

Beyond Copenhagen

A Collective Action against Climate Change, INDI

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At the Bella Centre, Copenhagen, it would not be out of place to feel being part of a mammoth international carnival. With a capacity of hosting 15,000 people, the convention centre has been overwhelmed by around 34,000 participants having applied for accreditation to the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This is by far the biggest meeting on this issue, attended by 192 countries, that is affecting billions worldwide. The media too has turned up in such overwhelming numbers that their accreditation was suspended after reaching the figure of 5,000 on the opening day yesterday!

On the 7th of Dec.2009, the biggest event ever organised anywhere on this planet – the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen.

The whole world is looking up to this once in a life time opportunity to step back from a road to climate disaster for a large percentage of the world's poor and vulnerable population, especially in the poorer countries. Apart from the over 10000 official delegates, tens of thousands of representatives from peoples struggles for their right to the common resources, right to exist with their own culture & dignity, thousands of environmental NGO activists, and many others descended in this sea-side city, in the dark & rather gloomy winter day,

Part of the Indian climate justice groups have also arrived - armed with the engagements they had in India with vulnerable communities from many different geo-cultural regions. The resolution and demand issued by many such Indian climate justice groups generated lots of interest from the international networks & international environment NGOs like – Climate Justice Now, World Rainforest Movement, Climate Justice Action, Siemenpuu Foundation, etc.

A COLOURFUL PROCESSION OF Delegates from various indigenous communities from all over the world painted the whole city with the colours of the Amazon - fighting the huge European companies exploiting their nations & people for both the natural resources over-ground (like forests) and those underground (mineral wealth), of the African savannah, of the Indian North-eastern Himalayas, of American Indian from both USA & Canada fighting to save their ancestral lands from devastating tar-sand mining ...

– Saumya Dutta

The highlight of the first day was when "Climategate" found mention at the opening speech by Dr. R K Pachauri, Chairman, Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). For more on the set of leaked emails, please see George Monbiot's excellent analysis at

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2009/11/23/the-knights-carbonic/>

<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2009/12/07/the-real-climate-scandal/>

The second day opened with a bang as Michel Jarraud, Chief, World Meteorological Organization, announced that by early next year when the final data is analyzed, 2009 is likely to emerge as the fifth warmest since 1850. Pointing out the extremes of weather witnessed in 2009, Jarraud cited China's worst drought in five decades, Australia's third warmest year and the hottest temperature ever recorded in Vancouver, Canada (not a word about the situation in India... perhaps the report will carry more details).

Meanwhile, the much talked about "Danish Text" was leaked to the world by Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/08/copenhagen-climate-change>). This caused a major furore as the text is a major departure from the Kyoto protocol and seeks to shift power away from the UN to a chosen few industrialized nations. Few outraged delegates from developing countries were seen mingling with civil society groups while the latter went about the Convention Centre periodically rocking things around a bit with peaceful demonstrations and sloganeering.



↑ Groups from Africa, Asia & Europe protesting TOGETHER against the exploitation of tropical forests by big MNCs / TNCs in the name of CDM etc - getting carbon credits for their dirty steel & power plants in other southern countries

Exhibit booth of BEYOND COPENHAGEN, a collective → against Climate Change

POLITICS AT PLAY:

The BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) tabled a diluted version of demands on developed countries ostensibly to align with the USA. This has caused severe cracks in the G77+China group. In a move, that appears as retaliatory, the Association of Small Oasis States (AOSIS) that are most vulnerable to rising sea levels due to global warming are likely to come out with their own declaration that may be in variance of the G77+China communiqué. The UK is trying to exploit this crack by trying to whip up support for AOSIS to demand emission cuts from emerging economies like China and India. The likely winner would be the USA due to this distrustful move by India and the rest of the BASIC bloc.

By Bhaskar Goswami

The huge network of grassroots environmental groups, Climate Justice Now, working in tandem with Climate Justice Action etc, have made their first intervention in the negotiation, and the short text is given below. There will be many more interventions, with pressure on "official negotiators" from the world community increasing with every passing day.

CJN LCA Opening Intervention

December 7, 2009

Delivered by Ricardo Navaro, CESTA Friends of the Earth El Salvador

" Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am speaking today as a member of Climate Justice Now!

Climate change is the result of a global political and economic system where profits are more important than people and the planet. It is a problem created by the exploitation of the world's resources to benefit the wealthy, living mostly in the global North. Therefore, the responsibility to solve the climate crisis lies with Northern countries. They must stop appropriating the earth's atmosphere for a small minority of the population. Climate change will not be solved by negotiating an agreement behind closed doors. Secret meetings that exclude affected peoples voices only perpetuate the system of injustice - and is nothing less than criminal. We will not be able to stop a profound climate catastrophe if we do not include the voices and the interests of those who have been historically marginalized.

We demand that Northern countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, with no offsets, by 2017, and pay reparations for the atmospheric space they have already used - as the Bolivian government is proposing. What is at stake here is the future of humanity. Thank you."

YOUTH ACTIVISTS TAKE UP THE LEADERSHIP IN COP15 OUTSIDE ACTIONS

One notable feature of the 2nd day's events is the tremendous enthusiasm of the large number of young people from all parts of the world, but specifically from the northern countries - protesting side by side with Africans, Asians, Latin Americans... Jack Morton from Wales UK, was seen - with a large bunch of leaflets in hand demanding that rich countries immediately start paying reparations to the poor ones for the climate exploitation - talking to each of the hundreds of delegates coming in to the Bella centre through the gate where he was standing, and trying to convince them about the urgency of the situation. Jack has worked as a volunteer with community groups in Tamil Nadu in India for some time, and Rajen from India from the organization PAD struck an instant friendship with him through this. Many hundreds of others young people like Jack are convinced that THEY have to take up the fight if the Earth is to be saved from catastrophic climate disaster.



Delegation from India at COP15 meeting

Climate activists will conduct a People's Action on Climate Solutions. Representatives from Asian and African communities will hold an action outside the Bella Center. The action will highlight the issues of communities regarding climate change and demand that the welfare and interest of the people not of corporations be put first on the on-going negotiations in COP 15. The event is organized by People's Action on Climate Change (PACC) and People's Movement on Climate Change (PMCC) WHEN: 9:00 AM December 9, 2009; WHERE: Bella Center M Station (in front of the entrance gate of Bella Center)