

OUTREACH

a multi-stakeholder magazine on environment and sustainable development.

**KNOWING
SUCCESS IF
YOU SEE IT**

ROBERT N. STAVINS

**A HISTORIC
CONSENSUS AT
THE NAGOYA
BIODIVERSITY
SUMMIT**

**HIGH NOON
IN CANCUN:**

**CAN WE STILL MAKE
PROGRESS IN THE
UNFCCC?**

**WHICH WAY
FOR CANCUN?**

**FROM THE COPENHAGEN
DISCORD TO THE
COCHABAMBA ACCORD**

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Knowing Success if You See It

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The key challenge of the climate negotiations in Cancun -- the Sixteenth Conference of the Parties (COP-16) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – is to continue the process of constructing a sound foundation for meaningful, long-term global action.

Some of the gloom-and-doom predictions made about these negotiations are misleading, because they are based upon unreasonable – and fundamentally inappropriate – expectations (despite the fact that expectations have been lowered dramatically since COP-15 in Copenhagen last year).

Keeping Your Eyes on the Prize

Why do I say that the best goal for the Cancun climate talks is to make real progress on a sound foundation for meaningful, long-term global action, not some notion of immediate triumph? This is because of some basic scientific and economic realities.

First, the focus of scientists is (and the focus of policy makers should be) on stabilizing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at acceptable levels by the year 2050 and beyond, because it is the accumulated stock of greenhouse gas emissions — not the flow of emissions in any year — that are linked with climate consequences.

Second, the cost-effective path for stabilizing concentrations involves a gradual ramp-up in target severity, to avoid rendering large parts of the capital stock prematurely obsolete.

Third, massive technological change is the key to the needed transition from reliance on carbon-intensive fossil fuels to more climate-friendly energy sources. Long-term price signals (most likely from government policies) will be needed to inspire such technological change.

Fourth and finally, the creation of long-lasting international institutions is central to addressing this global challenge.

This is not to suggest that there should be anything other than a sense of urgency brought to these efforts to address the threat of climate change. But for all of the reasons above, international climate negotiations will be an ongoing process, not a single task with a clear end-point. So, the bottom-line is that a sensible goal for the international negotiations in Cancun is progress on a sound foundation for meaningful long-term action, not some

notion of immediate “success.”

Major Long-Term Achievements are Needed, Not Minor Short-Term Gains

It might be relatively easy, but actually quite unfortunate, for countries to achieve what some people might define as “success” in Cancun: a signed international agreement, followed by glowing press releases. I say it would be unfortunate, because such an agreement could only be the Kyoto Protocol on steroids: more stringent targets for the original list of industrialized countries (Annex I) and no meaningful commitments by the key rapidly-growing emerging economies, such as China, India, Brazil, Korea, Mexico, and South Africa.

Such an agreement could — in principle — be signed, but it would not reduce global emissions, and it would not be ratified by the U.S. Senate (just like Kyoto). Hence, there would be no real progress on climate change.

What Will Real Progress in Cancun Look Like?

If it is not reasonable to expect that a comprehensive post-Kyoto policy architecture will be identified and enacted in Cancun, what will constitute real progress?

1. Embracing Parallel Processes

A significant step forward would be for the UNFCCC to embrace the parallel processes that are carrying out multilateral discussions (and in some cases, negotiations) on climate change policy: the Major Economies Forum or MEF (a multilateral venue for discussions – but not negotiations – outside of the UNFCCC, initiated by the United States); the G20 (periodic meetings of the finance ministers – and sometimes heads of government – of the twenty largest economies in the world); and various other multilateral and bilateral organizations and discussions.

Protocol between Annex I and non-Annex I countries. (Note that more than 50 non-Annex I countries have greater per capita income than the poorest of the Annex I countries.)

The UNFCCC principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” could be made meaningful through the dual principles that: all countries recognize their historic emissions (read, the industrialized world); and all countries are responsible for their future emissions (think of those rapidly-growing emerging economies).

This would represent a great leap beyond what has become the “QWERTY keyboard” (that is, unproductive path dependence) of international climate policy: the distinction in the Kyoto Protocol between the small set of Annex I countries with quantitative targets, and the majority of countries in the world with no responsibilities. Various policy architectures could subsequently build on these dual principles and make them operational, beginning to bridge the massive political divide which exists

The most sensible goal for Cancun is progress on a sound foundation for meaningful long-term action, not some notion of immediate triumph.

