail fundamental operational shifts at three different levels which are explored further in the following sections.

### 5.3.1 Addressing inter-linkages: bridging top-down and bottom-up responses

LCCRD in difficult environments needs to be planned in ways other than purely top-down, while acknowledging that bottom-up approaches alone will also not suffice. As previously noted, top-down planning fails to grasp micro-level vulnerabilities, the intricacies of community relations and tensions, and focuses more on national interests. Further, in communities where there is deep mistrust for central government – for example, in Sri Lanka where actors in the current administration were party to the recent conflict – and when there is a history and legacy of government marginalisation of particular identity groups, top-down government-managed adaptation assistance might come across to local communities as an unwanted and potentially harmful imposition. In such contexts, it is important that climate responses might get past relying on the governments and promote community engagement through education and information access services such as community radio.

Exploring the role of the private sector as an agent for peace and development is also important here. The peace-building potential of local businesses has been well documented within the peace-building community and after ten years of piloting, the profit benefits of

adopting conflict-sensitive business practices (compared with the costs of conflict-insensitive business-as-usual and the subsequently huge costs of private security provision for staff, refineries and mines, etc.) are being embraced by major extractive industries (Henisz *et al.* 2011).

Community-based adaptation is strongly promoted by many development actors as an effective means of ensuring context-specific actions. This is an attractive approach but it needs to be nuanced. On the one hand, local communities in conflict-prone or conflict-affected contexts often lack the confidence and the capacity to take on the responsibility for providing basic needs and services for themselves, and, on the other hand, even if they could do so, such action by the community would risk usurping the legitimate role of the state. There is a strong correlation between the perception that a state isn’t upholding its side of the bargain – that is, spending taxes on provision of basic needs and services such as security and roads – and the incidence of political instability. It follows then that, if communities take over roles, which ought to be done by the government in return for the tax revenue they receive from citizens, the social contract is further weakened and efforts to build resilience actually undermine governance and political stability.

There are arguments to be made for top-down approaches, and for bottom-up approaches, but there is also a need for work to address the middle ground to connect the top with the bottom. Certainly, LCCRD should be locally informed through bottom-up processes, but some level of top-down leadership is also required. Dogmatic pursuit of one at the expense of the other could be problematic. What is needed is to find a way to get the two levels to work together.

It sometimes seems there is a dichotomy between these [autonomous adaptive responses] and the ‘exogenous’ programmes, policies and projects of a state or development partners (usually called planned or national adaptation). However, the two are interlinked and both are always present. Hedger *et al.* (2011: 15).

### 5.3.2 Revising current donor norms

Development, peace-building and state-building strategies need to adapt to meet the combined challenge of climate change, conflict risk and state fragility. It is wrong to imply that henceforth there will be old-style development with adaptation on top. Likewise, traditional approaches to sequencing in post-conflict contexts (to over-simplify, first comes disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, then look at reforming the security sector, then shift focus to development and climate change adaptation) cannot be sustained. It may be that there will be a continuum from development activities that are not affected by climate change to development activities whose entire purpose is adaptation (McGray *et al.* 2008), but overall policy and strategy will present a new form of development. That means all external assistance will need to adapt too.

This will entail ensuring that state-building and peace-building processes are climate adapted. Bolstering citizen-state relationships is a key component of state-building, and will be characterised by responsibility and responsiveness. A state's ability to take responsibility for and respond to communities' changing needs and service provision requirements in the face of either slow onset or sudden climate change poses an opportunity to build trust and cooperation. However, it also creates very visible political expectations (for example, in the case of food scarcity or flood responses), which if not given sufficient attention, could severely undermine progress on state-building writ large.

Initiatives to support physical infrastructure projects, particularly in post-conflict and post-disaster situations must also be climate-sensitive by ensuring that construction is both climate proof in that it can withstand future climate change impacts, and also that it does not inadvertently undermine community resilience, for example, by using timber felled from woods vital to prevent soil erosion and landslides, or gravel extracted from riverbeds causing downstream river siltation and water scarcity. These kinds of issues are not just relevant to construction, but also to private sector development and livelihoods initiatives to avoid lock-in to inadvertently high carbon economy structures.

