

UN AND CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

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Voices of the South on Globalization is a monthly newsletter intended to inspire a meaningful North-South Dialogue by raising awareness for global interdependences and by offering a forum for voices from the South in the globalization debate. Each edition presents short analyses or commentaries from a Southern perspective on one particular issue of the globalization process.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Three Imperatives

Cancun has come and gone. But forging a durable global consensus on a new climate accord remains a herculean task. In fact it reminisces of a highly intricate knot that, according to an ancient Greek legend, resisted all attempted solutions until Alexander the Great cut through it with a sword. Carrying swords to international conferences is however not permissible. Even if it were, swords are not a solution, though crossing swords in UN climate change talks as in other gatherings part of the game.

Climate diplomacy must focus on what Martin Khor, director of the South Centre -- a think-tank of the developing nations, based in Geneva -- calls the EDE formula, comprising the environmental, development and equity imperatives.

This EDE formula requires that the different pieces of the climate negotiations be seen and addressed as a whole, in a holistic way. In particular, setting the global goal for emission reduction has to take account of the environmental imperative, and also deal with the emission reduction of Annex I (industrialized) and non Annex I (developing country) parties including China and India.

The formula envisages that a global carbon budget of how much more emissions should be allowed between now and 2050 be fixed, and also how that budget should be allocated especially between developed and developing countries. So a fixing of a temperature target and of a global emissions reduction goal must be done within a paradigm or framework for the equitable sharing of the atmospheric space and the development space.

In fact the sharing of the mitigation efforts, and the support (finance and technology transfer) that must accompany this sharing, is a most critical piece of the jigsaw puzzle.

The UN Climate Convention recognizes the equity principle; that developed countries take the lead in emission reduction, and that developing countries have development imperatives, and their ability to undertake climate actions depend on the extent of support they receive from the developed countries.

According to the EDE formula, Annex I countries will also meet the agreed full incremental costs of implementing developing countries' climate policy measures.

Khor points out that between 1850 and 2009, about 1,280 Gigatons (Gtons) of CO2 were emitted, thus adding to the stock of CO2 in the atmosphere. To achieve a 67% probability of limiting temperature rise to within 2 degrees, CO2 emissions in 2010-2050 will have to be kept to below 750 Gt; a 75% probability requires a 600 Gt budget.

In the historical situation, estimates for the fair share for developed and developing countries are based on proportion of population for 1850 to 2008. Cumulative global emissions have totalled about 1214 Gtons in 1850-2008. Of this total, Annex I countries accounted for 878 Gton or 72% of the total. Their share of population was about 25%, so their fair share was 310 Gton and their overuse was 568 Gton.

Non-Annex I countries accounted for 336 Gton or 28% of the total. Their fair share was 904 Gton and under-use was 568 Gton. The carbon debt of Annex I countries was thus 568 Gton for the period 1850-2008. They are still accumulating debt because their actual emissions as a group in 2009 still exceed their fair share.

In sharing the remaining carbon space in 2010-2050 two concepts are needed: (1) The allocation of carbon space as according to rights and responsibilities; (2) The actual carbon budget (and related physical emissions reduction schedule) that countries eventually put forward as what they can physically undertake. – Ramesh Jaura ☑

Good News from Cancun for the UN

The agreements achieved at the climate change conference in Cancun underline that that the United Nations' decision to refrain from setting a high expectation bar ahead of the international gathering was most appropriate. Of critical importance is also that it has reinstated faith in multilateral processes under the umbrella of the United Nations.

The conference is "not intended to establish the ultimate framework for comprehensive global action", the secretariat of what is officially known as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said on the eve of the gathering in the Mexican spa resort from November 29 to December 10.

The Bonn-based UNFCCC secretariat has all the more reason now to rejoice at the adoption of a balanced package of decisions that "set all governments more firmly on the path towards a low-emissions future and support enhanced action on climate change in the developing world".

The outcome has been described as an "important success for a world much in need of it" by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "Governments came together in common cause, for the common good, and agreed on a way forward to meet the defining challenge of our time," he said in a statement.

Much of the credit for the conference not ending up in a fiasco, as the Copenhagen gathering in December 2009 did, goes to the Mexican hosts -- President Felipe Calderon and Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa, who presided over the conference -- as well the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres. Unlike Copenhagen, Cancun was both inclusive and transparent.

The package, described as the 'Cancun Agreements', was welcomed to repeated loud and prolonged applause and acclaim by Parties to the UNFCCC -- with the eminent exception of Bolivia -- in the final plenary.

