P17 / Towards Just and Sustainable Land Allocation for Displaced Farmers: Climate Change Adaptation in Southeast Asia

Topic : ENVIRONMENT, SDGs, ENERGY

Chair : Warathida Chaiyapa (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Panel Overview:
Climate change poses a severe threat to Southeast Asia's agricultural sector, with farmers in facing increasing displacement due to extreme weather events like floods and droughts. These changes not only jeopardize agricultural productivity but also threaten the livelihoods of millions of small-scale farmers. As the backbone of rural economies, the displacement of these communities has far-reaching consequences, both economically and socially. Current adaptation efforts, such as Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) in Thailand and Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Cambodia, are steps in the right direction, but the harsh reality remains: many farmers are forced to abandon unviable lands.

This panel seeks to address the urgent need for a just and sustainable framework for land allocation for displaced farmers, which goes beyond humanitarian aid and focuses on long-term solutions to support their livelihoods. The discussion will focus on policy innovation and strategies for ensuring climate-resilient agricultural systems through equitable land distribution. Key issues such as environmental suitability, market access, and social integration will be explored, alongside how to address land rights conflicts and incorporate the needs of marginalized groups such as women, children, ethnic minorities, and disabled individuals.

General Objectives:
The panel aims to explore how land allocation can serve as a vital strategy for fostering resilience among climate-displaced farmers. Specifically, it will:

Investigate the key elements of a just and sustainable land allocation framework.
Propose inclusive policies to address the needs of vulnerable groups within displaced farming communities.
Discuss the alignment of land allocation with broader climate adaptation strategies and development plans.
Provide policy recommendations that promote the long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency of resettled farming communities.

Key Research Questions:

What are the essential components of a land allocation framework that ensures justice and sustainability for displaced farmers?
How can land allocation policies be inclusive and address the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and ethnic minorities?
How can land allocation strategies align with national and regional climate adaptation and development plans, while addressing conflicts over land rights?
What lessons can be drawn from current adaptation efforts in Southeast Asia for developing policies that promote resilient, climate-smart agricultural communities?

Scientific Relevance:
This panel contributes to the ongoing discourse on climate adaptation by providing a comprehensive examination of land allocation as a strategy for climate-displaced farmers. It addresses the intersection of land rights, environmental sustainability, and social justice, with a focus on vulnerable populations. As Southeast Asia is a key agricultural region, the discussions in this panel will not only provide context-specific insights but also offer lessons applicable to other regions facing similar climate challenges. The panel aims to fill critical knowledge gaps by advancing innovative policy approaches that integrate climate resilience, agricultural sustainability, and social equity, particularly for marginalized communities.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel welcomes papers on following topics. While Southeast Asia is a primary focus, the papers investigating cases of other regions are encouraged to apply.

1) **Designing a Climate-Resilient Land Allocation Framework for Southeast Asia**

This paper would explore the key principles and criteria for developing a sustainable and just land allocation framework, with a focus on environmental sustainability, market access, and the long-term resilience of farming communities displaced by climate change.

2) **Incorporating Gender and Social Equity in Land Allocation Policies**
This paper would focus on the specific needs of marginalized groups, such as women, children, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and disabled individuals, examining how inclusive land allocation policies can be developed to ensure equitable access and support for these vulnerable populations.

3) **Land Rights and Climate Justice: Resolving Conflicts in Displaced Communities**
This paper would analyze the legal and policy challenges surrounding land rights in the context of climate displacement, addressing how to resolve land tenure conflicts and promote fair access to land for displaced farmers.

4) **Linking Climate Adaptation and Land Allocation to National Development Plans**
This paper would discuss how land allocation strategies can be effectively integrated with national and regional development plans, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other climate adaptation frameworks, to ensure long-term agricultural and economic viability.

5) Case Studies of Climate-Displaced Farmers in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam or other countries which are facing similar challenges.
This paper would present empirical case studies from Southeast Asia, highlighting the experiences of displaced farmers, examining how different land allocation approaches have succeeded or failed, and drawing lessons for future policy design.

6) The Role of Community Engagement in Sustainable Land Allocation
This paper would explore the importance of involving local communities and civil society organizations in the design and implementation of land allocation policies, focusing on participatory approaches that ensure social integration and the sustainability of resettlement programs.

7) Climate-Smart Agriculture and Land Allocation: Synergies for Sustainable Development
This paper would investigate how land allocation policies can be linked with climate-smart agricultural practices to foster both environmental sustainability and economic resilience, with a focus on strategies that improve productivity while reducing vulnerability to climate risks.