Finance is sometimes channelled into infrastructure projects which are not thought through with low-carbon or climate impact criteria taken into account. The risk is of contributing to locking countries into carbon-intensive development pathways which would be expensive and inefficient to retro-fit.”  
Newsham *et al.* (2011: 23).

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In addition, aid effectiveness lessons from direct budgetary support and the involvement of multi-donor trust funds in fragile states need to be applied to efforts to route climate finance. This will help to safeguard against climate financing creating perverse incentives for corrupt regimes to engage in climate change initiatives as a means to access more international aid. Already, much disbursement of climate financing is supply-driven rather than demand-led (see section 5 of Bridging Paper 3).

Further challenges arise where absorptive capacity of national governments and civil society is weak and as such, regional banks or multi-donor trust funds take ownership of climate funds. As was the case in Bangladesh, this is generally met by hostility at a perceived technocratic approach, which excludes local ownership. In a fragile context, such controversies can be detrimental to peace processes where the same international institutions are instrumental in peace-building and state-building processes. Regional or bilateral flows are perhaps better suited to difficult environments, but here too, efforts must be made to ensure that 'national ownership' is not simplistically interpreted as 'national government' ownership should the state not be adequately representing the needs of its people. Provisions for local civil society access to bilateral funds may help here, as would riders for INGOs to act as intermediary checking mechanisms on local implementing agencies.

### 5.3.3 Institutional reform

Institutions responsible for climate change adaptation – whether under the UN climate change framework, international financial

institutions, development agencies or peace-building organisations – need to ensure that their internal systems and structures promote adaptation even where there is state fragility or conflict risk. In these complex and delicate situations, adaptation must do no harm, and ideally help the goal of peace along its way. For this to be possible, institutions must restructure in such a way as to maximise the participation of ordinary people and build accountable and transparent public institutions.

Poverty reduction is included as one of the criteria for the selection of priority actions in NAPAs...A recent review of three NAPAs (Sudan, Mozambique and Uganda) concluded that they did not adequately demonstrate how adaptation interventions will either reach or benefit poor people... Crane 2010 in Hedger *et al.* (2011: 22).

Design of the instruments under the new climate change architecture needs to ensure that an understanding of the social issues and the political economy of conflict-affected contexts is embedded in all policy and practice. It must also minimise the institutional constraints that impede flexibility or it will be impossible to respond to changing circumstances. And, reflecting the importance of outcomes such as perceptions of security, trust and social cohesion, they should promote qualitative indicators rather than simply relying on assessing quantitative outputs (or, even worse, quantitative inputs such as money spent). Institutions, such as the World Bank and the UN system, which will undoubtedly play a major role in disbursing climate change funds and implementing climate change adaptation projects, urgently need to evolve to better cope with the complexity, uncertainty and variability posed by climate change across all sectors, not just those which explicitly deal with climate change. This requires a move away from inflexible structures grounded in sectoral 'silos', counterproductive incentive systems which advance large-scale and rapid fund disbursement, patchy knowledge bases and inadequate consideration of governance in

any meaningful sense (Bell 2008). This is necessary not just within departments, but also in aid financing structures.

## 5.4 Political will

National governments in difficult environments affected by climate change object to the apparent use of the 'climate security' narrative by Western donors to place the responsibility for climate impacts from the industrialised states (who polluted in the first place), to the overwhelmed state which, due to weak governance or legacy of conflict, is unable to safeguard its populace. In this understanding, climate conflict risks are viewed suspiciously, as a way for Annex 1 donors<sup>9</sup> to shirk their responsibility to support adaptation and mitigation efforts and shift the blame to the fragile state. This suspicion is also a particular challenge when promoting low carbon and emission reduction initiatives.