"Cancun has done its job. The beacon of hope has been reignited and faith in the multilateral climate change process to deliver results has been restored," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Figueres. "Nations have shown they can work together under a common roof, to reach consensus on a common cause. They have shown that consensus in a transparent and inclusive process can create opportunity for all," she said.

The fact that faith in the multilateral climate change process to deliver results has been restored is indeed noteworthy because detractors of multilateralism saw in the tough climate change negotiations an obvious proof that these would have to be carried outside of the UN in regional or sub-regional groupings.

"Governments have given a clear signal that they are headed towards a low-emissions future together, they have agreed to be accountable to each other for the actions they take to get there, and they have set it out in a way which encourages countries to be more ambitious over time," Figueres said.

In Cancun representatives of 193 countries launched a set of initiatives and institutions to protect the poor and the

vulnerable from climate change and to deploy the money and technology that developing countries need to plan and build their own sustainable futures. They also agreed to launch concrete action to preserve forests in developing nations, which will increase going forward.

Delegates from around the world also agreed that nations need to work to stay below a two degree temperature rise, and they set a clear timetable for review, to ensure that global action is adequate to meet the emerging reality of climate change.

NEW BEGINNING

"This is not the end, but it is a new beginning. It is not what is ultimately required but it is the essential foundation on which to build greater, collective ambition," said Figueres, the UNFCCC executive secretary, a Costa Rican national.

Elements of the Cancun Agreements include:

- Industrialised country targets are officially recognised under the multilateral process and these countries are to develop low-carbon development plans and strategies and assess how best to meet them, including through market mechanisms, and to report their inventories annually.

- Developing country actions to reduce emissions are officially recognised under the multilateral process. A registry is to be set up to record and match developing country mitigation actions to finance and technology support from by industrialised countries. Developing countries are to publish progress reports every two years.

- Parties meeting under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol agree to continue negotiations with the aim of completing their work and ensuring there is no gap between the first and second commitment periods of the treaty. The first commitment period ends 2012. Japan, which appeared to be rejecting the 'extension' of Kyoto Protocol, is party to the decision

- The Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanisms has been strengthened to drive more major investments and technology into environmentally sound and sustainable emission reduction projects in the developing world.

- The country Parties launched a set of initiatives and institutions to protect the vulnerable from climate change and to deploy the money and technology that developing countries need to plan and build their own sustainable futures.

- A total of \$30 billion in fast start finance from industrialised countries to support climate action in the developing world up to 2012 and the intention to raise \$100 billion in long-term funds by 2020 are an integral part of the 'Cancun Agreements'.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6] ➔

Cancun May Have Saved the UN Process, But Not the Climate

By Anders Wijkman, Vice president, Club of Rome and Tällberg Foundation*

After the failure in Copenhagen last year, expectations for the climate conference in Cancun were low. Press reports, both ahead of and during the two weeks of negotiations, were predominately negative. Only hours before the meeting ended, Chris Huhne, the UK energy and climate secretary, talked about Cancun becoming "a car crash".

A combination of skillful tactics by the host country Mexico and the determination by many governments to avoid another failure, led to an agreement that - at least - will keep the process in motion. But, as Stephen Leahy reported for the IPS, "if success is measured by delaying difficult decisions, the Cancun meeting was a real success".

The deal has been hailed as restoring faith in the multilateral UN process. While making limited progress on forest protection and the establishment of a Climate Fund, the agreement postpones many of the most important decisions to future negotiations. With regard to emissions reductions the agreement is extremely disappointing.

But the negotiating process is still alive. All eyes now will be on South Africa, the host of next year's conference. Some people hope that the meeting in South Africa will bring about the much needed breakthrough on emissions reductions. We must seriously question the realism of that, however.

The U.S. and China are the main barriers to an international agreement. The political situation in the US with regard to climate change is highly unlikely to improve in the coming twelve months. If the U.S. does not sign, China will not sign. Indeed, the question is whether China has any inclination at all to sign a legally binding text in the near future. Experts on China will tell you that "the Chinese leadership views carbon emission caps as a threat to China's development and that China will do everything it can to avoid a binding agreement, at least for now".

Whichever way one looks at it, a legally binding agreement seems far away. But this does not mean that negotiations should stop. The world badly needs an agreement and efforts must continue. The issues already agreed upon, like forest protection through REDD and the Climate Fund, should be further developed. Parallel to that action on many other fronts must be vigorously pursued, such as:

- Enhancing energy security is the most pressing need and dominates attempts to solve the emissions issue. Access to crude oil will be less secure in the years to come. Many experts predict that supplies will decline by up to 5 % per year from 2012 and onwards. Another oil price shock appears imminent. Two sectors will be hit particularly hard - transport and agriculture.

