

The South North Nexus- SNN Learn, Innovate, Share, Act

The Challenge

Global Trends

Climate change impacts and potential solutions are closely linked to sustainable development which balances social well-being, economic prosperity and environmental protection as articulated in the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the corresponding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015.¹ The SDGs provide a framework to consider the linkages between sound development and sustainable actions that address multiple interconnected issues simultaneously, including eradicating poverty and hunger, reducing inequality, and promoting environmental sustainability.² Despite comprehensive commitments and goals, much still needs to be done to achieve the SDGs. Concerning are the findings from the 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI) which reported an increase in world hunger over the previous three years. Such high levels of individuals suffering from hunger (821 million people) have not been seen in nearly a decade.³ In addition to political and economic factors, climate variability has contributed significantly to the increase.⁴ The 2018 SOFI stresses that real challenges remain to reach a zero hunger world; even though solutions exist, political will is often lacking.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, published in October 2018, confirmed that there is an urgent need for concrete, ambitious and decisive actions to limit the planet's warming well below 2°C.⁵ Importantly the report highlighted that mitigation and adaptation consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C are underpinned by enabling conditions, which cut across sectors and include geophysical, environmental-ecological, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional dimensions. It too makes clear the importance of

¹ UN General Assembly, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1, Preamble (Oct. 21, 2015).

² Climate Change Action Network, *Briefing: 2019 SDG-Review: The Natural Link between Climate Action and Sustainable Development*, May 2019, http://www.climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/canbriefing_sdg_review_may2019.pdf.

³ FAO et al., *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2018: Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition* (Rome: FAO, 2018).

⁴ See also Deborah Hines, "Adequate Food and Nutrition as a Human Right," in *The Research Handbook on Human Rights and Development*, ed. Stephen Marks and Balakrishnan Rajagopal (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, forthcoming).

⁵ IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers," in *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways, in the Context of Strengthening the Global Response to the Threat of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Efforts to Eradicate Poverty*, ed. V. Masson-Delmotte et al. (Geneva: World Meteorological Organization, 2018 in press), <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.

integrated solutions, stating, “Strengthened multilevel governance, institutional capacity, policy instruments, technological innovation and transfer, mobilization of finance, and changes in human behavior and lifestyles are enabling conditions that enhance the feasibility of mitigation and adaptation options for 1.5°C-consistent systems transitions.”⁶

At the end of 2018, in an effort to move forward with concrete commitments, the Conference of the Parties 24 (COP) in Poland brought together a wide range of actors from the North and South, in an atmosphere of trust and collaboration, to finalize the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Part of that agreement, Work Program 1, achieved consensus on practical implementation guidelines to track and ensure progress towards the commitments made under the Paris Agreement. Also referred to as the “Rulebook”, it demands that the world take the transformative actions required not only to limit warming, but also to prevent and mitigate the most extreme impacts of climate variability and the longer-term tipping points that are projected to accompany a warming climate.

The Paris Agreement commits countries to provide at least USD 100 billion per year by 2020 in climate finance to support both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Predictable funding is required to provide a clear understanding of available resources to address the growing challenges imposed by climate change. Long-term commitments, including funding of USD 100 billion per year by 2020, are urgently needed for equitable climate and disaster risk reduction actions. Importantly, the Paris Agreement also states, “Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights.”⁷

Further, the 2018 World Humanitarian Summit recognized that to collectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, strengthening the humanitarian relief and development nexus with peace building is crucial. The end of 2018 had the highest numbers of displaced people on record, with at least 70.8 million people forcefully displaced, of which 9 million people fled as refugees.⁸ Migrants and refugees garnered international attention, but the growth of internally displaced people (IDPs) was also significant—between 2017 and 2018 the number grew by more than a million people to 41.3 million, with 30.9 million of these occurring in only ten countries. Most of the displacement was caused by conflict and natural disasters—about 61 percent of the newly internally displaced were victims of climate-related events.⁹ Importantly, the humanitarian development nexus must consider that natural disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change are disproportionately harsh for the poorest countries and

⁶ Ibid., D.2.3.

⁷ UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Paris Agreement, UN Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, (Jan. 29, 2016). See also the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights’ *Key Messages on Human Rights and Climate Change*, which “highlight the essential obligations and responsibilities of States and other duty-bearers (including businesses) and their implications for climate change-related agreements, policies, and actions.” https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/KeyMessages_on_HR_CC.pdf.

⁸ United Nations High Commission for Refugees, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019*, 2019, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/>. See also Hines, “Adequate Food and Nutrition as a Human Right.”

the most vulnerable people and groups, a large majority among them rural communities and women.

Latin America and the Caribbean – growing challenges

Consistent with global trends, the Latin America and Caribbean Region (LAC) faces a growing number of challenges due to unparalleled displacement as people are forced to leave their home countries because of the effects of climate change and variability, inadequate public policies, and non-democratic practices. While forced displacement has a long history in Latin America, the current numbers of displaced people are unprecedented. Presently, the most pressing situation is that of Venezuela, where approximately 61 percent of the population ends the day hungry. Over 4 million people have fled the country, many due to lack of food.

