

INCREASING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Throughout the world, climate change and environmental degradation are increasingly affecting economies and the well-being of people. People are highly dependent on the natural environment for their physical, social and economic well-being. This ranges from the necessities of life such as water, food and air, to reliance on resources for economic growth, to the need for resilience against the impacts of natural hazards. With a rising global population and more people living in urban centres, environmental challenges have the potential to destabilize communities, jeopardizing hard-fought development gains and contributing to social unrest and migration.

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL SOUTH ASIA AND THE CHILIKA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Low-lying coastal areas, which include some of the most densely populated areas on Earth, are at high risk from rising sea levels and other effects of climate change. Since 2011, Canada's International Development Research Centre has supported Wetlands International South Asia and the Chilika Development Authority. Working with local stakeholders, these organizations assess how people and ecosystems are vulnerable to climate change in one coastal hotspot—India's Chilika Lagoon. An integrated management planning framework resulting from the research is now helping preserve the livelihoods of some 200,000 fishers and 400,000 farmers living around the lagoon. In addition, training materials and other resources have been created for wetland managers and decision-makers so that others can benefit from Chilika's experience. The project's disaster-response measures were dramatically tested in 2013 when Cyclone Phailin struck the region. Disaster resilience committees, cyclone shelters and family survival kits that were put in place helped avoid a major loss of life in Chilika.

Evidence also shows that the impacts of climate change often disproportionately affect women and girls—as they constitute the majority of the world's poor and are more dependent for their livelihoods on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. Furthermore, women and girls have limited mobility, unequal access to resources and decision-making processes and face social, economic and political barriers that limit their coping capacity. It is estimated that in the coming years, billions of people, particularly those in developing countries, will face shortages of water and food and greater risks to health and life as a result of climate-related impacts.

In November 2015, recognizing the pressing and urgent need to act on environmental and climate change issues worldwide, Canada announced a new commitment in climate financing, of \$2.65 billion over five years, to help the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world adapt to climate change. This investment will help build a more environmentally sustainable future for generations to come. As part of this commitment, the Government announced funding for a number of key initiatives, including:

- \$150 million to the G7 Africa Renewable Energy Initiative,
- \$50 million to the G7 Initiative on Climate Risk Insurance, and
- \$30 million to finance urgent adaptation projects through the Least Developed Countries Fund, which is operated by the Global Environment Facility.

MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The impacts of environmental degradation and climate change (including drought, floods, extreme weather events, pollution and diminished biodiversity) represent key global challenges that are as persistent as they are complex. Environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change are inseparable from other critical development challenges such as gender equality, economic growth, governance and human rights, education, health, peace and security, and humanitarian assistance and resilience. To address these challenges, Canada supports global initiatives and international organizations that help maximize the impact of its contributions.

During the Conference of the Parties (COP15), held in Copenhagen in December 2009, developed countries pledged to provide significant financial resources; this collective commitment came to be known as fast-start finance. Canada's Fast-Start climate finance commitment provided \$1.2 billion over three fiscal years (2010–2013) in climate change financing to enable the poorest and most vulnerable countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change; support also focused on forests and agriculture. Canada's COP15