



## PAIRVI OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES

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# TOWARDS CONSENSUS ON INDIA'S POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

## Introduction

The Consultation is being organized by a collective of civil society organizations working on the issues of economic and climate justice and access to equity and justice issues. A number of activities have been organized in different states and agro climatic zone and with the objective of reaching out to different groups of stake holders including policy makers, media, academicians and scientists, farmers and underprivileged groups including women.

The objective of the Consultation is to brainstorm India's position in international negotiations, its preparedness at national level to face challenges imposed by the climate change and open up the policymaking informing it of the impacts and insights gained during the process of the campaign and other similar efforts in different parts of the country. The Consultation hopes to involve members of Parliament, members from state legislative Assemblies and prominent leaders across political parties in the discussion towards arriving at a consensus regarding India's position in international negotiations and national preparedness.

## Background and genesis of climate change

Climate Change is the defining human development issue of our generation. It is very likely that climate change can slow down the pace of progress towards sustainable development either directly through increased exposure to adverse impact or indirectly through erosion of the capacity to adapt. The FAR IPCC (2007) has projected that global mean surface temperature will rise by 2.0% to 4.5% by the end of the century due to increase in CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> The increasing climate variability, unpredictable extremes of weather will have a dramatic impact on agriculture and

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC Fourth Assessment Report accessed on <http://www.ipcc.ch>, last visited 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009

food security as it may alter the balance between food demand and supply. Asia and South Africa are projected to be particularly vulnerable to these changes due to their large populations and great dependence on agriculture<sup>2</sup>. Majority of the developing countries and small island states are most likely to be affected by climate-change impacts. Even with a temperature rise of 1–2.5DC, the IPCC predicts serious effects, including reduced crop yields in tropical areas leading to increased risk of hunger, spread of climate-sensitive diseases such as malaria, water stress in Africa, increased risk of floods followed by drought and water scarcity for millions of people living in the catchment areas of the Himalayas and Andes, inundation of coasts and threat of tropical cyclones worldwide, complete submergence of small island states and an increased risk of extinction of 20–30% of all plant and animal species. With impact on life and livelihoods, climate change will have far-reaching effects on the sustainable development of developing countries, including their ability to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The main sources of GHG in the world are 60% from energy, 18% from deforestation, 14% from agriculture excluding land use change, 4% from industrial processes and 4% from wastes. The developing countries with 80% of the world's population still account for only 20% of the cumulative emissions since 1751. Developing countries like China, Brazil and India have per capita emissions lower than the world average. According to the World Bank the high-income countries emit CO<sub>2</sub> at 13 t/yr per capita, whereas the same for middle and low-income countries is no more than 3 t/yr. The current per capita emissions of the US is 20 times higher than India's. With just 15 per cent of the world population, rich countries account for 45 per cent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

## **India: Climate Change Concerns and Challenges**

From an economic standpoint, climate change is likely to have its most pronounced effects in the area of agriculture. Approximately 70 percent of India's population lives in rural areas and 55 to 60 percent of its workforce is engaged in agriculture. A temperature change of +2°C would result in a decline in agricultural net revenue by 9%, and a warming by 3.5°C can result in decline of 25% in farm revenues. Even now the agrarian crisis in India has claimed more than 200,000 lives. The situation is further worsened by the climate change induced irregularities in rainfall. Recent years have witnessed severe droughts in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Vidarbha and flash floods in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The case of Andhra Pradesh has been the most tragic with drought and floods within the same year. In recent times northern India rice yield has reduced during the last three decades. Interaction of climate related changes with agriculture, forestry, livestock, aquatic systems is bound to affect food security in ways more than one can imagine. Water and reduced availability of water is another concern. More than 70% of India's ground and surface water is being used for agriculture, and out of this, 70% is allocated to rice cultivation. Besides food security and water, there are a number of concerns regarding the impact of climate change and global warming requiring urgent debate and redressal through policy and action.

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<sup>2</sup> Agarwal, P.K. (2007). *Climate Change: Implications for Indian Agriculture*. Jalvigyan Sameeksha, Vol 22

Health impacts of climate change are the most under discussed ones. With the rise in temperature heat waves may become more intense and longer lived resulting in increased incidence of heat stroke and related diseases and deaths. Warmer climate can also make air borne and water borne diseases spread fast. Floods are likely to increase the risk of spread of diseases such as Malaria. The proportion of the poor living below the poverty line may rise due to reduced incomes of farmers. The vagaries of monsoon and related droughts and floods have been and are expected to increasingly displace more poor people. Floods and heavy rains are also likely to asymmetrically damage the urban poor who live in dwellings that readily collapse under heavy downpour. Intensification of urban-rural and inter-state migration may be another area of impact of climate change. Many of the poorer states in the north such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan would witness increased migration. Climate change can further add to complications in migration patterns. Rising sea levels may displace a part of the population currently living in the coastal zones. According to the Government of India (2004), a rise of one meter in sea level is projected to displace 7.1 million people. More frequent cyclones, droughts and floods may also lead to increased migration. In addition, climate related events may lead to massive migration from climatically vulnerable Bangladesh into India.