The problem however is not limited to Venezuela—climate change combined with political instability threatens the food security and nutrition of communities and entire regions. These phenomena are especially evident in the *Drought Corridor*, a land strip that stretches from southern Mexico to Panama, with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, the most affected. The levels of recurring drought, massive crop failures, and extreme climate variability for these four countries rank them among the countries most affected by drought worldwide, with over 4 million food insecure due to drought conditions.

The frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, and storms in Central America are occurring in tandem with an increase in average temperature (.5 C since 1950 and projected to rise to 2.0 C before 2050).¹⁰ A prolonged drought since 2015 has resulted in an acute food security crisis that affects more than 4 million people, many migrating to urban areas or other countries. Some are legitimately seeking asylum. The largest source of asylum seekers in 2018-19 in the United States came from the *Northern Triangle* of Central America, where many risk factors converge, most significantly environmental degradation, violence, and political instability, exacerbated by climate variability. Quite simply, most people migrate to feed their families. Despite the magnitude of the problem, there have been few concrete responses from governments. While the US announced it was cutting aid to the four Central American countries in April 2019, citing the migration crisis as a main justification,¹¹ Mexico

¹⁰ Oliver Leighton Barrett, “Central America: Climate, Drought, Migration and the Border,” The Center for Climate & Security, April 17, 2019, <https://climateandsecurity.org/2019/04/17/central-america-climate-drought-migration-and-the-border/>.

¹¹ Alan Gomez, “U.S. Aid to Central America: What It Does, Why Trump Cut It and Why That May Not End the Migration Crisis,” *USA Today*, April 4, 2019.

announced in June a plan to aid the 4 affected countries, with support from the United Nations.¹²

Experience has shown that women are often more adversely affected by natural disasters and a variable climate due to differences in roles, responsibilities, and needs. A gender and culturally differentiated response to risk analysis, disaster response, and adaptation planning is slowly becoming adequate practice, but more needs to be done, as differentiated responses are the only way to achieve equitable and just results. It also requires rethinking foreign aid from strategic social perspectives.

Without concerted and sustained efforts in globally and in Central America, the situation for affected families will not improve. Today there are more than 70 million forced migrants in the world, with the United Nations predicting that there will be over 200 million by 2050. People need concrete solutions and assistance that address climate-related risks, and meet people-identified needs, not politically motivated programs.

The SNN Approach to Collaborative Solutions

Now is the time to join South North efforts to identify collaborative and coherent solutions to the recurring shocks resulting from climate variability and change. Equitable, socially equitable and sustainable long-term solutions that protect livelihoods, especially of the most vulnerable, are urgently needed; concretely we need to identify building blocks to protect people and the planet.

SNN is proposing a platform that seeks social justice, equality, and sustainable solutions for all, with particular attention to the most vulnerable. Such solutions require context-specific approaches and holding people accountable when commitments and promises are broken. The world needs enabling systems that can house and nourish populations, while creating more equitable societies. Collaborative, inclusive solutions require the power of diplomacy, strategic engagement, and relationship-building among people from LAC, North America, and around the world, including through south-south cooperation.

SNN will focus on how to handle the impacts of climate shocks (migratory, environmental, social, economic) by understanding risks and who is most vulnerable (impact assessment, hazard mapping), and preparing responses (international aid versus national and local, emergency preparedness, disaster risk planning and reduction). Strategies for sustainable food security and nutrition will be among the first priorities considered. For any given context, SNN's will engage with communities to

¹² "Mexico Announces at the United Nations the start of an Integrated Development Plan for Central America," June 19, 2019, <https://mundo.sputniknews.com/america-latina/20190619108769740.8-mexico-anuncia-a-la-onu-comienzo-del-plan-de-desarrollo-integral-en-centroamerica/>.

identify risks and work with them to identify appropriate and effective collaborative strategies and solutions.

SNN will promote collaborative solutions to complex problems by bringing together stakeholders and actors (communities, corporations, governments, institutions with public policy, corporate responsibility, social development, and regulatory compliance actors) to create and adapt tools (approaches, systems, paradigms). A priority is supporting the nexus of traditional knowledge with contemporary science, economics and technologies. For example, SNN will collaborate with established organizations such as BioRegions International with its core concern to support community-based activities in Mongolia through holistic actions that promote social and ecological integrity.

The design of context-specific solutions starts with the moral obligation to act, give voice to those most impacted and mutual trust and respect for cultures and gender roles, supporting social inclusion. Conversation and dialogue among stakeholders, actors and appropriate expertise will be critical to designing and implementing solutions. Approaches that integrate social, political, rights and environmental dimensions will decrease the need for meeting basic human needs through post-facto, costly humanitarian assistance. Accountability and definition of roles and responsibilities for the longer-term are key elements of SNN's approach, as is positioning on global and national agendas solutions and lessons to inform policies and programs.

