

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań, 1-12 December 2008

UN-supported Climate Change Capacity Development

A COP 14 Side Event organized in collaboration with the CEB/HLCP Working Group on Climate Change Capacity Building.

Monday 08 December 2008

15:30-17:30, Room: Fox

UNFPA Capacity Building for Acting on Climate Change

Capacity building is a central focus of UNFPA activities at the regional and country levels. UNFPA is undertaking capacity building associated with climate change initiatives in the following four areas: sustainable urban development, the incorporation of gender considerations into climate change discussions, disasters and humanitarian response, and census initiatives.

Sustainable Urban Development

The world's urban population will increase by 1.7 billion people between now and 2030, mostly in Asia and Africa. The scale of growth in the developing world in coming decades has no parallel in history: its urban population is projected to double in a generation's time. Urban centers, especially those in the developed world, are the primary source of greenhouse-gas emissions contributing to global climate change but unmanaged urbanization very often tends to outpace the development of infrastructure and environmental safeguards, leading to high pollution and carbon dioxide emissions which impact on climate change. Urban expansion represents both an enormous challenge and a unique opportunity for the promotion of poverty reduction and sustainability. Taking advantage of this opportunity will require a radical change in the anti-urbanization attitudes of many developing country policymakers.

UNFPA is contributing to countries capacity building in the use evidence-based results in urban planning. In many countries UNFPA have contributed to strengthen institutional capacity and civil society participation to formulate integral population and sustainable development policies and strategies at the national and subnational levels and contribute to the reduction of poverty and inequalities. Most of the activities in this area are summarized in the Report of the Secretary-General to the 2008 Commission on Population and Development, on Monitoring of population programmes focusing on population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development

Incorporation of Gender into Climate Change Discussions

It is generally recognized that women living in poverty bear a disproportionate burden of climate change consequences. Because of their greater dependence on local natural resources, their domestic burdens are increased. Beyond these well-traveled observations, it is critical that gender

issues be integrated into all mechanisms, policies and measures, and tools and guidelines within the climate debate and response. This will require an expansion of the gender/climate change agenda in order to go beyond describing the situation of poor rural women as victims and to relate vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation issues to the broader cultural, economic and social processes that are at the root of climate change processes. UNFPA is increasingly incorporating in its capacity building activities on gender the need of focusing on the role of women as critical potential actors in changing mentalities and as a recognizable force in advocating for more sustainable policies.

Disasters and Humanitarian Response

UNFPA is conducting training and capacity building workshops at the country level for humanitarian response to natural disasters, including climate change related events. These workshops focus on resource mobilization and contingency planning for a wide array of emergencies, including storms and weather patterns associated with climate change. The objectives of the workshops are to strengthen the capacities of the personnel in Government ministries and UNFPA country offices to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises, to present different tools, resources and documents on procedures available in the field, to strengthen collaboration between country offices and UNFPA Headquarters, and to encourage sharing of experiences between countries. Issues raised included targeting vulnerable groups, encouraging environmentally sustainable practices, and using data collection and analysis to track the results of emergency management.

2010 Round of Censuses

The next 2010 Round of censuses must provide the data for all national programmes related to adaptation. UNFPA has been mobilizing support for the 2010 round of census-taking, including the organization of advocacy and resource mobilization meetings and regional workshops, to contribute to countries' capacities to successfully implement their 2010 census round. UNFPA has also initiated an interactive tracking tool that allows development partners and others to access information on a broad range of data collection activities, including on population and housing censuses of reporting countries. The regional workshops revealed that assistance is particularly needed on how to engender population and housing censuses, harmonize methods, norms, operations, technologies and dissemination of census data; utilization of census data for public policy formation; and monitoring of progress toward the MDGs.

Population and housing censuses are nationally owned and conducted and UNFPA plays a lead role in contributing to advocating and mobilizing support for this undertaking. In many countries, UNFPA helps develop capacity in various technical aspects of the process, including cartography, data collection and processing, data analysis and dissemination, utilization in planning and monitoring processes, and utilization in policy dialogues on all forms of development processes, including climate change adaptation efforts. Many countries would have been unable to conduct censuses without the assistance provided by the Fund. In a number of these countries, these censuses have provided the sole source of information on the population and its characteristics, without which evidence-based adaptation planning could not be conducted.