- Everything possible should be done to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, notably oil. The most obvious strategy would be to accelerate investments in energy efficiency and renewables. That would require stronger incentives, something that each and every government can easily provide.

- A floor price for carbon would be the most appropriate incentive but this has yet to be established. In most parts of the

world, carbon emissions have no price at all. In some regions, like the EU, a carbon market exists, but prices are extremely volatile. The establishment of a floor price for carbon would provide security to investors. The EU should take the lead and encourage other regions to adopt the principle of a floor price for carbon.

- Turning farming from a carbon source into a carbon sink, is another effective intervention. Agriculture emits an estimated 4-5 Gigatons of carbon globally each year. Through activities like low-tilling and perennial crops the same amount of carbon could instead be stored in the soils. A co-benefit would be that both soil fertility and water retention capacity would be greatly enhanced.

- Reducing other greenhouse gases (GHG) must not be forgotten in the focus on CO₂. Other gases contribute to climate change as well. Black carbon is a special concern as it is generated by hundreds of millions of inefficient stoves in South Asia, Africa and Latin America. By replacing such stoves, emissions of Black carbon as well as CO₂ will be lowered. A critical co-benefit would be the significant reduction of in-door air pollution - a major killer in poor communities.

- More efficient use of natural resources. The throw-away lifestyles of the rich world are being adopted by the growing middle classes in fast developing countries, resulting in the rapid increase in the throughput of energy and materials. This is unsustainable. Business models have to be reconsidered. Instead of earning revenue by selling more stuff, the main objective should be to extend wealth and doing more with what is already produced. Leasing instead of selling products is an obvious way forward. One of many benefits when using resources more efficiently will be lowered GHG emissions. The introduction of efficiency standards - both for energy and virgin materials would promote activities like reuse, recycling and reconditioning, thereby greatly reducing material throughput as well as GHG emissions.

For many years, many of us lived under the impression that a legally binding agreement of GHG emissions would be the way forward to stabilize the climate. Only recently did we enormous difficulties to realize such a goal.

But we can't let the best be the enemy of the good. There are many other actions to be taken and many are already happening. A major one, of course, will be to rethink global governance processes - a topic given high priority by the Tällberg Foundation. But parallel to that, a whole range of measures can and should be taken at national levels to help reduce GHG emissions, stop climate change and generate an economy that is not threatened by environment and social instability. I have suggested some of the most obvious ones and trust they will be pursued by as many governments as possible.

*This comment first appeared on <http://other-news.info> ☑

Africa Paves the Way for Climate for Development

Amidst persistent warnings that climate change will destroy Africa, the leaders of the world's second largest and second most populous continent have launched the 'Climate for Development in Africa Programme' and decided to set up an 'Africa Green Fund'.

The two significant steps to defend the continent came in run-up to the landmark UN climate change conference from November 29 to December 10 in Cancun, Mexico, where the African Green Fund was to get underway.

The Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme was launched by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) at a ceremony on the sidelines of the Seventh African Development Forum (ADF VII) on October 13 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Speaking for their governments at the ADF VII, several African ministers unanimously supported the African Development Bank's proposal for the establishment of a Green Fund.

"The Fund is designed to receive and manage resources allocated to Africa from all sources including the fast-track financing and long-term pledges made under the Copenhagen Accord to finance projects and programs that contribute to climate-resilience and low-carbon development in Africa," the AfDB stated.

Going by speeches of government Ministers, among others, from Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, DR Congo and Cote d'Ivoire, the African Development Bank will host and manage the Fund.

"Africa has urgent and enormous climate change financing needs, but existing sources of financing and disbursement are inadequate," said AfDB compliance and safeguards manager, Anthony Nyong, while speaking on financing climate change adaptation and mitigation action at ADF VII.

Climate change financing has in fact been a complex issue, particularly in the case of Africa, which is contributing less than 4 percent to global emissions, with 75 percent of this coming from deforestation. The African continent is highly vulnerable to climate change, and it is critical to obtain sufficient financial support to manage adaptation and mitigation processes.

FINANCING

Of 22 climate funds available worldwide, Africa has access only to a few. The carbon market has not brought much money to Africa so far. Several hundred projects in Mexico, Brazil, India and China are funded under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). There are only a handful of CDM projects in South Africa and very few others on the rest of the continent.

"Africa is not benefiting from the CDM because emissions from agriculture and other land use practices are not included in it, whereas these are important parts of the African economy," Nyong said.

