



# Reducing Poverty Through Climate Action

A Strategy for Global Development Leaders

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# Introduction and summary

*Climate change could reverse hard-won development gains and could stop our end poverty efforts completely. We can't end poverty unless we take serious steps to protect our planet.*

— World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, opening statement at the International Monetary Fund-World Bank 2014 Spring Meetings, April 10, 2014<sup>1</sup>

Climate change is already affecting every continent across the globe, and people living in developing countries will fare far worse than most in a warmer world, warns a March report from the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC.<sup>2</sup> The report—“Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability,” authored by leading scientists from around the world—makes clear that there are many actions that local and national decision makers and the international community can take now to strengthen community resilience and reduce climate change risks and costs. The report also reveals that many actions to fight climate change and prepare for its unavoidable impacts will improve public health, safety, and livelihoods.<sup>3</sup> An April IPCC report presents a host of sobering evidence revealing that if countries do not take immediate and ambitious steps to rein in global carbon pollution today, they will face crippling costs to do so in the future.<sup>4</sup> The report identifies many different options that countries can pursue now to reduce emissions from energy production and use, transportation, and land use, among others; these options also provide energy access, reduce local air pollution, and support sustainable development.<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately, countries around the world have a tremendous opportunity to design a new global development agenda that can rapidly accelerate progress toward tackling two of the world's most pressing challenges—ending poverty and preventing catastrophic climate change. This new development agenda will kick into gear when the Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs—eight voluntary goals agreed to in 2000 by leaders from 191 countries—expire in 2015. Once agreed upon, the post-2015 goals will serve as a road map through 2030 for countries, local governments, development institutions, and the private sector to stamp

out poverty and support sustainable development. Where countries previously stopped short of fully integrating environmental concerns into the MDGs, they now have the chance to craft new voluntary development goals that do just that. As the new IPCC analyses expose, letting this opportunity pass by risks unraveling decades of progress against poverty, hunger, and economic insecurity. It will also leave future generations more vulnerable to extreme weather events that flatten communities and critical infrastructure, cause food insecurity, give rise to pollution-related illnesses, and disrupt livelihoods.

In this report, we assess poverty and climate change and identify opportunities to jointly tackle these challenges. To end poverty in ways that support low-carbon, resilient, and sustainable economic growth, we recommend that countries adopt the following ambitious yet achievable targets to measure progress against the new global development goals once they are enacted in 2016, through their expected expiration date in 2030.

**Potential goal: Ensure sustainable agriculture, food security, and good nutrition**

Recommended targets:

- Reduce global postharvest and supply-chain food loss and waste, including bycatch in commercial fisheries, by 50 percent.
- Eliminate the practice of overfishing in ocean and freshwater fisheries, rebuild overfished populations to sustainable levels, and end all illegal and unreported fishing.
- Increase water efficiency in agriculture by 25 percent.<sup>6</sup>

**Potential goal: Support sustainable and resilient economic growth, employment, and infrastructure**

Recommended target:

- Build community resilience and reduce deaths and economic losses from natural hazards by 50 percent, while improving the accuracy and lead times of forecasts and warnings by 50 percent.<sup>7</sup>

### **Potential goal: Secure sustainable energy**

Recommended targets:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
- Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.
- Double the share of renewable energy in the global mix.
- Phase out inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption and production.

### **Potential goal: Ensure healthy ecosystems and biodiversity**

Recommended targets:

- Ensure that no natural forest is lost.
- Guarantee secure tenure and rights, including customary rights, to land and other assets for men and women.
- Reduce loss of coastal wetlands by 50 percent, set aside 15 percent of the world's oceans as marine-protected areas, and eliminate fisheries subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity.
- Ensure that at least 20 percent of the world's terrestrial lands and inland waters are equitably managed and conserved.

### **Potential goal: Ensure healthy lives**

Recommended target:

- Reduce the incidence of morbidity and mortality from indoor and outdoor air pollution by 50 percent.<sup>8</sup>

We urge countries to include these targets in the new global development agenda to drive actions to fight poverty, reduce climate change risks, and ensure sustainable development.

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