

## **New Adaptation Fund Board Chair Sees Continued Innovation and Support for Most Climate-Vulnerable Communities as Keys for Fund**

*Diligence in Implementing and Enhancing Paris Agreement Ambition, Possible Development of Regional Offices to Strengthen Developing Countries' Ties Also Pivotal*

*Bonn, Germany* (March 17, 2016) -- **Naresh Sharma**, of Nepal, was elected as the new Chair of the Adaptation Fund Board at the onset of its biannual meeting taking place in Bonn March 17-18.

Sharma, who has represented Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as a Board member since 2015, was nominated by the Asia-Pacific constituency to serve as the next Chair at the Board's last meeting in October. He assumes the reins from previous Chair **Hans Olav Ibrenk**, of Norway, who completed his one-year term. The Chair seat rotates between developed and developing country members each year. Developing country regions also alternate, with Asia-Pacific up this year.



Born in Kathmandu, Sharma obtained a Master's in Environmental Science in New Delhi before joining Nepal's government service in 1997 - where he continues to work today. He has worked for the Ministries of Agriculture Development and Population and Environment as an agricultural market expert, agricultural officer, planning and monitoring officer and currently as Climate Finance Management Chief institutionalizing environment and climate change activities. He has promoted clean development mechanism projects and further serves as National Program Manager for Nepal's Climate Change Support Program to expedite the Local Adaptation Plan for Action across the country, while attending numerous COP sessions.

The Adaptation Fund interviewed Mr. Sharma last month to gain his insights and vision for the Fund and its momentum going forward in view of the [COP21 Paris Agreement adopted](#) in December.

**What have you liked most about serving on the Adaptation Fund Board and how will you apply your Board, country and professional experience to the Chair position?**

*"The Adaptation Fund is one of the most innovative and pioneering funds in addressing climate change adaptation in developing countries. It generates innovative ideas and experiences from all around the world to support adaptation actions in climate-vulnerable communities. It is an enriching experience to participate, listen and discuss individual projects before a funding*



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*decision can be made. This Fund not only finances projects, but also looks into building institutional and national capacity in developing countries. The Adaptation Fund has not only evolved through a rigorous learning process, but also been a strong inspiration to shape the newly created Green Climate Fund. It is an honor to be a part of and serve this Fund.”*

*“I have been thoroughly engaged in the formulation of a national climate change policy process in my country and in the design of its National Adaptation Program of Action (a process established by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for least developed countries to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate climate adaptation needs). Recently, I have initiated the process to prepare the National Adaptation Plans to address the medium and long-term adaptation needs of the country. The insightful knowledge I receive from the Adaptation Fund Board discussions immensely helps me to support local adaptation actions. I am also responsible for implementation of a national project called Local Adaptation Plan of Action, which Nepal pioneered and is a good case for many other countries to learn from. My experience from the national level adaptation work can be of help to guide the Fund during my term as the chair and also take the learning the Fund offers to the national level in Nepal. This is a two-way process for me to contribute nationally and internationally.”*

**What would you say are the Fund’s greatest accomplishments over the past couple years, and what would you say are its biggest challenges in the next 1-2 years ahead?**

*“There is no doubt that this is one of the climate funds that is most dear to the developing countries and is close to the hearts of those that have worked hard to bring the Fund to this level. I am also highly appreciative of the hard work the Fund’s secretariat has put in to relay the importance of this fund to the international community. One of the biggest achievements of the Fund is to give continuity to financing new projects. Due to the collapsing price of carbon in the international market, the main financial source of the Fund has been almost dry. However the Board and secretariat have put in extra efforts with yearly targets to seek voluntary contributions to the Fund and [have kept the life-blood flowing](#) by being able to fund urgently needed adaptation projects in developing countries. I appreciate and thank those contributors in putting their confidence in the Fund. The experience of this Fund has also greatly contributed to the making of the Green Climate Fund and designing new approaches in that Fund, especially with the direct and enhanced direct access modality.”*

*“Though the Adaptation Fund is contributing a lot in helping countries adapt to the impacts of climate change, challenges remain in how long term and perennial resources can flow into the Fund. Keeping adaptation pipeline projects for too long will not help poor countries. Given the good practices of the Fund there are high expectations from developing countries, so meeting these expectations when the funding sources are limited remains a challenge. We will need to find ways to deal with resourcing more projects and building on the Fund’s achievements so far.”*

**Do you have any particular short-term (1-2 year) and longer term (5-year) goals that you’d like to see the Adaptation Fund accomplish?**



