A Review of the Least Developed Countries in the IPCC AR5 WGII

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Planting of mangrove seedlings in Funafala, Funafuti Atoll, Tuvalu. © David J. Wilson
Main findings

• Little reference is made specifically to the LDCs and not all LDCs are referenced
• LDCs examined with reference to institutional processes for supporting adaptation
• Adaptation experience is limited – there is more focus on impacts and vulnerabilities
• The content of the IPCC AR5 WGII may reflect the availability/lack of availability of quality research products
The ‘Least Developed Countries’

- References focus on socio-economic vulnerability
- Large and growing populations living in urban areas
- Discussions refer to processes supporting adaptation - e.g. financial mechanisms, NAPAs and NAPs

Figure: Past/predicted urban populations as a percentage of total global urban population and total world population
LDCs in Africa

• Africa has 34 LDCs, 30 directly cited in IPCC AR5 WGII
• Main impacts in Africa: drying, precipitation, SLR
• LDCs mostly referred to in rural/terrestrial context
• Shared impacts highlighted: increased malaria, landslides and flooding, vegetation shifts, fishery vulnerability
• Adaptive responses discussed on local/national levels are subject to multiple barriers
LDCs in Asia

- Asia has 9 LDCs, including adaptation leaders e.g. Bangladesh, Nepal
- Varied impacts: high precipitation, SLR, extreme events, drying
- Differential issues and varied responses highlighted
- Bangladesh: most cited LDC in the report, references reflecting vulnerability and successful and advanced responses e.g. disaster response mechanisms, CBA
- Nepal’s LAPA highlights this LDC as another leader
LDCs in the Small Islands

- Small Island LDCs highlighted as diverse in their geomorphology, culture, ecosystems and populations
- Similarities in impacts: SLR, flooding, critically affected marine resources
- Four LDCs are among the Small Islands, which are viewed as being particularly vulnerable
- Little successful adaptation experience is cited
- Communities are central to much research
- Cultural impacts differ between islands, both helping and hindering adaptive responses
LDCs in the Americas

- Haiti is the only LDC in the Americas.
- It is only briefly referred to regarding the challenges faced in governance, coping with extreme climatic events and in supporting citizens to cope and adapt.

Photograph: Kate Ferguson/Christian Aid (Source: The Guardian Online)

Saplings bound for a tree nursery in Thiotte. Deforestation has increased the landslide risk in Haiti and taken an environmental toll.
Discussion

• This review gives an indication of the current state of knowledge of the impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation within the LDCs
• The IPCC report does not give a comprehensive picture of each LDC
• Shortfalls in research availability can give a distorted understanding of the LDCs
• Heightened exposure of LDCs to climate change means reflection upon how to support the LDCs is crucial
• More direct and comprehensive information about each LDC in future IPCC reports can assist this
Thank you