The previous leadership of the UNFCCC seemed to view the MEF, the G20, and most other non-UNFCCC forums as competition – indeed, as a threat. Fortunately, the UNFCCC's new leadership under Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres has displayed a considerably more positive and pragmatic attitude toward these parallel processes.

2. Consolidating Negotiations Tracks

There are three major and somewhat parallel processes operative: first, the UNFCCC's KP track (negotiating national targets for a possible second commitment period – post-2012 – for the Kyoto Protocol); second, the LCA track (the UNFCCC's negotiation track for Long-term Cooperative Action); and third, the Copenhagen Accord, negotiated and noted at COP-15 in Copenhagen last year. Consolidating these three tracks into two tracks (or better yet, one track) would be another significant step forward.

One way this could happen would be for the LCA negotiations to take as their point of departure the existing Copenhagen Accord, which itself marked an important step forward by blurring for the first time (although not eliminating) the unproductive and utterly obsolete distinction in the Kyoto

between the industrialized and the developing world.

At the Harvard Project on Climate Agreements — a multi-national initiative with some 35 research projects in Australia, China, Europe, India, Japan, and the United States — we have developed a variety of architectural proposals that could make these dual principles operational. (See, for example: “Global Climate Policy Architecture and Political Feasibility: Specific Formulas and Emission Targets to Attain 460 PPM CO2 Concentrations” by Valentina Bosetti and Jeffrey Frankel; and “Three Key Elements of Post-2012 International Climate Policy Architecture” by Sheila M. Olmstead and Robert N. Stavins.)

3. Productive Steps in Narrow, Focused Agreements, such as REDD+

A third area of success at the Cancun negotiations could be realized by some productive steps with specific, narrow agreements, such as on REDD+ (Reduced Deforestation and Forest Degradation, plus enhancement of forest carbon stocks). Other areas where talks are moving forward, although somewhat more slowly, are finance and technology.

ROBERT N. STAVINS

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The Bottom Line

It is important to bring to the Cancun discussions sensible expectations and effective plans. Negotiations in this domain will be an ongoing process, not a single task with a clear end-point. The most sensible goal for Cancun is progress on a sound foundation for meaningful long-term action, not some notion of immediate triumph. The key question is not what Cancun accomplishes in the short-term, but whether it helps put the world in a better position five, ten, and twenty years from now in regard to an effective long-term path of action to address the threat of global climate change. Whether it does that remains to be seen. •

Which way for Cancun?

From the Copenhagen Discord to the Cochabamba Accord

By Ambassador Pablo Solon for Bolivia to the United Nations
Megan Morrissey, Assistant to Ambassador Pablo Solon



Cancun should be about those responsible for climate change committing to reduce greenhouse gases. It sounds like a strange thing to say.

Unfortunately our experience in past climate talks is that emission reductions is often the last thing discussed. Instead valuable time is spent trying to shift responsibility from those who have caused climate change to those suffering the effects, and looking for ever more creative financial mechanisms for multinational corporations to make profits from climate change.

These constant attempts to deviate from our critical task of preventing runaway climate change were most starkly exposed at the COP15 climate talks in Copenhagen in 2009. After days of blocking any progress on the Kyoto Protocol, the only legally binding agreement on climate

An internal report by the EU of its own commitments suggested that, thanks to various loopholes, the EU could actually increase its emissions by 2.6% by 2020. This is hardly a step forward and is why the Accord was rightly denounced by millions of people worldwide. During the Copenhagen climate talks, President Evo Morales of Bolivia observed that the best way to put climate change solutions at the heart of the talks was to involve the people. In contrast to much of the official talks, the hundreds of civil society organisations, communities, scientists and faith leaders present in Copenhagen clearly prioritised the search for effective, just solutions to climate change against narrow economic interests.

The Cochabamba Accord includes the following key demands:

1. 50 % reduction of greenhouse gas emission by 2017.
2. Stabilising temperature rises to 1C and 300 PPM
3. Acknowledging the climate debt owed by developed countries
4. Full respect for Human Rights and the inherent rights of indigenous people
5. Universal declaration of rights of Mother Earth to ensure harmony with nature
6. Establishment of an International Court of Climate Justice
7. Rejection of carbon markets and commodification of nature and forests through the REDD programme
8. Promotion of measures that change the consumption patterns of developed countries.
9. End of intellectual property rights for technologies useful for mitigating climate change.
10. Allocation of 6% of developed countries' national gross product to actions related to addressing climate change


The Cochabamba conference was inspiring in contrast to Copenhagen, because no-one was excluded and because it put the interests of stabilising the climate before the interests of business and profit. As the Cancun talks start, there is a long uphill road to climb if the UN is to re-emerge with its credibility in responding to the most critical crisis humanity has faced. The first step it could take is to stop listening to the interests of powerful corporations and instead listen to the demands of the peoples in Cochabamba.