One way to address the suspicion and defensiveness triggered by a perceived 'securitisation' of climate change is to redefine the definition of conflict at the heart of the inquiry. The understanding of conflict should not be too state-focused. Preliminary evidence on climate pressures points to local level conflicts, which have the potential to be politicised. It is therefore necessary to move beyond the traditional frameworks of analysis based on state level conflicts to understand the dimensions of community grievances and potential for escalation. It is also about redefining responses to climate change such that they are seen as an integral part of the state-building and peace-building process, rather than an add-on, which comes later. Building resilience to climate change – through conflict-sensitive energy security, climate proof employment, growth, risk reduction, etc., would then be rightly understood as a cost effective, positive and necessary dimension of conflict prevention.

- 8 Two main research projects in this area are:
- EACH-FOR: [www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=main](http://www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=main) and [www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=ef\\_media](http://www.each-for.eu/index.php?module=ef_media).
  - Foresight: [www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/projects/current-projects/global-migration](http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/projects/current-projects/global-migration).
- 9 Annex I Parties include the industrialised countries that were members of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1992, plus countries with economies in transition (the EIT Parties), including the Russian Federation, the Baltic States, and several Central and Eastern European States.



# The way forward: key tasks

This paper sets out the challenges of responding to climate change in difficult environments. It highlights emerging principles from the fields of conflict sensitivity, vulnerability studies and disaster risk reduction on how climate change and development policymakers and practitioners can promote peace-positive climate change adaptation actions which can yield the double dividend of building resilience to climate change and conflict.

Incorporating a conflict-sensitive approach when planning and implementing climate change adaptation actions is thus an imperative in order to promote increased socio-economic development, food security, equity and better resource governance as well as to promote peace and stability. This requires increased knowledge and understanding of the linkages between climate change, development, state-building and peace-building in order to capitalise on shared goals and avoid pitting conflicting goals against each other. This also requires changes in behaviour, systems and practice of institutions charged with managing and delivering aid in order to strengthen their role in supporting peace, development and prosperity in difficult environments.

Climate-related financing, policies, and programmes that have not adequately considered local conflict dynamics and the social and governance context could produce serious unintended negative consequences. The other side of this coin is that *approaching LCCRD as a set of inextricably and often beneficially linked goals, which duly balance economic, social, equity, gender and environmental priorities in a manner relevant to the particular country context, can yield significant climate change, development and peace-building dividends*. To move down this 'yellow brick road', overcoming obstacles such as political economy, vested interests, governance, information and communications, six key issues need to be understood. Each issue comes with corresponding tasks for donors such as DFID and practitioners to take on board.

## 1. Recognise and respond to the political nature of LCCRD from the outset

Efforts to promote low carbon climate resilient development in difficult environments will invariably centre on water, land, energy and food. All of these issues are not only highly affected by climate change and variability but are also highly political, and come with their own complex political economy. Donors must thus equip themselves to respond better to the complex tensions that arise in difficult environments between multiple political demands so that they can work in partnership with government and elites which may only have partial political legitimacy; support actions that improve stability and security; and proactively foster the emergence of a relationship between citizen and state that is characterised by responsibility and responsiveness.

This is not a question of another toolkit, but rather of promoting understanding among relevant policymakers of existing conflict-sensitive approaches. Such approaches ensure that the context is the starting point for all interventions, and include participatory community peace and conflict analysis, political economy analysis and dialogue linking policymakers and communities.

From discussions in Learning Cycle 4 it is apparent that DFID is actively working to incorporate political economy analysis into adaptation planning. But at the front line, there is still a demand for simple principles to approach these complex issues.

### Tasks

**a** There must be an understanding and acceptance of the political dimensions of responses to climate change among all actors working on LCCRD. This requires awareness raising – especially within technical teams, and training in conflict sensitivity where the capacity to grasp the knock-on consequences of both climate change and of climate change interventions is lacking.

