

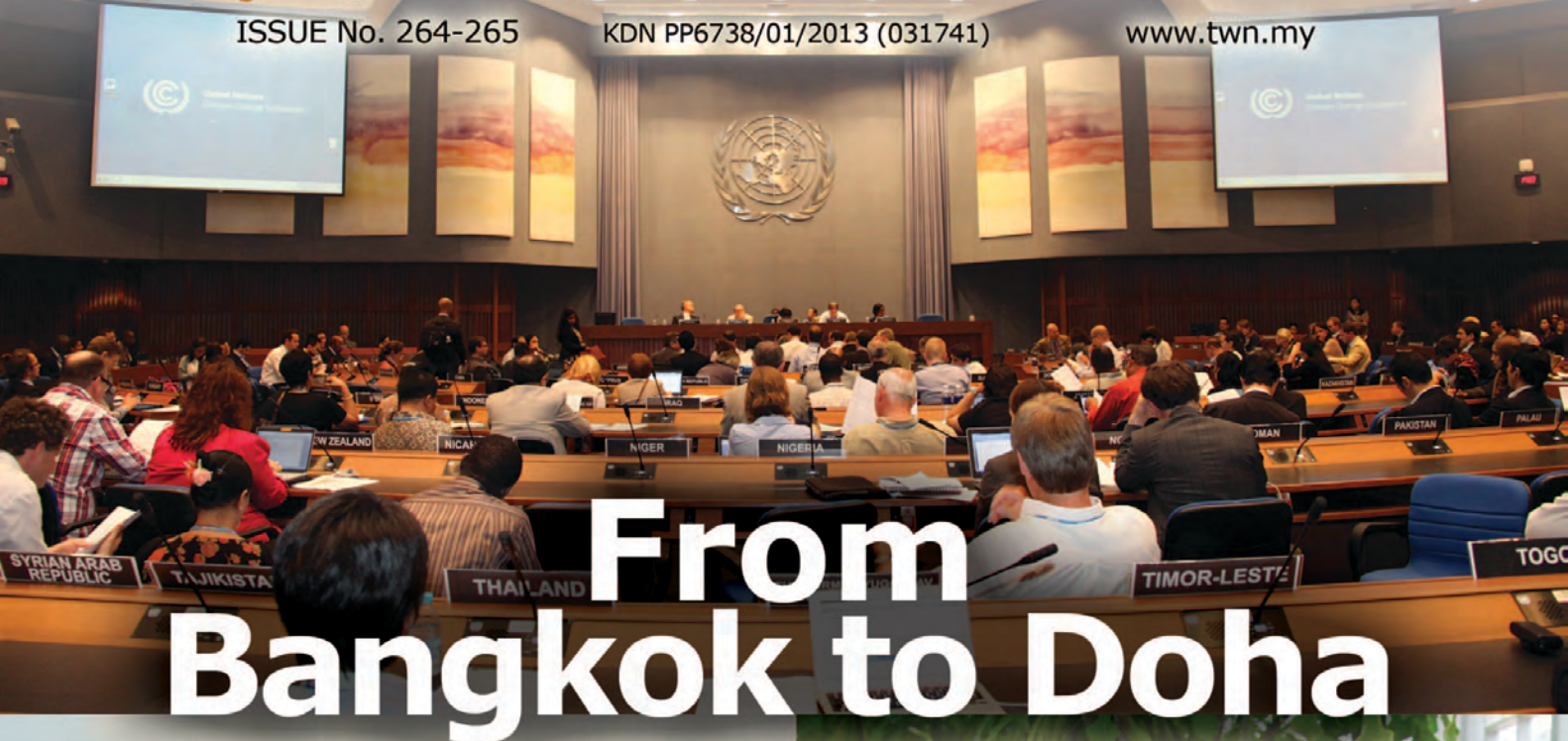
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From Bangkok to Doha

UN climate talks hang in the balance



Save the climate
Save Southeast Asia



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Editor's Note

AS governments prepare for the annual United Nations climate conference commencing 26 November in Doha, Qatar, the signals from the last preparatory negotiation session, held in Bangkok in September, are troubling.

