Session: 54 - The Role of non Nation State Actors in Combating Climate Change
Chair: Dr Aled Jones, University of Cambridge

Introduction
Combating climate change requires a transformational change from all parts of society. This session explored what this transformational change could look like and how non-nation state actors can play a role in ensuring that the transition to a low climate risk economy is a well managed process. In particular the interaction between non Nation State Actors and policy makers were examined with a view to further understanding how to manage this transition.

The key message from the group for the scientific community was:

- Consumers increasingly want business to only sell them the low carbon products, business want politicians to give them a level playing field to be able to deliver the low carbon product innovation and politicians want the scientific community to tell them what they should do – it has to come to a yes/no answer at the political level which is not being supported by the scientific community – currently all decisions are couched in risk analysis (while important in science it is being used as an excuse for inaction in every other area and therefore the scientific community should continue to analyse the detail of risk within scientific analysis while translating this into decisions for politicians and therefore business and community).
- Stakeholder involvement is important to delivering action – but this is not stakeholder consultation rather empowering members of the community to make decisions and deliver on local action based on information

The Role of Civil Society
Within the session we explored how communities and stakeholders engage with climate policy. In particular the speakers explored how climate change policy mechanisms engage with a broad range of stakeholders. The following is a list of key concepts and points that came out of the presentations and discussions:

- The role of social science in the climate debate should not be underestimated – in the end a response to climate change will be shaped and drive by people
- There is a basic assumption that asking people or informing people will give you better buy in to climate policy – very often this is not the case. People do not always need to understand the science to take action – political leaders should just deliver the action.
- There is a key issue of whether democracy is good enough to deliver the required action – are the values of the voters deep enough to drive through an environmental response?
- People will often cite that they are pro-environmental but are very often faced with internal crisis when they have to make decisions (for example, very few people have made a decision to not drive their car)
- The element of individual space and individual responsibility is important to understanding why and how people change

- There is some evidence that there needs to be a forced rupture (an external event that will force a change) followed by a carrot to encourage the right sort of behaviour – policy can be structured to create this rupture and set up the carrot
- When consulting with communities very often people do not understand what the purpose of a consultation is
- Stakeholder engagement in climate policy is important however it is important to define the purpose of stakeholder engagement. It can have the following purposes:
    - Education of the issue of climate change
    - Empowering communities to take decisions
- Defining it as stakeholder involvement rather than stakeholder engagement could be the key to making it effective
- A lot of stakeholder consultations achieve neither of these purposes. Consultation for consultation sake is not useful
- The issues around stakeholder consultation are common across the globe (we heard similar stories of people feeling disengaged in the process in China, Sweden, Africa, Belize). Many people do not understand what consultation is for.
- With community engagement it is vital to build on what already exists rather than creating new initiatives that are likely to fail.
- Stakeholder engagement should be used to both get key information from the scientific academics into the community but equally important to structure the engagement to get information back (to empower the people involved)
- Stakeholder engagement can be used to build up adaptive capacity at the local level – giving people access to information and using their knowledge to build risk reduction strategies is important
- Local communities can adapt more quickly than national policies (if they are given the right information and not constrained – for example, local communities will move to where the water moves but if this is across national borders then very often national politics can lead to conflict). It will be important for the scientific community to identify these areas early.
- Building links into the community requires the community to be involved (the Red Cross is very effective in empowering local community volunteers)
- Should international organisations such as the Red Cross be focussed on preparing for disaster relief or working with local communities to develop risk reduction strategies
- These communities need technical assistance but they have the resource
- Given the urgency of the issue stakeholder involvement may not always be the right way to set this up and it may get more special interest groups involved rather than the genuine ‘community’ – very often the ‘community’ just want government to tell them what to do
- However, climate change can be seen as a common issue and external pressure that could produce solidarity in groups – it can be used to motivate action

The Role of Business and Partnerships

In the second half of the session we explored the role of business and partnerships in combating climate change and how emission mitigation projects could be implemented. The following summarises the key points made:

- Partnerships are very effective in implementing action but the right members of a partnership are needed and the process of setting up a partnership is very important
- While the motivations for partners do not need to be aligned (some may join for green public relations, others for energy efficiency saving, others for strategic business drivers) the overall strategy for the partnership should be common – the underlying motivations never need to be aligned
- Good leadership is required to deliver on any form of action and empowering this leadership is important
- Trust is a vital part in implementing action on climate change – institutions such as CSIRO in Australia are trusted (very often academic institutions are trusted) – however often government departments are not trusted – in fact government is usually voted as the least trusted institution but also the most responsible for leadership
- It is difficult to translate global action to the local level (and back again)
- The cost and payback period for most business is 2-3 years (it can sometimes be stretched to 5 years and even on long term infrastructure projects they very often have to pay back investment in a 5-7 year period) - therefore business is not geared up to make long term decisions and policy is required to force these decisions
- Business is increasingly vocal about the need for action on climate change to create the right business environment for innovation and change
- The EU Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change is calling for urgent action at the international and European level (and national level) to deliver policies that will allow them to develop radically different business strategies – they are keen to get started but feel that policy is moving very slowly (partly driven by the scientific community not delivering absolute choices to the policy community)
- Consumers increasingly want business to only sell them the low carbon products, business want politicians to give them a level playing field to be able to deliver the low carbon product innovation and politicians want the scientific community to tell them what they should do – it has to come to a yes/no answer at the political level and not couched in risk analysis (while important in science it is being used as an excuse for inaction in every other area and therefore the scientific community should continue to analyse the detail of risk while translating this into decisions for politicians and therefore business and community).
- To deliver change at scale having partners that link into larger institutions that can build and share on the learning is important (size matters) – building trust in these institutions is key to building on this learning and so decisions and authority needs to exist at each level so that the information flow up and down the organization is fluid

The role of civil society speakers

- Participation of community-based stakeholders in the CDM project cycle in China, *Joakim Nordqvist, E Mühlhäuser, Lund University, Environmental and Energy Systems, Lund, Sweden*
- Volunteers as the entry point to climate change adaptation at community level, *Andreas G. Koestler, A Torbjørnsen, A-M Austenå, Norwegian Red Cross, Division of National and International Assistance, Oslo, Norway*
- The limits of participatory democracy for the fight against climate change, *Stéphane La Branche, Institute of Political Studies, Grenoble, France*

The role of business and partnerships speaker

- Collaborative emission reduction in regional Australia: Maine’s power, *Peta Ashworth(1), D Bridgfoot(2), J Gardner(1), S Rooney(1), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia, Mount Alexander Sustainability Group, Australia*