

Sustainable Development Network

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Welcome to *Environment matters...*

This year's theme on climate change and adaptation is timely. In the last two years, several major new studies have been released, including the Stern Review in 2006 and the latest IPCC reports in 2007. With these reports, the world community has become increasingly cognizant of the urgency of this issue.

At the World Bank Group, climate change and adaptation are under intense scrutiny. Currently, the various departments of the Bank are engaged in over 100 analytical, technical assistance, and knowledge products on this subject—setting the stage for the Bank's Strategic Framework on Climate Change, which will be presented later in 2008.

In their messages, Sustainable Development Vice President Kathy Sierra and Environment Department Director James Warren Evans highlight some of this work and the challenges ahead.

Outside Viewpoints span a range of stakeholders. Colin Chartres, of the International Water Management Institute in Sri Lanka, describes challenges to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and other research institutions. Atiq Rahman, of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, presents the views of a major NGO in Bangladesh. Maarten van Aalst, of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, links the disaster preparedness and development agendas. Luis Mejia, of the National Institute of Health in Colombia, emphasizes the need for urgent action on a range of waterborne diseases.

Feature articles highlight a number of key adaptation challenges and opportunities. The Bank's Ian Noble discusses what we know about climate change, what we will never know, and how to plan and deal with uncertainty. Muthukumara Mani assesses various estimates of the costs of adaptation and financing options. A team from the SDV anchor and the Tyndall Center collaborated to discuss a range of social dimensions of vulnerability and resilience to climate change. Finally, several special features describe some innovative thinking in the Bank's adaptation work in the areas of water security, biodiversity, and index-based risk insurance.

Regional reviews—the core of the magazine, as in all previous years—describe the issues and actions highlighted by the different regions. These articles are a reflection of the different impacts of climate change on regions, subregions, and even within countries.

In last year's *Environment Matters* reader survey, many readers requested more individual case studies and examples of best practice, as well as more access to graphs and sources of information. In response, we are also glad to present a consolidated assessment by various World Bank departments of the challenges of climate change with the simultaneous launch of WBI's Development Outreach: Special Report on Climate Change, Low Carbon Economies, and Resilient Societies. This publication presents client case studies in response to climate change. Both magazines provide a complementary view of current experiences within and outside the Bank.



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Young girl: © CORBIS

Man with bicycle: © CORBIS

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Digging for water, Kenya: Frank Sperling, World Bank

Mountains, Nepal: Will Davies

Crane, Ethiopia: Will Davies

Rain forest butterfly, Sumatra: Kathy MacKinnon, World Bank

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