

**Health and Climate Change
NGO Joint Report
UNFCCC COP 17**

Side Events & Activities Report

*28 November – 09 December, 2011
Durban, South Africa*

**Organized by
SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders**



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*As part of the expanding role of civil society in the UNFCCC, SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders chaired two important events during COP 17/MOP 7 in Durban, South Africa. The official UNFCCC Side Event, **Health as a Driver of Climate Change Policy - Local Efforts: Global Action** was delivered on November 30th. This event was preceded by a six-hour Side Event hosted by the two institutions in the African Pavilion on November 29th: **Global Disaster Management - The Roles of Nurses & Health Workers**.*

Both events showcased the pivotal position of health issues in climate change discussions and the prominent roles of health workers in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

I. Background

SeaTrust Institute's and Nurses Across the Borders's integrated initiatives at both multinational and local scales, (serving as co-Chairs of the UNFCCC *Coalition on Health and Environment: Climate Change Initiative* in collaboration with WHO and the ground based training and support effort *Capacity Building for Nurses on Climate Change and Human Health and Surveillance of Changes in Diseases*) began during COP 15 in Copenhagen and expanded at COP 16 in Mexico with our first joint presentations. Our close affiliation leverages a wide range of partners and experts dedicated to integrating human health with climate change adaptation and disaster reduction efforts to build and support resilient communities.

The South-North NGO partnership links local projects and knowledge with UN processes for global decisions. Our joint organizational programs, technical abilities and resources related to climate change and health, communications, GIS and databases technologies, life cycle and scenario based approaches to climate related diseases and health issues led us to combine efforts and disseminate our joint knowledge and assets widely through training healthcare workers beginning with nurses, midwives - who constitute the largest single professional group in any health setting worldwide. By including nurses in developing and implementing social sustainability within locally-generated climate change policies and plans to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk, evidenced-based local health and climate activities emerge as key indicators of successful climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies. Outcomes from these efforts augment strategies from other sectors as our COP 17 events highlighted.

COP 17 in Durban South Africa provided a forum through which to show how our work operationalizes various United Nations strategies for building local climate change and disaster resilience through climate change, health and policy application training for nurses and other health professionals, supported by data collection methods and technologies. Local projects link back through our joint organizational commitments and participation with the UNFCCC and other initiatives within the United Nations system.

Actions Resulting from the Meetings

Based on the results of this meeting, Side Events and subsequent reflection by the Chairs of the UNFCCC COP 17 Side Events, SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders prioritize the following outputs/actions during the current year:

1. Pilot in-country nurses and other health worker training in-country beginning in Africa as well as in other regions expressing direct interest in capacity building and data collection programs for nurses, midwives and other healthcare workers for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
2. Collaborate with the African Environmental Action Network (EANet-Africa) to target first responders for training related to the health aspects of disaster risk reduction. Expand relationship with the African Union to engage ministerial level support for in-country projects and participation of health ministers in the UNFCCC.
3. Online repository of tools to support country projects and multinational research reporting.
4. Train nurses and healthcare workers as trainers to serve as focal points in-country, with particular attention to the pilot countries; support with virtual mentorship program. Complete the development of core training materials.
5. Leverage partnership with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and collaborate to strengthen the role of health and healthcare workers in addressing vulnerabilities to disasters risk across United Nations organizations and nations seeking to address Hyogo Framework for Action goals and 2015 deliverables.
6. Deploy technology for data surveillance of climate related health issue changes. Report findings to countries and through the UNFCCC to help inform strategies including national action programs (NAPs).

Further, relationships developed and deepened through participating and chairing COP 17 sessions point to the following steps:

1. Identifying priority actions together with the distinguished participants in our official Side Event to engage their expertise in refining program activities in the context of regional priorities and placement of pilot projects with nurses and healthcare workers around the globe.
2. Engaging with specific interests expressed at COP 17 by the Philippines and at the ministerial level by Grenada.

Pillars of SeaTrust Institute/Nurses Across the Borders Work

1. Engagement with and support of local populations in self-determined climate change adaptation and disaster risk strategies
2. Climate change and health training of healthcare workers, particularly nurses incorporating local data surveillance and policy action engagement
3. Collaborating with partners and affiliates to inform policy at all levels through a “Local to Global and Back Again” approach to capacity building, research and active UN participation by key personnel in our South-North partnership

II. Summary of Side Events Proceedings

Both Side Events organized discussions around five main themes: 1) the role of nurses and health workers in global disaster management and climate change adaptation 2) technical in-country training, virtual support and mentorship and data surveillance 3) saving lives through broadening partnerships with the disaster risk reduction community and engaging first responders 4) the necessity for working work simultaneously at local and global levels 5) health as a driver of climate change policy and action. Participants listened to the panel's detailed conversation on the themes opportunities and challenges. There was also opportunity for participants to provide feedback to the presenters. The chairs focused on ensuring and accounting for overlap and/or linkages so that there would be alignment among the expert presentations and responses to questions.



GLOBAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT: THE ROLES OF NURSES AND HEALTH WORKERS

November 29, 2011

Venue: African Pavilion

This six-hour interactive event beginning at 9:00 was chaired by **Mr. Peters Omoragbon, Nurses Across the Borders** and **Dr. Lynn Wilson, SeaTrust Institute**. Formal presentations by the chairs were distinguished by a special endorsement from **Dr. Victor Fodeke, Advisor, Climate Change COP 17 & African Pavilion Side Event** for the African Union. Dr Fodeke stressed the



need to engage first responders in climate change disaster preparation, highlighting the appropriateness of starting with nurses as key first responders. He congratulated participants in the audience for being part of the global launch of the ***Global Response by First Responders to Climate Change Disasters***, a collaboration between Nurses Across the Borders, SeaTrust Institute, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster and Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and African Environmental Action Network, because the loss of one life is too much and “all the money in the world cannot replace one single person. If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.”

Discussions about nurses as emissaries of global disaster risk reduction policy, particularly for communities with high levels of risk, were conducted both in presentation and through additions from members of the audience. With 2010 being the deadliest year in the last 20 for disaster-related events with over 200,000 dead, 207 million others affected, and costing over 110b USD,

the primary focus must be on the interactions between the human and environmental systems according to Mr. Omoragbon. Climate change related health effects including asthma, cardiac, waterborne illness and exposure to heat and cold support considering health as a “mega-indicator” for the effects of climate change and related disasters and as a tool through which to build individual, community and national resilience.

In her presentation on the *Complementarity of Health to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*, Dr. Wilson, provided technical information about the ground projects Nurses Across the Borders and SeaTrust Institute launch this year. She stressed the need to coordinate and weave “the science with the politics, the policies, and the social and economic factors” for building a self-determined approach to climate disaster resilience at the community, national and global levels. Wilson went on to say that a society will be less vulnerable if it has explored multiple adaptation strategies, if it is well informed through multiple sources and scales of data, and if it has information to make decisions based on what the people in that community actually care about and “nothing hits home more clearly than one’s own health.”

Capacity building of nurses extends beyond science and health training and beyond technology and data surveillance; it involved policy action knowledge and empowerment especially for women. Nurses working with health as a tool to inform National Adaptation Plans resulting from the NAPA process as well as from less formal planning efforts can have a forum for significant policy input on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and actions. Local facilitated scenario development encompassing traditional and scientific knowledge provides a framework and a record of decision processes, community input and gaps in agreement, data or knowledge required to choose the optimum path towards resilience. As first responders, nurses and other health workers must know the nature of the problems within community and national contexts, and be able to appropriately apply available resources to help avert disasters through planning and preparedness and reduce the degree of emergency response required at the time of disasters. Training nurses and other health workers in the coordinated aspects of climate change and health also directly addresses calls in the *Extended Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006-2015)* and *Declaration of the 2nd African Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2010* for “promoting integration of DRR in the formal and informal education systems and specifically the health sector” as a major area of activity.

Panel discussants identified tipping points, those levels of combined climate change and societal stress past which recovery is unlikely or impossible. Discussants stressed the need for interrelationships among ecological, social and political vulnerabilities and how health can be an appropriate indicator for success or failure related to climate change disasters. Tying the approach by the NGOs to all 5 Hyogo Framework for Action goals through health makes sense and avoids being proscriptive about the best decisions within a local community. Audience members took the podium in this well attended side event and made cases for their local issues such as drylands, and for garnering global attention and funding for problems specific to Africa. Throughout the six-hour discussion, attendance remained between 40-50 people with individuals rotating in and out in order to participate in other events. Participation was still strong and discussion lively around the launch of this important initiative and its ramifications to specific country issues when Mr. Omoragbon concluded the session at 15:00.