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*“The Fund should continue building on the promising work it has been doing in the climate adaptation field. The recent COP21 held in Paris has also acknowledged the importance to this Fund by giving concrete guidance on the continuity of the Fund in the future. In the short run, we should focus and work on the strategy to make the Fund a permanent institution under the new Agreement. Similarly, before a long-term resource to fill the Fund is available, we need to encourage donor countries to contribute to the Fund to finance the project pipeline and receive new proposals. The South-South experience of the work of [National Implementing Entities](#) (NIEs) can also be promoted to empower and build national institutions in low-capacity countries. Other areas to look into would be how to build stronger ties with the Green Climate Fund to avoid duplication of work and bring synergy in adaptation financing.”*

*“In the long run, it is important that the Adaptation Fund continues to fund more adaptation projects. If possible, even having regional offices to oversee and have stronger relationships with developing countries may be needed. The Fund should increase the number of its accredited NIEs and finance more projects to generate ownership among countries implementing adaptation projects. At the same time, the Fund should continuously look into strengthening national capacity and building institutional capabilities. More priority should be given to the poor and those with the least capacity. By 2020, the Fund can be a strong institution leading adaptation work around the world based on its experience and vision to support developing countries in fighting climate change.”*

**The Fund is on the forward-moving edge when you consider its pioneering Direct Access modality, concrete localized projects, [environmental and social risk policy](#), gender initiatives, carbon market experience, majority representation from developing countries, assisting the most vulnerable, and flexible, efficient finance. Can you comment, and are there other areas you’d like to see the Fund explore or do differently in the next couple years?**

*“The Adaptation Fund should give continuity to its excellent work with such strong characteristics. This is the reason why the Fund is so attractive to many developing countries. I would like to continue building on these good practices with support from the Board members and the secretariat. [Direct access](#) has been one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Fund. We need to further strengthen this in the years to come with more decision-making authority to the countries on what they choose and implement. In order to give continuity to the good practices, in the long-term, having regional offices would build closer ties between the Fund and the developing countries.”*

**What initially drew you to work on the Board, and what did you like most about the opportunity to serve on it?**

*“Since the Fund is one of the pioneers in funding adaptation projects, especially through the Direct Access modality, I have always imagined working closely with the Fund. In Nepal, I have the responsibility of managing national adaptation projects so the experience of national work and international learning would help me further enhance adaptation planning for the communities. Coming from an LDC country, I will also have the opportunity to input some real ground experience on the impacts of climate change and the need for urgent adaptation actions.”*



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*“The Board is full of committed Board members, a very friendly working environment with frank and open discussions on concrete issues and a very helpful secretariat team. This is also something about the Adaptation Fund that enthuses me. I hope to meet the expectation of my Board members, secretariat and the beneficiaries of the Fund.”*

**What did you like about the COP21 results and its implications for the Adaptation Fund, as well as adaptation and climate finance, in general? Did it go far enough in taking a positive step to address climate change globally? What is needed most now for next steps to address climate change on a global scale – both generally and in shaping the Fund’s role in that effort?**

*“After the hard work from all the Parties for over two weeks, COP21 was finally able to deliver the [Paris Agreement](#). I believe the outcome could have been more ambitious in addressing climate change, however it is an encouraging result that brings every country together in the fight against this global problem. Now it is up to every country to be accountable to what they have signed to and raise ambition to seriously implement the Agreement. Since the Agreement only comes to effect post-2020, we do not have time to remain complacent and not take immediate actions. All of us have to do our respective share in reducing emissions and providing adaptation and finance to the poor and vulnerable countries for climate actions.”*

*“Thanks to the hard work of board members, the secretariat and other parties who strongly advocated for the [positive COP21 guidance](#) on the future of the Adaptation Fund. It is now for us to work hard and prove that the Adaptation Fund is more important for developing countries now than ever. There are already enough positive stories from the projects and also inspiring stories from the NIEs to build our case. The new system may come in place after 2020, but it is equally important for the Fund to get new (donor) pledges in its current state, too. As guided by the [CMP](#) (Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol) we need to encourage (developed country) Parties to make voluntary pledges so the pipeline of projects can be advanced.”*

*“The Fund should continue to grow into a strong international institution to support the adaptation needs of developing countries, especially the poor and vulnerable ones with the least capacity to adapt to the climate impacts they are already facing.”*

## ABOUT the ADAPTATION FUND

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed US\$331 million to support 51 concrete climate adaptation and resilience projects in 45 countries, with 3.5 million direct beneficiaries.

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