P17 / Towards Just and Sustainable Land Allocation for Displaced Farmers: Climate Change Adaptation in Southeast Asia

Chair : Warathida Chaiyapa (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Session 1

Wednesday, July 2nd 13:45 to 15:45 (C4)

Historical Review and Analysis of Land Allocation Policies Cambodia

Sineath Hong (National Institute of Social Affairs)

Land tenure distributions have been practiced differently in Cambodia. Four historical timelines are taken into consideration when discussing land allocation following the Khmer Rouge (KR): post-war 1979–1989, land allocation for social and economic development (LASED) 2008–2015, LASED II 2016–2021, and LASED III 2020–2026. People got their homes according to first-come, first-served status after the KR. Specifically, farming was done on state collective property known as Solidarity Group until 1989. However, it was after modify to private possession as the government learnt that farming on state collective property was not enough productive following free market, which was changed from planned economy. Then people possessed both residential and agricultural land. In order to facilitate the land distribution process, various policies and a legal framework concerning land allocation were established. This includes, notably, the sub-degree on social land concessions (SLC), along with associated policies and guidelines. Progressing through the second, third, and fourth phases, land was distributed using the social land concession (SLC) model, which adhered to the LASED framework, following the pilot initiative of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Under this land allocation scheme, individuals are granted full rights to private land tenure after residing on and utilizing the state private land allocated to them for a designated period of over five years for agricultural purposes. This land allocation is restricted to specific criteria, primarily targeting individuals who are landless or land poor. Displaced people affected by natural disasters can also apply for this model to improved livelihood opportunities. The goal is to alleviate poverty and enhance the country's economic development. The process of land allocation has faced numerous challenges as a result from the KR, which severely impacted the availability of resources, including human capital, the policies, legal frameworks, instructions, and guidelines necessary for supporting effective implementation. Other significant challenges were complex overlapping land disputes, land grabbing by individuals or the private sector, and a scarcity of private state land. The lengthy procedures for land identification and registration, coupled with bureaucratic administration involving multiple stakeholders at various levels, further complicate land administration and management. Additionally, overlapping legislative and regulatory issues can hinder the progress of land allocation and management development, sometimes resulting in years of stagnation. While LASED has prioritized infrastructure development, there is a pressing need for development services, such as agricultural extension programs that address local needs like soil conservation and farming techniques. These services require investment capital from recipients, many of whom are unable to sustain their agricultural activities on the land provided to them. Furthermore, it is important to note that specific data regarding SLC recipients affected by natural disasters is lacking. Nonetheless, it has been observed that land allocation has also been extended to communities that have been relocated or displaced due to infrastructure development projects.

Climate crisis and human mobilities in the Andean Region: Insights and policy proposals from 4 case studies

Jorge Forero (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences)

The Central Andes region, a geographical area that crosses Ecuador, Bolivia and Perú, has been identified as particularly prone to climate induced migration. In the field, climate change interacts with economic, cultural and political drivers, modifying already existing migration dynamics, usually increasing an already existing exodus from the countryside to the urban centers. A key factor for understanding how this process occurs is by paying attention to the socio-historical configuration of vulnerabilities in the communities

affected by those changes.
This paper presents some lessons for policy and decision makers providing insights coming from 6 case studies developed during the last year in Perú, Bolivia and Ecuador, in Andean rural communities with strong presence of indigenous heritage: La Merced in Ancash (PE), Sacha in Cotopaxi (EC), Arani in Cochabamba (BOL) and the Uru Murato communities in the Poopó Lake (BOL).
The project employs an intersectional approach and pays particular attention to the socio-historical processes that have shaped the vulnerabilities of the communities under study. Among its key findings are: a) the important role of colonialism on the configuration of the communities' vulnerabilities; b) the deep relationship between climate change-related mobilities and water and food insecurity; c) the convergence of climate change and extractivism in the configuration of an environmental driver for both, migration and (in)mobilities, and d) the important role of women and social organization in the resilience strategies of the communities studied.

Post-conflict land allocation in the context of climate policy: Lessons learned from Lao PDR

Micah Ingalls (Mekong Region Land Governance)
Naomi Basik Treanor (Mekong Region Land Governance)

Land allocation interventions to address climate-induced displacement are in their infancy, limiting empirical investigation into their causal elements and the efficacy of corrective approaches. However, lessons-learned from land allocation and the recognition of rights following other drivers of displacement are better known and may provide important, transferable lessons. We examine land allocation and political processes for tenure reforms in the context of Koksavang Village in Laos's Khammouane Province, a community that was displaced by the Second Indochinese War in 1965. Drawing on recent participatory approaches to allocate land to post-conflict returnees in state forest areas, we interrogate the ways this process interacted not only with national priorities and legal frameworks, but also potentially problematic intersections with climate mitigation priorities related to forest conservation.