From 2006 to 2009, sub-Saharan Africa received 12 percent of the climate change financing disbursements through multilateral development banks, the smallest share among all regions in the world. Even so, a large chunk of the 12 percent that came to Africa was used for mitigation alone.

The AfDB argues that the December 2009 UN climate change conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen, Denmark, had secured "a non-obliging political agreement to make USD 30 billion available by 2012 in new and additional fast track resources, with additional USD 100 billion to be raised annually by 2020".

During the Copenhagen conference, Africa's negotiators led by Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, demanded that 40 percent of the proposed fund should be allocated to Africa and should be handled by the AfDB. "There is nothing wrong with Africa that we cannot keep Africa's money within Africa," Nyong argued. After all, the AfDB is Africa's premier development finance institution, and climate is a developmental issue, he added, emphasizing Africa's right to host money allocated to it.

According to Nyong, Africa is not well served by existing financing mechanisms since the continent's unique problems such as high vulnerability to climate change and unique emission patterns related to agriculture and land use are never factored into the design of global funds. He called for a more appropriate financing mechanism such as the Africa Green Fund.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MDGs

The importance of Nyong's remarks lies in the fact that the impact of climate change will also affect Africa's ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The continent already has the largest proportion of people living below the 1.25 dollar-a-day line, and the largest gap between 2005 and 2015 MDG targets for poverty.

"We need tens of billions of dollars per annum," said Nyong, who is one of the architects of the Africa Green Fund. "Less than five years from now, by 2015, it will take between USD 22 billion and USD 31 billion per year for adaptation and to put the continent on a low carbon growth pathway. In another 15 years, that will go up to between USD 52 billion and USD 68 billion per year. In addition to that, climate-proofing will add 40 percent to the cost of meeting the MDGs. This will require international financial assistance estimated at USD 100 billion a year over the next decade," he pointed out.

Nyong went on to say that the Congo basin forest is the second largest rain forest in the world. "Some people do not know the good we are doing by preserving it," he said, stressing that the developed world had to pitch in to ensure that local communities were not forced to depend on the basin's forest for their livelihoods. **[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]** ➔

As Andean Glaciers Recede, Region Steps Forward to Adapt

The mountainous areas of South America's Andean nations supply water to the coastal cities, provide habitat to important biodiversity, and serve as natural barriers, but global warming threatens those regions, which are home to millions of people.

"It is clear that the glaciers are receding, and some communities can see that the climate is changing. Precipitation is more unstable, and in the cities along the coast face water supply problems," Peru's Environment Minister Antonio Brack told *Tierramérica*.

In Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile, the glaciers are a principal source of freshwater, and as they shrink, it means less water is available for the cities in the valleys and on the coast.

Peru's total area of mountain ice fields has decreased 22 percent in the last 35 years, with a 12-percent reduction in the volume of water, according to that country's National Environmental Council.

CONDESAN

To confront the threats hanging over the Andes, the region's nations have formed a consortium for sustainable development, CONDESAN, a member of the Mountain Partnership, created in 2002.

To date, 50 countries, 16 intergovernmental organisations and 107 civil society groups make up the Partnership, which has the support of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"We are implementing programmes to prevent fires in the highlands, to preserve wetlands, and to improve freshwater systems management," Marco Chiu, Ecuador's deputy minister for climate change, told *Tierramérica*.

The protection of mountainous areas was a key issue at the 16th Conference of Parties (COP 16) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which took place Nov. 28 to Dec. 10 in the Mexican resort city of Cancún.

In the arid regions of Central Asia, Chile, Argentina and Peru, where there is little precipitation, the receding glaciers will have a much greater impact on water availability than in Europe or other Asian regions.

That is one of the findings of the United Nations Environment Programme's report, "High Mountain Glaciers and Climate Change: Challenges to Human Livelihoods and Adaptation," presented in Cancún.

Since 2008, Ecuador has been implementing water adaptation and usage initiative, with 13 pilot plans in six provinces, backed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UN Development Programme.

Meanwhile, Peru is about to approve a plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation, which is expected to have legal force in January and become part of the national strategy approved in 2003.

Since 2008, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia have been developing a project to adapt to the impacts of receding glaciers in the tropical Andes (PRAA), with the support of the World Bank.



"All of the regions have been affected. The communities are lacking information. There should be a process of appropriation of the studies in order to participate in the decision-making process," indigenous Quechuan activist Tarcila Rivera said in a *Tierramérica* interview. She coordinates the Continental Connection of Indigenous Women, and participated in COP 16, along with Brack and Chiu.