HEALTH AS A DRIVER OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY: LOCAL EFFORTS / GLOBAL ACTION

November 30, 2011

Venue: Lebuvu Room, Durban Conference Center

This Official Side Event featured a panel with diverse expertise and geographic influence. From left to right in the side photo the presenters are: Mayor Adewale Ayodele, First Nigerian Mayor to the Mayors Conference in Mexico; Co-Chair Dr. Lynn Wilson, Executive Director/CEO SeaTrust Institute USA; Dr. Victor Fodeke, Technical Adviser to the African Union on Climate Change COP 17; Co-Chair Pastor Peters Omoragbon, Executive President/CEO Nurses Across the Borders Nigeria; His Holiness, Shri Shri 1008, Soham Baba Mission; Dr. Pedro Basabe, the Regional Director for Africa to UNISDR; and Dr. Levi Bautista, immediate past President, Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN-CONGO, and current General Secretary, United Methodist Church Headquarters, New York.



The panel members delivered individual presentations with Drs. Bautista and Basabe acting as discussants commenting on other speakers before opening the floor to questions following the formal program. During the hour and a half Side Event, collaboration among public and private partners through health and for alleviating disaster distress, planning and policy change was a key theme. Dr. Fodeke called for starting at every level, from the home to the global policy arena to act through the global initiative to strengthen and empower first responders in order to save lives. The call for a holistic approach was echoed by Dr. Basabe who showed how the health sector is a key factor in not only the Hyogo Framework for Action but in other major directives for disaster risk reduction. Yet he stressed the call to action when he poignantly stated that “we will be judged not by this (holding up a document) but because we are saving lives.”

Dr. Bautista expanded on His Holiness Soham Baba’s story of a Bengal tiger he observed in the Sundarban Islands floods lying down with the sheep and goats as an exemplar of climate change disasters turning livelihoods upside down. Dr. Bautista suggested that our very system needs to be turned upside down through a paradigm shift to holistic thinking about local and global. “Your local is somebody else’s global” so he sees the two must be in sync if we want a more holistic approach to climate change disaster actions. Also of concern to Dr. Bautista is that the migration of health workers is from the places most at risk, notably Nigeria from where Pastor Peters Omoragbon, Mayor Ayodele and Dr. Fodeke come as well as his home country of the Philippines, meaning that these highly at-risk locations are losing their first responders. Dr. Bautista would have this issue be part of climate adaptation plans.

NGOs in particular have emerged as centres of policy research, analysis, and advocacy that are actively engaged with governments and multilateral institutions. The achievements of the South-North partnership between SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders were highlighted in a demonstration of a next-step evolution in combining NGOs in service of building global capacities for resilience to climate change and disasters. His Holiness reiterated the readiness of the Soham Baba Mission to collaborate and support Nurses Across the Borders and SeaTrust Institute in the fight against Malaria with donation of treated mosquitoes' nets and anti malaria drugs to communities in Africa. Dr. Wilson showed how every sector dealing with climate change and disaster risk measures its successes or failures in terms of human health and called for the audience not to sit on the fence but to join in the inclusive rather than proscriptive approach to building capacity through training and technologies to make local people able to self-direct their climate adaptation strategies and disaster plans. Mr. Omoragbon added that as a nurse himself, it is "imperative for us to identify with the cultural values of every society we are called on to serve" and described measures Nurses Across the Borders has been taking to introduce nurses to climate change mitigation and adaptation issues in Nigeria.

Mr. Omoragbon stressed that each person on our panel has a role to play from policy development and facilitation from UNISDR and the Mayor to research and training from SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders. The proposed initial pilot targeting malaria in Nigeria is a place for each of those roles to play out. The victims are mainly women and children; a child dies every 30 seconds from malaria in Nigeria according to Omoragbon and the nurses are the first responders to this and other climate related disasters. Dr. Wilson's presentation supported the choice to begin with nurses as the first responders for pilot projects by showing the level of trust nurses hold in communities and pointing to their scientific information capabilities and roles as community leaders and teachers. They are ideal candidates for 'train the trainer' programs to take the capacity building system to remote communities. As Mr. Omoragbon said, this South-North partnership has the goal of empowering health workers, "linking research and capacity building with global policy and action to build momentum for health as the universal societal and political driver of climate policy."

Dr. Fodeke stressed that in this work there is "hope on the horizon: and that building capacity among first responders can have a real impact, is manageable on a regional basis and that trained first responders will save lives." Involving them in the planning and the replication throughout countries provides culturally sensitive, trusts approaches to borrowing what is useful from the developed nations to help the developing countries better determine their own futures and courses of action. This is what Dr. Basabe terms the most difficult part of the risk equation – the impediments to standardization when taking country issues and cultures into consideration. He sees that climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are indeed complementary and widens the net with the partnership with NGOs SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders to move towards holistic approaches that manifest in actions on the ground. Mayor Ayodele expressed an openness to having partners from the developed as well as developing world come to his country and work alongside local people help build capacity and resilience among health workers and communities.

