



IMPACT
MATTERS

Calle Felipe IV, 9
Madrid SPAIN

TEL (00) +34 91 531 03 72
FAX (00) +34 91 522 00 39

info@daraint.org
www.daraint.org

Press Release

EMBARGO: 22.00pm EST, Thursday 2nd December 2010

New Report: US tops list of industrialised countries vulnerable to climate change

- *US is most vulnerable wealthy nation, together with Spain – both register “High” vulnerability to climate change*
- *US suffers the greatest economic impacts due to climate change of all countries in the world – around 40 billion dollars per year by 2030*
- *US is the no.1 country worst hit by total economic stresses and damage costs from extreme weather*
- *US no.4 worst hit country by desertification and no.7 worst hit by sea-level rise on total impact*

Cancun, Mexico, 3 December 2010 – DARA, a leading humanitarian research organization, and the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of committed most vulnerable countries, today launch a major new global report on the state of the climate crisis. Groundbreaking “Climate Vulnerability Monitor” zeros in on widespread impact of climate change as countries continue to search for a deal to tackle global warming at the UN climate summit in Cancún, Mexico.

The ‘Climate Vulnerability Monitor: The State of the Climate Crisis’ calculates that 350,000 people are currently dying each year due to climate change, that over the next ten years five million people will die, and by 2030 nearly one million people each year will die unless there is an effective response to the crisis.

The Monitor classifies 184 countries across the world according to their vulnerability to climate change on four key areas of impact (health, weather disasters, habitat loss and economic stress) to produce an overall vulnerability ranking ranging from low to acute. Expansion in vulnerability worldwide over the next 20 years is explosive: “the fate of the vulnerable will be the fate of the world.”

Much of today’s impacts are highly concentrated in some 50 acutely vulnerable low-income countries, urgently needing assistance. The United States of America and Spain are the only advanced industrialized countries in the world to fall into the ‘high’ vulnerability category. Remarkably, when the same methodology is used to assess all countries, the US and Spain register levels of vulnerability similar to major emerging nations such as China, Iran, Indonesia and the Philippines, or African nations like Gabon, Ghana and Egypt. In general, the vulnerability of the US and Spain to climate change, unlike a number of other industrialised nations, is on the steady increase.

The Monitor also reveals that \$150 billion is currently lost from the global economy today, moving to around \$300 billion by 2030 because of climate change, over half of which fall on major industrialised nations like the US and much of Europe. The US itself has the largest total economic loss of any country in the world due to climate change.



The US has 'acute' vulnerability to human habitat loss because of desertification and sea level rise. It is seen as one of the top ten 'hot spots' worldwide for people at risk because of desertification and for damages caused by more extreme weather. Spain also registers 'acute' because of habitat loss linked in its case to desertification.

While the US tops the list of total impacts, many other countries are much worse affected in relative terms: in the South Pacific climate-driven economic losses average more than 4% of GDP. Topping the list of the most vulnerable are low-lying island nations and fragile states. Afghanistan and Somalia in particular are both rated in the highest category on the majority of the criteria.

The head of DARA who leads the report's development is Ross Mountain, who led the UN's operations during the Iraq War and other major fragile states, commented:

"These countries are at the brink. The harshest places on earth are also open wounds. Research implies significant climate stresses already today. That's a dangerous trigger in a seriously unstable environment.

"Added pressure like this fuels more hunger, poverty and desperation that can only breed violence and crime like piracy. The ramping up of that pressure is adding up. We can spend billions policing these places or on emergency assistance for disasters waiting to happen. Or we can shift the focus and fight disease, promote education and take preventative measures. All of that is relatively cheap and effective. Dangers and costs can only grow if we ignore these pressures."

DARA Trustee and advisor to the report, José María Figueres, Former President of Costa Rica, said:

"Whilst it is the poorest, most vulnerable nations on earth that will bear the brunt of the climate crisis, the industrialized world is not immune from its impact either. Countries such as the United States will suffer the greatest economic losses from climate change so it is clearly in their own interest to act now to address these impacts, and to mitigate climate change".

The Monitor concludes that whilst the climate crisis is urgent, there is still time to act. It lists over 50 highly effective, and mostly inexpensive, measures that are readily available to limit virtually all harm caused by climate change.

-- ENDS --



NOTES TO EDITORS

Report

The final report is under embargo until 3am GMT December 3rd 2010, to request a copy please use the contact details provided below.