So Bolivia decided to put its words into action, and host a Peoples Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth... [the summit] was attended by more than 35,000 people from more than 70 countries including representatives of 40 governments.

change; the US, EU and a small handful of hand-picked countries met in a secretive location to draw up a voluntary agreement, misnamed the Copenhagen Accord. Bolivia and many other nations opposed the Accord, because it ignored the views of more than 160 countries and because it would move us backwards rather than forward.

The UN's own research has shown that the Copenhagen Accord's voluntary pledges would lead to temperature increases of 4 degrees Celsius - a level that many scientists consider disastrous for human life and our ecosystems.

So Bolivia decided to put its words into action, and host a Peoples Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in April 2010. The summit in the Bolivian city of Cochabamba was open to everyone, and was attended by more than 35,000 people from more than 70 countries including representatives of 40 governments. More than 17 working groups developed innovative and effective proposals to both reduce greenhouse gas reductions and tackle the root causes of climate change. The Bolivian government then agreed to formally present these demands within the UNFCCC negotiations.



From Copenhagen Climate Carnival to Cancun Climate Circus

By Uchita de Zoysa
Convenor – Climate Sustainability PLATFORM

PHOTO: Stock.Xchng

Those of us who were in Copenhagen a year ago for the COP15 felt like it was a carnival. While the actual negotiations did not produce any result of worth, the Danish government and their stakeholders spent loads of money, energy and resources to make Copenhagen into one big carnival to keep the seventeen thousand plus visitors entertained. Similarly, preparatory events in Copenhagen throughout 2009 built momentum towards the COP15 climax.

Compared to Copenhagen, the hype around the Cancun COP16 has been rather subdued. Indeed, enthusiasm towards achieving a climate agreement and climate justice has noticeably depleted since last year.. In recent months I asked several climate concerned activists who were in Copenhagen if they planned to attend the Cancun conference. Most of them declined; If Copenhagen, with all its promise and hype delivered intangible results, then Cancun, a rather low key event by comparison, may likely result in inconsequential outcomes.

But, from today, let's wait and see what the Cancun Climate Circus has to offer the world.

A year ago in Copenhagen the Climate Sustainability PLATFORM, a group of people representing various regions and a diversity of stakeholders, called on that UNFCCC to deliver an agreement in which climate and sustainability were addressed together, not decoupled. as previously stated;

"Climate Sustainability addresses pressing issues of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation through relevant strategies for mitigation, adaptation, finance, and technology sharing. Governments must demonstrate political will and vision by signing a binding 'Climate Sustainability Agreement' enforced through strong compliance mechanisms."

A year later the demand is the same and the status of the climate negotiations remains unmoving. Alas, we are currently drifting further away from a 2°C destiny, rather than getting closer to achieving Climate Sustainability.

A small privileged group continues to negotiate for a climate deal and they separately talk about the sustainability of the planet. By marginalising rest of

the population in determining their own destinies, they have left us in destitution. A better world order needs to be created upon the mindful aspirations of the people; and should essentially be based on equitable opportunities for all.

Whilst hoping for success at COP16 in Cancun, our future cannot be based on these negotiations alone. They will find another stop to party each year while delaying commitments. What matters is what rest of the world do to arrest our own sustainable futures. While negotiating climate change continues to be with those without a political will to radically commit to the challenge, we meanwhile need to find other paths towards our climate sustainability futures.

Uchita de Zoysa is the author of the hard hitting book 'It has to be Climate Sustainability'. Please send your comments to uchita@sltnet.lk and for more information visit: <http://www.climatesustainabilityplatform.blogspot.com/>

A Historic Consensus at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit

Ahmed Djoghlaif

Executive Secretary of the Convention
on Biological Diversity



PHOTO: Stock.Xchnng

With memories of the disappointment of Copenhagen still within reach, many have spent the year leading up to COP16 in Cancun, questioning the merits of the multilateral forum and its relative success in gaining and positive momentum and outcomes. In the early morning of Saturday, October 30th in Nagoya, Japan, history was on the move. At the Convention on Biological Diversity's tenth Conference of the Parties, over 18,000 participants representing our 193 Parties and their partners agreed on a package of measures that, if implemented, will ensure that the ecosystems of the planet will continue to sustain human well-being into the future.

