

**State Consultation on Uttarakhand Action Plan on Climate Change
1st October, 2012, Dehradun**

Brief report and Recommendations

A number of civil society organizations organized a state consultation on the recently released revised draft of the Uttarakhand Action Plan on Climate Change (June, 2012). More than 70 participants representing research institutes, academic institutions, experts, practitioners, farmers and women's organizations, forest and indigenous populations, government departments, agriculture universities, water and forest research institutes, civil society participated in the Consultation. The organizers included beyond Copenhagen, CEOEDECON, PAIRVI, BJVJ, SADED, UDI, GB Pant Agriculture and technical university, HM Bahuguna Grahwal University, PSI, Inter Agency Group, CASA Mountain, Insaaf Uttarakhand, Citizen Global Forum, HAARC, HESCO, and others.

Mr. Suresh Satpathy from CASA Mountain welcomed the guests. Mr. Soumya Dutta, laying the global context of climate change, its impact on India and on Uttarakhand, said that there has been no development in the international negotiations on climate change and the developed countries which have been primarily responsible for bringing about this crisis are holding the entire world to ransom by not taking prompt, appropriate and ambitious actions. He emphasized that the national and sub national policies are becoming increasingly important in view of stalemate at the global level. He added that while developed countries must take quick actions to reduce the impact of climate crisis on developing and least developed countries, countries like India and other developing countries must also address the impacts on poor people especially forest dwellers, fisher folk, farmers and women, who bore the brunt of impacts. Ms. Vanita Suneja from Oxfam India said that they have been working with partners in monitoring national and state action plans, which have till now showed very little [promise. She emphasized that it's extremely important that states like Uttarakhand, which are extremely vulnerable adopt appropriate policies to support people adapt to climate change impacts. She added that women have been impacted in multiple ways, and Oxfam also stresses that policy response must recognize the multiple vulnerability of women to climate change and its impacts. Mr. Ajay Jha from Pairvi, shared the development in state action plans and the groups experience in engaging with SAPCCs of various states. He said that till now, 20 states have reportedly submitted their drafts to the MOEF, five of which (MP, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Arunachal have been approved by the National Steering Committee and five of them (Andhra, Assam, Orissa, West Bengal, Meghalaya) have been considered by the expert committee. He added that the process in all the states have been entirely consultant driven with very little participation of the people. He explained that beyond Copenhagen has tried to democratize these state plans by organizing discussions on the draft plans and engaging with policy makers to open both process and content for more discussion and bring appropriate focus on adaptation, and sectors like agriculture, water, forests, energy etc. He explained that consultations have been organized in states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, and Uttarakhand where more groups are engaging with these policies. He stressed that SAPCCs have such a broad sweep, that unless there is monitoring by people, these plans may alter or rather intensify the GDP obsessed growth pattern in all the states. He added that most of the states have till now approached action plans mainly as a document rather than a well devised polices, and there is hardly any road map for financing, dovetailing with existing resources and policies, and incorporation of major concerns of the affected populations in the states. Mr. Virendra Painuly (Formerly Professor, IIT Roorkee) said that the biggest problem with the Plan is that it promotes the same structure, institutions and policies, which have brought us to the crisis. He said that there is very little focus on

adaptation and the plan does not acknowledge the contribution made by various social and environmental movements which have taken place in the state and are considered landmark movements not only in the country but also globally. He added that in view of the different agro climatic zones in the states, strategies should be proposed based on the requirements of these separate agro climatic zones (hills and plains). He also added that more people should be consulted and their views incorporated in the plan. Mrs. Sushila Balooni, Chair of the state commission for women said that the agriculture and livelihood are being severely affected and therefore, women are in the centre if adverse impacts. She added that policies must be women centric with special provisions to support women in agriculture and their adaptation efforts. She said that she will speak to the Chief Minister to emphasize that plan must acknowledge the crisis faced by women and must have a gender specific approach in climate policy. Mr. Anand Sharma, Director of Meteorology Department said that with or without climate change, there are certain things that need to be taken in consideration. He explained that agricultural land is decreasing, irrigation is also being affected, livelihoods are under severe stress in the states, and in view of these problems, the state needs to take expedited steps to ensure that a large majority of the population does not continue to suffer. The chief guest of the inaugural session and the chair Mr. Anil Prakash Joshi (HESCO) said that the crisis couldn't be dealt with until and unless we change the blind pursuit of the growth in the GDP. He added that GDP has failed to reflect the crisis that this pattern of growth has created. He also suggested that Gross Ecological Product (GEP) could be a better indicator incorporating ecological concerns and achievements. He added that until and unless we create a convergence in economic and ecological growth patterns, the crisis cannot be dealt with.