**b** Donors need to equip themselves to respond better to the complex tensions

that arise in difficult environments between multiple political demands. A simple actor mapping and context analysis built into the planning, monitoring and evaluation phases of climate change interventions would be a good first step. A commitment to a full consultation process as part of decision-making would be the obvious follow-up.

**C** Specific attention must be paid to managing the necessary but challenging requirement of working in partnership with governments and elites, which may only have partial political legitimacy. A thorough understanding of power dynamics and competing political interests will help manage such difficult relationships with conflict sensitivity. Staff need to be assigned to shepherd strategies and major projects.

## 2. Agree strategic priorities that reflect the local context and a locally-specific approach to peace-building

Climate financing must be adapted to ensure that it does not contribute to the disconnect between institutional plans and local peace and development priorities. Project financing arrangements, narrow results agendas and siloed programmatic funding which separates climate change spends from development and peace-building spends, among other external factors, can have a detrimental effect on the degree to which local context and local voices shape the direction of international support.

### Tasks

**a** Conflicting priorities need to be identified and resolved in a way that promotes win-wins. This requires thinking through the socio-economic implications of climate change responses and linking up with other sectoral approaches to recognise and promote potential co-benefits. At the strategic and planning level, this calls for increased knowledge, understanding and lines of communication between relevant staff on the linkages between climate change, development, state-building and peace-building in order to capitalise on

shared goals and avoid pitting conflicting goals against each other.

**b** Financing modalities must also be shaped to ensure that they do not contribute to the disconnect between institutional plans and local peace and development needs and opportunities. This requires a move away from narrow results agendas, project financing agreements and siloed programmatic funding which separates climate change spends from development and peace-building spends.

**c** Given the complicated balance of priorities and different interests in difficult environments, a useful approach to programming is to prioritise activities, which improve community security and proactively foster better relations between citizens and the state, characterised by responsibility and responsiveness.

### 3. Enable flexible and innovative leadership within institutions

Flexibility, innovation and risk taking are vital in ensuring that institutions designed in the last millennium are able to cope with the challenges of the present millennium. Mechanisms to institutionalise emerging expertise are also vital to ensure that climate and conflict-sensitive expertise – which often happens in technical or sectoral projects – are brought into the mainstream. And to encourage and instil a culture of working differently, change must be incentivised through appropriate performance indicators for staff. Staff at every level of donor agencies, relevant national government institutions and operational agencies – from director to administrative support – need to be accountable for and capacitated to adopt conflict-sensitive and climate-sensitive approaches. This holds true for all sectors, not just those that explicitly deal with climate change.

#### Tasks

**a** Organisational structure needs to be reviewed from the perspective of the agenda of LCCRD in difficult environments and adjusted as necessary to meet criteria

of flexibility, innovation and rewarding successful risk taking.

**b** Long-term, programmatic funding should be promoted over short-term, output based funding, in order to encourage innovation and innovative leadership.

**c** To encourage and instil a culture of working differently, change must be incentivised through appropriate internal systems or performance indicators for staff. Mechanisms to institutionalise emerging expertise are also vital to ensure that climate and conflict knowledge gained in technical or sectoral projects are brought into the mainstream and can be shared across sectors.

### 4. Tackle funding issues

Funding for climate change needs to be long-term, predictable, coordinated and aligned with recipients' absorptive capacity. At present, most climate financing is structured to be channelled mainly through state structures. DFID is currently locked into this even while many DFID staff recognise that, in reality, most adaptation is happening autonomously with non-state actors. However, climate-financing mechanisms do not have adequate channels for disbursing large tranches of funding directly to non-state actors. Funding arrangements need to ensure a balance between recognising what institutions can do and what the constraints are. This holds true for both state and civil societies' absorptive capacity and adherence to good governance and donor fiduciary requirements. Appropriate steps must also be taken to ensure that climate financing is not used by corrupt regimes to reinforce systems of patronage and clientelism.

#### Tasks

**a** Based on a thorough understanding of key stakeholders and the political economy of the context, donors need to develop an appropriate and aligned balance between off and on-budget support for public goods and service provision.

