

Social dimensions of climate change

"A people-centred approach"



Photo by Barefoot Photographers of Tilonia

Article 1 of the UNFCCC states that the adverse effect of climate change will not only be felt in natural and managed ecosystems, but also have "significant deleterious effects" on the "operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare". Although climate change is widely considered as one of the most significant threats to future human development, it is often analyzed through an exclusively environmental or economic perspective, without adequately considering the extent to which it affects all aspects of human societies.

The impact of climate change also constitutes an opportunity to leverage positive social transformation with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable within a comprehensive sustainable development framework.

The UN system highlights the key social impacts related to climate change in close collaboration with governments, civil society and the private sector, and in accordance with article 4.1 (f) of the UNFCCC, which calls for assessing social benefits or negative effects together with environmental and economic considerations, before proposing new adaptation or mitigation initiatives.



**United Nations System
Chief Executives Board for Coordination**

UN system-wide response to climate change

Under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) brings together the leaders of 29 UN system organizations to jointly support Member States in meeting the global challenges faced by the international community.

In 2008, the CEB adopted the Climate Change Action Framework, a joint, action-oriented approach in line with the ongoing UNFCCC negotiating processes and the emerging agendas of the Parties of the Convention.

The UN system stands ready to support Member States in implementing their commitments. At COP 16 / CMP 6, it is presenting its ongoing work and practical tools available through side events, exhibits and by sharing a joint package with thematic information.

For more information on the CEB and its joint work on climate change, please visit: <http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/priorities/climate-change/>

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Objectives

The UN system supports Governments and partners to:

- **Develop a comprehensive and inclusive conceptual framework on the social dimensions** of climate change, drawing on the expertise of the UN system in related fields.
- **Advocate a multidimensional approach to climate change policies** to take into account the potential social co-benefits of effectively addressing climate change as well as opportunities to focus on the most vulnerable.
- **Develop climate-related policies and measures** to provide better living conditions in their societies as a whole.

Activities

The main activities of the UN system focus on:

- Raising awareness among Member States and other stakeholders of the importance of including the social dimension in climate change responses;
- Ensuring that physical and social structures and essential social service provisions will withstand climate change impacts;
- Supporting Member States in making informed decisions on addressing the social dimensions of climate change, by enhancing the social science knowledge base;
- Developing, providing and using tools and instruments to support countries in assessing the social (including demographic) impacts of climate change and developing adequate preparedness and response mechanism to cope with them.

Results

The UN system will contribute to the development of more resilient societies that can cope with the diverse and multi-faceted challenges of climate change by promoting decent work, better health, adequate housing, basic infrastructure and services, education, respect and protection of human rights, gender equality, protection for children, food and water security, viable agriculture, social protection for all, and safer migration.

Ultimately, the UN system's work on the social dimensions of climate change is a crucial component of its contribution to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Moving forward

The UN system will continue its joint effort to:

- Set an agenda that recognizes that mitigation and adaptation should be designed to improve living standards for all members of society, irrespective of gender, age or social status;
- Support countries in developing appropriate adaptation and mitigation policies by promoting coherent and holistic climate policies and programmes based on assessments of environmental and social impacts.

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