

# Beyond Copenhagen

## A Collective Action against Climate Change, INDIA

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As the Copenhagen conference is expecting the arrival of the Big players – the heads of states and their high power ministers - in the next few days, pressures from various quarters are also building up. As the various business lobbies are pushing for more and more "incentives" (like the controversial and as yet untested CCS - Carbon Capture and Storage commercial interests lobbying hard for its inclusion as a CDM entry), various peoples groups, resistance struggles, indigenous people etc. are also strengthening their voices of protest. Many forest people's alliances have made their opposition to REDD, REDD+ etc very clear, and there were very lively demonstrations.

### **POLITICS AT PLAY: COP15 Update**

*By Bhaskar Goswami*

One cannot help but feel a sense of pity for Yvo de Boer, the UN Climate Chief whose cup of woes seems to be overflowing. First came "Climategate" which was followed by the leaked "Danish Text", though it is debatable whether de Boer personally had much to do with drafting the text since it aims to strip his organization from most of the functions it has historically performed at the COP negotiations. Instead, the Danish proposal intends to rest it with the OECD countries.

With Denmark refusing ownership (or authorship!) of the text, de Boer has been left alone facing the ire of developing countries and civil society organization; the latter's numbers as well as vociferous demonstrations at the Bella Center swelled manifold today.

No wonder de Boer looks gloomier than the overcast city. Adding to his woes is a development that has brought negotiations to a grinding halt. A small island nation in the Pacific has stood up to the might of the world. Tuvalu earned the world's respect by demanding binding and immediately actionable emission cuts yesterday and the Chair had no choice but to put it on record that the negotiations are "suspended". However, the negotiations resumed soon after and everyone presumed that it is business as usual.

Tuvalu achieved the impossible by causing a suspension of COP negotiations yet again today. And this time round it is a suspension for real. Further, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) group has claimed that it has the support of 100 member countries that are against the provisions of the Danish text. In this melee, one country that has lost credibility and trust is India.

A small island nation of around 12,000 inhabitants achieved where negotiators and leaders of an emerging power - India - failed miserably. Yet again India broke bread with the sole super power of the world and sacrificed the interest of developing countries to secure a seat at the high table. It however remains to be seen whether that seat (on the UN Security Council as per Jairam Ramesh's leaked letter a month back) actually materializes.

### **JAIRAM NARESH ADDRESSING INDIAN MEDIA AND CSOs**

*By Soumya Dutta*

India's official delegation finally addressed the mounting concern and criticism from the poorer developing nations, the Small Island States and the African States, and in his first address to the Indian media and Indian civil society, Minister of Environment & Forests Mr. Jairam Ramesh told that – 1) We are with G77, and no question of breaking away, 2) We are talking with the African countries, and that the 'BASIC' draft jointly circulated by the large developing countries matches very closely with the African draft, and India will make all efforts to closely coordinate its negotiating stand with the African countries, 3) that India is closely coordinating with China on its negotiating position, though he was clear that by total emissions, by per capita emissions, and by financial strength - China is a league ahead of India. On the question of why India had to endorse the G8 position of limiting global temp rise to 2 deg Centigrade, and not support the Small Island States and African position of limiting to 1.5 Deg C, Jairam was evasive and took shelter behind the excuse that science is evolving and targets changing. The arrogance with which the minister brushed aside the extreme concern of the threatened-with-submergence Small Island States - by stating brashly "the Maldives President is repeatedly phoning me, but I am not picking up the phone" - shocked many of us present at the briefing at Asger Jorn Room at the Bella Center, from 7 to 8 PM on Dec 11. The youth climate activists from India heckled Jairam Ramesh for his fuzzing statements about uncertainty of Himalayan Glaciers melting and their "apparent lack of connection with global warming". He was again evasive, not giving any concrete answer, but loudly claimed that there is no "Conclusive proof". Ramesh also asserted that there is no question of India accepting absolute and internationally binding emission cuts, but our voluntary action will be to reduce emission intensity by 20-25% by 2020, and that we will be accountable to our own parliament. He also strongly reiterated Indian Government position of not accepting Monitoring, Reporting, Verification of national mitigation efforts where no outside funding is received. Overall, there was hardly any positive change from the somewhat regressive stand that India and large developing economies have come to be identified with, except his assertions that India will stand together with poorer countries in G77+China.

