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Communities and Local Resilience Outlook

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Enabling Resilience for All
The Critical Decade
to Scale-up Action

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Summary

The Asia-Pacific region faces unprecedented threats from climate change, interacting with socioeconomic challenges that together heighten local-level vulnerability. Notwithstanding the advancements in many areas towards building resilience, the pace and scale of the progress is not commensurate with the exacerbating climate impacts on the ground. Some argue that local communities who are on the front line of climate change impacts are a group that is most disconnected from such progress because of the top-down planning and decision-making processes supported in the prevailing climate governance architecture such as national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

While the last decades of adaptation efforts offer a wealth of experience and knowledge, replicating and scaling what has been done in the past alone is unlikely to fulfill adaptation needs of our society. The focus of this background document is on communities and local resilience and it presents information on progress, gaps and challenges in strengthening resilience of communities, around the five key enablers that will guide the discussions at 7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Network (APAN) Forum: policy and climate governance; planning and processes; science and assessment; technologies and practices; and finance and investment.

A major shift is needed in the vision, approach, enabling conditions and support for community-level resilience building – a new paradigm in which local communities are in the driver's seat, access to finance, information, technologies, new practices and capacity building support is made easier, and traditional knowledge is valued much more. This shift requires conscious efforts in creating a much larger civic space in which to allow information exchange, nurture innovation and accept and address different levels of vulnerability and adaptive capacity. At the same time, stronger and more meaningful linkages are also needed between national frameworks, such as NDCs, and sub-national structures including this civic space to enable community-led adaptation at a much broader scale.

1. State of Play: The Current Status at the Regional Level

The imperative for locally-led adaptation in Asia and the Pacific

Despite the remarkable economic success of the Asia-Pacific region, significant societal and environmental challenges remain. Widening inequality, deteriorating natural assets, unmanaged urbanisation and surges in urban poor are some of the negative side effects of the economic growth pattern that the region by and large has followed. These challenges are further exacerbated by natural disasters that cost on average 0.3 per cent of the regional gross domestic product (GDP) annually, three times higher than the global average.[1]

The last decades of economic transformation in the region has concentrated people, livelihoods and economic assets in cities, which has led to an increase in urban poverty and widening inequality. At the same time, the rural economy, which is predominantly dependent on the primary industry in most countries, is also going through structural changes amid demographic transformation triggered by outmigration of labour into cities. Poor communities are disproportionately affected by risks posed by such structural changes in the economic system, and climate change acts as a risk multiplier. Underlying poverty and structural inequality make people more vulnerable to climate change; and conversely, climate impacts are an important cause of poverty[2]. In the Asia-Pacific region, the most vulnerable populations include a significant number of Indigenous peoples and local community (IPLCs), including ethnic minority groups, female-headed households, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and slum dwellers.

Momentum is high for promoting the resilience of communities. The need for climate change adaptation at the community-level is more widely recognized now than at any time in the past; more international financing has become available, climate governance has been strengthened, new practices have emerged, and knowledge amassed. Yet, over the same period, climate change impacts have also become more pronounced. Has the pace and scale of community resilience building kept up with the increasing risks and impacts of climate change? Is a fundamental shift required in the paradigm to community resilience building in the future? This paper aims to begin answering these questions while provoking ideas for further discussion.

2. The Resilience Enablers

The transformation of the adaptation landscape that we see today and the tremendous gaps that still remain are presented below through the lens of five 'enablers' of resilience. Through this framing, it becomes immediately apparent that the focus on local communities and actors in building resilience has not received adequate attention they deserve.

[1] UNESCAP (2019) Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2019. The data are based on the period from 2000 and 2018.

[2] Olsson, L., M. Opondo, P. Tschakert, A. Agrawal, S.H. Eriksen, S. Ma, L.N. Perch, and S.A. Zakieldeen, 2014: Livelihoods and poverty. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Field, C.B., V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea, and L.L. White (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 793- 832.

2.1 Climate Governance

The Conference of the Parties (COP) in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has been instrumental in setting the contours of global and national climate governance architectures especially in the early phase. The National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPAs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) have been, or are being, used by governments as instruments with which to identify adaptation investment needs, obtain needed finance and report their efforts in fulfilling such needs. Many countries have established official bodies mandated to lead climate actions.[3]

National and sectoral strategies have started carrying the word of resilience, and domestic financing has started flowing to support adaptation. Bangladesh and Bhutan are two examples where the governments have integrated climate change concerns and aspirations in their highest national development plans.[4] [5] There is an increasing involvement of a range of non-state actors in these processes both globally and nationally. A vibrant Asian-Pacific civil society and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) community plays an important role in representing an under-recognized class of actors, such as IPLCs, and highlighting not only their special needs but also the specific contributions that they can make to issues such as climate resilience.

