



## **The Preah Sihanouk Declaration on Building Coastal Resilience to Climate Change Impacts in Southeast Asia**

**Adopted During the Third Annual Coastal Forum of the Building Coastal Resilience Project  
Wednesday 23rd to Friday 25th October 2014 at the Sokha Beach Resort, Preah Sihanouk  
Province, Cambodia**

1. We, the participants at the Third Annual Coastal Forum of the EU-funded 'Building Resilience to Climate Change Impacts - Coastal Southeast Asia' Project, comprise over 200 individuals from 8 coastal provinces in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, representing government agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational institutes and some of the coastal communities expected to be most severely affected by climate change anywhere in the world. For the past 4 years we have worked together to assess the vulnerability and capacity of our coastal ecosystems and local communities in adapting to the impacts of both climate change and man-made stressors. During this 3-day conference we have come together to learn from one another, to share our experiences and summarize our lessons.
2. This declaration comprises our major recommendations based on our combined experience and lessons learned on building resilience to climate change impacts in coastal Southeast Asia. We believe that following these recommendations will help to make our coastal ecosystems and local communities more resilient and better able to adapt to the impacts of climate change and man-made stressors in the future.
3. We therefore call on all those engaged in building resilience to climate change in coastal zones, either directly or indirectly, and including but not limited to government agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational institutes, media, civil society, international community and coastal communities themselves, to:

### **Coastal Zone Resilience**

4. Acknowledge that our coastal zones contain and sustain ecosystems, natural resources, livelihoods, community settlements, history and cultural heritage.
5. Acknowledge that our coastal zones are threatened not just by climate change, but also by man-made stressors such as urbanization, industrialization, agricultural intensification, privatization and tourism, as well as upstream developments in rivers flowing to the coast.
6. Acknowledge that addressing coastal erosion requires both soft solutions and hard solutions, both local small-scale interventions, national, regional and global large-scale interventions. (locally appropriate)
7. Acknowledge that the coastlines of the Gulf of Thailand and particularly the Mekong Delta are very dynamic. There is therefore a high risk of unintended consequences of development interventions.
8. Support local communities in applying local knowledge and in conducting participatory action research to generate new knowledge and understanding to address coastal erosion through small-scale interventions.
9. Acknowledge that spatial planning, zoning and stakeholder dialogue are important participatory tools that can help bring about multi-stakeholder agreement on long-term strategies to address the impacts of climate change and man-made stressors on coastal zones.

### **Livelihood Resilience**

10. Acknowledge that strengthening livelihood resilience in the context of climate change and man-made stressors requires two distinct but complimentary approaches: securing existing livelihoods and developing alternative or supplementary livelihoods.



11. Acknowledge that individuals with livelihoods dependent upon natural resources, often already poor, disadvantaged and under-represented in decision-making, are likely to be most severely impacted by climate change and man-made stressors.
12. Acknowledge that traditional resource-based livelihoods are often threatened by changing policy environments, modern development models and depletion of the resource base through over-harvesting as much as they are by climate change.
13. Acknowledge the ability to develop alternative and supplementary livelihoods depends upon access to resources and opportunities: finance, materials, equipment, knowledge, skills, partners and markets.
14. Support community-led initiatives to investigate, monitor and evaluate the impact of existing and alternative livelihoods on natural resources, habitats and ecosystems.
15. Support both community-led initiatives and multi-stakeholder co-management systems to conserve, rehabilitate and manage the natural resources, habitats and ecosystems on which existing and alternative livelihoods depend.
16. Provide access to resources and opportunities to enable local communities, particularly the poor, to develop alternative livelihoods that are appropriate, sustainable and resilient.
17. Ensure alternative livelihood development does not undermine or threaten the food security and food safety, social integrity or cultural heritage of local communities.

### **Ecosystem Resilience**

18. Acknowledge that ecosystems do not only contain and sustain important habitats and natural resources, but also livelihoods and community settlements.
19. Acknowledge that in some cases top-down ecosystem management that focuses only on strict conservation and ignores the presence of livelihoods and community settlements can be ineffective or even detrimental both for ecosystems and for communities.
20. Acknowledge that well managed ecosystems support sustainable and resilient communities, reducing vulnerability and increasing capacity to adapt to climate change and man-made stressors.
21. Acknowledge that ecosystems themselves and the individual species they contain are also directly threatened by climate change, and management will need to change to take this into account.
22. Promote the identification of champion species of economic importance or biodiversity value representative of different ecosystem types, and use these as a basis for expanding outwards to habitat, ecosystem and area-wide management, putting in place long-term monitoring systems to understand changes in these species populations at a variety of scales.
23. Support research into better understanding of climate change impacts on species and ecosystems, including inter alia how predator-prey relationships; parasite-host relationships; commensal relationships; pollination, flowering and fruiting; and seasonal migrations will all change.
24. Understand the limits to adaptation of species and habitats, how their distribution ranges will change with climate and what management interventions are necessary to ensure their continued survival.
25. Encourage green development at local level.

### **Diversity and Equality**

26. Acknowledge that coastal communities are home to diverse inhabitants. Various factors cause people to experience life differently, including gender, age, physical ability, nationality, religion, ethnicity, financial status and social status.
27. Acknowledge that these diverse inhabitants experience climate change and its impacts differently. The nature and severity of the impacts, and the capacity to adapt to those impacts, differs from person to person.
28. Acknowledge that under-represented and marginalized members of society often have greater vulnerability and lower capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change and man-made stressors.



29. Support initiatives aimed at addressing the specific vulnerabilities, impacts, needs and aspirations of under-represented and marginalized members of society in the context of climate change and man-made stressors.
30. Provide seed funds, matched funds or other forms of micro finance to enable groups of under-represented and marginalized members of society to establish themselves and explore adaptation initiatives.
31. Support community-led, multi-stakeholder, trans-boundary networking approaches to ecosystem management, acknowledging the fundamental rights of local communities to participate in the conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use of natural resources and the environment, ensuring the participation and strengthening the voices of poor, disadvantaged and under-represented individuals.

### **Governance and Policy**

32. Acknowledge that adapting to the impacts of climate change and man-made stressors requires a long-term commitment to making local development more sustainable and more resilient.
33. Acknowledge that at the local level, local communities, local administration organizations, local government agencies and other stakeholders must exchange knowledge, share resources and plan together if climate change adaptation is to be successful.
34. Acknowledge that at the national level, evidence-based policy, cross-sectoral coordination and incorporation of local realities are all necessary to ensure coastal ecosystems and local communities become more resilient to climate change and man made stressors.
35. Support multi-stakeholder collaboration on area-based or ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation at the local level.
36. Support bottom-up planning processes to ensure local, sub-national and national policies, plans and projects for climate change adaptation accurately reflect local realities.
37. Ensure fundamental and universal principles of good governance are adhered to, including access, participation, representation, influence, transparency, accountability and monitoring.

### **Media and Communications**

38. Acknowledge the role of media in creating better communication and raising awareness on climate change among the general public.
39. Encourage media agencies to adopt climate change into their media agenda; and invest in climate change related news and programme development.
40. Support capacity building and understanding of the media practitioners to report on climate change.
41. Encourage a better exchange of knowledge and information between scientists, government officers, villagers and media practitioners.
42. Consider establishing national, regional, and international media networks on climate change adaptation where resources, expertise, skills, knowledge and information are shared.
43. Support the inclusion of a subject on climate change and media report into journalism and mass communications curricula at university level.
44. To reach the poorest households with no mass media access, support climate communicators drawn from the local community.