The National Assembly of the Lao PDR issued a Resolution in July 2024 to allow the issuance of land titles in Laos's State Forest Areas, administrative zones that comprise 70 percent of the national territory. Amid concerns that the issuance of titles and other forms of statutory tenure recognition might undermine state goals for forest conservation and expansion—the cornerstone of Laos's Nationally-Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement—development agencies were tasked with supporting state planners to develop and implement tools that would both recognize legitimate tenure claims and ensure forest protection, while also mitigating the potential for unscrupulous land speculation that may result from formalization. The Mekong Region Land Governance Project (MRLG), together with other donor agencies, developed draft approaches to meet these goals and began piloting their application in Koksavang Village in late 2024, beginning with participatory land allocation, community forest planning, and parcel surveys. Piloting these tools bumped up against local interests related to the expansion of commercial agriculture and resistance from state planners stemming from national priorities, particularly forest conservation. Beyond these tensions, other complications emerged. Similar to many communities in Lao PDR, the residents of Koksavang Village had been displaced by the Second Indochinese conflict in 1965. Many residents returned to their village in the 1980s, while others did not, remaining in what later became Savannakhet Province. Both returnees and non-returnees retained ancestral land claims in Koksavang village, adding further complications to already complex processes of land allocation and tenure rights formalization. In this panel, we will unpack lessons-learned from the Koksavang case and proposing principles applicable to other cases of climate-related displacement and land allocation.

Land Allocation Policy in Vietnam: Process, Participation, and Power

Nguyen Tan (Hue University (Vietnam))

This study analyzes the transformation of stakeholder roles and power relations in Vietnam's land policy through the Democracy Cube Framework (participant selection, communication/decision mode, and authority/power) across four stages from 1975 to the present. During collectivization (1975-1986), participant selection was strictly limited to 'expert administrators' (the Vietnamese Communist Party - VCP) and 'professional representatives' (central government), with communication following 'technical expertise' modes and 'direct authority'. Agricultural cooperatives operated as 'professional stakeholders' with 'bargaining' power, while farmers were merely 'open, self-selected' participants with 'express preferences'. The de-collectivization stage (1986-2003) expanded participant selection to include more 'professional stakeholders' at local (sub-national) levels, shifted communication modes toward 'bargaining' and 'technical expertise', and maintained 'direct authority'. Agricultural cooperatives' role diminished to 'lay stakeholders'

with ‘advise/consult’ functions, while farmers gained limited ‘personal benefits’ through formal land rights. The administrative decentralization period (2003-2013) marked significant institutional complexity in participant selection, introducing specialized agencies (MONRE, MARD) as ‘expert administrators’ and international donors as ‘professional stakeholders’. Communication modes remained dominated by ‘technical expertise’, while authority was exercised through ‘direct authority’ and ‘advise/consult’. The current market-oriented phase (2013-present) features more diverse participant selection, including foreign entities as ‘lay stakeholders’ and civil society organizations as ‘professional stakeholders’. Communication modes combine ‘technical expertise’ and ‘bargaining’, while authority structures maintain ‘direct authority’ with limited ‘advice/consult ’ roles for non-state actors. Individual farming households remain ‘lay stakeholders’ with ‘express preferences’, while ethnic minorities are recognized as ‘lay stakeholders’ with ‘personal benefits’. Throughout all stages, the state (under the direction of VCP) has maintained ‘direct authority’ while gradually incorporating more stakeholders in consultative roles.

P17 / Towards Just and Sustainable Land Allocation for Displaced Farmers: Climate Change Adaptation in Southeast Asia

Chair : Warathida Chaiyapa (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Session 2

Wednesday, July 2nd 16:00 to 18:00 (C4)

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis in Social Land Concession (SLC) In Cambodia – Based on Archon Fung's Democracy Cube

Sam Chanthy (National Institute of Social Affairs)

Social Land Concession (SLC) is a key social protection initiative in Cambodia, aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged households. Mandated since 2003, the SLC process involves a multi-layered governance structure with various stakeholders supporting its implementation. This paper reviews the SLC framework using Archon Fung's (2006) "democracy cube," focusing on legislation, initiation, and stakeholder engagement. Six key stakeholders are identified, with decision-making concentrated among elected officials and expert administrators, while recipients face participation challenges due to socio-economic barriers. The paper highlights the critical roles of the Provincial/Municipal Land Use and Allocation Committee (P/MLUAC) and the National Social Land Concession Committee (NSLCC) in shaping SLC outcomes. A more collaborative approach is recommended to enhance inclusivity in the SLC process in Cambodia.

