

**Opportunities and challenges for rural areas
in the context of climate change: a comparison of countries**

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The opportunities and challenges that face rural people and economies in the context of climate change vary considerably from one country to another. This keynote address will examine these differences and will identify progressive attempts to address the challenges and take the opportunities from the perspective of climate adaptation.

Earlier this year in Scotland the Government put in place a climate adaptation framework¹ “Climate Ready Scotland: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme” as required by section 53 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. It addresses the impacts identified for Scotland in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment published under section 56 of the UK Climate Change Act 2008. It sets out the government’s objectives in relation to adaptation to climate change, their proposals and policies for meeting those objectives, and the period within which those proposals and policies will be introduced. The framework focuses on the natural environment, infra-structure and society. The framework strives for what is referred to as “climate readiness”.

In Ethiopia, the Government has developed an ambitious agenda that merges the twin objectives of climate resilience and green economy (CRGE).² The CRGE is viewed as an opportunity to transform the country’s development model by leapfrogging to modern energy-efficient development trajectories. The CRGE Facility is now housed in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development from where the programmes of different line ministries are supported. Given the importance of the agricultural sector to the development of Ethiopia it is fitting that it is this ministry that is furthest ahead in the formulation of both investments towards a greener and climate resilient farming sector.

These two country cases will be used to assess the factors contributing to the development and implementation of progressive climate change strategies in particular reference to the opportunities and challenges in the rural areas. The enabling environment, policies and plans, and prioritised actions will be examined and compared. In addition, the different ways that progress and success is assessed will be explored.

The IPCC Fifth Assessment report has stressed that climate change effects are fast becoming “severe, pervasive and irreversible”. To be able to respond with effective collective action that enables rural people and economies to take any opportunities and face climate challenges we need to learn quickly from emerging experiences. Are we doing things right? Are we doing the right things? And how will we know?

¹ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00451392.pdf>

² See

http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/287CRGE%20Ethiopia%20Green%20Economy_Brochure.pdf