Women are more vulnerable to climate change impacts with half of them (along with children) in developing countries being anemic. Women represent economically marginalized group more dependent on natural resources like water and forests. Their limited adaptive capacities result from prevailing social inequalities and ascribed social and economic roles. Women produce 60–80% of the food in most developing countries and provide up to 90% of food for the rural poor. In rural areas, women have the major responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, as well as for food security. Women are likely to suffer more than men in climate change probabilities.

## **International political framework for combating climate change**

The global efforts to combat climate change are taken under the aegis of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change. The UNFCCC adopted at the *Rio Earth Summit* (May 1992) seeks to achieve stabilization of GHG concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system within a time frame that allows eco-systems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. The UNFCCC recognizes historical role of developed countries in GHGs accumulation and that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs. The UNFCCC recognizes the legitimate need of developing countries for sustained economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Kyoto Protocol is the most significant legally binding protocol to take forward the objectives of the UNFCCC and it was adopted by 162 parties to the UNFCCC except US and Australia. The Protocol

provides for quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments for the developed countries, mechanisms to facilitate review of and compliance with these targets. It sets out targets for GHG reductions by individual industrialized countries during the “first commitment period”, 2008-2012, totaling 5.2 percent below their aggregate 1990 emissions. The *Kyoto Protocol* also provides for three (market based) mechanisms that enable the developed countries with quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments to acquire greenhouse gas reduction credits from activities outside their own boundaries at relatively lesser costs. These are Joint Implementation, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Emission Trading.

## **State of international negotiations and climate politics**

The international community and mainly developed countries (called Annex 1 countries in KP) have failed the efforts on climate change. Bali Action plan recognized the need for “deep cuts” in emission of developed countries based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibility”. After Bali several dialogues have taken place including Poznan, G8 meeting at Laquila, Bonne meeting) however, Annex 1 countries have failed to declare their express commitment towards emission reduction to an appreciable limit. Whereas, the BAP asked them to reduce 25-40% of the emission by 1990 standards up to 2020, at best developed countries emission reduction commitment add up to 10-15% only. The basic argument for this poor show by developed countries is that they also want binding commitment from major developing countries viz. India, China, Brazil and South Korea. Inaction by these countries they allege is the major source of demotivation, for developed countries. However, this is not entirely true. Developing countries including India, China, Brazil, SK have adopted their National Plans, though it does not commit binding commitment for reductions, which is fair and in accordance with KP. Another argument on the part of developed countries is that they want to have market based mechanism to be able to undertake increased commitment for reduction. They wish to meet at least half of their commitment through market based mechanisms.

- US Commits to reduce emission by 17% by 2020 at 2005 levels, effectively 4% reduction by 1990 base line
- EU 20% reduction by 2020 on 1990 baseline, might go up to 30% depending on commitments by other countries
- Australia would reduce emissions by 25% of 2000 levels by 2020
- Russia 10-15% compared to 1990 by 2020 (emissions already below by 30% as compared to 1990 due to collapse of USSR)
- Japan will reduce by 15% as compared to 2005 levels by 2020, effectively 7% by 1990 levels
- UK will reduce by 30% from 1990 levels by 2020
- Indicative targets add up to 10-15% reductions in 2020 as compared to 1990 levels

Other important issues in politics over climate change are finance for mitigation and adaptation to developing countries. According to modest estimates at least \$ 100 billion per year will be required to enable developing countries undertake mitigation and adaptation. Developed countries are yet to

commit to pool in their resources to support the process. Positive development on technology transfer and IPR issues also remain central to success or otherwise of the talks at Copenhagen.

## **India's position and preparedness for climate change**

While internationally India is being seen as a major actor, nationally its own preparedness to meet challenges posed by climate change is questionable. India legislated the NAPCC in July 2008. The plan's core emphasis underpins the objective of meeting growth targets in an ecologically sustainable manner. Deriving the results from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it identifies eight mission-based approaches to meet the potential threat of the future.<sup>3</sup> The eight missions are a step towards order to attain a low-carbon sustainable development goal. However, these missions are - neither a vision statement nor a plan of action but a sketch of development priorities. Whereas the NAPCC stresses on clean energy development, the Planning Commission's integrated Energy policy (2005), continues with the use of coal as a major source of energy till 2031-2032. Even with a 20 fold increase in nuclear and hydro capacities, India may generate only 5-7% of total energy requirement from these sources. Another cause of concern with NAPCC is that while it foresees investment up to 2.5% of the GDP, the clarity on source and procedure is lacking. While it was expected that all missions will have detailed Action Plans, done by the respective Ministries in collaboration with the state governments by the end of 2008, we have been able to see only two Mission documents till September 2009. The NAPCC was passed without any broad consultative process and is alleged to be in complete ignorance of grassroots realities.

