



**WORLD SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT**
BEYOND 2015: PEOPLE, PLANET & PROGRESS



Thematic Track:

Collaborative Regional Learning and Brokering Knowledge to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change in South Asia

October 8, 2016 | 10:00 to 12:00 noon
Juniper Hall, India Habitat Centre

Concept Note

South Asia is one of the world's fastest growing regions in terms of population and urban growth. Scientific assessment indicates that Climate change challenges are real and urgent.

As many countries make final preparations in coming months for Marakesh COP and Paris ratification, there is a growing need for policies that take an integrated approach to combat climate change, not just within a country but holistically as a region too. And, ground zero is South Asia, where 24% of the world's population live with high growth potential.

Climate change affects both natural and human systems and the extent of impacts varies from one region to the other. As a result, it has huge socio-political and economic implications. In South Asia, we are uniquely placed as we share the same climate, our water resources and land features including synergies in the social and cultural fabric. The trans-boundary nature of impacts in many cases are evident including the issue of floods and flash floods, water scarcity and drought and migration and extreme events of heat and cold waves, which have been on an increase. The paper, titled Assessing the Costs of Climate Change and Adaptation in South Asia, forecasts that six countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka - will see an average economic loss of around 1.8 percent of their collective annual gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050, although South Asia has low per capita GHG emissions. Therefore, regional cooperation is the need of the day to explore the solution space to enhance resilience of communities in the region.

CDKN has been working in the region (primarily with Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) for past 7 years of high quality impactful work. One of the major achievements of CDKN has been its ability to affect collaborative regional learning synthesizing experiences and information into usable knowledge that may be replicated amongst and within regions at the national and sub-national level.

Losses and damages could be reduced with effective regional cooperation on grounds of timely communication for planning and action, on structuring of policies and practices that allow for better coordination and distribution of resources to prevent social and economic disruptions. Regional networks could play an important role for a climate compatible development. The fifteenth Summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 2008 reiterated the need for increased regional cooperation in tackling climate change, in particular need for building capacities and on awareness-raising. Regional, national, local platforms, forums provide the right environment for sharing of experiences. Organizing “Collaborative Regional Learning and Brokering Knowledge” on key topics could be an approach for promoting regional resilience to climate change. Exchange visits demonstrating the use of successful technologies/ techniques, sharing of practices and knowledge products that have worked would benefit the societies in large. A large scale regional programme on raising awareness and capability development on climate change issues is therefore critical.

This session brings together experiences from the countries in the region that has potential for wider impact and utility than its immediate geographical and policy domain. The speakers in the session will reflect how climate change issues are common across the region with varied impacts, through a “shared learning and scaling-up approach” Key questions are: What have we learned about regional collaboration? What works? What can work better?

The question we consider then, is how can climate and policy practitioners, such as development partners, government agencies, NGOs, academics or others involved and concerned with sustainable and equitable development, apply these in practices – that is: Share and learn from each other – what works and how they can be replicate to achieve climate compatible development.