However, the engagement of these stakeholders and rights-holders in existing climate governance architectures, particularly within national structures, remains patchy and ad hoc. Systemic mechanisms to inform them about global and national strategies, processes and actions for resilience often do not exist; and more importantly, neither are there systemic mechanisms and opportunities for these groups to contribute their feedback to shape and adjust the national strategies, decisions and processes that affect their futures. In Nepal, for example, the Framework on Local Adaptation Plans for Action (LAPA) was developed in 2011 to better link local adaptation priorities into development planning. However, a recent government assessment concludes that further efforts are needed to identify how knowledge gained through the LAPA process can be incorporated in the formalized NAP process.[6] The absence of the integration of local communities' views represents a loss for the society at large because communities' knowledge and experiences may not be incorporated to enhance resilience efforts, but also a loss for communities themselves since the resulting adaptation measures and actions will in all likelihood not respond adequately to their needs.

There are some positive signs, nonetheless. For example, 23 countries in the Asia-Pacific region are now including gender-responsive activities to be reflected in their updated NDCs.[7] Also the formation of a Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) has been mandated under the terms of the 2015 Paris Accord to recognize and deploy IPLCs' traditional knowledge both for adaptation as well as mitigation actions. Yet, for effective resilience building at the community level, greater and more systemic inclusion of a wider stakeholder and rights-holder groups, beyond women's groups, is needed.[8] This requires not only a platform on which their interests, needs and contributions are presented and assessed, but also new skillsets, dedicated resources, and a mindset change, as discussed below.

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[3] For example, India, Malaysia, Niue, Pakistan, Solomon Islands and Tonga each have a ministry that bears "climate change" in their name.

[4] Fatemi, M., Okyere, S. A., Diko, S. K., & Kita, M. (2020). Multi-level climate governance in Bangladesh via climate change mainstreaming: lessons for local climate action in Dhaka city. Urban Science, 4(2), 24.

[5] Gross National Happiness Commission (2013) Eleventh Five Year Plan, 2013- 2018, http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wpcontent/uploads/2017/05/Eleventh-FiveYear-Plan.pdf

[6] MoFE (2018). Nepal's National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process: Reflecting on lessons learned and the way forward. Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) of the Government of Nepal, the NAP Global Network, Action on Climate Today (ACT) and Practical Action Nepal.

[7] UNDP (2020). UNDP Climate Promise Progress Report Special Edition: NDCS and Inclusivity.

[8] Salamanca, A., Davis, M., Anschell, N., and Tran, M. (2021). Inclusive Resilience Outlook. Prepared for the 7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, 8-12 March 2021. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network

2.2 Planning and Processes

Strengthening of climate governance architectures over time has contributed to associated adoption and upscaling of planned adaptation. The NAPAs, which started in 2001 and targeted only Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as part of the UNFCCC financing framework, was the first impetus for introducing adaptation planning in the national context for many countries. With the advent of the NAP processes in 2015, the importance of long-term, iterative adaptation planning started to be widely recognized. But equally importantly, the NAP process was instrumental in promoting the concept of inclusivity in the planning process where integration of gender considerations received a particular emphasis.[9] In addition, adaptation project financing through international climate funds, bilateral donors and development banks now often requires considerations of gender, and sometimes Indigenous peoples, to be fully reflected in the project design.

However, a strong "check-box" mentality continues to prevail with respect to inclusion of a range of stakeholders and rights-holders in adaptation planning processes. That is, consultations of most vulnerable groups such as women, Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, slum dwellers and PWDs, are often driven by donor requirements rather than by a genuine recognition that inclusive adaptation planning results in more resilient outcomes. Indigenous communities and ethnic minorities, for example, often possess a wealth of knowledge about the ecosystems they live in as they have traditionally played the role of stewards of community environmental assets.

The 5th Assessment Report of the IPCC documents many cases of the detailed ecological knowledge of IPLCs of their lands and territories[10] which is particularly useful in designing nature-based solutions for resilience building.[11] A study reveals that Indigenous peoples from 87 countries manage or have tenure rights over at least a quarter of the world's land surface (~38 million km^2) and this represents 40 per cent of all terrestrial protected areas and ecologically intact landscapes.[12] This means that long-term adaptation planning without Indigenous peoples' participation and knowledge is simply not effective. Involvement of IPLCs in the planning process is important for developing a sense of ownership as well. Adaptation is a process of "making adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts"[13] and effective adaptation requires an iterative process of testing solutions based on specific local contexts, observing results, and adjusting the solutions – a process in which local communities must play an integral role.

