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Gingging Poyo cuddles her baby after a day's work. The 31-year-old mother is part of the maintenance staff of a lake resort in Jabonga. "I grew up in this place so I decided to settle here with my family," she says.

Jabonga, one of the eleven towns in the Philippines province of Agusan del Norte, seems to have many natural advantages to offer a young family: a view of mountains, rock formations, underwater caves, waterfalls, diving sites and a fresh water lake. However, changing weather trends in Jabonga are affecting many residents, including Gingging and her family.

"We experience extreme flooding due to heavy rain and typhoons. The weather is unpredictable. It takes about two to three months for the water to subside," said Gingging. "My children cannot go to school. We rely on my husband's meagre income from fishing, but he cannot even go out of our house to work. We do not have anything to eat. We have no choice but to wait for canned goods and relief items".

The Mayor of Jabonga, Mr Glicerio Monton, Jr, agrees. He sees climate change having a serious impact on the communities in Agusan del Norte, which are largely dependant on agriculture and fishery. "Climate change has caused severe flooding in Jabonga, about 12-16 feet deep, often from December to February. People do not have any source of income. We have to depend on internal revenue allotment to provide temporary jobs," he said.

"Before only 20 per cent of water from the lake and seaside overflow to the community, now it has increased to about 80 per cent. It has affected farm production for rice, corn, vegetables and fruit trees".

The experience of Jabonga shows how climate change affects peoples' lives at their very core--not only environmentally but socially, economically and politically. The consequences of these changes will be discussed during the Bangkok Climate Change Talks 2009, the latest in a series of meetings taking place under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Bangkok meeting, from 23 September to 9 October, will attract about 2,500 participants and will prepare for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, 7-18 December 2009.

Almost a third of the land in Agusan del Norte is classified as agricultural land and the province is one of the leading rice producers in the Philippines. Other major crops are coconut, corn, mango, banana and vegetables. Recently, climate change has caused food production to drop, creating worries of serious consequences for poorer communities.

Ms Modesta Lim, President of the Women in Small Enterprise Development in Caraga, Inc. (WISE-DEV) agrees that climate change is posing a real threat to food production and the livelihood of women in the community. WISE-DEV was set up in 1976 and helps women in Agusan del Norte through livelihood and skills training.

"We organized women in the informal sector. We received initial capital from the Department of Labor and Employment to provide training in food processing. Women were able to earn their own income and save for their family," said Ms Lim.

However, things are changing. "The heavy rain and extreme flooding caused a huge increase in prices of raw ingredients like flour. Women who depend on agriculture, mainly income of their husbands working as farmers, borrow money from us due to low harvests. In the end, it is difficult for them to pay for their loan and save for their family," said Ms Lim.

"Sadly, poor farmers who often live in vulnerable areas are dependent solely on their meagre income from farming and could not afford the cost of adaptation," said Ms Linda Wirth, Director of the ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific, in Manila. "Alternative livelihoods and enabling conditions for these livelihoods therefore become necessary,"

In response, at the end of August 2009 the ILO launched a project, "Climate Resilient Farming Communities in Agusan del Norte through Innovative Risk Transfer Mechanisms". The three-year project is funded by the Spanish Government through the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund and is being implemented in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Trade and Industry and the provincial government of Agusan del Norte.

"We recognize that long-term preparedness for climate change requires an integrated and comprehensive approach. This project will look into climate change adaptation in all its dimensions, not only environmental

but also social, economic and political. Research, guideline-setting as well as advocacy work will be conducted alongside training, skills and business development,” said Ms Wirth.

Such practical interventions, combined with the prospect of international political action, give hope to those who want to preserve their ways of life and combat climate change. “I hope there will be more and better jobs in our community” says Gingging as she embraces her baby. “I pray that my children will be able to have a good education despite our situation”.