

Mapping the nexus between the green economy agenda and human security: the role of social protection policies

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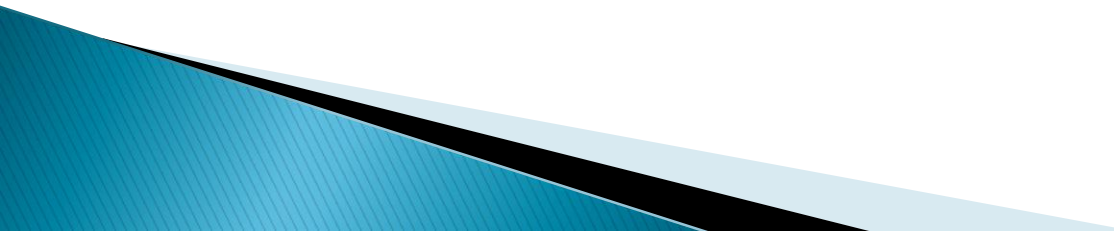
The concept of human security

- The 1994 HDR report defined human security as ‘safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression ... [and] protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, in jobs or in communities’
- Rather than focusing on state security, the primary focus of human security remains on the human citizen and on “people’s ability to live without dramatic hindrance to their well-being, whatever the cause” (Liotta and Owen 2006:42).
- Human security is compromised when threats to the life and liberty of individuals and communities are not balanced by capacities to deal with those threats (security = threats minus capacities) (Bajpai 2004: 36).

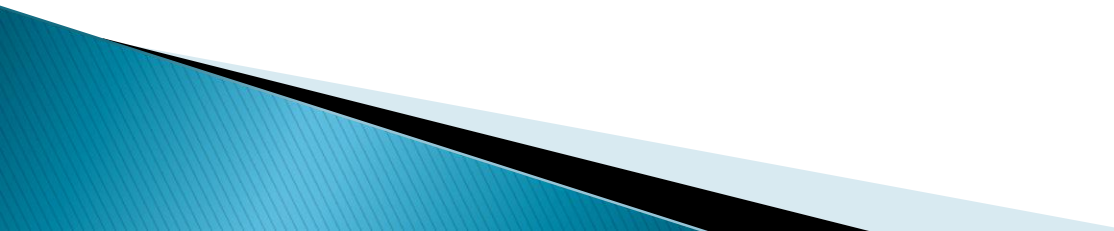
Practical considerations

- To be concerned about human security is to be concerned about the threats to people posed by human rights abuses, poverty, hunger, environmental hazards and natural disasters, as well as war
- ▶ The promotion of human security is about enhancing the *capacity* to identify these threats, to avoid them when possible, and to mitigate their effects when they materialize
- ▶ The concept of human security focuses attention on the fundamental issues at stake when discussing climate change which is ultimately not the fate of the planet, but the individual and collective wellbeing of humans, both in present and future generations

Climate change induced threats to human security

- Climate change is negating and, potentially, stagnating and even reversing progress so far registered in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, especially in cutting extreme poverty, and realizing health, nutrition, and education targets.
 - It poses a fundamental threat to the core of human rights and freedoms, which are both a means to and an end in respect to the realization of human security
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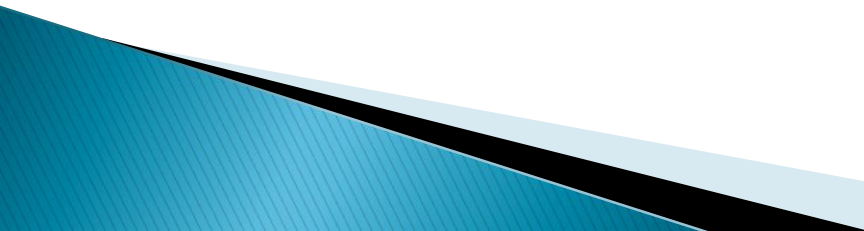
The social dimensions of vulnerability to climate change

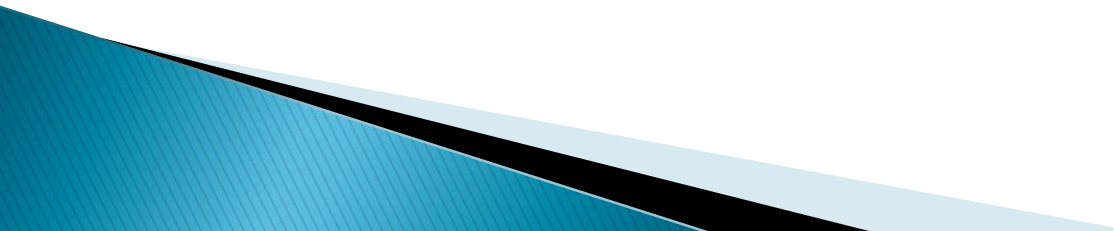
- ▶ Duality of the facets of vulnerability–exposure and coping sides to the experience of vulnerability
 - ▶ Exposure side includes human–induced ecosystemic perturbations, entitlements to livelihood assets, and social exclusion
 - ▶ The coping side encompasses institutional, technical and organizational deficiencies in prevent, prepare for, face and cope with hazards and disasters
 - ▶ Thus, the damages associated with environmental shocks and stresses such as droughts, floods, storms and slow climate are shaped by the social, political and economic vulnerabilities of people and societies
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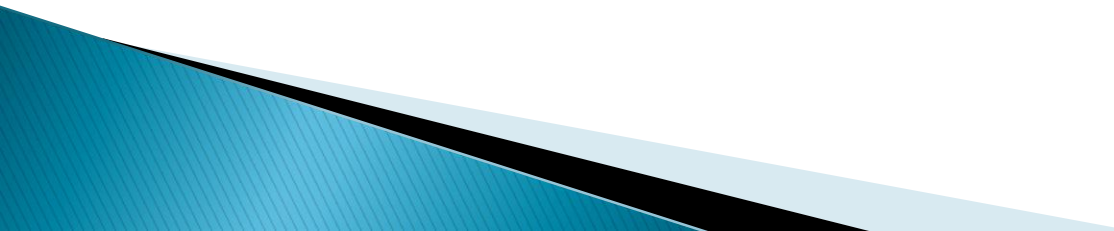
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- ▶ In *magnitude*, the effects of climate change may, in the short term, be *less significant than* and are in fact *amplified by* these socioeconomic development challenges, hence this underscores the need for social policy intervention, particularly social protection
- ▶ social policy can potentially buttress pro-poor climate change adaptation, by creating “a policy space where the trade-offs between ecological concerns and poverty can be negotiated”
Heltberg et al (2010:267)

