**Global Adaptation Institute Annual Meeting**

**Working Session: Consultation on the Global Adaptation Index GaIn™**

***Abridged Notes & Key Points***

Countries are being challenged to prepare for and, if possible, to minimize the effects of climate change within the context of other global trends such as population growth, urbanization, and economic growth. Resources have been committed from international institutions and more are being negotiated, but public funding alone is not the solution. The private sector will play a key role in the investments that are needed as well. With appropriate information all can contribute to increasing the resilience of local communities. The Global Adaptation Index™ (GaIn™) will become the navigation chart that will guide investments both private and public.

The Global Adaptation Institute, a non-profit environmental organization, is guided by a vision of building resilience against climate change and other global forces as a key component of sustainable development. We are developing GaIn™, identifying pilot projects and conducting global outreach efforts to achieve our goals.

The Institute is seeking to improve GaIn™ through several phases of consultation. After building an initial working model, the Institute submitted the early version of the Index to critique from some of the world’s foremost leaders on Adaptation from a variety of fields and countries. This took place during the Working Session: Consultation on the Global Adaptation Index™ on May 3, following the May 2 Institute Annual Meeting. The main ideas and constructive criticisms of this working model are captured in this document and will mold the next iteration of the model, which will be presented for consultation to a wider audience early this summer.

**If we have overlooked anyone’s comments in the following summary, please let us know.** We want to capture to the extent possible all suggestions as we move forward to the next and subsequent iterations of GaInTM.

Dr. William “Bill” Clark, Professor of International Science, Public Policy and Human Development at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Chair of the day’s meeting, led the discussion along the following concepts:

**Decision Support**

* Interpretation of the Readiness Matrix will differ among investors, government agencies, and NGOs. Important to keep GaIn™ relevant to public/NGO sectors as there will always be areas where the private sector will not enter. Important to clearly separate where the public/NGO sectors will invest from conditions where the private sector will invest.
* Following from this, involvement of the private sector is a distinguishing characteristic of the Institute. But there is confusion about what it means. Clarify the ideas of private investment vs. social adaptation investment.
* Innate conditions (geography, natural resources) will expose particular sectors in a country to risk regardless of Readiness or overall Vulnerability. However, the GaIn™ framework can highlight risks for these sectors.
* A country’s trajectory of making progress or deteriorating against indicators is important to many audiences and will be further elucidated by the Institute going forward. Such a trajectory will require tracking changes in a country’s indicator values over time.
* GaInTM will eventually account for changes in the recurrence of events over time. What may now be seen as a one in 100 year event could be a one in 50 year event in the furure.
* Incorporating the scale of impact into indicator analysis could help decision makers better allocate resources.
* The diagnostic and strategic aspects of the Index should be clarified. Is it capturing risk or opportunity, or both?
* Use/abuse cases must be developed to show how and where GaIn™ can and cannot be used.
* Resources are shared across borders. Consideration of the impact of regional and international collaboration on sectors/indicators should be considered.
* GaIn™ will compliment other investment/project decision tools, but will not consider/compute all conditions favorable to investing in particular projects (e.g. market size, resources).
* The Index may be most useful in justifying action for leaders already committed to Adaptation.
* The many layers of complexity inherent in this project will require releasing different versions and iterations of the product, but we must ensure that Version 1.0 is theoretically sound, consistent with later versions, easily understood, and stimulates obvious actions.
* Scalability. The Institute is examining how to make GaIn™ more scalable to the local level by developing different layers of the Index for more local audiences.
* While the Index is the core product, the Institute could easily become the main “portal” for authoritative and comprehensive articles, thought pieces and resources on Adaptation.

**Vulnerability**

* Capturing exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity is a common approach to measuring vulnerability, but it is not necessarily the only empirically derived framework.
* Portraying an overarching “story” requires examining the causal relationships between indicators or choosing indicators that connect with each other. Currently, the indicators are “steps along the way” and need more internal coherence.
* Opinion differs over continuing to include adaptive capacity within the Vulnerability Axis.
* More attention should be given to other “drivers” besides climate change; e.g. urbanization, population growth, economic development.
* Hazards: Major single events (e.g. the Japanese earthquake) could significantly alter the vulnerabilities of countries.
* Data availability is not uniform across time scales.
* The degree of risk an indicator represents could equal the weighting of that indicator.
* The Vulnerability axis could be constructed as (Climate) Risk. This enables the explicit consideration of hazard drivers, and could provide a simpler way to extend the Index in the future to include other related hazards and challenges.