The meeting adopted the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the CBD, or "Aichi Target", which includes 20 headline targets organized under five strategic goals that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss, reduce the pressures on biodiversity, safeguard biodiversity at all levels, enhance the benefits provided by biodiversity, and provide for capacity-building. Among the targets, Parties agreed to at least halve and where feasible bring close to zero the rate of loss of natural habitats including forests; protect 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of marine and coastal areas; restore at least 15 percent of degraded areas; and make special efforts to reduce the pressures faced by coral reefs.

Several key outcomes of the conference will help us to achieve these targets. Parties endorsed a plan of action on cities and biodiversity adopted by the Nagoya Biodiversity City summit attended by more than 200 mayors. 122 legislators from around the world attending the GLOBE meeting on parliamentarians and biodiversity declared their support for the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. Representatives of 34 bilateral

and multilateral donor agencies agreed to translate the Plan into their respective development cooperation priorities. In addition, a Multi-Year Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development was adopted by the G77 and China.

Finance in support of implementation of the Convention was also forthcoming. The Prime Minister of Japan, Naoto Kan, announced USD 2 billion in financing, and Ryu Matsumoto, the Minister of Environment of Japan, announced the establishment of a Japan Biodiversity Fund. Additional financial resources were announced by France, the European Union and Norway, with nearly USD 110 million being mobilized in support of projects under the CBD LifeWeb Initiative, which aims at enhancing the protected-area agenda. Parties will define mechanisms in time for CBD COP11 in India 2012 through which additional financial resources can be identified and channelled.

The meeting also adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization. Eighteen years after the Rio Earth Summit, the third objective of the CBD has finally been operationalized.

The Nagoya Protocol proposes for the creation of a global multilateral mechanism that will operate in transboundary areas or situations where prior informed consent cannot be obtained. The Nagoya Protocol is expected to gain early entry into force by 2012, with support from the Global Environment Facility of USD 1 million. As recommended by the United Nations Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki Moon, the new Strategic Plan was adopted as the overarching global coordinated framework on biodiversity of the whole biodiversity family. The heads of agencies, including the heads of the biodiversity-related conventions as well as the heads of NGOs

attending the meeting endorsed this recommendation. Therefore the whole United Nations system with the support of civil society will assist the 193 Parties in translating the Aichi Target into national biodiversity and action plans within two years.

With this in mind, promoting joint activities between the three Rio Conventions will be central to the successful implementation of the new Strategic Plan. That is why the importance of better integrating the biodiversity agenda with that of climate change and land degradation was covered in Nagoya through the Ecosystems and Climate Change Pavilion. The Pavilion is now moving to Cancun for UNFCCC COP16, and will also take place in October 2011 at UNCCD COP10 in Changwon and at Rio+20 in 2012.

Building on the success of the Ecosystems Pavilion, the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit adopted key decisions on assessing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, reducing the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and biodiversity-based livelihoods, ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation and mitigation, reducing biodiversity impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, valuation and incentive measure, climate change and the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, and ways and means to achieve biodiversity co-benefits.

It is my hope that the historic success of the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit will help give steam to the negotiations in Cancun. At the closing of the meeting in Nagoya Ryu Matsumoto stated, "The outcome of this meeting is the result of hard work, the willingness to compromise, and a concern for the future of our planet." Will the same be said at the closing of UNFCCC COP16? Let us work together over the next two weeks to make the answer to that question a resounding "yes".

High Noon in Cancun: Can we still make progress in the UNFCCC?



Antonio G.M.
La Vina & Lawrence G. Ang

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As government negotiators arrive in Cancun, Mexico from November 29-December 10, 2010, expectations and the political pressure to deliver a comprehensive deal on climate change seem to have eased. Instead, it is anticipated that Parties will consider for Cancun translating certain negotiating areas, where agreement can already be reached, into a “balanced set of decisions” as an outcome of the Conference.

