



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 April 2012

Original: English

Substantive session of 2012

New York, 2-27 July 2012

Item 13 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Economic and environmental questions:
sustainable development**

Statement submitted by Nurses across Borders, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2012/100.



Statement

Combating climate change to achieve sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels and attain the Millennium Development Goals

Social protection must widen its focus beyond economic policies to encompass one of the largest threats to social development: climate change stresses and risks. Climate change issues so heavily influence social development that the inclusion, as appropriate, of climate change adaptation and disaster reduction concerns at multiple scales is a responsible and effective strategy focused on social protection.

As climate change creates more erratic weather patterns, storms become more severe and floods and drought more frequent. Health effects are magnified by greater extremes in temperature and precipitation. Exacerbating deep inequalities within countries, unaddressed climate change policies and actions undermine efforts to build a more inclusive pattern of global social development.

Developing countries derive a substantial portion of their income from ecosystem services at risk from the effects of climate change. Failure to confront climate change risks jeopardizes the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, consigning the poorest of the world's population to a future of diminished opportunity.

Building capacity at all levels to adapt and create resilience to the effects of climate change is vital for reducing inequality and social exclusion with a view to long-term sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Rather than focusing solely on emissions, climate change adaptation measures must also be integrated into development and interwoven with disaster risk reduction strategies.

When social capital, which is based on trust, reciprocal action and reputation, interacts with natural capital, it empowers public good aspects of institutional performance in relation to climate change and risk adaptation, including by reducing inequality and eradicating poverty and social exclusion.

In the *Human Development Report 2007/2008: Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*, the United Nations Development Programme forecasts that the impact of climate change on the world's poor will have long-term consequences. It is apparent that future changes in climate pose significant challenges to society, not least of which is how best to adapt to the observed and potential future impact of these changes.

Responses to climate change require governance actions through the enabling of a policy environment that directly supports the building of local capacity in order to ensure that local communities can manage climate change within local ecosystems, social conditions and political contexts. This includes equitable access to finance (leveraging both traditional and emerging sources) for capital to learn, engage their communities and implement climate change adaptation and disaster reduction strategies. While scaling-up actions have merit, global replication at the expense of locally effective and relevant implementation can actually impede rather than encourage social development. The unintended consequences of failing to attend to local scales with diversified options can derail the goal of decentralization,

which in turn diminishes the emphasis in the Millennium Development Goals on community participation and political commitment, both of which are also key activities under the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.