SNN will advocate for and give voice to numerous groups: migrants and refugees; those displaced from natural disasters and climate events; those whose lands have been taken or are at high risk of environmental damage; those whose right to food has not been realized; and those who have not benefited from economic development, social assistance, and technology that would allow them to adapt to or mitigate the impacts of climate variability and change. Importantly, more cohesive approaches also will ensure that strategies and actions do not reinforce or aggravate existing gender inequality and discrimination, but instead promote inclusion and rights for all. Special attention would be given to those whose food security and nutrition, livelihoods, and even survival are under threat from climate variability and change. The better the coherence and convergence amongst actors and approaches, including how foreign aid is allocated to support national, regional, and sub-regional priorities, the better climate risks can be mitigated. Essential is developing a common understanding that while we may not all share the same problems; we will share the same conclusion.

Objectives:

The SNN will work to:

1. Encourage the systematic identification of context-specific risks from natural disasters, climate variability, and related social disruption, identifying people, cultures, and ecosystems at acute and moderate risk.
2. Identify solutions and strategies that incorporate gender-, cultural-, and rights-perspectives to promote sustainable and equitable resilience building, risk mitigation and adaptation.
3. Position on global and national agendas in LAC, solutions and lessons that inform policies and programs, by promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR), while simultaneously addressing related social issues, including migration, displacement, gender inequity, and human rights.
4. Advocate in sensible, clear ways to make complex climate, DRR, and sustainable social and economic development issues accessible to a range of diverse stakeholders, including communities, civil society, and local and national governments. Dialogue would support developing common understandings on context-specific risks, potential impacts, and solutions, with clearly defined rights, obligations and duties.
5. Convene stakeholders from Canada, LAC, and the United States, including international and regional organizations, to discuss today's challenges related to policy formulation, solution identification and implementation, and leveraging innovation and technology, to reduce disaster risk and impact, and promote adaptation to climate change with a justice focus.
6. Mobilize technical expertise in support of actions that relate climate variability with sustainable development and equity priorities, including: a) food and nutrition security, loss and damage, and recovering traditional agriculture systems; b) impacts on the most vulnerable, winners and losers, and gender and cultural dimensions; c) maximizing water use and its equitable distribution for more sustainable food systems; and d) collaborative planning for adaptation to climate change and risk mitigation, including through south-south cooperation.

Areas of Focus:

1. Analyzing: a) climate change adaptation and food systems challenges in the face of environmental degradation, illegal economies, and national security considerations; and b) the role of international cooperation and foreign aid vis-à-vis national and local efforts, considering capacity strengthening at territorial levels, including hazard mapping and local planning processes.
2. Assessing the impacts of climate shocks, considering the relationship with social inclusion, gender relations, migration, displacement and violence. Expanding the dialogue to consider state sovereignty and the ethical and moral

obligation to act; limits of non-intervention principles; humanitarian principles and restricting responses for political objectives; and the strength of international laws (human rights and humanitarian) to promote equity and voice for all.

3. Integrating climate science and assessment results in resilience, adaptation, and disaster planning. Promoting the linkages with social, political and cultural aspects, particularly in climate risk assessments, disaster risk response plans, and adaptation plans and policies. Incorporating in national and local planning processes, people- centred approaches for shared results.
4. Capacity strengthening through south-south and north-south cooperation, for emergency preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction and adaptation planning, through simulations, and training programmes.

Concrete Actions:

1. Knowledge Generation: contribute to the knowledge base through case studies, assessments and evaluations, presenting successes and failures in building resilience, highlighting the scientific, social and cultural foundation for mitigating risk, reducing impacts and adapting to climate change. Studies would highlight successes in gender and human rights-based approaches, and principles of non-discrimination and impartiality.
2. Website:
 - i. Provide information on the above areas of focus, including scientific articles, specialized reports, I, etc.
 - ii. Serve as a platform or depository for relevant cutting edge information.
 - iii. Foster thematic discussion groups with key stakeholders.
3. e-Forums: Promote web-based, high-level discussion forums among recognized stakeholders, open to public access. For the first stage, 3 to 6 forums per year may be organized. From these exchanges, follow-up actions could be formulated whereby SNN would have a role.
4. Technical Support: Offer specialized consultancies covering a range of technical areas (adaptation planning, food and nutrition assessments, staging emergency simulations, contingency planning, etc.) as inputs to policies, programs and as mechanisms for strengthening a range of national and local stakeholders. SNN would serve as a platform/host for mobilizing funds and expertise for technical consultancies.
5. Advocacy: Lead awareness campaigns and presentations in international and national forums, and organize conferences with a diverse range of experts, civil society, and community representatives.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation: Support countries in tracking national and regional progress towards meeting the Agenda 2030 and Paris commitments, including the interrelated sustainable development goals (for example SDG 2, 5, 13); mitigating the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of disasters; and adapting to a changing climate with a rights focus.

SNN Structure:

SNN is an international, non-partisan, non-profit platform that brings together the South and North to take risks to learn, innovate, share, and promote successful solutions.

Board of Directors: influential practitioners who guide the strategic direction of the SNN from Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States.

Platform Members and Advisors: Collaborators and consultants, with specific technical expertise and administrative capacity.

Associated Entities: Academic institutions, Civil society.

The SNN welcomes all those who share similar interests and concerns to join in this effort. We have no time to waste!