In the international negotiations India has been asking for equity in available carbon space based on "per capita emission". The Prime Minister has recently declared and committed that India's per capita emission would never exceed that of the developed countries. While these arguments are laudable; Indian position suffers from oversight in terms of bringing emphasis on agriculture and adaptation support for agriculture. India along with developing countries has been asking for financial support for mitigation and adaptation for developing countries but has never gone beyond that. Nationally also India has failed farming and the farmers. The current drought affecting more than 250 districts also attracted a financial support little more than Air India bailout package. As a matter of fact India has approached climate change mainly from the point of view of international negotiations. It needs to be a priority issues in the national governance, if we are to meet the challenges posed by climate change successfully.

## **COP 15 at Copenhagen**

The UNFCCC promotes and reviews the implementation of the Convention through decisions taken at annually held meetings of the Conference of Parties (COP). 14 COP have already been held. The Bali Conference (COP 13, 2007) laid down a process to determine the GHG reduction commitments

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<sup>3</sup> National Solar Mission, National Mission on Energy Efficiency, National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, National Water Mission, National Mission on Sustainable Ecosystem, National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, and National Mission on Strategic Knowledge.

of industrialized countries (Annex I) under the Kyoto Protocol, beyond 2012 and the commencement of a comprehensive dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address four major building blocks of climate change, i.e. GHG mitigation; adaptation to climate change impacts; technology development and cooperation; and finance. The coming COP 15 in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 is of high importance because of the fact that the year 2009 is the deadline to finish the negotiations to set new targets beyond 2012 when the Kyoto Protocol expires. Moreover, it is expected that at COP 15 developed countries must declare in definite terms their intention rather targets to reduce GHG emission and financial support to developing countries to facilitate mitigation and adaptation.

## **What we want from policy makers**

The climate change should be approached from the standpoint of larger goals of economic justice and equity, be more inclusive and informed of the nationally desirable goals and interests of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labour, fisher folk, underprivileged populations including dalits and scheduled tribes. These have very low adaptive capacities and are worst sufferers of the impact on agriculture, economic opportunities, reduction in food and water availability etc. Women have been the worst victims with astronomically increased workload and distress due to loss of farm incomes, agricultural earnings and food and water scarcity. At the international negotiation India must press for the “polluter pays principle” and stick to its position of developed countries committing at least 25-40% reduction in greenhouse gases as laid down in the BAP. It also must not agree to reduction commitments for developing countries.

### *Specifically we demand*

- Reduction demanded by science (25-40%): Developed countries should commit reduction in emissions to the extent of 40% by 2020 and 90% by 2050. These reductions should be achieved nationally irrespective of carbon credits purchased.
- Agriculture to be included in negotiations: COP 15 negotiations are likely to develop a framework to sustain global efforts to contain climate change beyond 2012. It is likely to have a timeline for longer period say 2050. It is important to view climate change through agriculture. Agriculture feeds world and supports livelihood of more than one-third of world's population.
- Market based mechanisms to be substantially modified, must not account for more than 1/3rd of reduction: Market based mechanism allows rich countries to continue polluting for cheap investments and is a manifestation of colonial supremacy. Combating climate change needs structural reforms in developed countries economies and lifestyles. It cannot be achieved by perfunctory projects in developing countries. There should be strict moratorium on any further “tools” for developed countries to escape their historical liability.
- Clear commitment for financial and technological support to developing countries: Adaptation fund should allocate specific resources for adaptation for agriculture. Besides LDCs, developing countries should also receive financial support for combating climate

change. The technological support to LDCs along with developing countries having no access to international support should be provided with a definite timeline.

***Nationally we demand***

India must adopt a low carbon growth pathway: Research and investment in exploring alternative sources of energy must be expedited. Equity and justice in available carbon space must be enshrined nationally and interests of populations not having access to commercial energy should be given preference over industries and big business.

Expedite the progress on the NAPCC: the NAPCC objectives, resources and action plan must be committed to the nation without any further delay. The state governments must be involved in the planning.

Interests of small and marginal farmers, fisher folk, agricultural labour must be protected: Poor peoples interest must be central in all the missions of the NAPCC. The policy making should be broadened to have representation of various vulnerable groups including dalit, Scheduled tribes, forest dwellers, pastoralists and herdsmen, women etc.

Focus on Adaptation: Agricultural adaptation is equally important to achieve the development goals. Adaptation should be included in all developmental planning. Traditional knowledge and wisdom on adaptation should be preserved and strengthened.

