



Inputs for the Technical Examination Process on Adaptation

The Population and Sustainable Development Alliance (PSDA) is pleased about the opportunity to submit inputs to the newly established Technical Examination Process on Adaptation.

We believe that integrating family planning into climate adaptation programs strengthens resilience and reduces vulnerability.

Worldwide, **225 million women have an unmet need for family planning**, meaning that they want to stop or delay childbearing but do not have access to any modern method of contraception for various reasons. This results in an estimated **74 million unintended pregnancies** every year¹.

A lack of access to family planning has detrimental effects on women and the planet. Women who are unable to access family planning often have more children than they wish and this impacts their overall health and empowerment, as well as their ability to adapt to the environmental context of climate change. Ultimately, unsustainable rates of population growth lead to reduced resilience to the effects of climate change and risks undermining adaptation efforts at the local, national and regional level. Research demonstrates that for every pound spent on family planning, an estimated £2 to £6 can be saved in other poverty reducing interventions, including health, education and conservation².

The **UNFCCC** has already acknowledged family planning as a climate adaptation strategy and made family planning projects eligible for climate adaptation funding, just as the **IPCC** has highlighted the important role that family planning can play in reducing climate change vulnerability. Also, the **East African Community** has recognized the value of family planning in climate adaptation, and as a result they are in the process of developing a 5 year strategic plan on an integrated response to climate change that includes population, health and environment interventions. Finally, at the country level, 37 of the 40 **LDCs** that have submitted strategy documents to the Global Environmental Facility have expressed concern about the impact of unsustainable population growth on their ability to adapt to climate change³. Still, this is not translated into action in national adaptation plans.

¹ Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA, “*Adding it up - The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health 2014*”

² Moreland, S. & Talbird, S (2006). [Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: The contribution of fulfilling the unmet need for family planning](#). Washington D.C: USAID.

³ <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/11/08-062562.pdf>

Indeed, complex development challenges, such as climate change, require integrated solutions. One such integrated approach is the so-called Population, Health, and Environment (PHE). PHE programs aim to simultaneously improve access to health care services, particularly family planning, while also helping communities respond to the effects of climate change and build resilience.

Several PSDA members have experience demonstrating significant results from implementing these kinds of projects:

- Marine conservation organization **Blue Ventures'** programs in Madagascar encompass community-based marine conservation and fisheries management, support for alternative livelihoods and reproductive health services. They currently reach over 25,000 people across 60 communities along Madagascar's west coast. In the Velondriake marine area, the proportion of women using contraceptives has increased more than fivefold from 10% in 2007 to 55% in 2013, while the general no. of births per woman has fallen by over a third. Couples now have access to the services they need to choose freely the number and spacing of their births, improving food security, allowing women to play a more active role in fisheries management, and enhancing the sustainability of local marine conservation efforts. The Velondriake marine initiative demonstrates how practical initiatives can contribute to building immediate and long-term resilience and adaptive capacity while also improving health and gender outcomes⁴.
- **Population Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE EC)** employs holistic multi-sectoral strategies that have led to impressive results in terms of conservation, gender, and health in protected areas, wet lands, biospheres and forest management areas in Ethiopia. A comparative study in Guraghe zone (PHE pilot project area) in 2012 revealed that women were over four times more likely to use family planning methods compared to women in non-PHE project areas, and that significant positive changes had been made in men's attitudes and behavior towards fertility and family planning, which is a determining factor in women's use hereof. Also, 58% of women in PHE project areas had control over income generating resources compared to only 15% in non-PHE areas, suggesting that women's empowerment is better in the PHE project area⁵.

From these and other experiences collected among the PSDA members, we have learned the importance of applying a **human rights based and participatory approach** to climate change adaptation. This means that access to family planning information and services should be provided

⁴ Westerman, K., K. L. L. Oleson, and A. R. Harris (2013) *Building socio-ecological resilience to climate change through community-based coastal conservation and development: Experiences in Southern Madagascar*. Western Indian Ocean J. Mar. Sci. 11(1): 87-97. http://blueventures.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Westerman_et_al_2013.pdf. Accessed on 13 November 2015.

⁵ http://phe-ethiopia.org/pdf/GPSDO_Research.pdf

on a voluntary basis and in a non-discriminatory manner. A second lesson learned is that development of sustainable adaptation efforts, which create long-term resilience beyond simply bouncing back from a disaster, need to involve the local communities and the people affected in identifying challenges and solutions. **Citizen participation** in decision-making processes is already sanctioned under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 and in §10 in the Rio Declaration 1992.

In the spirit of recognizing the integrated nature of various dimensions of sustainability from the 2030 Agenda and utilizing the knowledge and opportunity presented above, we urge the Adaptation Committee to consider this and similar approaches that seek to promote cooperative, integrated action on adaptation, and request that it be added into your scope of work including financially.

We would be more than happy to elaborate on this approach and showcase such integrated projects, should it be of interest to you.

The Population and Sustainable Development Alliance

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