KN01 KEYNOTE ADDRESS · WATER SECTOR

Water, Climate and Future of Resilience: Rethinking Sustainable Development in South Asia

M. G. Maswabi[1*]

[1]*Commonwealth National Climate Finance Access Hub, Sri lanka*

**Corresponding author: g.maswabi@commonwealthconnect.org*

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Abstract

Climate change is reshaping the conditions for sustainable development, with water at the centre of interconnected risks affecting food, energy, ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods across South Asia. Building resilience therefore requires moving beyond isolated technical solutions and projects towards more integrated approaches to planning, investment and implementation. This keynote explores two critical shifts. First, resilience requires institutional integration: climate and water risks are systemic, yet development planning and investment decisions often remain organised around sectoral mandates. Second, financing resilience requires moving from project pipelines to investment pathways that connect risk and evidence with policy priorities, investment planning, appropriate financing, implementation and scale. Drawing on emerging experiences from South Asia, the keynote considers how stronger institutional integration and more strategic approaches to finance can help translate knowledge and innovation into resilient development outcomes. It argues that resilience is not simply a project to be financed, but a development pathway to be deliberately shaped and sustained.

Keywords: *climate finance; climate resilience; institutional integration; investment pathways; South Asia; sustainable development; water security*