

Part V

Policy Responses for Adaptation

Part V of the Review analyses adaptation as a response to climate change.

Climate is a pervasive factor in social and economic development – one so universally present and so deeply ingrained that it is barely noticed until things go wrong. People are adapted to the distinct climate of the place where they live. This is most obvious in productive sectors such as agriculture, where the choice of crops and the mode of cultivation have been finely tailored over decades, even centuries, to the prevailing climate. But the same is true for other economic sectors that are obviously weather-dependent, such as forestry, water resources, and recreation. It is also evident in how people live their daily lives, for instance in working practices.

Adaptation will be crucial in reducing vulnerability to climate change and is the only way to cope with the impacts that are inevitable over the next few decades. In regions that may benefit from small amounts of warming, adaptation will help to reap the rewards. It provides an impetus to adjust economic activity in vulnerable sectors and to support sustainable development, especially in developing countries. But it is not an easy option, and it can only reduce, not remove, the impacts. There will be some residual cost – either the impacts themselves or the cost of adapting. Without early and strong mitigation, the costs of adaptation rise sharply.

Part V is structured as follows.

- **Chapter 18** outlines key adaptation concepts and sets out an economic framework for adaptation.
- **Chapter 19** examines the barriers and constraints to adaptation identified in this chapter. It sets out how governments in the developed world can promote adaptation by providing information and a policy framework for individuals to respond to market signals.
- **Chapter 20** explores the particular issue of how developing countries can adapt to climate change. Developing countries lack the infrastructure, financial means, and access to public services that would otherwise help them adapt. The chapter shows the importance of support from the international community, and the need for investment in global public goods such as the development of resistant crops.