



Appendix Q

# Donors' Perspectives: United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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Good morning. Thank you very much for inviting us to this important forum and to share our ideas, our strategies, and our future plans in the area of climate change and biodiversity.

To introduce a little caveat, we are a development agency. I work with the US Agency for International Development. Therefore, we don't necessarily support research per se.

However, the US government support for mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity issues is quite significant. It has been for a very long time, despite the possibly larger and political discussions about climate change that have been taking place. I'm sure many of you could put me on the spot to answer questions about this, so I hope you won't.

I do have an adaptation background. I worked for years at the National Oceanographic Administration in their climate change office that funded a lot of very, very early adaptation work going back quite a few years - going back at least 10 or 15 years. A lot of that work focused on climate variability. We have some interesting discussions here about the difference between climate change and variability, and what does it mean to adapt to climate change, and how you can use variability as an en route. That's just a caveat.

But to start of, obviously, the challenge is huge. I will not reiterate the many, many presentations we've had over the last two days about the massive impacts, both regionally and especially on the Philippines. The challenge is great and so should the responses. Unfortunately, I think we're lacking on the responses. But still the challenges are still overwhelming in many places.

I just came back from Tanzania to look at their adaptation strategies. Our adaptation strategies right now is very piecemeal. Even our look at biodiversity and adaptation, and biodiversity and climate change, is still just the beginning. So much more needs to be done. There's such a lack of holistic policies, holistic plans that would integrate all of the great work that all of you are doing. That's one of my calls to actions.

But the challenge is great. For an agency, like the US Agency for International Development, it is especially daunting in that being in the field of development, climate change can and will cause serious destructions to developmental progress. Quite frankly, if you read the last two reports, if you haven't been scared yet, you should read them because it really does put a very sobering look on what the possibilities are. Not only could it arrest development in some areas, it could set us quite a bit back. It's a serious challenge that the USAID is taking very seriously.

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## Realizing Challenges, Exploring Opportunities

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Of course, I would say there's a huge consensus that affected development cannot proceed without adaptation. Adaptation is a central part of it. So, what is the response? The responses are manifold.

The US government has been involved in mitigation activities for a very long time, both domestically and internationally. In the last five to six years, there's much greater consensus on the support for adaptation. Once again, there's quite a few governments around the world who have invested very heavily on adaptation research especially, US being only one of them. The lessons from that are manifold and apply specifically to many developing countries.

Apparently, discussions here with the participants focus on specific activities on adaptation research going on in the Philippines that are with US government institutions. But the support and response to climate change is manifold, as I mentioned, to mitigation, adaptation, financing, technology sharing. Specifically to USAID, we have supported, built mitigation activities since about the early 1990s, and have done so region-wide, including probably hundreds of biodiversity projects. If you're interested in hearing more about those, I'd be happy to give you synopsis on a number of those. This includes many, many projects since, pretty much, in the 1960s in the Philippines. Many of those projects focused on, for many years, on land, and green biodiversity. Many more of those, in most recent years, have focused on water, on coral, coastal resources management. Once again, we are development agency so there is a focus on poverty alleviation, on livelihood. All our biodiversity conservation projects have a component on livelihoods and poverty alleviation.

Our biodiversity portfolio is in the process of expanding. As you know, there's several different ways of approaching, and I do focus, and I apologize for that, on adaptation mostly. I do feel that in the Philippines, although the Philippines is contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, the real challenge for the Philippines is adaptation. I think many of you have said that over the course of the last couple of days. It is a specific challenge that needs to be addressed. So our responses and thoughts in the Philippines, and our plans for the Philippines have mostly focused on adaptation.

Our past plans, and some of you might attest to that, include some clean energy projects. We do have projects on mitigation, and pollution control. As a way forward, we are integrating adaptation into our conservation planning. We are integrating that agency-wide. We are integrating that into individual projects. Our regional mission is also looking at designing and putting together regional plans for climate change adaptation programs.

