



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-INWEH

Wednesday, 23 April 2008

Global Development Agenda at Peril? **Climate Change Puts Global Gains at Risk**

The Atrium at the Michael DeGroote Centre for
Learning & Discovery (MDCL)
McMaster University, Hamilton

A Special Symposium by United Nations University's International Network on Water, Environment and Health

Global Development Agenda at Peril? Climate Change Puts Global Gains at Risk

Context

Recent reports, such as that by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), point to startling impacts of global climate change on environment and people. However, despite the urgent and alarming characteristics of this pressing global problem, its consequences are largely underestimated. As evidenced by the rapidly changing climatic conditions currently being experienced throughout the world – floods, droughts, and fires, to name only a few – societies will be faced with unprecedented climatic events with vast and devastating impacts. The biggest impact of global climate change will be on water availability, with the poorest countries around the world paying the steepest price. Corresponding policies will therefore need to embrace a wide range of sectors in order to meet these challenges. Furthermore, the inability of global governance and policy mechanisms to converge on effective solutions threatens to unravel many developmental gains already made; by focusing national and global policies on adaptation, we are in effect recognizing climate change as a present and future reality.

This Symposium will explore the manifestation of climate change, in the form of its impacts on societies, particularly through the distribution of water; the relationship between human health and climate change; and, through the lens of policy responses, or lack thereof, at the international arena. It will also examine policy options to encourage lateral thinking on the topic through a discussion on key issues, including: the engagement of policymakers; the role of the international community and civil society; and, the onset of an international dialogue mindful of economic interests, among others.



Programme

- 14:00 Opening Remarks
- 14:10 **Keynote Speech: Climate Change: Global Challenges and Opportunities**
Dr. Elizabeth Dowdeswell
Special Advisor to the Board, Nuclear Waste Management Organization; Former Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme
- 14:40 **Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources and Desertification**
Prof. Walid Abderrahman
Director, Water Research Program, King Fahd University; Advisor to the Minister of Water and Electricity, Saudi Arabia
- 15:00 **Innovation and Sustainable Development**
Prof. Luc Soete
Director, UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology (UNU-MERIT)
- 15:20 **Adapting to a New Water Cycle**
Dr. Zafar Adeel
Director, UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)
- 15:40 Coffee break
- 16:00 Panel Discussion
- Panelists:
Prof. Konrad Osterwalder, UN Under-Secretary General and Rector, UNU (Moderator)
Prof. Peter George, President, McMaster University
Prof. Susan Elliott, Dean of Social Sciences, McMaster University
Dr. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Special Advisor, NWMO
Dr. Robert Slater, Chair, UNU-INWEH International Advisory Committee
- 16:50 Closing Remarks
- 17:00 Closing of Symposium

Register by sending an email to: conference@inweh.unu.edu

**United Nations University - International Network
on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH)**

175 Longwood Road South, suite 204
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 0A1
CANADA

Tel: 905.667.5511

Fax: 905.667.5510

Web: <http://www.inweh.unu.edu>

Register by sending an email to: conference@inweh.unu.edu