



## PAIRVI OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES

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### **Beyond Copenhagen: Setting the Agenda**

Now that the dust on Copenhagen seems to be settling, all of us realize that Copenhagen did not settle anything. Rather it has unsettled some already settled propositions and it is unfortunate that now things will have to move on the lines which the powerful developed countries have charted along with some developing countries eager to be deal makers. COP 15 beyond any doubts have sounded a death knell for CBDR based on the principles of historic responsibilities, which was equitable for the countries who have hardly any contribution for bringing world to the edge due to insensitive and vulgarly lavish life in developed countries. It has completely jettisoned the efforts to keep in the rise in temperature to 2°C and finally junked the Kyoto Protocol (KP). The developed countries have got what they wanted. They have made developing countries agree to reduction in emission and have successfully brought in monitoring mechanism which subjects developing countries to international verification. On the demise of the superstructure of KP which 192 countries hoped would bring climate justice, just five countries have build their safe haven, which gives them liberty to continue polluting at nominal costs. A perfect example of greed overcoming and deliberately refuting science!

The Copenhagen Accord (CA) which the COP 15 “noted” was marshaled largely on the behest of Barack Obama puts global environment in perilous conditions. Many researchers have by now agreed that at best Copenhagen Accord will be able to keep the temperatures below 3.5°C to 4°C. It immediately consigns many AOSIS and African countries to death, if scientific projections are to be believed. More importantly, it seems to have opened a third track of negotiations besides, KP and LCA, which have been relegated to the background. There are very few possibilities of COP 16 adopting CA officially. It means democracy and multilateralism in COP comes to a premature death. With the present strength of thirty odd countries, the CA dares to overpower a collective of 192 countries who have been members of KP. What is there in store for developing and least developed countries? The president of Tuvalu described it aptly as “thirty pieces of silver to betray our land and people”. The 30 billion USD support for 2010-2012 and promises of 100 Billion later, when the modest of the estimates put the figure of 165 Billion per annum for supporting mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing and developed countries. Even this modest amount has set larger

developing countries on thinking what will be their piece of cake. Smaller nations still seem not to have come to terms with the disappointment that Copenhagen brought.

## **What lies ahead for Copenhagen Accord?**

The ultimate uncertainty that CA faces is the acid test of the Climate Bill in the Senate. The future of the Accord and the global fight against climate change hangs on a thin balance. The American Senate has no dearth of climate science agnostics. To make the problems more difficult most of the republicans believe that there should be no limit on their right to emit and even a 20% reduction that Obama has promised is seen with severe circumspection. Given the hard work Obama had to put in bringing the Health Bill on shore, Climate Bill seems an uphill task. With all optimism and earnestness and Senate clearing the Bill, the numbers seem to be eluding the CA. though Maldivian President Nasheen has prophesied that CA will have 120 signatories, seems if not unlikely, very difficult. With G-77 Chair likening CA to Nazi Holocaust, it is very improbable that majority of their ilk will have anything to do with CA in its present form. The adaptation fund can be a big deal maker in the end. The developed countries will have to be more generous than they appear to be. The buck starts with the US, which has committed just billion 3.7 in the billion 30 USD funds. Creating a transparent global cap and trade regime has the best possibility of attracting numbers as well as intentions. The science dictates that global average per capita emission will have to be brought down to 2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050. That gives the developing countries leverage to peak their emissions. Smaller countries like Rwanda which has 0.35 tones average emission can trade their credits with other developed countries in deficit. The global cap and trade fund will allow the developing and least developed countries to receive financial assistance outside the adaptation fund. Already proposed by Rwandan President, it would still require a massive hammering to be agreed and accepted. In all the negotiations EU and China have a major say. EU already smirking under the ignominy inflicted in Copenhagen can be used effectively by developing countries as an antidote to the US.

The first date to watch would be first February, first deadline by when the parties to UNFCCC are supposed to communicate their acceptance. Obviously many extensions of the deadline and intense lobbying would be required through the Copenhagen redux (June, Bonn) before the curtains open in Mexico.

## **Beyond global negotiations, sprucing up national act**

While the direction and outcome of international negotiations are still unpredictable, what all countries will have to do nationally requires strong commitment and political will. The countries who thought that it would be fashionable to declare reduction commitments just before Copenhagen, will have to do serious homework, scale up their act and take the nation along. It is understandable that when it can be difficult for Obama, it will be more difficult for anybody else in the developed world.