However, and this is a challenge to all of you, and it's a challenge to us, there's many different ways of looking at adaptation. You can integrate it into ongoing projects. You can design purely adaptation specific programs, or you can just do what you do in terms of natural resources management and hope that helps adaptation. All three of those are valid. There's an ongoing debate about how things are going to be done in the future. I can see from the presentations from the other two donors that any one of those three strategies is something that they are deploying currently.



We do have specific plans for climate change adaptation on the regional scale. This includes, as I mentioned, projects that are focusing on conservation like the Coral Triangle Initiative, which USAID and other donors are also supporting. It's a very large effort, requiring lots and lots of funding so lots of donors are stepping up to the table. We will integrate adaptation and climate change issues in general into that program. But there will also be specific programs addressing adaptation. A lot of that will hopefully focus on planning which many countries in the region have not yet been able to accomplish.

But as much as we're trying to integrate adaptation into our ongoing biodiversity activities and conservation activities, much more work remains to be done.

As I mentioned before, the work is daunting. We have not even begun really talking about supporting appropriate research agendas. This is a challenge to you also. What would be an appropriate research agenda for the Philippines, not just in biodiversity? This is where biodiversity and folks working on biodiversity conservation had to put themselves in a larger scheme of things in terms of supporting research and on climate risk and vulnerability mapping. Any of the large number of things that could be supported by looking at adaptation. We also need to start looking beyond just natural resources management, biodiversity, and coastal resources management sectors. There are many sectors that are going to be impacted by this. And biodiversity plays a large role in number of these sectors.

Once again, we are a development agency. So therefore, reaching the poor and safeguarding their development potential is paramount in USAID programs. That, too, has not been addressed in terms of integrating that with adaptation. We have not done a very good job coordinating with other donors yet it is happening with programs like the Coral Triangle Initiative where many donors are stepping into the table. Adaptation is the central part of that program. Donors are starting and beginning to coordinate. A lot more needs to be done. Obviously, this is where the government of the Philippines leads. We do support the government's priorities and plans.

As many of you, I'm sure, know, the plans that are currently available for climate change adaptation are not very holistic. There's so much more. For example, our research agenda. That's missing from those plans. So I urge you to also take a look at that, and present, and get involved. That's something that the donors can pick up and invest on, and is more holistic, and has lot more of those priorities.

But basically, what I wanted to leave you with is just a myriad of examples and priority setting exercises that the Philippines needed to go through. I have mentioned a few of those. Basically, the choice that the Philippines has is to adapt to specific programs on adaptation and to go on doing good governance programs, and hope that that also helps adaptation. Or just basically do climate proofing, current programs, current activities. Those are the three objectives. Those are the three ways to go. But the different scales that you need to work on in terms of planning, also haven't been addressed. USAID pays a huge attention to working on the community level a lot. But to integrate the community with the provincial, with the national, with the multinational -



that, too, hasn't happened in the plans especially on how to do adaptation on all these different levels.

Finally, there are many sectors to look at, many sectors that haven't been involved in the debate yet - disaster risk management, agriculture, coastal resources management, water management, energy, and human health. Biodiversity plays a role in quite a few of those, and in terms of strategies. What are we investing in? What is the research agenda? As the organizers, for example, where is PAGASA? They are the place in the Philippines that has all the climate data. When you're talking about climate risk, when you are talking about climate proofing things, where is that? Where is their information? Where are they sitting at the table? And as far as I know, they haven't, they're not yet, and they need to be.

But research agenda has obviously had to go beyond that, go beyond enough to integrate research and implementation. How is that going to happen? Who is going to lead that effort? Are we just going to, basically, change our NRM practices? Are we going to build institutions? Are we going to launch planning processes?

All of these are strategies they haven't yet been put together into cohesive plans. Awareness raising and biodiversity, again, plays a huge role here. Research institutions that you're representing play a huge role at what levels? How is that going to happen? How is that going to be integrated into national plans?

You know, I've many, many more strategies and ideas that have been put forward by many institutions about adaptation. In this case, I would urge you to lead and for the donors to follow. And we'd be very happy to do that.

Thank you.