In 2002, the UN declared Dec. 11 "International Mountain Day," and this year it was dedicated to indigenous peoples and minorities living in mountainous areas.

"There are weak points in the data, insufficient measurements, lack of experience and insufficient methodological tools to calculate the region's vulnerability. The plan should be to guide us towards what we will do to fight climate change," said Peruvian Edwin Mansilla, coordinator of the climate change unit for the Cuzco regional government.

This region of about 72,000 square kilometres, home to 1.1 million people, holds a quarter of Peru's glaciers, of which 30 percent has disappeared, according to the regional government.

The communities are concerned about the water situation and the state of the highland wetlands, which provide food for alpaca herds. These camelid cousins of the llama are a source of revenue for the local communities, which sell the alpaca wool to be made into textiles and clothing.

"The traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples must be recognised and applied, because the people have long survived by using that knowledge," said Rivera.

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- Emilio Godoy ☑

Picture above: Cuzco potato-growing communities note changing temperatures in the higher elevations.

Africa Paves the Way for Climate for Development [Continued from Page 4]

"We welcome the Fund in Uganda," said Fredo Much, the country's state minister for finance. "This Fund was needed yesterday, not today," he emphasized.

Grain Malunga, Malawi's natural resources, energy and environment minister, said Malawi endorsed the African Development Bank's bid to host and manage the fund on the merits of its in-depth experience with other funds and its knowledge of the continent. "The AfDB has outstanding knowledge and experience to help Africa in climate change adaptation," he added.

The Africa Green Fund, according to Nyong, will have a balanced allocation to mitigation and adaptation, reversing the situation in which much of the resources allocated to climate change on the continent are spent on mitigation.

In yet another noteworthy move, the instrument creating the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme's joint secretariat, to be based at UNECA in Addis Ababa, was signed by AfDB President Donald Kaberuka, AUC Chairman Jean Ping, and ECA Executive Secretary, Abdoulie Janneh.

"This launching is taking place as climate change has taken centre stage in the world," said Jean Ping, who spoke on behalf of the signatories.

According to the agreement, the programme was launched due to the inability of government institutions, development practitioners and service providers to effectively manage climate risks and to link climate change concerns to development imperatives because of the lack of appropriate climate information and services.

Africa has less than 13 percent of the minimum number of stations required to support development, according to the World Meteorological Organization. The Programme is a unique regional initiative that responds to climate change challenges facing Africa's development. It will focus on climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture and food security, water resources, energy and health.

The Programme, according to Ping, was designed to respond to urgent climate variability challenges, an issue that needs to be addressed "with deep seriousness".

The AfDB and African leaders expect ClimDev-Africa to strengthen the continent's climate and development institutions at regional, sub-regional and national levels. They also expect it to assist in sound policy-making based on information and analyses on policy options.

The programme will improve climate-related activities in sectoral institutions through enhanced policy environments and help address weaknesses in both demand for, and supply of, pertinent climate services, which have contributed to the limited use of climate data in development processes in Africa. ☑

☞ [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2]

- In the field of climate finance, a process to design a Green Climate Fund under the Conference of the Parties (COP), with a board comprising equal representation from developed and developing countries, is established.

- A new 'Cancun Adaptation Framework' is established to allow better planning and implementation of adaptation projects in developing countries through increased financial and technical support, including a clear process for continuing work on loss and damage.

- Governments agree to boost action to curb emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries with technological and financial support.

- Parties have established a technology mechanism with a Technology Executive Committee and Climate Technology Centre and Network to increase technology cooperation to support action on adaptation and mitigation.

An important aspect of these decisions is that these are being carried home by delegations of industrialised and developing countries, including the U.S. and China, the biggest polluters in absolute terms.

Bolivia's decision not to support the Cancun Agreements is grounded on the fact that none of the elements are legally binding. And, as the head of the country's delegation, Pablo Solon, told journalists ahead of the final plenary, the proposal to curb global temperatures at two degrees Celsius was totally inadequate. Emissions from war and weapons, which should have been included as part of global emissions, were not considered.

He said the proposals could open the door to an agreement that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. Even the market mechanism, which Bolivia has been opposing all along, found a place in the drafts. Also, the Green Fund did not specify where the resources would be generated from, he said. How far the agreements are taken seriously remains to be seen. The next Conference of the Parties dubbed as COP17, scheduled to take place in South Africa, from November 28 to December 9, 2011, will be critical.

With 194 Parties, UNFCCC has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 191 of the UNFCCC Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments.

The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. – IDN-InDepthNews ☑