In the second session participants shared their concerns on the UAPCC. A number of organization and individuals including Prof. Sanjay Jain (NIH), Prof. Mohan Panwar (HM BahugunaUniv), Suresh Bhai, Raghu Tiwary (Insaaf Uttarakhand), Bihariji (farmer), Dev Bahuguna (farmer), Rahul Jugran (Disaster management and mitigation cell), Atul Sharma, Mr. Sanjay Singh Chauhan (ECO development society), PSI, HAARC, Dr. Dhyani (Insaaf Uttarakhand), Gene Campaign. Concerns were raised with respect to following issues:

- Loss of floral and faunal biodiversity
- Soil and water conservation
- Drying up of traditional water bodies
- in situ and ex situ conservation of traditional seeds and coarse grains
- Livestock
- Adaptation
- Transport and communication,
- Hydel power projects and its impact on bio-diversity, communities and displacement
- Lack of irrigation facilities in the hills
- Organic farming
- States potential in horticulture and lack of facilities for promotion
- Lack of support to organic and sustainable agriculture (despite Uttarakhand being declared organic state).

The third session focused on recommendations for improving the UAPCC and was chaired by Mr. Jai Raj, Additional Principal Conservator of Forests and nodal officer SAPCC. Mr. Ajay K Jha and Mr. Soumya Dutta shared the main gaps and recommendations on behalf of the participants. Mr. Jai Raj, the nodal officer, SAPCC explained the process adopted in formulating the Plan, major objectives and strategies proposed. He said that efforts have been made to organize consultations to include

variety of stakeholders. He added that it is difficult to satisfy everyone and have all sorts of comments incorporated in the Plan. He added that the plan is a living document and was still open for comments; therefore, he invited participants to provide their comments in a structured manner within a week to enable the department to consider and incorporate their recommendations. He also agreed to a number of suggestions provided by the floor and assured that these will be considered. The participants and organizers thanked him for his openness and willingness to consider the recommendations in a positive manner. The vote of thanks was delivered by Mr. T S Bhandari from UDI.

The major recommendations from the Consultation are as follows:

1. Overall structure, approach and vision

- The Plan needs to be translated in Hindi, so that it can be accessed and understood by majority of the population.
- The two consultations held so far have been quite limited and not even reached to the known environmentalist and development practitioner, let alone the communities. Hence, It is requested that given the importance of this document there should be more Consultations before the action plan has been finalized.
- There is no vulnerability assessment, district wise vulnerability needs to be conducted and actions proposed accordingly. The current vulnerability assessment is based on 4*4 assessment and Max Plank Institute's assessment; these two differ substantially in their approach and suggestions the pan needs to recognize the differences in these assessments.
- Attention of the action plan should be more focused and driven towards adaptation measures; and within that there is a need to focus more on planned adaptation measures looking at the warming level at the short term and in the long term period.
- While developing planned adaptation strategies it is important to assess and understand current livelihood systems, indigenous knowledge, adaptive capacities and vulnerabilities of the communities who live in marginal lands and whose livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources and who are among the most vulnerable to climate change.
- Since adaptation to climate change is something that primarily takes place at the local level, it is of paramount importance that communities themselves define the risks related to change. This need to be recognized and their struggles must receive priority.
- Increased focus on adaptation needs to be brought in agriculture too.
- The Plan needs to acknowledge the significant contribution by social and environmental campaigns like Chipko, and others.....
- The institutional mechanism proposed is very weak and will be unable to take prompt action. The longer the chain of government institutions, the slower will be the response. The chain needs to be shortened.
- There is no road map for financing strategies, dovetailing with existing resources, plans and policies. There are no resources allocated for monitoring review and assessment, which will result in poor implementation and review.
- Equity issue cannot be limiting only to Poverty and livelihood. There is need to define the equity for energy needs and for over all development model; and define inequity as driver of climate change as well.
- Role of women in hill economy as producer of food; and the important role played by them for conservation of forest resources and biodiversity need to be kept in center and should be incentivized.