The future of the Bali Roadmap with its two negotiating tracks – adopted at the 2007 climate conference in the Indonesian island – hangs in the balance. The first track – negotiations on the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for greenhouse gas emission reductions by developed countries and economies in transition (the first commitment period expires at the end of this year) – looks likely to produce a weak result. The other track – the 'Bali Action Plan' track designed to enhance the full, effective and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC – is under threat of closure without a meaningful resolution of several important unresolved issues.

A new agreement under the UNFCCC which is to come into effect in 2020, after the expiration of the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, hinges on the success of these twin-track negotiations.

With regard to the first track, Canada has walked out of the Kyoto Protocol while Japan and Russia have officially announced that they are not participating in the second commitment period. The US refused to be a party to the Protocol from its inception.

It was agreed in last year's climate conference in Durban, South Africa, that there will be a second commitment period, but what was not decided was its length (whether a five- or eight-year period starting in January 2013) and the actual numbers for the emission reduction targets.

Many developing countries have called for a 40-50% reduction by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, with the Alliance of Small Island States demanding a cut of at least 33% below 1990 levels by 2017.

The European Union has made it clear that it wants an eight-year commitment period and that its own target would be a reduction of only 20% below 1990 levels by 2020, even though it had previously indicated that it was willing to consider a 30% reduction. In the wake of criticisms by developing countries, the EU has proposed that there be a review of the commitments, at the latest by 2015, with a view to strengthening these commitments in line with an overall emission reduction by Annex I Parties (i.e., developed countries and economies in transition) of at least 25-40% below 1990 levels in 2020. Many observers view this as doing too little too late, which does not reflect the urgency and ambition needed from a scientific perspective.

Meanwhile, emission cuts by Annex I countries which are not party to the Kyoto Protocol, such as the US, are the subject of discussion in the second negotiating track. The US, however, is opposed to any review of its 17% emission reduction pledge based on 2005 levels, made at the Cancun climate conference in 2010. While one hopes the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy on the east coast of the US, following the serious drought in the mid-west earlier this year, will serve as a

wake-up call, it may be too much to expect a real shift in the US position in Doha.

Also under the second track, developed countries have been dodging the issue of how the Cancun commitment to mobilise \$100 billion per year by 2020 for the purpose of assisting developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change, is going to be realised and delivered from 2012 onwards. Given the current economic and financial crisis in the developed countries, continued resistance from these countries is expected on this issue.

Developed countries have also refused to address other issues of concern to developing countries, such as intellectual property rights that will impede the transfer of climate-friendly technologies and the need for developed countries to avoid taking unilateral measures in the name of climate action which have negative impacts on developing countries.

In addition to these issues, a central battle at Doha will be over the final shape of the new, post-2020 agreement under the UNFCCC. The critical question here will be whether the UNFCCC principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' – which is based on the historical responsibility of developed countries for the accumulated emissions that have caused global warming – will constitute the guiding principle in determining emission reduction commitments.

This equitable principle was reaffirmed by heads of state and government at the June UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), where they also endorsed the conference outcome document's recalling that the UNFCCC provides that Parties should protect the climate system 'on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.'

Developed countries, however, want to jettison this cornerstone of the Convention and replace it with a new provision which will oblige developing countries, especially the 'major emitters', to take on similar commitments as the rich countries in the future agreement. Developing countries are bound to resist any such unjust moves. For all these reasons, the Doha talks will indeed be critical for the future of the climate regime.