Developing countries and especially larger developing countries like China, India, Brazil, South Korea it will be equally difficult. Nowhere in the world, oil and energy companies and other corporates would like to reduce their consumption and elite downgrade their lifestyles. It is only a matter of degrees of resistance that the countries will face nationally.

India is not exempted of the tribulations it will face on account of its stand in the international negotiations and in setting the house in order. Before Copenhagen nobody thought that government of India was serious in addressing climate change issue at home. A hastily cobbled National Plan of Action, serious dissensions within the cabinet, no concrete road map to follow it is as discrete and as messy it can be. At the national level, complete lack of communication with the state governments and allied ministries has been the most worrying factor. While there is some semblance of seriousness at the national level, the state governments are yet to grasp the significance of the issue and start applying their minds. The unease in the centre state relations brings in additional handicap in developing a comprehensive climate management. Different Ministries have been looking up at climate change as an issue to be dealt solely by Ministry of Environment and forests, contrary to this most of the work will have to be done by different ministries and at the state levels. Post Copenhagen agenda envisages intense work at state level. It includes energy audit, energy planning and efficiency, exploring renewable sources of energy. One should lose sight of the enviable task of ensuring energy equity.

## **Climate change and agriculture**

The most important among the pursued objectives will be agriculture and enabling agriculture to cope with climate change so as to ensure food security of 65% of the population dependant on agriculture and allied industries. The FAR estimates loss of more than 40% of the output in wheat and disturbing projections for rice in near future due to impacts of climate change. it definitely means a more concerted and concrete efforts both on mitigation and adaptation aspects. Beginning from the most obvious, tackling the root cause and limiting the emission, it would require proliferation of interventions at every level and in every direction. The actions will have to share the common goals and determinants such as equitable access to resources, appropriate technologies and substantially scaled up non-farming opportunities. Intense brainstorming within and outside the government on how emissions from agriculture and forestry would be reduced, how to produce food with greater input efficiency and low GHG emissions, and how agriculture, agro-forestry can best adapt under given local circumstances can only determine right priorities, policies and action. The aspects of adaptation will be more critical as the efforts would require individual farmers. Bringing huge number of farms under knowledge network and induce desired action may be highly challenging in countries like India. The adaptation will include strategies from a number of listed actions to a number of actions which certain communities may be practicing but is not accessible to larger farming community. To quote from an instance cited by Shri Anupam Mishra regarding the communities in Jaisalmer, “despite lowered rainfall of 3 inches we are water secure for at least two

years.” Many similar practices are tried and tested but unknown to larger communities due to distance and apathy of modern science and research. Therefore, bringing existing knowledge on adaptation in common wisdom pool may be a good start.

The semi morbid condition of the agriculture and declining public investment needs to be reversed immediately if India has to base its food security on self sustainability in agricultural production. It is high time we started thinking food security in terms of sustainability of small farms and making agriculture a viable activity. The research and policy investment in small scale agriculture will have to be pursued vigorously in view of the fact that small farms are more sustainable and less polluting for the environment. Similarly, intensive and extensive research in dry land and semi arid farming needs equal attention. Agricultural research is the only factor which has increased the gap between agricultural outputs in India and china, which was almost equal 20 years back. Dedicated and committed agricultural research institutions and universities and rather a fairly equipped research and knowledge centre for each 27 agro climatic sub zone in India, might turn climate change into an opportunity for Indian agriculture. Dr. M S Swaminathan’s advise to set up internet linked knowledge centre in each Panchayat and training one man and women in each Panchayat as climate crisis managers needs more consideration as their knowledge on local conditions and adaptability can magnificently improve local farming communities access to all material information. Let us also not be misled, there is not food security without water security and unless addressed in all earnestness can reduce the outcomes despite best efforts. River capture, over exploitation of aquifers and groundwater, drainage of wetlands and deforestation have already reduced the availability to alarming proportions, the threats posed by climate change requires us to be more prudent in use, proactive in conservation and restoration, and consistent in planning.

All said and done, climate change is an area where individual education, approach and behavior matter equally as efforts of the government. Until and unless every individual contributes, it might be impossible to achieve the goals. Education, awareness and behavior change among individuals in no less than important a strategy will have to be given similar priority.

