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Let's rethink the world

Commentary on the Cross-Cutting Recommendations 3 And 4

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Introduction

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, it is widely recognized that actions aimed at climate change adaptation are most effective when implemented at the local level (UNFCCC, n.d.). This is because the impacts of climate change are largely determined locally, shaped by specific geoclimatic and socioeconomic factors unique to each area.

In recent years, the concept of Locally Led Adaptation has gained considerable traction, particularly as developed by the World Resources Institute (WRI). This approach is intended to address and rectify the significant inequalities that exist in both access to financial resources and involvement in decision-making processes. The framework places a strong emphasis on the pivotal role that community innovation and local knowledge play in crafting effective and sustainable adaptation solutions (WRI, 2022).

Given this context, the purpose of this commentary is to propose a series of key activities designed to enhance and reinforce local climate actions. Special focus is placed on rural and marginalized environments, as these areas are often the most vulnerable yet the least equipped to deal with climate-related challenges. This commentary specifically aims to contribute to the implementation of two critical cross-cutting recommendations from the T20: Recommendation 3, "Leverage affordable climate and sustainable development finance, including resources needed to promote just energy transitions," and Recommendation 4, "Provide capacity building, technology transfer, and adequate funding for national transition plans, including measures to leverage climate adaptation and bioeconomy"

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- **Recommendation 3**, "Leverage affordable climate and sustainable development finance, including resources needed to promote just energy transitions," with a focus on contributing to the reduction of finance gaps and prioritizing vulnerable and low-income communities.

- **Recommendation 4**, "Providing capacity building, technology transfer, and adequate funding for national transition plans, including measures to leverage climate adaptation and bioeconomy", with the aim of supporting the implementation of plans that promote both climate change adaptation and mitigation (T20 Brasil, 2024).

Policy Recommendation Overview

Both the financing of sustainable development (Recommendation 3) and the process of capacity building, technology transfer, and financing for climate action (Recommendation 4) must be grounded in the promotion and development of climate action and adaptation at the local level. Specifically, this can be achieved by focusing on six core areas: (1) activities that allow for the identification and analysis of future climate impacts; (2) the training, empowerment, and strengthening of key actors who possess decision-making power; (3) developing the capacities of relevant organizations while

simultaneously raising awareness about the urgent need to prioritize adaptation within their strategic agendas; (4) connecting local-level projects with larger-scale initiatives to amplify their impact; (5) establishing mechanisms that enable local projects to gain access to various sources of climate financing; and (6) encouraging the involvement of new sectors and stakeholders, who have not traditionally participated in climate adaptation efforts, to join in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change.

Implementation Pathways

Drawing upon the challenges previously identified in climate action (Delalande & Santana Mora, 2024), the following strategic activities are proposed for the effective implementation of Recommendations 3 and 4:

1. Expanding the generation of scientific and empirical evidence regarding the impacts of climate change, with the goal of increasing both the number of available response strategies and their geographic and temporal scope. This will allow for a more comprehensive and informed approach to the climate crisis.
2. Given the limited number of local actors with sufficient decision-making power, it is essential to focus on the training, empowerment, and continued support of local organizations and leaders. This is particularly important in rural and marginalized areas, where the capacity to address climate issues is often lacking.
3. Providing support for the development and strengthening of local organizations' capacities to take meaningful climate action, while also raising awareness about the critical importance of prioritizing climate adaptation efforts in their operational agendas.
4. Facilitating the scaling up of local climate action projects to regional levels, thus expanding their scope and impact across wider geographical areas.

5. Promoting the financing of local climate adaptation projects by simplifying and streamlining the processes required to obtain funding, making it more accessible to communities.

6. Actively fostering the engagement of diverse sectors—including, but not limited to, environmental organizations and community development initiatives—in local climate action projects, broadening the range of participants in these efforts.

Potential Barriers to Implementation

There are several potential barriers that may hinder the implementation of the recommended activities. These include:

- The inherent difficulties associated with data collection in rural and marginalized areas, particularly when trying to develop accurate and meaningful indicators in contexts of high complexity and uncertainty.
- The scarcity of strong and cohesive groups of actors, organizations, and leaders capable of driving the necessary efforts to scale adaptation projects.
- The bureaucratic and often inaccessible processes that rural and marginalized communities face when attempting to secure climate action financing.
- Limited willingness or interest from sectors traditionally outside of climate adaptation efforts (such as businesses, investors, and governmental bodies) to engage in climate-related projects.

Drivers for a Successful Implementation

Conversely, several factors could facilitate the successful implementation of these activities:

- The increasing prominence of climate action on both public and international policy agendas, which provides a favourable environment for garnering support and resources.
- The expansion of connectivity in rural and marginalized areas, coupled with the availability of diverse and far-reaching communication channels, such as social media and other digital platforms, which can enhance the dissemination of information and best practices.

Feasibility and Maturity Assessment

In evaluating the feasibility and maturity of local-level climate action and adaptation policies, it is evident that these approaches are highly viable within urban environments, where infrastructure and resources are more readily available. However, significant limitations persist in rural and marginalized settings due to the constraints inherent to these areas, such as limited infrastructure, poor accessibility, and fewer resources for effective implementation.

Conclusion

To drive the successful implementation of cross-cutting Recommendations 3 and 4—focused on sustainable development finance and building capacity to respond to the climate crisis—we must act by prioritizing a localized approach through concrete actions to:

1. Generate Scientific Evidence on the impacts of climate change to guide informed decision-making at every level.
2. Train, Empower, and Support Local Organizations and Leaders so they can lead the charge in addressing pressing climate issues.
3. Strengthen Local Capacity by investing in the development of organizations capable of taking concrete climate action.
4. Scale Local Projects to Regional Levels to broaden their impact and ensure lasting, transformative change.
5. Simplify and Streamline Financing Processes to make climate action funding more accessible to local communities.
6. Engage Diverse Sectors in local climate projects, ensuring a broad coalition of actors working toward shared goals.

To achieve this, it will be essential to tackle critical issues, including the inherent challenges faced by rural and marginalized communities, the limited willingness of certain sectors to engage, and the small pool of actors capable of leading projects. Despite these obstacles, the growing connectivity and the increasing importance of climate action provide a promising environment for successful implementation.

References

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