Contact

The London launch of the report will take place at 8.45am GMT at the Commonwealth Club London on 3rd December. In order to express an interest in the report, to place request for interview or for more information, please contact James Drewer on +44 207 467 9238 / +44 7801 151 531 or jdrewer@daraint.org or Pete Bowyer on +44 7740 913 886

The Cancun launch of the report will take place at Press Conference Room "LUNA" Moon Palace, Sunrise Building, Cancun at 9am (CST) on December 3rd. In order to express an interest in the report, to place request for interview or for more information, please contact Christian Teriete on +52-1-9982128172

About the Climate Vulnerability Monitor

The Climate Vulnerability Monitor is an independent global assessment of the effect of climate change on the world's populations today and in the near future. It will also contain an effectiveness review of some key measures that can be taken now to adapt to climate change and limit impacts that harm people, their economies and the environment.

The report targets some basic questions about climate change, including where the most serious impacts are being felt? To what degree? And what measures can minimise its harmful effects? In doing so it will clarify the extent of the main impacts of climate change on human society, and what some of the most effective responses to that impact are known to be. It will clearly highlight the scale of what is at stake in the upcoming Cancun climate talks and for all the world's populations if action is not taken in greatest urgency to deal with climate change.

Advisory Panel

The report has been brought together by an expert panel of key international authorities including:

Mary Chinery-Hesse - Chief Advisor to the Former President of Ghana, Member of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union (incoming)

Helen Clark - Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Jan Eliasson - Former President of the UN General Assembly, Former Foreign Minister of Sweden

José María Figueres Olsen - Former President of Costa Rica, Chairman of the Carbon War Room

Saleemul Huq - Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

Yolanda Kakabadse - International President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Ashok Khosla – President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Chairman of Development Alternatives, Co-Chair, UN Resources Panel

Ricardo Lagos - Former President of Chile, Former President of the Club of Madrid

Loren Legarda - Senator of the Philippines, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation for Asia and the Pacific

Ahmed Naseem - Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives

Rajendra Pachauri - Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Director General of The Energy Resources Institute (TERI)

Teresa Ribera - Secretary of State for Climate Change of Spain

Johan Rockström - Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and Stockholm Resilience Centre

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber - Founding Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

Klaus Töpfer - Former Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)



Margareta Wahlström - UN Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Michael Zammit Cutajar - Former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Peer Review Committee

The report has been reviewed by a committee of key international authorities including:

Yasemin Aysan - Under Secretary General of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Suruchi Bhadwal - Associate Director of the Earth Sciences and Climate Change Division of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Manuel Carballo - Executive Director of the International Committee for Migration and Health (ICMH)

Diarmid Campbell-Lendrum - Senior Scientist on Public Health and Environment of the World Health Organisation (WHO)

Ian Christophos - Senior Project Researcher of the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)

Pierre Encontre - Chief of Special Programmes of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Anne Hammill - Senior Researcher on Climate Change and Energy of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Juergen Kropp - Head of the North-South Research Group of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

Marc Levy - Deputy Director of the Centre for International Earth Science Information Network of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

Bo Lim - Special Climate Change Advisor of UN Development Programme (UNDP)

Urs Luterbacher - Chairman of the Environmental Studies Unit of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

Hansjoerg Strohmeyer - Chief of the Policy Development and Studies Branch of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Farhana Yamin - Portfolio Manager of the Climate Change Division of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)

DARA

Founded in 2003, DARA is an independent humanitarian organisation committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of aid for vulnerable populations suffering from conflict, disasters and climate change. Its activities have spanned over 40 countries across 5 continents. DARA is led by Ross Mountain who headed UN relief operations during the Iraq War following the Bagdad UN HQ bombing (2003-2004).

www.daraint.org

Climate Vulnerable Forum

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is the first global partnership of nations from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific united against by a common threat as some of the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. CVF countries have contributed least to a problem that threatens, in many cases, their very survival. The CVF first convened in the Maldives in November 2009 and adopted a declaration that expressed alarm at the pace of change to the Earth caused by climate change and sealed the commitment of participating nations to work in concert towards strongest action tackling global warming and its negative effects. Participant nations include Bangladesh (future chair designate), Barbados, Bhutan, Kiribati (incoming chair), Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam as well as the Maldives (first chair).

2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference



The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference will be held in Cancún, Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. The conference is officially referred to as the 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 6th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties (CMP 6) to the Kyoto Protocol. <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>