Among the negotiating areas deemed almost ready for agreement include: adaptation, technology transfer, capacity building, and REDD-Plus. A Cancun package which includes some form of agreement in at least these areas provides the opportunity to transform decision texts into actual and official efforts on the ground and financing by as early as 2011— a much needed boost to developing countries already at the forefront of climate change impacts and for which key global resources cannot be stalled any longer.

Although uncertainty looms over several key issues within the climate negotiations, most notably mitigation and finance, we highlight below what could be in a Cancun package:

1. Reaching a general decision on establishing a mechanism to MRV developed and developing country mitigation actions and climate financing, while deferring difficult details to further negotiations next year. It is important to make progress in this complex issue for a balanced package but it is clear a full agreement at this point is unrealistic.

2. Establishing and operationalizing the adaptation framework by Cancun, with language to accommodate (fast-start) financing. Investments in infrastructure and adjustments in such sectors as agriculture and public health requires a long lead time and delaying further a decision on an adaptation framework would be tragic. Indeed, there is an ethical motivation for the early adoption of an adaptation agreement. The most vulnerable countries in the world, most of whom have contributed least to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, need this agreement urgently. It would indeed seem coldhearted and selfish to hold hostage an agreement on adaptation to gain political advantage in unrelated issues such as mitigation.

3. Negotiations in Technology Transfer have progressed and a decision text for

technology in Cancun is achievable that would establish a Technology Executive Committee and a Climate Technology Center. Likewise, on Capacity Building, Parties, there is broad consensus that a decision on capacity building can and should be reached by Cancun despite ongoing negotiations over related institutional arrangements and the creation of performance indicators.

5. Launching through a decision, the implementation and financing of a Readiness Phase for REDD-Plus, acknowledging the work and sharing lessons from the Interim REDD-Plus Partnership. This is achievable despite recent developments which seemed to complicate the UNFCCC negotiations. A key issue that needs solution is the concern raised that a REDD-Plus mechanism, to the extent that the financial markets will eventually be a source of funding to pay for actual performance during the results-based phase, will lead to the commodification of forests. There is of course a distinction between markets and commodification; it is possible to resort to markets for funds but ensure that commodification is not a result. Certainly, we do not know of any Party or interest group that believes that the value of forests

is determined solely by its carbon value. In any case, this issue is an operational matter and can be addressed through the strengthening of the social, environmental, and governance safeguards already agreed to by the Parties in Copenhagen.

6. Progress could also be made in the agriculture discussions where a launching a work program for this important sectoral approach is within reach. There is also a parallel development in REDD-Plus where the draft text includes a mandate for SBS-TA to identify the potential of other land-use activities to contribute towards global mitigation.

7. Reaching a decision on the approach and work towards determining the legal outcome and form of a comprehensive

legally-binding agreement with special reference to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, including a clear deadline for when this will be finalized. While difficult and complex, progress on this issue can be achieved if a process for determining how and a deadline of when legal form will be decided are agreed upon by Cancun.

Achieving the above decisions, or the right mixture of even 3-4 of these, will send a strong and positive signal to the international community, to financial markets and especially to those nations and peoples that will suffer most the impacts of climate change. It would certainly demonstrate a sincere and focused global commitment to combat climate change and pursue a full legally-

binding agreement in due course, while as a good faith and fast-start gesture, already operationalizing and making available key resources for adaptation, forests, agriculture, technology and capacity building.

There are challenges to getting an agreement in Cancun but, with political wisdom, good will, and imaginative thinking, there are realistic prospects as well for moving the climate change process forward. Indeed, Cancun can set the pace towards a full-fledged legally-binding climate agreement, one that is crafted one decision at a time within multiple streams of political cooperation, in the very near future.

Note: The authors are affiliated with the Ateneo School of Government, Manila, Philippines. Although they are civil society members of the Philippine Delegation to the UNFCCC Negotiations, including in COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, this article does not reflect official positions of the Philippine Government. The support of the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) is acknowledged but likewise this paper does not reflect CLUA's opinion on any issue. This article is an abridged version of a working paper written by the authors and released by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development - "From Copenhagen to Cancun: Challenges and Prospects for the UNFCCC Negotiations" - which can be downloaded at http://www.field.org.uk/files/lavinaang_from_copenhagen_to_cancun.pdf

Letters to World Leaders

An open letter from World Rainforest Movement

Distinguished government representatives:

The causes of global warming are perfectly well known, as are the measures needed to stop it from becoming more acute and eventually affecting humankind as a whole. Nevertheless, you know as well as we know that the governments you represent continue refusing to do what they have an obligation to do in order to seriously confront the problem.

