



## **IACD Policy Statement on Climate Change**

**To coincide with the COP21 - United Nations Conference on Climate Change, being held in Paris in December 2015, the International Association for Community Development (IACD) is publishing the following policy statement on community development and climate change.**

**Over the past year IACD has been prioritising its work around supporting its members to engage with this issue, alongside work addressing the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by all UN member countries in September 2015. IACD is running two major events in India in March 2016 and in the USA in July 2016, to support community developers working on these related agendas, putting policies into practice. We urge all members to disseminate this policy statement widely.**

### **Position Statement**

The IACD recognizes the urgency of climate change and broad impacts on society, including the global economy and on the environment. As such, the IACD calls for more action and investment in policies that support community resiliency and low-emissions development with significant attention to individual and organizational capacity-building related to addressing community vulnerability and adaptability.

### **Purpose and Rationale**

The IACD recognizes the urgency of climate change challenge and recognizes the need to discuss, debate, inform, and hold policy positions. Furthermore, we recognize that this critical issue can only be addressed if communities, particularly those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, are directly and genuinely involved in the policy process. We know of no other community development-oriented organization that functions at the global-level that has addressed this policy issue with a formal policy process and statement. The IACD, through our network for community development academics and practitioners, is one of the most capable and extensive organizations to assist with community-oriented efforts. Our global network of community development academics and practitioners is uniquely positioned to develop this statement and influence policy on multiple levels. Through a vetted policy development process, our impact can be profound in local, regional, state and even international contexts. Not only do we desire to galvanize our membership through

the development and implementation of this policy position statement, but we hope to influence our colleagues, constituents, and contemporaries at every level of policy making, from local governments and organizations to the United Nations.

### **Science and Public Policy Aspects**

Multiple independent lines of evidence throughout the world make it clear that climate change is occurring, and rigorous scientific research demonstrates that the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are the primary driver. According to the IPCC, “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. ...It is extremely likely (95% CI) that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system.”<sup>i</sup>

Moreover, there is strong evidence that ongoing climate change will have broad impacts on society, including the global economy and on the environment. Climate change is and will continue to adversely affect social development factors including poverty, infrastructure, technology, security, and economics across the globe. Indeed, the relationship between climate change and social vulnerability and inequality will be particularly evident in impoverished communities. For example, access to safe drinking water and food security will become increasingly acute as a result of climate change.<sup>ii</sup>

The International Association for Community Development (IACD) recognizes that climate change will have profound impacts on communities with the likelihood of negative consequences affecting those most vulnerable. The IACD also recognizes that rapid societal responses, particularly addressing the needs of communities and of those most vulnerable, can significantly lessen negative outcomes. We agree with the nearly 200 worldwide scientific organizations that hold the position that climate change has been caused by human action and requires immediate and deliberate attention.<sup>iii</sup>

In particular, we are concerned with the “Vulnerable Twenty” (V20) representing close to 700 million people from 20 countries around the globe that are most vulnerable to climate change – low and middle income, least developed, arid, isthmus, landlocked, mountainous and small island developing countries from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.<sup>iv</sup> We agree with the V20 statement that, “The fate of the most vulnerable will be the fate of the world.” Disproportionally, the least 50 developed countries of the world account for a 1% contribution to the worldwide emissions of greenhouse gasses, yet suffer 99% of the consequences attributable to climate change.<sup>v</sup>

## Recommendations

The IACD recognizes the need to call for more action and investment in climate resiliency and low-emissions development. Specifically, there is an urgent need to integrate responses to climate change and adaptation measures into strategies for poverty reduction to ensure sustainable development. Given the complexity of challenges facing humanity, the IACD can play a critical role in necessary policy changes while supporting communities to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and adapt to the transformations that must take place.

### Opportunities for IACD and its Members to Help Implement Recommendations

We recognize that there are many opportunities for IACD and its members to help implement the above-stated recommendations. We invite IACD members to contribute in the following ways:

1. Learn as much as possible about the critical issue of climate change and how communities that are most vulnerable can be assisted to become more resilient and to make the transition to a low carbon future. It is essential that CD employers invest in continuing learning around this issue.
2. Support local, regional, state and international policies that seek to lower greenhouse gas emissions and sustain communities, through highlighting the importance of community-based mitigation and adaptation strategies.
3. Engage with your colleagues regarding establishing or building up existing networks and other opportunities for collaborative efforts that increase awareness and mitigate impacts.
4. Highlight the necessity for local communities to be active players alongside governmental agencies, NGO's, local governments, educational institutions, business interests and other organizations, in creating local community transition and resilience strategies.

For further information on the work of IACD please see our website

[www.iacdglobal.org](http://www.iacdglobal.org)

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<sup>i</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2014. *Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers*. [https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5\\_SYR\\_FINAL\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2013. *Poverty and Climate Change: Reducing the Vulnerability of the Poor through Adaptation*. <http://www.oecd.org/env/cc/2502872.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> This list is presented at: [http://opr.ca.gov/s\\_listoforganizations.php](http://opr.ca.gov/s_listoforganizations.php); additional references at: <http://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/>

<sup>iv</sup> The Climate Vulnerable Forum Official Website: <http://www.thecvf.org/>

<sup>v</sup> United Nations Development Programme. *"Human Development Report 2007/2008: The 21st Century Climate Challenge."*