Climate Vulnerability and Impacts on Farming Communities in Cambodia, Increasing Climate Migration Trend

Sam Chanthy (National Institute of Social Affairs)

Cambodia is increasingly vulnerable to climate-related disasters due to both regional and local climate changes. Despite some improvements over the past five years, the country remains highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. The economic and social risks posed by climate change affect critical sectors, including agriculture, water resources, forestry, fisheries, and tourism. Droughts and flooding present significant challenges, particularly in low-lying areas such as the Tonle Sap and Mekong floodplains, where agricultural lands and vital crops like rice are severely affected. The paper discusses that though disaster-related migration is commonly ignored and acceptable, the connection between climate change and displacement is growing, threatening human rights, worsening poverty, and jeopardizing livelihoods in Cambodia. The heavy reliance on agriculture, which employs a substantial portion of the rural population, exacerbates these challenges. With low adaptive capacity, Cambodia could face a potential 10% reduction in GDP by 2050 if significant adaptation efforts are not implemented. In 2021, 79% of the Cambodian population was affected by climate change, leading to increased migration and forced displacement. From now, there is a need to reconsider climate migration as a trending concern in public policy in Cambodia.

I Don't Want to Go Anywhere Else; I Want to Die Here: Factors Influencing Migration Decisions in Response to Climate-induced Disasters– A Case Study of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai Provinces, Thailand

Niranrak Pathan (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Karanyapas Pooyongyuth (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Jarukit Kanokjaros (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Lakchayaporn Thansiri (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

This study explores the migration intentions of individuals affected by floods in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai

provinces, Thailand, during September–October 2024. While climate change-induced disasters are often linked to large-scale population movements, migration is not always the preferred or feasible solution for affected communities. Economic, social, and cultural ties often anchor individuals to their current locations, even in the face of recurring disasters. This research examines the factors influencing decisions to stay or permanently migrate, aiming to inform more context-specific land allocation policies and disaster interventions.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection. Household surveys were conducted with 217 participants to gather broad insights, while in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 40 individuals from vulnerable groups—including children, elderly individuals with health issues, persons with disabilities, bedridden patients, and ethnic groups—provided a deeper understanding of their perspectives and constraints.

The findings reveal that most respondents prefer to stay, motivated by strong social ties to their communities and economic limitations that hinder relocation. Vulnerable groups, in particular, highlighted significant barriers to adaptation and expressed fears of losing their social networks and cultural identity. Additionally, the presence of civil society support in some areas has strengthened the willingness of many to remain and adapt to disaster risks rather than migrate. However, a segment of the population expressed a desire to relocate but faced significant obstacles, rendering them involuntarily immobile.

These insights underscore the importance of developing targeted, context-sensitive policies that address the diverse needs of affected populations. Policymakers must consider the social, economic, and cultural dynamics influencing migration decisions to provide effective support for those who choose to stay and those who wish to migrate but face significant barriers.

Keywords: climate disaster, climate-induced migration, land allocation, northern Thailand.

Loss and Damage in the Highlands: Perspectives from indigenous farmers in Atok, Benguet

Francis Uldric San Juan (Manila Observatory)

Jameela Joy Reyes (Ateneo de Manila University)

Laurice Jamero (Manila Observatory)

Doreen Allasiw (Benguet State University)

This study investigates the impacts of climate change on indigenous farmers in Atok, Benguet, Philippines, through their lived experiences of loss and damage (L&D). Guided by the question, "How do indigenous farmers in Atok adapt to climate-induced challenges while preserving their cultural and ecological practices?" the research uses focus group discussions, interviews with farmers and government agencies, and desk reviews to explore the interplay of climate hazards, market pressures, and socio-cultural shifts.

Farmers report increased crop losses due to frost, hailstorms, and unpredictable weather, compounded by economic pressures such as vegetable importation, smuggling, and fluctuating prices. These factors disrupt traditional farming cycles and force shifts to alternative livelihoods like flower farming or tourism, eroding communal practices and indigenous knowledge.

Findings highlight indigenous farmers' reliance on informal, community-based risk-sharing systems to mitigate these challenges. However, these systems alone are insufficient to address non-economic losses, including cultural erosion and weakening community cohesion. While government aid exists, the assistance is often inadequate to meet local needs, with farmers struggling to access meaningful support or navigate bureaucratic barriers.

These issues reflect broader shifts in governmental priorities, where resources are increasingly diverted away from rural and agricultural sustainability, signalling a misalignment between political agendas and local needs, exacerbating vulnerabilities in already marginalized communities.

The study recommends integrating indigenous knowledge into localized weather forecasting and climate adaptation strategies, strengthening community-based safety nets, and implementing market protections for locally grown crops. These measures aim to address both economic and cultural dimensions of L&D, ensuring resilience for indigenous farmers while respecting their traditions. This research underscores the importance of aligning climate adaptation policies with the needs and values of marginalized farming communities.