



Climate Change Futures: helping achieve the MDGs by providing critical information to help countries adapt to and better cope with global environmental change

ABOUT UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme is the UN's global development network, focused on helping countries build and share solutions to the challenges of energy & environment, democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention & recovery and HIV/AIDS.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders put development at the heart of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set clear targets for reducing poverty, environmental degradation, hunger, disease, illiteracy, and discrimination against women by 2015. At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment and pledged to significantly increase funding for these goals. On the ground in 166 countries, UNDP helps the UN system and its partners raise awareness and track progress on the MDGs, while connecting countries to the knowledge and resources needed to achieve these goals.

Issues that need to be addressed to achieve the MDGs are climate change and ecosystem degradation, including biodiversity loss. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and damaging due to climate change, accelerating and magnifying the impacts of hurricanes, floods, landslides, droughts, and forest fires. This leads to increased loss of life and property, especially in developing countries, threatening livelihoods, travel, trade, tourism and infrastructure. Ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, as a result of climate change can also encourage the spread of diseases in wildlife, livestock and crops, as well as increase vulnerability to extreme weather.

These challenges seriously threaten sustainable development and global poverty reduction efforts, as increases of natural disasters, health

risks and crop failures will disproportionately impact the poor and vulnerable in developing countries. An estimated 96 percent of disaster-related deaths occur in the developing world, yet 90 percent of developing countries lack disaster-related insurance coverage. Private sector development, investment and insurance enterprises will also be increasingly exposed to these risks in the coming years.

Until now little has been done to integrate our current understanding of climate change and ecosystem degradation with projections for public health, the value of biological resources, and the long-term security of investments.

In 2003 UNDP joined forces with the Center for Health and the Global Environment at Harvard Medical School and Swiss Re to engage in a multi-stakeholder scenario building exercise: *Climate Change Futures: Health, Ecological and Economic Dimensions*. This international, multidisciplinary project was designed to evaluate health, environmental and economic damages from climate change and associated extreme weather events based on a set of climate projections and development trajectories. The working group also examined how degraded ecosystems magnify the damaging impacts of extreme weather events.

UNDP's goal is for this study to expand the potential of the insurance and broader financial services industries to operate in the developing world, assisting these countries in mitigating the potentially devastating impacts of global environmental change. By providing critical information that will help countries better cope with climate variability and protect their ecosystems, this initiative can consequently play an important role in helping countries meet the Millennium Development Goals.

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