It is worth recalling that in 1992, all of the world's governments pledged their commitment, through an international agreement, to adopt measures to prevent a climate disaster. This is what gave rise to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which almost all of the world's governments have signed and ratified. Since then, 18 years have passed in which governments have done little or nothing to confront the problem. In other words, for almost two decades, they have been violating the spirit of the Convention, which was aimed at preventing climate change from taking place.

For the sixteenth time, you will be participating in a meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The last several meetings have not moved beyond negotiating over secondary issues – with very little success – and have failed to tackle the crux of the problem: the need for the total elimination of fossil fuel emissions in the shortest time possible. There is every indication that the meeting in Cancun will follow in these same footsteps.

Nevertheless, the world still has hope that governments will adopt the decisions needed to prevent a climate disaster, and it is prepared to support them. In order for this hope to inspire this support, what is needed are clear signs of a complete change of attitude. In this regard, the main sign would be placing fossil fuels at the centre of the debate. The time has come to put aside discussion of false solutions that have been so eagerly espoused ("carbon sinks", "avoided deforestation-REDD", the "Clean Development Mechanism", "carbon offsets", etc.) to focus on the real problem: how to move beyond the fossil fuel era as quickly as possible.

At COP16, your government should take steps towards restoring lost credibility by committing to an immediate and permanent halt on the search for new fossil fuel reserves in their territories. At the same time, they should channel their efforts towards finding mechanisms of compensation to ensure that reserves already identified but not yet exploited remain untouched. Finally, they should set concrete deadlines for the total eradication of fossil fuels.

We realize that this is an enormous challenge, but is it really too much to ask, when what is at stake is nothing less than the survival of life on earth?

World Rainforest Movement
November 2010

Water World:

Preparing for the ultimate climate challenge

Hannah Stoddard

Head of Policy and Advocacy at Stakeholder Forum



water and
climate
coalition

A year on from COP15 in Copenhagen, delegates are descending upon Cancun for two weeks to try to thrash out at least some elements of a global climate change deal. The objective remains the same - the reduction of CO2 emissions in the earth's atmosphere. The political challenge remains the same – how can these reductions be made fairly and equitably across nations with varying responsibilities and capabilities.

Fast-forward to 2050. If the world's leaders have failed to reach an adequate climate change agreement and carbon emissions continue at business as usual scenarios, people all over the world will be feeling the impacts of climate change. Even with the most ambitious agreement, there will still be some unavoidable impacts due to the 'time-lag' in emissions scenarios. The nature of these impacts will vary globally, but they will all share one thing in common – the medium through which these impacts will be felt is water. Either too much (floods), too little (scarcity and droughts) or reduced quality (e.g. saline intrusion through sea-level rise).

This is why the global climate challenge is to a great extent a global water challenge. The IPCC predicts that by 2020, between 75 and 250 million people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change. The IPCC also states with high confidence that current water management practices are very likely to be inadequate to reduce the negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability, flood risk, health, energy, and aquatic ecosystems. Importantly, climate change impacts on water resources will aggravate the impacts of other stresses – such as population growth, urbanization and changed economic activity. Given the current pace of the negotiations and the increasing elusiveness of a deal, it would

seem to be wise to turn attention to how we are likely to address what looks like an inevitable and imminent global water crisis.

Yet water does not feature very prominently in the climate change debate. Negotiations on adaptation do not specifically highlight the importance of building resilience through water management, neither do discussions on mitigation recognize the role of water for the long-term sustainability of much renewable energy production, or for forest health. There seems to be a reluctance to refer to particular 'sectors', and where sectors are acknowledged or recognized, the onus is more likely to be placed on agriculture, forests and land-use. This is understandable given the mitigation potential of all these sectors. But what is forgotten is that water underpins them all. When the impacts of climate change start to be felt, and the imperative for mitigation becomes more acute, the way we manage our water – both nationally and internationally – will be the deciding factor in our ultimate survival.

It is crucial therefore that we bring water to the climate negotiating table. One of the most vocal initiatives calling for this is the Water and Climate Coalition – a global coalition of actors promoting the integration of water and climate policy on a global level. As part of its advocacy the Coalition is calling for the establishment of a work programme on water under the Convention, as a 'space' to address water and climate issues and discuss the necessary actions to both build resilience to climate change through water resources, and respond to climate-induced water hazards.