[9] Manuamorn, O. P, & Biesbroek, R. (2020). Do direct-access and indirect-access adaptation projects differ in their focus on local communities? A systematic analysis of 63 Adaptation Fund projects. Regional Environmental Change, 20(4), 1-15.[14] UN (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Adopted at the Third UN World Conference, Sendai, Japan, March 2015. United Nations. https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030

[10] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/links/related-information/publications/all-books-and-reports/Weathering-Uncertainty

[11] Bimson K., Kilponen A., (2021). Nature-based Resilience Outlook. Prepared for the 7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, 8-12 March 2021. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network[17] Nielsen, A. B. and Papin, M. (2020). The hybrid governance of environmental transnational municipal networks: Lessons from 100 Resilient Cities. Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space. 239965442094533. DOI: 10.1177/2399654420945332

[12] https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-018-0100-6

[13] https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/what-do-adaptation-to-climate-change-and-climate-resilience-mean

2.3 Science and Assessments

Many tools and technologies, such as satellite imagery and remote sensing, have become much more accessible and affordable over recent years, contributing to broadening the scientific knowledge base on climate and ecosystems. Vulnerability assessments, which were previously largely dominated by a perception-based approach, are now often informed by multiple climate models under a range of scenarios and remote sensing-based exposure data.

The Government of Indonesia, for example, uses village-level climate vulnerability data to inform the planning process. The system, called "Vulnerability Index Data Information System," or locally known as SIDIK (Sistem Informasi Data Indeks Kerentanan) (Figure 1), generates a composite of scores from socioeconomic parameters that measure either adaptive capacity or sensitivity.[14]

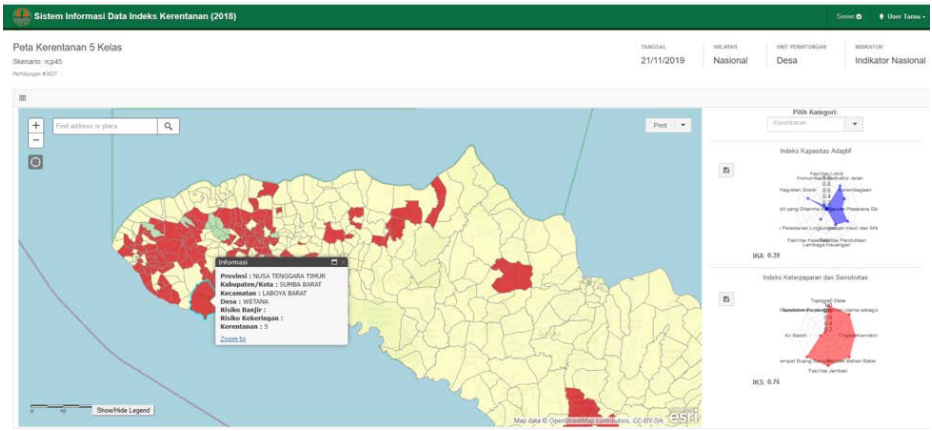

Figure 1 – Screenshot of the Government of Indonesia's Vulnerability Index Data Information System (SIDIK)

With financial support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Government of Tuvalu, using the airborne LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology, recently obtained granular elevation data covering 500 square kilometers of land and ocean surfaces, covering all of Tuvalu's inhabited islands.[15] This data has multiple uses, applying not just to coastal infrastructure development, but also to natural resource management and monitoring, and other emerging needs.

The increasing use of advanced technologies and sciences in understanding the nature of climate hazards, the assessment of the vulnerability of different populations, and how risks are transmitted differently to different vulnerable groups, represents a significant step towards long-term resilience building. However, much more needs to be done. Scientific advancements are only beginning to be used recently to inform local planning and budgeting process or translated into forms and shapes, including local languages, that are accessible to local communities and actors to make informed decisions about their own future.

[14] The adaptive capacity is measure by: Electrification; road infrastructure; economic infrastructure; micro and small enterprises; education facilities; financial institutions; medical facilities; conservation activities; access to credit; social activities; and communication infrastructure. Climate sensitivities are measured by: Village topography; poverty level; fuel source; toilet facility; waste collection facility; clean water; and population density.

