



## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT SERIES**

### **Social Assistance and Climate Adaptation: Impacts and Design**

**Professor Arun Agrawal (University of Michigan)**

**23 October 2020 | 5pm**

#### **Summary**

A reflection on climate change and its consequences is a necessary condition for critically engaging with the discourse and practice of international development. The new lecture series ‘Climate Change and the Challenges of Development’ is therefore an important and timely initiative for foregrounding debates on climate change and environmental protection in development studies and giving them the priority they deserve.

The inaugural lecture by Professor Arun Agrawal (University of Michigan) provided an insight into his ongoing research on the connection between social assistance and climate resilience, highlighting a promising and innovative avenue to explore for researchers and policy-makers alike. Focusing on cash transfers and employment guarantee schemes, Prof Agrawal analysed how social assistance programmes may advance climate resilience, and how their impact and design could be improved to reflect the exigencies of climate change. His lecture emphasised the need to think of climate change and development as intrinsically linked, and advocated for a more holistic approach to social welfare. He argued that social assistance programmes must advance absorptive, adaptive, and transformative climate resilience in order to reach long-term sustainability. By not doing so and continuing to ignore the challenges of climate change, these programmes will run the risk of forfeiting any developmental progress that they may have made or even lead to its reversal.

The lecture by Prof Agrawal blazed a trail in the nascent conversation on the climate-development nexus. However, he himself reiterated the urgent need for more research in this area. At the Oxford Department of International Development, we are in a prime position to answer this need, and the lecture series actually marks a major attempt in this regard. Greening our department does not only entail cutting waste and carbon emissions, it also includes adapting our curricula and research efforts to reflect the demands of a changing climate.

This reflection was written by Professor Laura Rival