Our cover story reviews the outcome of the latest UN climate talks in Bangkok and considers whether any real progress has been made to ensure that the upcoming talks in Doha can build on that progress. As the various contributors are at pains to point out, the prognosis is bleak as a result of the continuing refusal of the rich countries to accept their proper role and responsibility in addressing the problem of climate change. Warning that the talks are in jeopardy, they set out the issues that must be resolved and the course that must be taken if the negotiations are to be saved and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

— *The Editors*

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Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin



The deadlock in the last round of multilateral climate negotiations, held in Bangkok on 30 August-5 September (pic), does not bode well for the UN climate conference in Doha in November which will seek to hammer out the next steps to tackle the pressing problem of climate change. 10

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Mining for gold: A ‘pact with the devil’?

The rising price of gold has spurred gold mining companies to expand their activities around the globe. The environmental fallout of such mining has however drawn fierce protests from affected local communities. However, when in response, the government of El Salvador decided to impose a moratorium on such mining, it found itself facing a multi-million-dollar lawsuit based on an investor rights clause filed before a tribunal at the World Bank. El Salvador’s experience holds some important lessons for developing countries.

**John Cavanagh and
Robin Broad**

‘THE water’s bright orange,’ we exclaim while balancing ourselves precariously on rocks alongside a spring. We are visiting the community of San Sebastian in the province of La Union in the northeast corner of El Salvador. Above us stands a mountain with a prominent slash where US and other firms mined gold for over a century, a mountain that also happens to be a key watershed for this area.

‘I’ve seen this water also cranberry red and also bright yellow,’ our companion responds. But then she quickly adds: ‘Remember: don’t touch the water. Last time I was here, I slipped and ended up with rashes all over my leg and stomach where I got wet.’ She doesn’t need to remind us. Experts from the Salvadoran government’s Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources were here in July and they found levels of cyanide and iron that were through the roof.

What at first seems odd is that there hasn’t been commercial gold mining here for at least a decade – since the US company Commerce Group left. But, as we learn on this, our second, research trip to El Salvador, a decade or two can be a blink of an eye for the environmental havoc wreaked by gold mining. These ancient mountains contain not only gold and many other minerals, but also sulphide. It is a deadly combination with long-term consequences: once the mining excavations expose sul-



A pig wallowing in waters polluted as a result of decades of gold mining in San Sebastian, El Salvador.

phide to the air and rain, it is converted to sulphuric acid. With each new rain, the acid unleashes new toxic substances down the mountain and into the springs and streams. In a nutshell: a long-term poisoning of the water, the land, and the people.

The now-orange spring water flows into a now-lifeless stream that flows into the San Sebastian river that, in turn, flows into the Santa Rosa river. Along the way, the water is used by many before it enters the Gulf of Fonseca far to the south and continues its journey.

The technical term for the environmental nightmare that is unfolding in front of us is ‘acid mine drainage’. Acid mine drainage has plagued mine sites from Pennsylvania to El Salvador for centuries. Mining expert Robert Goodland stresses that some communities near ancient Roman mines in England and Spain continue to suffer the effects of acid mine drainage over 2,000 years after the mines

were closed. And remediation – or ‘clean-up’ – is technically and financially challenging. As a local college student who has studied the situation here explains: even if the funding were available, ‘we wouldn’t be able to clean this up even in 100 years’.

We spend the next day with Father Lorenzo, a handsome man in his early 40s with an easy, dimpled smile, who is the priest from the nearby city of Santa Rosa de Lima. Father Lorenzo leads us up the mountain to the site where Commerce Group mined. On the way, we walk by homes built on land covered by finely crushed rocks, or ‘tailings’ – what remains when the mining companies use cyanide to separate the gold from the surrounding rock. We walk on roads and paths built from the tailings.

As with the water, so too ‘this land is heavily contaminated’, Father Lorenzo sighs. In the words of a local man whose father worked for Commerce Group: large-scale mining

involved ‘making a pact with the devil’.