[15] https://undpasiapac.medium.com/tuvalu-wields-new-data-in-the-fight-against-climate-change-f07ab13dfe43

2.4 Technologies and Practices

Improvements in science and assessments are also leading to a better understanding and application of climate resilient practices. Technological advancements have played a critical role in the development of new adaptation solutions and making solutions more financially or otherwise accessible. Increasing access to mobile technology, for example, is allowing people to access information more easily, and opening up opportunities for climate resilient practices such as climate-smart agriculture. The application of remote sensing technology is enabling farmers to monitor conditions of farmland in real-time and reduce the risk of crop failure, while also allowing planners to monitor the conditions of ecosystems in otherwise inaccessible areas such as remote wetlands and seagrasses or. In addition, efforts that harness the power of ecosystems to not only build community resilience but also reap multiple socioeconomic benefits are growing in the region.[16] Technologies to enhance resilience of agrarian communities are especially important since rural poverty in Asia is expected to be exacerbated from climate impacts on rice production, increases in food prices and the cost of living.[17]

Yet, these technologies and practices are still beyond the reach for many vulnerable local communities in developing countries. In Bangladesh, for example, lack of access to appropriate technologies such as climate resistant crop varieties is preventing farmers from adjusting their livelihoods to an increasing risk of saltwater intrusion in coastal areas.[18] Systemic underlying inequalities, in the form of access to finance, information and basic services, amplify the difficulty for these communities to access and utilize emerging adaptation technologies and practices. In addition, numerous adaptation plans undervalue and overlook existing traditional or Indigenous solutions that have been tried and tested over generations through traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, including a detailed ecological understanding of soil and plant ecology, seasonal indicators, animal behaviour and coping mechanisms for climate-induced disasters.

2.5 Finance and Investments

Ever increasing investments towards climate change adaptation, and improvements in the surrounding institutional systems that enable it, are one of the key impetuses behind enhanced climate action over the last two decades. Research on the outcomes of select Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) funded projects in the Asia-Pacific region has found direct benefits for community resilience and adaptive capacity, for example, through the development of community-based disaster management committees in Bhutan and climate change awareness training on remote islands of the Maldives,[19] demonstrating the role of finance as an enabler of community-based adaptation and resilience, as well as opportunities for expansion.

[16] https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/climate-and-disaster-resilience-/UNDP-Issues-Brief-on-Nature-Based-Climate-Solutions.html

[17] Hijioka, Y., E. Lin, J.J. Pereira, R.T. Corlett, X. Cui, G.E. Insarov, R.D. Lasco, E. Lindgren, and A. Surjan, 2014: Asia. In: Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Barros, V.R., C.B. Field, D.J. Dokken, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebi, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea, and L.L. White (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 1327-1370.

[18] Islam, M.T., & Nursey-Bray, M. (2017). Adaptation to climate change in agriculture in Bangladesh: The role of formal institutions. Journal of environmental management, 200, 347-358.

[19] Sovacool, B. K., Linnér, B. O., & Klein, R. J. (2017). Climate change adaptation and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF): Qualitative insights from policy implementation in the Asia-Pacific. Climatic Change, 140(2), 209-226.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), tracked adaptation finance amounted to approximately USD 16.8 billion[20] in 2018, an increase of 29 per cent per year since 2016.[21] Despite the rapid increase in recent years, available adaptation financing falls far short of the estimated USD 140 to USD 300 billion per year that is needed to build resilience by 2030 in developing countries, and between USD 280 billion and USD 500 billion by 2050, an estimate made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).[22] Furthermore, pledged climate finance, at USD 67 billion in 2020, which combines both adaptation and mitigation finance provided by developed countries, falls short of the USD 100 billion per year target that was committed as part of the Paris outcome.[23] The climate finance gap is expected to widen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an anticipated decline in public global adaptation finance flows.[24] Finance must be increased for transformational adaptation.[25]

Unpacking the macro trends unveils a more concerning picture on the ground. The financial statistics suggest that the most vulnerable populations only benefit from a fraction of the adaptation finance that is made available globally.[26] Consequently for local actors directly experiencing climate impacts, such as smallholder farmers, the cost of adaptation is often unaffordable, despite the importance of sectors such as agriculture for local livelihoods and food security.[27] Furthermore, it is not only the inadequacy of funding that is preventing local communities from effectively building resilience, but also how it is being used. Much of adaptation financing from global climate funds or bilateral resources is made available in the form of project finance, which is time-bound and is governed by a rigid results-based framework. International funds generally expect the climate change projects that they finance to demonstrate a clear climate rationale and adopt the "predict-and-act" approach, which is based on the assumption that national agencies are capable – technically, institutionally and financially – of generating accurate, granular impact-based projections, translating them into local actions, and achieving controllable outcomes. However, in reality, locally led adaptation, under the current level of uncertainty about future climate risks, is more likely to succeed if it adopts a system-wide risk management approach that aims to minimize regrets under a wide range of possible future scenarios.

