India: The Uttarakhand tragedy is not natural

India Climate Justice, a collective of social movements, trade unions, other organizations and individuals, has issued on last June 25 a statement stressing that the devastating loss of life, livelihoods, and homes in Uttarakhand and beyond, caused by extreme unseasonal rains in North India, is a tragedy that indicates a global warming induced climate change phenomenon.

The Uttarakhand disaster is not natural: extensive deforestation of mountain tracts, by the state and due to “development” projects, has led to soil erosion and water run-off, thus destabilizing mountain slopes and contributing to more intense and frequent landslides and floods; hundreds of small, medium and large dams across the Himalayan states have been built or are planned; sand mining along river banks has intensified water flows into rivers. An already fragile ecosystem has been destabilized.

India Climate Justice believes that adaptation to disasters does not just mean desperate rescue work during and after the event, but also reducing vulnerability and risk before. Effective adaptation involves a series of measures that need to be adopted on a war footing. The sustainable development of a hill economy, and equity “not profit for a few“ should be at its core.
See the open letter at http://sandrp.wordpress.com/2013/06/25/climate-justice-statement-on-the-uttarakhand-catastrophe/