**b** Poor absorptive capacity and the consequent temptation for donors to work

‘around’ the state requires urgent attention. Donors need to commit to address and work through appropriate measures of strengthening capacity and matching aid to increasing state capacity to handle funds, especially in climate adaptation. Such capacity building and governance activities should be viewed as legitimate ends for climate financing to support.

- C** The role of the private sector and non-state actors such as social enterprises needs to feature more prominently in climate financing mechanisms where state structures have a low capacity to deliver.

## 5. Push forward with international institutional reform

International institutions responsible for climate change adaptation – be they under the UN climate change framework, international financial institutions, development agencies or peace-building organisations – need to ensure that their internal systems and structures promote adaptation even where there is state fragility and conflict risk. In these complex and delicate situations, adaptation must do no harm, and ideally help the goal of peace along its way. For this to be possible, institutions must restructure in such a way as to maximise the participation of ordinary people and build accountable and transparent public institutions. Institutional reform is thus a ‘must have’ goal rather than a ‘nice to have’.

### Tasks

- a** Design of the instruments under the new climate change architecture needs to ensure that an understanding of the social issues and the political economy of conflict-affected contexts is embedded in all policy and practice. In addition, particularly where institutional structures are already in place, cross-sectoral thinking and programming must be actively incentivised through training, staff objectives and assessments.
- b** As much as possible, international institutions should follow the logic outlined above about organisation review

and staff incentives and rewards. DFID is a leading international voice with several parts of the international institutional architecture and has a key role to play here.

- C** Reflecting the importance of outcomes such as perceptions of security, trust and social cohesion, donor priorities and reporting structures must promote qualitative indicators rather than emphasising quantitative outputs (or, even worse, quantitative inputs such as money spent).

## 6. Promote national and regional institutional reform

At the national level, if states fulfil their governance mandate to their people, they will be well positioned to adapt their responses to climate change to strengthen capacities for resilience to cope with climate related change and variability across all sectors – from trade, to health, to development. The tasks that need to be taken on are complex and challenging but well run states can ensure that line ministries responsible for development and those responsible for climate and environmental issues have a coordinated and synergistic approach.

Regional institutions also have a strategic role to play in promoting regional approaches for addressing climate and security through establishing platforms for exchange, sharing and concerted action. For example, regional initiatives such as the ASEAN multi-sectoral framework on climate change provide a useful platform to address agriculture, forestry and food security. However, to date, regional initiatives have been patchy, often lacking leadership and sustained donor support. Since regional processes tend to be slow and cumbersome, there is an urgent need for sustained support (through funding or external facilitation from international donors where relevant) and political will from member states.

### Tasks

- a** National governments and national institutions need to improve communication to ensure information

flow to citizens and key sectoral stakeholders. An improvement in sharing and learning across sectors and line ministries will improve not just efficiency, but also the conflict sensitivity of climate change response policies and programmes.

**b** Given the trans-boundary nature of climate change and the mutual gains from sharing knowledge available on the issue to enable understanding and response, opportunities for regional cooperation and dialogue should be created and exploited wherever possible.

**C** Civil society actors at the national and regional level also have three crucial roles to play here: i) representing the concerns and insights of specific interest groups; ii) monitoring the implementation of adaptation policies from a conflict-sensitivity perspective, flagging problems and the need for adaptation approaches where necessary; and iii) strengthening social capacity at the community level to understand and manage climate and conflict risks.

Flexibility, innovation, risk taking, and contextualisation at the local level, supporting community-based adaptation, and combining top-down and bottom-up adaptation planning all need to feature a lot more in the way aid is given instead of applying universal blueprints, recipes and prescriptions of the same modalities, programmes and projects. Understanding the political environment in each country, being sensitive to power bases and power balance, and shaping priorities and strategies jointly with national governments not only strengthens the state's negotiating position, it also produces far more appropriate results.

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