Moreover, besides the mobilisation of climate finance globally and nationally, a critical issue for local communities is a lack of tailored support to enhance their capacity for absorbing support and managing and communicating transparently the fund that they receive. Stringent rules around fiduciary standards and managements, procurement processes and transparency sometimes present barriers for local communities to even be ready to receive such support for capacity building in the first place. In recent years through readiness and accreditation support from many international organisations such as the GCF and the Adaptation Fund, some headway has been made in this direction. However, the pace and scale of progress to date is far from desirable. A careful reconsideration and transformation in the calibration of the present support regime may be needed to ensure that no one is left behind.

[21] OECD (2020). Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2013-18, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/f0773d55-en. Taishi Y., Austin S., Kohli R., Sitathani K., (2021). Communities and Local Resilience Outlook. Prepared for the 7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, 8-12 March 2021. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network

[22] UNEP 2016. The Adaptation Finance Gap Report 2016. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya

[23] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/climate-finance-roadmap-to-us100-billion.pdf

[24] https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/covid_and_resilience_funding_briefing_note_web_0.pdf

[25] Sinha Roy A., (2021). Economic Resilience Outlook: Prepared for the 7th Asia Pacific Climate Chage Adaptation Forum, 8–12 March 2021. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network

[26] https://pubs.iied.org/10178IIED

[27] Aryal, J. P, Sapkota, T. B., Khurana, R., Khatri-Chhetri, A., & Jat, M. L. (2019). Climate change and agriculture in South Asia: Adaptation options in smallholder production systems. Environment, Development and Sustainability, 1-31.

3. The Way Forward

Over the last 20 years, significant progress has been made at the international- and national-level in advancing climate resilience. However, for communities on the frontlines of climate change impacts, the progress has been ad hoc and has not reached the scale needed. Moreover, continuing more of the same enabling activities as carried out for the last 20 years is unlikely to put the Asia-Pacific region on the kind of resilient track that is required. New approaches and paradigms to community resilience are needed, particularly now during an unprecedented global pandemic which places tremendous strain on resource-scare local authorities.[28] [29]

Previous APAN Forums have demonstrated that a broad understanding of the importance of community-based adaptation, traditional knowledge and local experience has taken root within the region.[30] The path ahead must include a translation of this understanding into action that ensures bottom-up approaches and inclusive engagement of a wide range of local actors. Locally-led resilience based on traditional ecological knowledge and science – one of the best illustrations of which are community-based nature-based solutions – can address multiple challenges concurrently, including social and economic inequality, environmental degradation and public health concerns.[31]

A significant realignment of climate finance for adaptation is required while learning from the last decade of adaptation efforts. This shift involves treating local communities as leaders and partners rather than as end-of-pipe beneficiaries, investing in long-term capacity building to co-design and direct investments, promoting civic space and shared governance arrangements, and helping them manage and absorb climate finance through more flexible arrangements rather than focusing exclusively on short-term and rigid project-driven approaches. One idea gaining momentum is the increased provision of climate finance directly to communities through demand-driven and competitive innovation programmes, blended finance at the appropriate scale, and cash transfer mechanisms,[32] representing a fundamental shift in the way communities are supported in building their own resilience.

This realignment also includes a full recognition of more intangible enablers such as inclusive representation, the promotion of civic space, rights to information and participation, and greater voice in decision-making.[33] Notably this adjustment of the climate finance architecture requires the inclusion of a much wider group of actors – namely local and municipal authorities, civil society actors such as NGOs, community-based and grass-roots organisations, academia, as well as the local private sector including emerging local start-ups and entrepreneurs. The push for vertical integration – the combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches – needs to be united with jurisdictional approaches which convene multi-actor platforms and coalitions at appropriate scales of governance, including devolution and decentralization based on established principles of subsidiarity. National frameworks and institutional coordination mechanisms will require more formal linkages with sub-national structures to enable locally led adaptation practices to be replaced at a much greater scale, thereby realizing and unlocking the untapped potential of under-served actors within the NDCs and NAPs.

