

GRF Position Paper on Climate Change

The worldwide impacts of Climate Change

Worldwide, increasing attention is given to the present and the potential future impacts of Climate Change. Among their several findings, the Nobel Prize winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts it is very likely that extreme weather events will occur more frequently in the future and the number of people affected will be highest in the low-lying deltas of Asia and Africa, as well as in Sub-Saharan African countries and small island states.

Over 4 billion people, approximately 60% of the world's population, are currently vulnerable to Climate Change. Climate Change is likely to increase the intensity and frequency of weather related natural disasters, such as wind storms, heavy rain falls, floods, droughts and heat waves and is contributing to the increase of risks worldwide. Today, more than 300 000 people already die due to Climate Change every year.

The need for Climate Justice is crucial. Grave global injustice equates that those who suffer most from climate change have done the least to cause it. The 50 Least Developed Countries contribute less than 1 percent of global carbon emissions. Climate Change will increase the global social injustice, as the boost of extreme weather events, in combination with sea level rise will have severe effects for the global population, but especially for the poorest countries in the world, where the people on a day to day basis are dependent on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities faced by vulnerable groups particularly women, children and elderly people. Water shortage, desertification and land degradation will place up to 250 million people in Africa alone at increased risk by 2030.

Climate change can result in the degradation or destruction of the world's ecosystems and their services. This will have unprecedented consequences for the already volatile global economy.

Sea level rise will likely inundate small island developing states, coupled with storm surges, erosion, salt water intrusion and other coastal hazards. The rising sea level will also impact Asian Mega deltas, such as the Ganges-Brahmaputra or the Mekong Delta, where large populations will be exposed to further storm surges and river flooding with all of its consequences.



picture: www.turningthetide.ch

But even in highly industrialized and developed countries, the impacts of Climate Change are likely to be felt heavier and more frequently. The heatwave of 2003 in Europe, and hurricane Katrina in the U.S.A. were just examples of what might hit the rich countries in future.

In order to avoid the most dangerous consequences of Climate Change, the goal should be to half the current CO₂ emission from 38 gigatonnes in 2004 to approximately 19 gigatonnes by 2050.

Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction

Reducing disaster risks is critical to managing the impacts of Climate Change and to avoid an erosion of social and economic welfare. Current and future risk reduction and disaster management policies have to take account of Climate Change. The Harmonisation of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction activities is an important factor for the GRF. Additionally, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should acknowledge the social impacts of Climate Change. Advancing the

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global implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 to build resilience of nations and communities to disasters, and considering Climate Change adaptation activities within this context is therefore an objective of the GRF. Additionally, GRF aims at reducing vulnerability to risks and disasters to protect life, property, and environment, and at increasing resilience to critical infrastructures and all means of business for the worldwide community on a sustainable basis.

GRF's commitment and contribution

In order to target solutions and promote good practice in risk reduction, disaster management and adaptation to Climate Change an integral approach involving all risks, disciplines and stakeholders has to be taken throughout the whole risk cycle.



Red Chair interview at the IDRC Conference 2008

GRF actively promotes this approach through its various activities in the fields of Climate Change adaptation, mitigation, risk reduction and disaster management to overcome the lack of understanding of the substantial medium and long term benefits of effective risk reduction strategies. GRF favours a global and integrated perspective on hazards, risks and Climate Change through the lens of *Integrated Risk Governance*.

GRF Risk Academy:

The Risk Academy initiates and facilitates the dissemination of topical knowledge and new technologies to be transferred from the world of academic science to business and society. It serves as a think tank and a solution provider as well as a knowledge management and know-how transfer instrument that provides continuous education courses, trainings and workshops for the accelerated transfer of topical knowledge and new technologies to applicable know how.

GRF Platform for Networks:

To overcome the lack of effective means of bringing together research and academics, the private sector, administration, practitioners, society and other at-risk stakeholders, GRF has developed the Platform for Networks. This is a web-based "professionalsq platform" where practitioners, experts, scientists & decision-makers have an opportunity to share their knowledge, know how, experiences, projects, lessons learned, problems, ideas, etc. in specific virtual circles across disciplines, risks and stakeholder sectors to ease communication and exchange worldwide.

GRF's International Disaster and Risk Conferences (IDRC):

The IDRC is a global platform for all stakeholders in risk and disaster management that has been meeting annually since 2006, alternatively in Davos and in another parts of the world, to promote inter- and trans- disciplinary exchanges. The next IDRC conference, IDRC Davos 2010, will be held in Davos, Switzerland on May 30 . June 3, 2010. Climate Change and its manifold linkages with natural hazards, risks and disasters, and with its impact on the UN MDGs, will play a central role at this Conference.

An outcome of the IDRC 2007 that was held in Harbin, China, is the **Harbin Alliance**, an alliance of 12 institutions (universities, NGOs, UN-Organisations) for the harmonisation of Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction activities. GRF serves as the secretariat of the Harbin Alliance and is a founding member. The Harbin Alliance intends at lobbying to countries that Climate Change adaptation is the first and foremost strategy to address disaster risk reduction. Additionally, it intends at building up a critical mass of Climate Change negotiators who understand disaster risk reduction.

For further information

please visit our web-site
www.grforum.org

IDRC Davos 2010

The call for Abstracts is open on
www.idrc2010.org

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