



On 12 June, three senior UN experts discussed the interlinkage between inequalities and environmental risks at the Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum in Bonn.

As countries across the world are striving to improve the welfare of their people and reduce existing inequalities, the impacts of climate change and environmental risks threaten to hamper these aspirations. The session was moderated by Caroline Petit, Deputy Director of the UN Regional Information Centre (UNRIC) in Brussels.

Zita Sebesvari of the United Nations University - Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) talked about risks for the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Depending on the season, large areas of the delta are flooded, but the pattern of flooding varies due to development decisions and climate change. "Farmers are losing their yields and their livelihood options", she pointed out. "Some might even be forced to seek other sources of income, but not all farmers can afford such radical change".

Matthias Braubach of the World Health Organization's European Center for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH) added a health dimension to the discussion. "There is a difference between inequalities – where things are just different and not the same – and inequity – where we say it is an unfair difference", he said. "We see varied dimensions of inequalities on a global scale, for instance concerning climate change. Many resources of our planet are depleted by our lifestyle".

Koko Warner of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) highlighted the environmental risks for the daily lives of people and how they build resilience. She underlined that environmental disasters often hit the poorest. Ms Warner who deals with risk adaptation, mentioned the big floods in Pakistan in 2010 as an example: "People struggled to keep their kids in schools, to put food on the table and lots of other troubles like being able to afford medicine", she said. Apart from other measures, there were also specifically designed programmes for women who were given identity cards. According to Ms Warner such a programme helps them to build an economic basis and to be able to generate their own incomes: "Through these IDs, poor women were suddenly able to get a bank account." Hence, women had the opportunity to raise their families from poverty. What we imagine creates our future – we should create it together", she concluded.

The panel members and the audience, which consisted mainly of media professionals and civil society experts, also discussed the relationship between the media and UN organizations and how issues of global relevance could reach a wider audience.

Deutsche Welle's Global Media Forum is the only international media conference that brings together decision-makers and influencers from the worlds of journalism, digital media, politics, business, civil society and academia. This year, more than 2.000 participants attended the Forum from 11 to 13 June.