

REPORT ON SIDE EVENT

ECO-VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA AS COMMUNITY BASED ADAPTATION PRACTICES

OCTOBER 18, 2016 COLOMBO, SRI LANKA



L-R: Dr Lokendra, Neeraj, Raymond Myles, Prof. Vinod Menon, Dr Atiq Rehman, Zareen Myles, Dumindu Herath and Santosh Patnaik

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY
CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK SOUTH ASIA

INTRODUCTION

Addressing climate change and eradicating poverty are the most gruesome challenges of human development. Challenges emerge in the form of rising impacts of climate change and heightening consumption oriented of GHG emission while rural areas in South Asia remain unserved of basic life services. In order to tackle these multiple challenges, Eco Village Development (EVD) concept brings in local solutions by using local resources and low-cost techniques. The EVD concepts are more relevant in the current era of implementing international agreements of 2015. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development Goals bear a strong interlinkage with development and climate agenda. The countries in South Asia are committed to putting in place diverse mechanisms to execute the agreements. There is a clear synergy between EVD solutions and SDGs which have been framed to create a better future for all. While practicing the nuances of sustainable development, the foundation to build a stronger, ambitious and equitable climate action can be laid. The relevance of EVD in reducing risk to climate-induced disasters and achieving SDGs necessitated advocacy at all levels. 5th Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum on Climate Change provides an ideal platform to spread the word on ecological solutions.

ABOUT ADAPTATION FORUM

The Asia Pacific Adaptation Forum is the flagship event of The Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN). APAN aims to bridge the gap by bringing adaptation practitioners close to each other and providing a platform for interaction and capacity building. It is a regional network that supports governments and other organisations to manage and apply adaptation knowledge in the region with an emphasis on knowledge management and capacity building. APAN is the first regional adaptation network developed and launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2009 under the Global Adaptation Network (GAN).

Adaptation Forum has been the regional platform for adaptation practitioners for experience sharing, cross-learning and networking. It is an opportunity of cross-learning and shares ideas among diverse stakeholders. The inaugural event was held in Bangkok in 2010. Subsequent events were organised in 2012, 2013 and 2014 in Bangkok, Incheon, Korea and Kuala Lumpur. Adaptation Forum events bring together policymakers, scientists, donors, youth, and representatives from several countries in South Asia and Pacific.



Neeraj Shreshta

PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

The session was to enhance visibility for EVD approach and gain policy focus in regional and international negotiations on climate change. The session was to influence international, regional and national policymakers to include sustainable EVD into climate-related policies as well as in the proposals for international negotiations. It was intended to put emphasis on the effectiveness of localised and low-cost solutions to deliver on development aspirations of emerging economies without causing environmental degradation. The session was to create opportunities for policy advocacy with like-minded organisations across Asia and Pacific and create a niche for ecological solutions as adaptation.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audiences were decision makers that included national (governmental) politicians and higher government officials in relevant ministries, state/regional politicians and officials including development planners and local authorities. The session was targeted at bilateral and international donors, financial institutions engaged in adaptation finance, NGOs, women's associations, youth and business associations and young researchers.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION



Dumindu Herath

The session was titled as “Co-ordinating Policy Initiatives for Adaptation” with an aim to convey messages to relevant stakeholders including national and regional climate negotiators responsible for national climate policy and international negotiations. The session established linkages between Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals with eco village development efforts by partners in South Asia. The session established that in order to enhance climate resilience in vulnerable areas, development policies need to be inclusive, gender responsive and supportive of integrating climate agenda. The session emphasised that collaboration is needed among a wide group of stakeholders on building coherence between existing knowledge on adaptation. Disaster risk reduction, adaptation and sustainable development need integration into national as well as local planning processes. The session established Eco Village Development as a practical approach to achieving achieving climate-related SDGs and established as a means for disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Reflecting on Paris Agreement, the case studies shared in the session established EVD as a credible approach for adaptation.

The EVD approach was recognised as an alternative narrative of development as Dr Lokendra Thakkar representing Department of Environment, Government of Madhya Pradesh, India introduced an initiative to implement ecological solutions in rural areas of the state. Madhya Pradesh has embarked on to develop 1,100 climate-smart villages with an aim to promote climate resilient agriculture practices and improve productivity. The project would be implemented in 100 villages each in 11 agroecological zones of the state with a cost of Rs.150 crore per year. The session was moderated by Prof Vinod Menon, Founding Member, National Disaster Management Authority, India and co-facilitated by D. Atiq Rahman, Executive Director, Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies.

OUTPUTS FROM THE ADAPTATION FORUM

1) ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- The forum created numerous advocacy opportunities among partners and like-minded organisations. The session facilitated knowledge exchange among more than 40 participants.
- Climate Tracker (www.climatetracker.org) expressed interest to know about EVD project activities and outcomes of implementation at village level.
- Dr Lokendra Thakkar has expressed interest in conducting exposure visits of government officials of Madhya Pradesh state to EVD demonstration areas in Ranichouri block, Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand.
- Networking with delegates from Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan was materialised who shared their experiences with EVD delegates. Adaptation forum could extend the reach of EVD strategies beyond project countries and initiating contacts with new people.
- An abstract on EVD practices by Mr Dumindu Herath was published in the Adaptation Forum proceedings.



Dr Lokendra Thakkar

EXCERPTS FROM PARTNERS

The regional event was a good platform to advocate on EVD given the audience. The regional potential for the applicability and replicability of solutions such as EVD is on the higher side given the context. This was shown through the interest of participants for the EVD theme at the EVD Side event and positive interactions prior to and following the side event. Opportunity to publish briefing notes on EVD in the publication was also very helpful to propagate the EVD concept to a bigger audience.

As a Sri Lankan, presentations by Sri Lankan decision makers on their take on climate change and the way forward was immensely useful for planning future activities locally. Moreover, the Sri Lanka NEXT exhibition and awards ceremony which was held parallelly with the Adaptation forum enriched the experience with Sri Lankan interventions on adaptation and mitigation to Climate change.

Dumindu Herath
Project Manager from IDEA, Sri Lanka

Niraj Shreshta
Project Officer from CRT/N, Nepal

"APAN Forum 2016, provided international platform to the climate adaptation project proponents like Center for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N) to share their experience of working with rural communities to implement decentralized climate adaptation initiatives like Eco-Village Development (EVD) Concept to enhance rural livelihoods of pro-poor, climate vulnerable communities".

PARTICIPANTS AT THE EVENT

- Dr Lokendra Thakkar
 - Dr Vinod Menon
 - Dr Atiq Rehman
 - Shovana Maharjan
 - Niraj Shrestha
 - Dumindu Herath
 - Raymond Myles
 - Zareen Myles
 - Santosh Patnaik
- Government of Madhya Pradesh
 - Founding Member, National Disaster Management Authority, India
 - Executive Director, BCAS
 - CRT Nepal
 - CRT Nepal
 - IDEA Sri Lanka
 - INSEDA India
 - WAFD, India
 - CANSA

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