

Latin America: Prepared for Climate Change?

Project Terms of Reference

Climate change is a significant challenge in Latin America, and the region seems woefully unprepared for the disruptions it will bring. Our Practicum Team assesses the region's efforts so far to deal with these challenges and explores how innovation, education, and improved coordination within the region and worldwide might help.

KEY QUESTIONS

The Practicum Team has formed four subteams (members listed below) to research, analyze, and explore policies in four key areas:



Vulnerable Communities

- Who are the communities most vulnerable to climate change? Why are they particularly vulnerable? How can policy measures promote inclusivity for these communities?
- How can the region work towards pursuing a consensus on how to define an “environmental refugee”? What protections can be afforded to such individuals? How can the U.S. and international community address these concerns?
- What kind of impact have past development efforts in the region had on vulnerable communities due to climate change? How can international development efforts address challenges faced by vulnerable communities in Latin America due to climate change?

Sustainable Food Commodities

- How are crops in Latin America affected by climate change? What local, national, or international agriculture policies or projects in the region have been put in place to lay the groundwork for a climate-resilient future for food/agriculture production? How can governments improve them? What are other steps that can be taken?
- What specific impacts has climate change had on fisheries across Latin America? What regions and populations have been affected? Considering the previous climate-resilient fishery policies, what has been successful and what can be improved?
- How is the expansion of livestock production affecting deforestation and water? How can Latin American governments overcome the political obstacles contributing to these specific environmental factors?

Diplomacy and Communications

- How can Latin Americans use their existing diplomatic channels to work on regional climate change issues? What are their current diplomacy strategies and how can they be improved?
- How is the issue of climate change portrayed in Latin America throughout media outlets and local activism? How can education improve local awareness of climate change issues?

Low-Carbon Energy Solutions

- What is the current renewable energy landscape in Latin America? What renewable energy strategies are most viable for the Latin American context?
- What have shown to be the best ways to implement energy efficiency measures and sustainable transportation in cities to mitigate climate change? How can they reasonably be expanded?
- What energy-based adaptation strategies are currently in place for Latin America? Which climate hazards pose the biggest threats to energy infrastructure and how can energy systems build resilience towards these hazards?
- What are the climate finance needs of Latin America for mitigation, adaptation and resilience in terms of energy solutions? What are public and private capital flow options for potential technological investments? What are the current and future challenges of Latin America on carbon pricing mechanisms and emission trading schemes?

GOALS

Produce concise analysis and actionable policy recommendations to assist our clients in understanding a) the impact of climate change on Latin America, b) the scope and effectiveness of the region's efforts at adaptation and mitigation, and c) ways that the United States, other nations, and international organizations might help. Based on an analysis of ongoing policies and programs, the Team hopes to identify ways that they can be improved, better synthesized, and augmented.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to researching published material, the team will consult with a broad range of government and non-government experts on the region and U.S. policy. These include government agencies, non-governmental entities, and other academic and regional NGOs in Washington D.C. and, if travel can be arranged, in the region.

- **Primary Sources:** The working teams will consult with a broad range of government and non-government experts in Latin America and the United States. These include U.S. and Latin America government agencies, non-governmental entities, and other academic and regional NGOs in Washington D.C. and Latin American cities.
- **Secondary Sources:** Published academic papers, policy memos, NGO knowledge products, think tank articles, speeches from key figures.

Special Sources of Information Under Consideration

Sustainable Food Commodities: La Via Campesina; CIAT; UNDP; FAO; University for Peace (Costa Rica) USDA; NOAA; USAID; UNDP; OECD; GEF; INTA Argentina; World Bank; IMF

Diplomacy and Communications: La Onda Verde (The Green Wave); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Low-Carbon Energy Solutions: Buenos Aires city officials; World Bank; Inter-American Development Bank; DC city officials (CEDC, BEPS, C40, Resilient DC); USGBC (utilities).

Vulnerable Communities: IDB; Brookings; LAWG; WWIC; Migration Policy Institute; IOM, World Resource Institute, Nansen Initiative, Platform on Disaster Displacement

PRODUCTS

The Practicum Team will develop and deliver products reflecting the Client's expressed needs and interests, as outlined in this paper, including brief (1- to 2-page) page memos, background papers, oral briefings, and, if Client wishes, PowerPoint presentations.

OTHER CLIENTS

Recognizing the sensitive nature of these issues, the Practicum Team will be cautious in its portrayal of its relationship with the Client. At the end of the project, we may seek Client's permission to offer briefings on our key findings to other entities such as Embassies, NGOs and think tanks.

TOPIC AREAS AND TEAM MEMBERS:

- 1) Vulnerable Communities
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 - Brigitte Suastegui
 - Jessica Gomez

- 2) Sustainable Food Commodities
 - Rishon Seaborn
 - Karla Muñoz
 - Renée Garcia-Tolson

- 3) Diplomacy and Communications
 - Princess Joseph
 - Amanda Fleming

- 4) Low-Carbon Energy Solutions
 - Jonah Saacks
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 - Joanna Saunders
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