

Climate change is a Looming Humanitarian Crisis CARE warns of major setbacks in development gains

November 8, Nairobi, Kenya—As an organization committed to ending global poverty, CARE views climate change as a potential humanitarian crisis. To address this, the organization believes that wealthy countries must reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and commit resources to enable poorer nations to adapt to climatic changes.

Each year, government representatives, scientists, academics and the NGO community gather at the UN conference to discuss the global response to climate change. CARE strongly believes that developed countries must act now to meet and exceed greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol.

“The impact that climate change will have on our efforts to reduce poverty and achieve security for people in the developing world is alarming,” says A. John Watson, President and CEO of CARE Canada. “As with all natural disasters, it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who will suffer the most”.

Climate change is expected to cause at least 50 million environmental refugees by 2010. It is estimated that by 2025, 63 percent of the global population will be living in countries that will experience significant water shortages thus increasing the probability of conflict over scarce resources. Crop yields in parts of Africa will fall by 30% by mid century.

CARE believes that developed countries must allocate resources to assist developing countries in adapting to the unavoidable negative impacts of climate change.

“We mustn’t ignore the important role of civil society organizations, in particular humanitarian aid organizations, in working with the most vulnerable people of this planet,” says Phil Franks of CARE International. “Organizations like CARE have decades of experience working at the grassroots level, and this knowledge must be utilized in order to reduce the impact of climate change on humanity.”

With support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CARE has piloted community-level adaptation projects in Bangladesh and Tajikistan. These projects have demonstrated that efforts to help people cope with climate change can have a positive impact on well-being and livelihood security in vulnerable regions. CARE has also recently launched a Poverty-Climate Change Initiative, which will examine the implications of climate change for CARE’s programming around the world.

For more information on CARE’s climate change work, please visit
www.care.ca/climatechange

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