The proposed work programme has five functions or elements – a Discourse element, to advance the global policy discourse on water and climate at a global level; a Principles element, to establish

guiding and normative global principles on water and climate; a Finance element, to provide expert advice on water and climate priorities to the Convention funds; an Implementation element, to build capacity for the implementation of water and climate objectives globally; and a Coherence element, to promote synergies between and advance implementation of other multilateral agreements that build resilience through water.

The way we deal with and manage water – as a resource and as a hazard – represents one of the greatest challenges posed by climate change. The risk of not addressing water at the earliest possible stage is too great to allow for complacency. A work programme on water under the UNFCCC will not be able to solve everything, but it is a good place to start.



PHOTO: Stock.Xchng

For more information on the Water and Climate Coalition please visit www.waterclimatecoalition.org, or contact:
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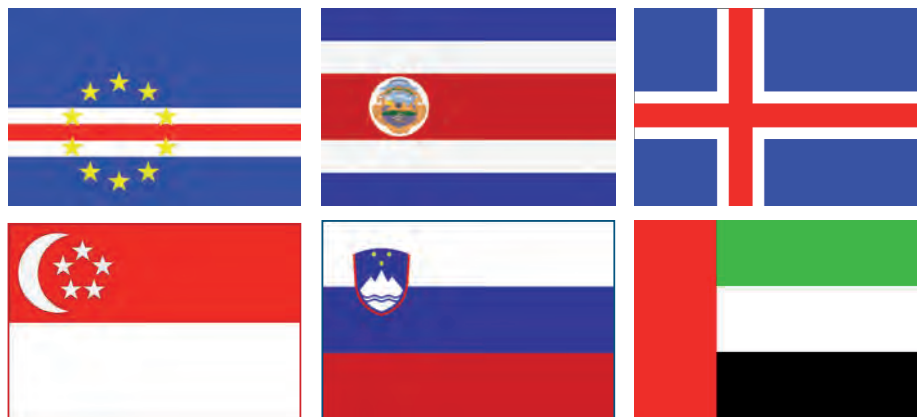
On visible climate change and invisible water

A year ago, international attention was focused on the Copenhagen climate conference. World leaders were expected to succeed in reaching a comprehensive global climate agreement. Although the Copenhagen conference fell short of the high expectations, it provided a political framework for negotiations that continued throughout this year and some important decisions are to be made in Cancún to pave the way for the post-2012 climate framework.

Climate change is most often associated with global warming. However, its most severe impact is on the natural water cycle. As stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, water is the primary medium through which the impact of climate change will be felt by both people and the environment. Climate change affects precipitation patterns: it prolongs drought periods and decrease soil moisture, leading to irreversible land degradation and desertification. It also increases the frequency of extreme meteorological events and water-related natural disasters, such as floods and landslides. Effects of climate change on the world's oceans are also a cause for great concern. Briefly, water changes are climate change in a nutshell.

Water is indispensable for the survival and health of living beings, for preservation of natural ecosystems and for economic and social development. Therefore, it is imperative that access to safe drinking water and sanitation be recognized also as a human right. Water is a renewable resource but it is also a limited one. Less than 3% percent of the Earth's water is fresh. In addition, as the Green Group countries illustrate, water resources are unevenly distributed across the world. Costa Rica, Iceland and Slovenia have an abundance of water resources, while Cape Verde and the United Arab Emirates face serious water scarcity, and Singapore has limited land for reservoirs despite receiving abundant rainfall.

Throughout the world, few things are more precious than safe and adequate water supply. Unfortunately, prospects for the future are grim; according to the UN, more than 2.8 billion people will face severe water stress by 2025. Increased water stress is, of course, not only the result of climate change but also other human pressures, such as population growth and increased economic activity. On the supply side, available water resources are diminishing due to pollution and degradation of freshwater ecosystems,



as well as uncontrolled urbanization and land-use change.

In order to adapt effectively, understanding the relation between water and climate is of crucial importance. Climate change will mostly affect countries and communities that are already under water stress. Vulnerability is not predetermined by economic or regional differences, such as a North-South division. Social resilience is yet another term for the endless human imagination and creativity that developed irrigation systems and water efficiency policies.