2. Agriculture, water and livestock

- The strategies and actions in agriculture continue with the same pattern of agriculture, which has been responsible for bringing agriculture in the current state and poor growth in agriculture.
- The focus in agriculture must be on adaptation. More efforts in form of strong soil and water conservation efforts, soil testing and analysis, risk and insurance coverage, strategies according to agro climatic zones.
- The state has huge number of women in agriculture, and the policies must support increased access for women to land, farm inputs, credit and risk coverage, information and capacity building, post harvest facilities.
- The agriculture sector also perceives increased use of biotechnology and GMOs as solution to climate change impacts and increasing productivity and introducing pest resistance. The experience of GMOs in India does not support that conviction.
- Excessive use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers has resulted in contamination of land and water. It has also resulted in many birds getting extinct. Policy encouraging use of unbalanced input in NPK must be reversed.
- There are number of best practices in agricultural adaptation, and agro ecological mixed farming like “barahnaja,” which needs to be acknowledged and shared and promoted.
- The development of drought, flood and pest resistant varieties must take in consideration that there a number of varieties and seeds already available, which should be used, popularized and their increased production supported by the state.
- The lab to farm approach should be applied in agricultural research and it must also include feedback from below.
- Agriculture extension and demonstration of appropriate technology and research outcomes on developing climate hardy varieties must be strengthened and increasing investment.
- Numbers of rivulets and water sources have dried (approx 1000 in the state and more than 80 in Rudraprayag only), the water is also getting contaminated due to excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The agriculture policy must correct the imbalance in use of NPK with policy support.
- The focus on foreign breed in livestock breeding must be reversed, as exotic varieties are less adaptable to climate change impacts. The local varieties of cows, goats, and buffalo adapt to climate change more easily, and breeding programmes must promote local varieties.
- There is a need to introduce weather index based insurance for crops and mortality index based livestock insurance. Information about the weather forecast condition like monsoon arrival, precipitation, etc; and should be disseminated to the farmers and community through mobile telephony.
- In the proposed estimates of budget for implementation agriculture receives only 0.8% of the budget that needs to be increased.
- Good and bad weather codes should be devised/revised/ implemented.
- Promotion of crops like various traditional millets must be done as these crops have better chances of survival in adverse weather conditions

3. Energy, transport and roads

- The energy mission only focuses on electricity, while the electrical use only forms 16% of the energy use. The mission on energy must place adequate focus on viable, cost effective and green sources of energy.
- The mission on energy must include equity consideration and must ensure increased access to energy to resource poor, rural areas and difficult terrain.

- Biomass forms the sole source of energy for majority of the population (up to 70%), therefore, appropriate efforts should be made to develop biomass, its judicious use and increased access to people.
- Many of the energy requirements viz drying of crops, heating etc. can be very well facilitated by using solar thermal means.
- The mission proposes increased use of LPG, CNG etc. however; the state does not have easy access to sources of CNG and LPG. Bringing LPG and CNG sources from far off places will contribute to more emission and make access to energy more vulnerable.
- Increased emphasis must be placed on strengthening and greening the public transport system rather than making attempts to prioritize conversion of private vehicles to using green fuel.
- Both roads and transport sectors focus only on motorized transport. There is no consideration for promoting non-motorized means of transport.

4. Forests and bio-diversity

- The forest mission must focus on increasing both the cover and quality of the forests, reverse monoculture, and increased participation of Van Panchayats and forest dwelling and forest dependant population in forest management.
- It must also increase access to forest dependant population to NTFP in accordance with forest rights Act.
- Forest Rights Act and JFM proposed by GIM work at cross purposes as far rights of forest dwelling populations are concerned. They must be harmonized keeping the objectives of forest rights Act, and significant contribution of forest dwelling population and indigenous population in consideration.
- The Plan has big focus on REDD+ and Green India Mission and seeks to earn carbon credits. However, the national and global experience in REDD projects amply manifest no significant benefits to communities, loss of control of forest dependant communities, and destruction of natural forests and their displacement by monoculture. The state must review its plan in participation of REDD+, GIM and other efforts aimed at commercializing forests.

5. Disaster management

- The role of people in disaster management needs to be acknowledged. The experience suggests that people and communities play a major role in natural disasters. The plan must have a role for communities and people in disaster management.
- The relationship between development and disasters need to be highlighted in detail. Development initiatives tend to create new disaster risks; and hence, the process of development planning assumes special significance. For example: development of highways and haphazard urban development triggering landslides in some areas.
- A district level disaster response team must be developed for harm reduction.