## THOUSAND RALLIED IN COPENHAGEN DEMANDING 'SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE'

### First Week of Climate Talks: A Predictable Failure

At the end of the first week of the climate talks at Copenhagen, thousands of activists from the Climate Justice Action and Climate Justice Now! Networks are joining the climate march under the banner of System Change Not Climate Change to denounce the climate negotiations as a predictable failure. The protesters are demanding radical changes in economic and political systems in order to address the climate crisis. The coming together of the Climate Justice Action and Climate Justice Now! is an unprecedented coalition of social movements, NGOs and grassroots climate activists from around the world to demand alternatives to the failed market solutions being pushed by governments and big business. The System Change contingent has been tipped as the largest and loudest section in the march and includes people from 50 different countries. It will include a flat bed truck broadcasting music and speeches from prominent activists from the global south. Josie Riffaud from La Via Campesina a global coalition of peasant movements, said – “We have seen this week in Copenhagen that governments are turning the climate chaos into commodities. Farmer’s men and women – are taking to the streets today because we are so outraged by the ineffective targets and false solutions such as agro fuels being peddled by business lobbyists and governments that listen to them.” Lidy Nacpil from the Jubilee South Coalition said – “All week we have heard a string of excuses from northern countries to make adequate reparations for the ecological crisis that they have caused. We are taking to the streets to demand that the ecological debt is repaid to the people of the South.”

Lars Fredikssen, an activist from Climate Justice Action said – “At the root of the climate crisis is an economic and political system that puts profit above people and the long term sustainability of this planet. Unless we address these root causes, climate change will devastate people around the world. These talks are a predictable failure and that is why we will be taking action next week to create a Peoples Assembly. We want the voices of ordinary people who are already being affected by climate change to be heard and listened to.” Both networks will continue to work together on 16 December, where they are planning to bring the energy from the streets into the Centre where the talks are being held. A massive Peoples Assembly will take place when thousands are expected to march to the Bella Centre to expose the false solutions and to propose positive alternatives and at the same time, hundreds of people inside the talks are expected to walk-out and join. (ENDSs activists from the Climate Justice Action & climate Justice Now networks, indigenous peoples networks etc. There is an unprecedented police presence today morning all over Copenhagen, at all main bus and metro stations. We had to face repeated checks of our 'credentials'. Police are revealing the contours of Unitarian state systems. The atmosphere is charged.

### POLITICS AT PLAY CONTD...

What does matter is that India today stands isolated at Copenhagen. No wonder India’s Chief Negotiator, Shyam Saran, had to rush back to New Delhi to seek counsel and fresh instruction on how to get out of this mess.

There is however another viewpoint that is holding fort: the Tuvalu proposal is a fallback option of developed countries after the failure of the Danish Text. The next few days would possibly clear the fog on this issue.

Multilateral negotiations are always an opportunity for sharing “authentic and exclusive news”. One such news doing the rounds today is that the Danish Text was drafted with full knowledge of and consultation with India. This is quite possible given that Jairam Ramesh had proposed something similar a month back. What is puzzling is the list of other countries that are now emerging as co-authors – Brazil, China, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Algeria. The tentacles of climate betrayal seem to have spread across continents that have virulently opposed any concessions for developed countries.

Meanwhile, newspapers today reported that the police confiscated paint bombs, shields and other gear from an empty property in the city next to which hundreds of activists are staying. While it is not clear whether any arrests have been made, Bella Centre and COP participants may not get to watch multicoloured walls... or blackened faces of negotiators who seem to have betrayed the cause for preventing further global warming. The big day however is Saturday when 60,000 demonstrators are expected to take to the streets marching from the Parliament to Bella Centre to demand a fair climate deal.