Moreover, water also has the potential to mitigate climate change. As a clean energy source, hydropower can replace fossil fuels in electricity generation and, therefore, help reduce greenhouse gas emission. Furthermore, water ecosystems, especially wetlands, function as an important carbon sink, similar to forests.

Despite these facts, it sometimes seems that climate negotiations are neglecting the importance of water. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) refers to water management only once in the context of adaptation to climate change. Similarly, the Bali Action Plan only implies the importance of water management. Water was also omitted in the Copenhagen Accord.

Traditionally, water brings people together; it enhances dialogue, reconciliation and community building. While international negotiations should devote more attention to the complex link between water and climate change, our action should not end at the negotiating table. Past and present, local and global are inextricably entangled. Water management should be placed at the focus of climate action by encouraging states to take ambitious steps in improving water conservation

and management and fully integrate them into national adaptation plans. Action is also needed on regional levels; regional strategies are of political, economic and environmental importance, particularly in transboundary river basins.

Although water has its place on the international agenda, its complexity often makes it invisible. It is our collective responsibility to make the water issue more visible. Forums such as the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Global Sustainability can play an important role in this. But the climate negotiations themselves can also provide greater focus on the opportunities that better water management can bring. As the climate conference in Cancun is about to begin, the Green Group wishes to highlight water as the nexus between economic development and environmental sustainability. Water runs through every basin of human development and is therefore a crucial element of any climate change action.

Jose Brito, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cape Verde

René Castro Salazar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religion, Costa Rica

Össur Skarphéðinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Iceland

George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore

Samuel Žbogar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

H. H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, United Arab Emirates

Mainstreaming gender in climate change policy

Jordan leading the way amongst Arab states

WATER scarcity is one of the major challenges affecting the Arab region as a direct result of the impacts of climate change. And Jordan was one of the first developing countries to respond to this challenge by signing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Today, the country is taking the lead again, moving to start a process of gender mainstreaming in climate change policies.

The Jordanian Ministry of Environment in cooperation with IUCN – the International Union for Conservation of Nature recently

organized a national workshop under the theme “Gender and Climate Change – Towards a Gender Plan of Action in Climate Change in Jordan”. The workshop was held in November 2010 in Amman as part of a work programme implemented through the Global Gender Climate Alliance (GGCA).

“Parties to the climate change countries have been requesting the mainstreaming of gender considerations in climate change mitigation and adaptation policies and initiatives,” said Lorena Aguilar, IUCN Global Senior Gender Advisor. “The steps taken by the Ministry of Environment in

Jordan puts the country at the forefront. Jordan will be the first country in the Arab League to start this process”.

From research conducted by IUCN over a period of 20 years, it is shown that women are important agents of change and holders of significant knowledge and skills – assets that could be employed in projects on mitigation and adaptation, hence significantly reducing vulnerability of communities and making them an indispensable asset in the fight against climate change.

For more information please see the IUCN website <http://generoyambiente.org/blog/?p=217>
The above information was previously published on 08/11/2010.

COP16 SIDE EVENT “The missing link to success: Women in REDD”

November 29, 2010; 1:20 pm to 2:40 pm
Location; COP16, Sandia Room,
Cancun Messe

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with WEDO, WOCAN, and IUCN will host a side event entitled “The missing link to success: Women in REDD”. This event will examine how having a gender approach and women’s empowerment are essential to a successful implementation of REDD initiatives.



COP16 SIDE EVENT: “Making Climate Finance Count for Women”

December 6, 2010; 11:30 am to 1:00 pm
Location; COP16, Jaguar Room,
Cancun Messe

OXFAM International (OI) in coordination with the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), will host a side event entitled “Making Climate Finance Count for Women”. Climate change is making it harder for women to feed their families. Women are finding solutions to adapt. Climate finance must support women to adopt, and provide food for their communities. This side event will assess what decision must be made at COP16 to meet the required short, medium and long term climate finance objectives.

COP16 High Level SIDE EVENT: “Gender and Climate Change Finance: Empowering Women to lead in the New Green Economy”

December 9, 2010; 1:20 pm to 2:40 pm
Location: COP16, Room Aguila,
Cancun Messe

On Thursday, December 9th during COP16 High Level Segment, the Governments of Mexico, Finland, and Grenada, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme and the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance, will host a side event entitled “Gender and Climate Change Finance: Empowering Women to lead in the New Green Economy”. This event will be made up of high-level leaders on gender and climate change from different sectors and regions, including government representatives, United Nations, civil society and private sector.

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