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[28] https://www.iisd.org/sustainable-recovery/building-climate-resilient-and-equitable-cities-during-covid-19/

[29] Phillips, C. A., Caldas, A., Cleetus, R., Dahl, K. A., Declet-Barreto, J., Licker, R., ... & Carlson, C. J. (2020). Compound climate risks in the COVID-19 pandemic. Nature Climate Change, 10(7), 586-588.[52] Bryant-Tokalau, J. (2018). Indigenous Pacific Approaches to Climate Change: Pacific Island Countries. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, Switzerland

[30] Lebel, L. (2013). Local knowledge and adaptation to climate change in natural resource-based societies of the Asia-Pacific. Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change, 18(7), 1057-1076.[54] Shaw, R., Uy, N. and Baumwoll, J. (2008). Indigenous Knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction: good practices and lessons learned from experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction: Bangkok.

[31] Bimson K., Kilponen A., (2021). Nature-based Resilience Outlook. Prepared for the 7th Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Forum, 8-12 March 2021. Bangkok: Asia Pacific Adaptation Network

[32] See more in the Adaptation Innovation Marketplace, a platform launched by UNDP in partnership with ICCCAD, the Adaptation Fund, the European Union, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the Global Resilience Partnership and Climate-KIC.

[33] https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CivicSpace/Pages/UNRoleCivicSpace.aspx

4. Priorities for action

Based on the challenges identified in the current state of community and local resilience in the Asia-Pacific region, three priority actions towards transformative change for locally led adaptation are put forward. The priority actions presented here will be further updated by incorporating suggestions and action-oriented recommendations discussed and explored at the various Communities and Local Resilience stream sessions of the 7th APAN Forum. The expertise of speakers at the Forum will undoubtedly further challenge current views of the status quo and raise additional innovative actions to change the approach to community and local resilience.

- **Stronger advocacy that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are critical change agents and partners for transformation.**

IPLCs generally possess a wealth of traditional knowledge and are by large the most acutely aware of the challenges and local conditions facing their lives and livelihoods. Meaningful involvement of IPLCs in climate change governance, planning and processes, and continuous resilience building actions require a major shift in mindsets, capacity building approaches, access to finance and recognition of traditional knowledge. LCIPP, as shown above, is an example of a new institutional architecture that intends to deploy IPLCs' traditional knowledge both for adaptation as well as mitigation actions. Key national and international instruments such as NDCs and NAPs will likewise need to evolve from being top-down planning instruments to becoming vehicles to derive integrated climate, nature and sustainable benefits for local communities.

- **Expanding the research-practitioner-community interface.**

Efforts are needed to, on one hand, translate relevant information about climate scenarios, risks and solutions into a format that is context-specific and accessible by end users, including community members and practitioners; and on the other hand, to support communities in applying those solutions in an iterative manner. In this regard, universities and other academic institutions are ideally positioned to support capacity building of local government officials, IPLCs and other local stakeholders because of their ability to engage in locally-relevant and long-term actions. In some places, this is already taking place led by, for example, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in Bangladesh and the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities – Network (EPIC-N).[34] There is likewise strong potential in the inclusion of local communities in scientific assessments through participatory methods, such as in the Philippines where researchers combined participatory land-use mapping with computer simulation modelling to support effective local adaptation policies.[35]

- **Lengthening and enhancing flexibility of adaptation financing.**

There must be a renewed recognition that adaptation and resilience building is an iterative learning process, and moreover, that working with the most vulnerable communities is inherently a long-term endeavour that may not generate tangible results immediately. With this recognition, there is a tremendous opportunity for improving some of the existing rules of the international climate finance regimen and shifting towards the provision of patient capital to allow for more flexible programming and learning, while ensuring transparency, international fiduciary standards, and accountability. Moreover, prevailing conditions for accessing international adaptation funds require vulnerable countries to spend significant resources in the effort to prove that their adaptation proposals are justified. Instead, conditions could be altered to redirect the effort more to monitor and transparently report the progress on building long-term resilience while fully involving IPLCs in the process.

[34] www.epicn.org/

[35] Kumar, P, Johnson, B. A., Dasgupta, R., Avtar, R., Chakraborty, S., Kawai, M., & Magcale-Macandog, D. B. (2020). Participatory approach for more robust water resource management: Case study of the Santa Rosa sub-watershed of the Philippines. Water, 12(4), 1172.