



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2011

Anthropologists Announce New Task Force on Climate Change

CONTACT:

Damon Dozier,
Director of Public Affairs,
703-528-1902 x 1163
ddozier@aaanet.org

The Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) is proud to announce the creation of the Task Force on Climate Change, an effort to bring anthropology's contributions to issues of environmental concern into the spotlight, and increase its engagement with current research, policy discourse and the communities they study worldwide.

While geophysical scientists and governmental bodies decry climate changes and the resulting ecological effects, anthropologists' sociocultural and archeological interpretations are not as well known. Because of the specialized nature of their academic training (including extensive fieldwork, as well as expertise in biology, linguistics, and ethnography) anthropologists are uniquely positioned to interpret from multiple scales and perspectives and bring a new view to the effects that our changing environment have on livelihoods, identities and culture. Many anthropologists also study the asymmetries in global power dynamics and the inequities associated with global climate change policies and responses.

Appointed by former AAA President Virginia R. Dominguez, the members of the Task Force include Chair Shirley J. Fiske, Susan A Crate, Heather Lazrus, George Luber, Lisaa Lucero, Anthony Oliver-Smith, Ben S. Orlove, Sarah Strauss and Richard Wilk. Two additional members are likely to be appointed.

The Task Force has outlined an action plan for its activities for the next three years, which includes producing guiding documents to recognize, promote and develop anthropological contributions to global climate change-related issues; promoting engagement of the AAA and anthropologists in general with public policy agendas and the greater public interest, utilizing media and outreach modalities to reach beyond the discipline; supporting anthropologists and anthropology students who are interested and engaged in climate research across all sub-disciplines of anthropology, by promoting public and professional exchange of ideas and networks, providing forums to listen and learn, and producing guidance documents on human dimensions of climate and climate change; and Provide the AAA with proposed actions and recommendations to support and promote anthropological engagement with climate change.

"I am pleased that the AAA has taken this action to get members of our discipline focused on our potential to contribute in a significant way to current policy debates surrounding climate change," Task Force Chair Shirley Fiske said in a statement released today. "In the face of increasingly widespread and directional environmental shifts linked to this phenomenon, there is no better time for anthropologists to make their voices heard."

-- AAA --

Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world's largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 10,000. The Arlington, VA – based association represents all specialties within anthropology – cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.

2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22201-3357
Tel 703-528-1902
Fax 703-528-3546
www.aaanet.org