**Readiness**

* The Institute’s definition is capacity to “absorb additional investments and apply them effectively” to reduce vulnerability. This is not communicated strongly enough in the text. Is Adaptive Capacity double counting with Readiness?
* There is a difference between generic and specific capacity. What links the general institutional and economic Readiness to concretely reducing/responding to climate risk? Are we capturing Readiness to tackle climate-related impacts?
* Readiness captures “Enabling Environment” by measuring obstacles such as bribery, exclusion of foreign capital, government restrictions and infrastructure to facilitate communication and movement of resources to affected areas.
* Avoid purely measuring GDP.
* Readiness mixes current assets and future flows/process. Going forward, a process-oriented indicator framework will be easier for countries to improve upon quickly.
* The value of the Readiness Axis may be rated higher (twice perhaps) than the Vulnerability axis. Vulnerability causes alarm, but Readiness reduces concern.
* Understanding the causal chain of events that create positive or negative investment environments may be more fruitful than an indicator approach.
* An ecosystem services/natural capital component that reflects the level of investment needed to maintain a sector (water services) could be useful.

**Integration**

* There are tradeoffs between using the Readiness “Matrix” and “Ranking” Index. While the Matrix communicates more information, a Ranking conveys a stronger and simpler message. Countries will be classified quite differently among the two models – a country with low Readiness and Vulnerability and one with high Readiness and Vulnerability on the Matrix may rank equally when aggregated based on Readiness minus Vulnerability in a ranking format (i.e. Readiness minus Vulnerability chart).
* The richness of the Matrix is lost by consolidating into a single number.
* We will explore various representations of the information in the Index as a different means of communication according to the audience.

**Evaluation & Testing**

* There has been much discussion of indicators, but the key to making this work valid is through the implementation of solutions and pilot projects.
* Project effectiveness and impacts take a long time to measure properly.
* As GaIn™ currently stands, it could be very difficult to see how projects that could affect change in the Index score. Must assume that the initial project could be scaled up considerably to impact the Index.
* There is not a coherent framework to evaluate progress on Adaptation.
* Hindcast. Examine time series of the GaIn™ over past periods of time for several countries and compare with other measures of development over the same period. This would enable the issue of pathway to be explored.

**Wrap Up & Next Steps**

* Clarification of purpose of the GaIn™ and terms used in discussing it
* Release a road map, Version 1.0, and White Papers for different audiences. A clear development plan that describes how we plan to develop the Index and associated resources.
* Evaluate possibility of structural changes (adding an Adaptive Capacity Axis).
* Definition and application of use cases – to help in both the development and the testing of GaIn™ and of the software that supports users.
* Include causal chain analysis (linkages between indicators).
* Review selection of indicators with more thorough application of category definitions and based on new conceptualizations.
* Address challenges of time series and data gaps.
* Develop more rigorous selection of weightings.
* Pilot projects:
  + Demonstrate effective interventions rather than trying to solve the problem
  + Define how Index should be used
  + This niche is not being filled
* Communications:
  + Pictorial representation of the “Matrix” and country “Ranking” list must be easily understood by different target groups
  + Pilot projects must tell story
* Public consultation.
* Determine first “key user/s.”
* Consider additional sectors (energy, ecosystems/infrastructure).
* Adaptometer:
  + Find on-the-ground leaders and institutions to work with.
* Plan for new information, new socio-technological tools (e.g. Google).
* Consider drivers other than climate change in analysis, though initially focused on climate in V.1.
* Determine how to make the Index more proprietary. One method may be through collecting and creating unique data.

We are in the process of capturing many of these points in the next version of GaInTM. **Again, if we have overlooked any suggestions from the Conference, please let us know as soon as possible.**

We appreciate all the rich feedback we received during the meeting.  It is under active consideration, and we will share with you the concrete changes we are implementing soon.