

## **An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure**



Ueli Mauderli is leading the Climate Change and Environment Network at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

In this interview he talks about his view on the challenges and opportunities of climate change for development cooperation and about SDC's way to address them.

*When looking at the development approaches and priorities of SDC of the past 20 years, which have been confirmed and reinforced by climate change?*

The most immediate and first effect of extreme weather events (floods, droughts, storms, fires, cold-waves) is the one on the physical resource base of people: their natural resources and their infrastructure. Climate change thus hits the most basic and first needs of people. All human development depends on water and food security, on soils, forests, ecosystems, but also on secure housing, human mobility, balanced energy and water yield infrastructure. Since the quality of crises management is highly interrelated with the quality of social organisation, all development priorities of SDC keep their importance, as regards the adaptation to climate change. Contrariwise in every sector or activity field wrong decisions – not really integrating future scenarios – could be made, leading to what is called 'maladaptation'. Development cooperation and tackling climate change are to a very high degree overlapping and inseparable.

As to adaptation it is therefore not so much the 'what', that is key, but much more the 'how': An appropriate monitoring with regard to new and increased threats, risks and vulnerabilities, individual and institutional

awareness raising well as a sound selection of appropriate prevention and adaptation measures – taking into account also the opportunities of a long term change of weather conditions – are what needs to be reinforced.

If we change from the 'cure'-side of climate change (adaptation to global warming) to the 'prevention'-side (mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions), we see that there are opportunities to combine adaptation with measures leading to less emissions in the land-use and in the energy sector. Sustainable systems of agriculture and forestry have a high potential to decrease dependence on fertilizers and pesticides and increase food, water and energy security. They are able to yield a broad bandwidth of agricultural and forest products and environmental services (water supply, nutrient balance, ecological stability – pest management – and the reduction or sequestration of greenhouse gases).

Climate change as a phenomenon depicts that on the one side energy supply is one of the most striking pre-conditions for development; on the other it calls to the world to find ways to increase the efficiency of energy use and to develop sustainable forms of energy. If we seriously talk about the right for development, significant investments have to be done in the energy sector of development countries. SDC as a small donor can focus on measures, which are attractive because they have both a high cost-benefit ratio for investors and a high potential for scaling up: Decentralised rural energy supply and (small-) industrial processes to increase energy efficiency.

Be it with regard to risk sensitive program management, energy or land use programmes, SDC needs to strengthen combinations of bottom up approach, public private partnerships and policy dialogue in the future. Thus, poverty alleviation can be achieved by both, increased assets and better distribution. Paying

particular attention to aspects of governance in programs will continuously gain in importance.

*What three most important priorities do you observe in the South and the East regarding climate change? How does SDC address them?*

- a. Risk management with regard to future weather scenarios. The SDC Climate Change and Environment Network launches the Climate and DRR Check as a working aid for SDC staff to screen and – if necessary – assess strategies, projects and programs with regard to increased future natural risks. Climate change raises the importance of Disaster Risk Reduction and broadens its fields of application.
- b. Sustainable energy production and energy efficiency lead to more development options, they may be additionally used to reduce pressure on natural resources. SDC innovates local energy supply systems (biomass incl. firewood and charcoal, small hydropower, wind energy) and industrial processes with a high potential for emission reductions (e.g. brick production, foundries, buildings).
- c. Land use as regards the selection of crops, maintaining soil fertility, water efficiency (alternative and improved crops, integrated pest management, organic agriculture, irrigation) and the management of common pool resources (community forest, pasture and water management) in collective action.

*Climate change mitigation and adaptation: On which level – micro, meso, macro – do you make out the most promising approaches? What 2-3 SDC projects are in your view champions / good examples?*

The Global Programme Climate Change aims at programs, which have good outcomes on all levels of intervention. A successful policy dialogue is crucial for up scaling achievements on the local and regional level, whereas a successful policy dialogue is not possible without the example of convincing examples. See some selected examples below and on the SDC website:

<http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Home/Projects?country%5B%5D=&theme%5B%5D=5&activity%5B%5D=>

### Climate change in Peru: Maximising resilience to minimise vulnerability

SDC supports a climate change adaptation programme in the highlands of Peru with the objective of preserving the livelihood of the poor communities in the regions of Cusco and Apurimac and reducing their vulnerability to climate change.



### Making new buildings in India more energy-efficient

SDC supports the Indian government's efforts to reduce energy consumption in new commercial buildings. This project also helps to improve the skills of architects, building contractors, engineers and research institutes in the field of energy efficiency.



### Recycling refrigerators to protect the climate

The refrigerants released into the atmosphere when old refrigerators are crushed for disposal are massively contributing to ozone layer depletion and global warming.