What is the nexus between a green economy and human security?

- ▶ Key definitional elements of green economy are :improved human well-being , social equity, and minimal environmental risks and ecological scarcities
 - ▶ These ends are to be realised through simultaneously addressing the economic, social and environmental facets of development processes.
 - ▶ A green economy is characterized by substantially increased investments in economic sectors that build on and enhance the earth's natural capital or reduce ecological scarcities and environmental risks
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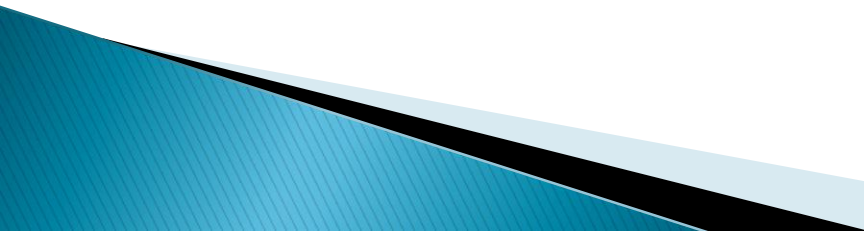
- ▶ Thus transition to a green economy is meant to exploit win–win synergies between economic growth and environmental sustainability
 - ▶ Key benefits include poverty reduction through the generation of new labour intensive employment opportunities, (mainly ‘green jobs’) and expanding entitlements to natural capital for the socially marginalized
 - ▶ The nexus between green economy and human security lies in the fact that realizing human capabilities requires that ecological systems maintain the conditions of life in the first place .
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- ▶ Thus sustainable ecological capacity constitutes a critical lever of human capabilities (i.e. people's real opportunities to achieve outcomes they value).
 - ▶ Ultimately, greening economies enhances adaptive capacity to cope with and mitigate risks posed to livelihoods by climate change
 - ▶ It helps counter the forces driving human insecurity, especially those affecting the environment and entrenching poverty.
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What role for social protection in climate change adaptation?

- ▶ The role of SP is two-fold: vulnerability reduction via ex-ante measures that reduce the occurrence of adverse circumstances or mitigate their impact, and through ex-post measures to boost coping ability by maintaining adequate consumption and access to basic services once the insecurity occurs. This is achieved through enhancing adaptive capacity and mitigative interventions implemented through protective, preventive, promotive and transformative SP.
- ▶ Protective SP involves offering protection to those most vulnerable to climate risks and who have low levels of adaptive capacity.

SP cont'd

- ▶ Preventive SP includes measures to prevent use of damaging coping strategies to mitigate risks facing weather-dependent livelihoods
 - ▶ Promotive SP build resilience against climate change and empower communities to harness pertinent emerging opportunities
 - ▶ Transformative SP promotes social equity and reduces social exclusion (e.g. through gender empowerment and institutional reforms)
 - ▶ Utility of social protection policies hinges on their contribution to economic well-being through increasing security (by bolstering households' and communities')
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- ▶ livelihood resilience in the face of shocks and stresses), promoting social justice as well as promoting growth .Thus essential in addressing the social dimensions of vulnerability

Complementarity between green economy and social protection

- ▶ SP contribute to enhanced adaptive capacity through building the asset base of the vulnerable, especially financial and human capital, which are often prerequisites for realizing the other components of adaptive capacity e.g. through cash transfers
- ▶ Cash transfers smooth consumption, obviate distress sale of asset holdings and facilitate experimentation and adoption of green innovations

SP interventions such as environmental public employment programmes provide income and employment to poor unemployed people by engaging them in activities that result in

environmental rehabilitation and conservation
thereby improving both ecological and adaptive
capacity, e.g. Indian NREGA (National Rural
Employment Guarantee Act), Kenya's '*Kazi Kwa
Vijana*' (KKV), 'Jobs for Youth' programme, South
Africa's Working for water programme

- ▶ Weather indexed insurance incentivise farmers
to make productive management decisions, pre-
empts the pursuit of harmful coping strategies
and enables them to smooth their consumption
by providing liquidity following crop losses

- ▶ SP can also facilitate energy reforms ,e.g., removal of energy subsidies which promote use of fossil fuels by cushioning the poor against the effects of such reforms thereby mitigating their political cost
- ▶ SP can also complement large scale water management (e.g. dams) and forestry projects which often result in the forced displacement of minority groups thereby undermining their human security