The expressions and declarations of partnership and a working relationship among the speakers and discussants showed a commitment to action and an understanding of the urgency to engage global health workers in their capacities as first responders and community leaders as well as to translate local efforts to global action through health as a driver of climate change policy.

III. Outcomes

The goals of SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders included exploring what is necessary to strengthen their efforts to begin in-country capacity building efforts and help inform the global policy decisions by linking health to UNFCCC and other UN organizational and sectoral goals. One of the next priorities is to develop a strategy to prioritize and achieve these goals. Several specific outcomes from COP 17 will support this strategic development and project launches in the coming months:

- As head of the African Environmental Action Network (EANet-Africa), Dr. Victor Fodeke is partnering with Nurses Across the Borders and SeaTrust Institute on the launch of the *Global Response by First Responders to Climate Change Disasters*.
- A developing partnership with the UNISDR started during COP 17 through which SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders was invited to participate as representatives of the health sector in upcoming UNISDR activities including conferences and publications.
- County and ministerial level discussions led to requests by countries to investigate ways to begin the capacity building training for nurses in several countries beyond Africa including Grenada and the Philippines
- Relationships with the African Union, Nigeria and other African nations were strengthened on the basis of shared knowledge and the potential for concrete actions through interactions between the governmental bodies and the two NGOs to specifically address unmet targets in the unmet Millennium Development Goals and the Hyogo Framework for Action
- The preparedness of the Federal Ministry of Health-FMOH and Federal Ministry of Environment-FMOE Nigeria to collaborate with SeaTrust Institute USA and Nurses Across the Borders, Nigeria on building the capacity of Health Workers on Climate Change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

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IV. Annexes

Annex I

Official Side Events – COP 17/CMP 7

HEALTH AS A DRIVER OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY: LOCAL EFFORTS / GLOBAL ACTION

Description of Official Side Event – UNFCCC COP 17, Durban, South Africa
November 30, 2011

This event catalyzes specific adaptation projects by a north/south NGO partnership for local health practitioners in low adaptive capacity regions with global actions to increase the awareness of health as the universal social, economic and environmental driver for changes in climate policy.

Through empowering local health professionals in low adaptive capacity areas, the event demonstrates how a growing north/south NGO partnership links research and capacity building with global action to build momentum for health as the universal societal and environmental driver for climate policy.

Demonstrates how, by empowering health professionals in low adaptive capacity areas, a north/south partnership with Nurses Across the Borders links research and capacity building with global action to build momentum for health as the universal societal and environmental driver for climate policy.

Presentation Materials Available at

http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/events_list.html?session_id=COP17/CMP7

GLOBAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT: THE ROLES OF NURSES AND HEALTH WORKERS

Description of African Union Side Event – UNFCCC COP 17, Durban, South Africa
November 30, 2011

This event, chaired by Nurses Across the Borders (NAB) and SeaTrust Institute launches *Global Response by First Responders to Climate Change Disasters* in partnership with the African Environmental Action Network (EANet-Africa) and in collaboration with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). During the day-long symposium,

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) specialists and participants deliberate on the symbiotic qualities of directly incorporating human health into Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRR/M) in a new way that delivers outcomes that help countries achieve their MDGs, is informed by the Hyogo Framework for Action: 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA) , and integrates with traditional and newer risk management strategies.

For information about this presentation see p. 4 of the Events, African Union Pavilion, at http://www.au.int/pages/sites/default/files/Pavilion_program_FINAL_lowres%20interp_1.pdf

Previous Official Side Events – COP 16/CMP 6

HUMAN HEALTH: THE ISSUE OF/FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

Description of Official Side Event – UNFCCC COP 16, Cancun, MX
December 7, 2010

With SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across Borders, this joint event uses scientific knowledge to support health practitioners in tangible climate change adaptation actions, highlighting malaria. We explore ways to improve adaptive strategies in regions with low adaptive capacity, and catalyze a COP16 health coalition.

Presentation Materials Available at
http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/archive.html?session_id=COP16/CMP6

CONSULTATIVE FORUM FOR THE COALITION ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT: CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

Description of Official Side Event – UNFCCC SB 34, Bonn, Germany
June 10, 2011

SeaTrust Institute and Nurses Across the Borders Humanitarian Initiative present this event is to provide a focus and venue for global colleagues, parties and stakeholders to work together in 2011-2012 to craft innovative ways to give health its proper place in the climate change discussions. Key to this effort is involving Ministers of Health and recruiting their participation at COP17.

http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/sb34/logistics/application/pdf/side_event_schedule_sb34.pdf