In order to reduce emissions of these greenhouse gases, Switzerland provides funding to a pilot project to recycle used refrigerators in Brazil. The first specialised fridge disassembling facility was inaugurated in the state of Sao Paulo in September 2010.



*Climate protection and the right for development: Do you see a contradiction of climate protection and development? Or can synergies of climate protection and fight against poverty be generated?*

As I said above, if we seriously talk about the right for development, significant investments have to be done in the energy sector of development countries. Many projects that are climate protection oriented would not yet be economically viable without the aid of non profit organisations or public donors like SDC. It is often through quantity (in land-use and energy use) that investors can profit from the opportunities of the carbon markets, which is why so far mainly private investors of a certain scale applied for the Clean Development Mechanism. Development programs dealing with climate protection in land or energy use (mitigation of greenhouse gases) can show that reducing poverty by selling climate protection as a by-product of normal agricultural, pastoral or forestry production is possible. This for example the case with a new SDC project in Mongolia, which will deal with selling carbon sequestered through livestock numbers reduced to a sustainable size per surface.

*Climate protection as business opportunity: Do you see potentials for developing countries? Which ones?*

There are a few options for small scale producers to profit from the opportunities of climate protection and the related markets. As said, we see the opportunity to combine land use options, i.e. agricultural, pastoral or forestry production with climate protection, in SDC the first program exploring this opportunity just started in Mongolia. Without any doubt, we are only beginning to be innovative with this regard and there are several SDC programs, which could copy this approach.

The following program options are possible: Aiming at more adapted/more sustainable crops, more sustainable modes of production (choice of crop, production system and choice of breed, e.g. rice), sustainable livestock production (species, breed, fodder), more sustainable user arrangements in pasture and forest management, organic agriculture or agro forestry. With regard to ownership, i.e. tenure of the carbon sold, different regimes are thinkable: (a) individual land-

owners produce individually and apply together for money from the carbon market or (b) they produce in association and apply as such.

Approaches to the production of biofuels (e.g. Jatropha) need to be examined carefully regarding their social, ecologic and economic sustainability; several weak approaches have been aggressively attacked by the international media. Few examples manage to convince the attentive observer.

Of course there will be big players and government realising climate protection business opportunities with regard to energy production (solar panel parks, wind parks, big hydropower projects, large scale forest conservation and – restoration programs, reforestation or afforestation programs). The quality of their participatory and socially compatible planning will be decisive with regard to their success both with regard to climate protection and general development.

*What is done for mainstreaming climate protection within SDC? And what are the three most pressing issues, SDC should tackle for climate protection?*

We don't favour neither the term 'mainstreaming' nor 'mainstream' since they remind us of fashion, where a lot of trends – cheap or expensive - come and go. - Alas, it still appears to be the periodical fate of key-lessons in development – e.g. participation and gender as obvious governance criteria - to be seen by some of us as pure trends that pass. Integrating climate change as a part of general risk management means a) dealing responsibly with a broader range of future (weather and temperature related) scenarios and b) profiting from (much) lower marginal costs for adaptation and mitigations options in the present than in the future.

Due to the fact, that the international debate about climate created official carbon markets (e.g. the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme, the EU ETS; the Clean Development Mechanism, CDM under the UNFCCC; the Voluntary Carbon Standard, VCS) climate protection already pays from a certain scale on.

The Global Program Climate Change is implementing and launching exemplary programs that serve both as learning and flagship examples, on the local, regional, national and on the global level. It's the a task of the

Climate Change and Environment Network (CC&E Network) to use different channels to promote learning and replication tailored to country conditions. The SDC Climate & DRR Check helps staff to identify appropriate adaptation measures but also suitable climate protection measures. And of course the activities of the CC&E Network related to training, learning, sharing of information and joint monitoring will continue.

Most pressing issues SDC should tackle (mentioned not in order of importance):

- Implement the SDC Climate and DRR Check as regards the screening of new planning in the pipeline and decide whether a new SDC project, program or country or regional program or a new phase of an ongoing project should undergo a thorough Climate and DRR assessment. The application of the Climate and DRR Check will contribute both to improve an SDC intervention and advance and simplify the SDC Climate and DRR process.
- Build the case for the compensation of collective action regarding the management of natural resources (water, forest and pasture management)
- Identify least developed countries with a potential to become future champions with regard to climate adaptation and mitigation measures

*What questions regarding climate change concern you personally the most?*

Is it morally acceptable to be an optimist as regards the global challenge of climate change? And do the actions we take individually and jointly in our professional and private life already justify our optimism? And if we are not optimists, why do we continue to work in development cooperation? And even if we are pessimists, is there any justification to practice a development incompatible with climate change? But luckily these questions do not concern me all day long.

*If you can make one statement regarding climate change, that you want every collaborator of SDC to know about, what is it?*

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