Near the top of the mountain, we enter the mines: jagged holes carved into the mountainside, with piles of rock below, here and there a glint suggesting the ore that lies within. It is not hard to figure out where Father Lorenzo now stands in terms of mining: a dramatic mural outside his church depicts a denuded landscape darkened by mining. But, we ask, how did Father Lorenzo and the community discover that the mountain we are standing on was a toxic nightmare?

He starts by saying that he was not always against mining; indeed, his father was a miner in a nearby area. But then, 11 years ago, he was assigned to this parish and he and others noted San Sebastian’s high incidence of kidney failure, cancer, skin problems and nervous system disorders: ‘My first clue [about what was wrong] was that I would visit farms in this community, and I would wash my hands and notice that there were no suds from the soap. The water was too acidic to make suds. This is how we made the link between the mining and the water.’

Sad saga

The environmental nightmare actually goes back to the original miner here, US metallurgist Charles Butters. Butters commercialised the use of cyanide in gold extraction over a century ago. In 1927, Butters was kicked out of nearby Nicaragua by the revolutionary leader Augusto Sandino, but he had already found a much more compliant government in El Salvador. Butters purchased the San Sebastian mine in the early 1900s for \$100,000, and within a year had mined \$1 million worth of gold – 24-carat, we are told. We can’t help but admire Butters’ gold-sourcing skills and the workers’ stamina as we envision him searching for the vein and them hauling ore out of these steep mountains before any roads were



The message in this mural painted on a wall in El Salvador reads ‘Metallic mining is death and destruction’.

built. And thus began the sad saga.

The most recent company to extract gold from this mountain was Wisconsin-based Commerce Group, which first acquired the San Sebastian gold mine in 1968. Commerce Group made money off the gold for many years, stopping temporarily during El Salvador’s civil war and ceasing mining activity by 1999 due primarily to the low price of gold. Yet, as gold prices skyrocketed over the past decade, Commerce filed for and was awarded a new mining licence from the government. Then, in 2006, a study by the research group CEICOM found that the San Sebastian river was 100,000 times more acidic than uncontaminated bodies of water in the same region – so bad that the Environmental Ministry of El Salvador’s then right-wing government revoked the company’s environmental permit.

Rising protests from mining communities and a coalition called the National Roundtable on Mining (‘La Mesa’) led the two front-running political parties in the 2009 Salvadoran presidential election to voice opposition to mining. The victor, the current progressive government of Mauricio Funes, has kept its word and not issued any new mining permits since 2009.

And so, in 2009, Commerce Group became one of two North American mining firms (the other is Vancouver-based Pacific Rim) to sue the Salvadoran government in an investor-rights tribunal based at the World Bank in Washington, DC. That tribunal ruled against Commerce Group in 2011. But Commerce Group

appealed the decision in July 2012, demanding \$100 million from the government of El Salvador.

As we look at the orange water and walk on the cyanide-laced soil, the fact that current global rules allow Commerce Group to sue the Salvadoran government seems beyond ludicrous.

Groups in the United States have joined the Roundtable in protests against the firm, demanding that it drop the suit and pay for a clean-up in San Sebastian, whatever it costs and however long it takes.

But this tale is not just about El Salvador and the people of San Sebastian. Nor about the need for those of us in the United States to help ensure that a US company pays for the damage it has caused and that gold-mining not return to environmentally vulnerable El Salvador. And it’s not just about the need to make sure that domestic investment laws and future trade agreements do not include such lopsided investor-rights clauses. With the rise in gold prices, US and Canadian firms are reopening old mines from Michigan to Maine; with the excuse of the economic crisis, mining firms are pressuring state legislatures to loosen environmental regulations.

We in the United States would do well to learn from El Salvador’s ‘pact with the devil’ and from its current moratorium on new mining permits. As the Roundtable warns, ‘We can live without gold, but we can’t live without water.’ ♦

John Cavanagh is director of the Institute for Policy Studies and is co-chair (with David Korten) of the New Economy Working Group. Robin Broad is a Professor of International Development at American University in Washington, DC and has worked as an international economist in the US Treasury Department and the US Congress. They are co-authors of three books and numerous articles on the global economy, and have been travelling the country and the world for their project ‘Local Dreams: Finding Rootedness in the Age of Vulnerability’.

They wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a US-based non-profit media organisation that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. For more information, go to www.yesmagazine.org.

Developing world has 80% of tobacco-related deaths

The health impact of tobacco use has been 'devastating' to the world economy, particularly in respect of health and development in developing countries, says a new health report.

TOBACCO use led to almost six million deaths in 2011, according to new research released on 15 October, of which nearly 80% were in low- and middle-income countries.

Such trends, fuelled by tobacco industry tactics, are having a 'devastating' impact on the global economy, health and development workers warned at the Washington launch of a new report tracking tobacco use worldwide. The findings are the results of nascent research into the links between development, economic growth and tobacco use.

'We have more and more data on these links,' Hana Ross, one of the lead authors of the new *Tobacco Atlas*, told Inter Press Service (IPS). 'For instance, it appears that in Russia, gross domestic product would have grown by 1.0 to 1.5% faster over the past three decades if it weren't for the tobacco-related costs. Once you start to accumulate over time, these numbers become huge.'

The tobacco industry's products and 'spurious legal challenges', Peter Baldini, the CEO of the World Lung Foundation, said on 15 October, 'hurt economies as much as they hurt people'.

According to the fourth edition of the *Tobacco Atlas*, put out by the American Cancer Society and the World Lung Foundation, tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the world. It is also the only risk factor common to the four most significant non-communicable diseases, heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes.

Several diseases exacerbated by smoking also inordinately affect developing countries. Between 2010 and 2050, for instance, 40 million smokers with tuberculosis are expected to

Carey L Biron



Tobacco use 'is increasingly becoming largely a developing world problem at a time when the developing world can least afford to add another health problem'.

die, with smoking estimated to directly cause 20% of all cases of TB worldwide.

'While smoking rates have been slowly declining in the United States and many other high-income nations during the past 25 years,' Baldini and John R Seffrin, CEO of the American Cancer Society, write in the *Atlas*'s foreword, 'they have been increasing in low- and middle-income nations, which are the least prepared to deal with the effects of tobacco-related disease.'

Overall, a billion people are expected to die due to tobacco use over the course of the 21st century. That figure includes a significant proportion of victims of second-hand smoke, 75% of whom are women and children.

The tobacco industry's role in dragging down health indicators weighs heavily on national and international efforts at strengthening health systems, experts warn. In the United States alone, cigarette smoking has been directly blamed for around \$193 billion in annual health-related costs (in 2000-04), half in lost productivity.

Overall, a billion people are expected to die due to tobacco use over the course of the 21st century.

With healthcare costs already unsustainably high in many Western countries, the future impact of smoking on the developing world is now increasingly worrying those in the development sector.

China is a case in point, not only due to its massive population but also for the uniquely high percentage of the population that smokes. Although the Chinese government, under significant international pressure, has moved to cut down on smoking in recent years, Chinese men, more than 60% of whom use tobacco, continue to smoke roughly a third of the world's cigarettes.

And if Chinese women were to begin smoking at anywhere near that rate, the *Atlas*'s writers warn, 'the country's economy and health systems will be overwhelmed'.

'The World Bank is greatly concerned about tobacco because ... it is increasingly becoming largely a developing world problem at a time when the developing world can least

afford to add another health problem,' World Bank official Keith Hansen told journalists on 15 October. 'We need to all have a unified message: Tobacco control is a development issue, and we will not lose revenue by addressing it.'

The World Bank is reportedly looking to begin putting increased focus on tobacco-related research and programming.

'With tobacco now poised to explode in developing countries and addict a new generation,' Hansen says, 'urgent action is needed to make sure that these countries are able to put tobacco behind them and not become the centre of tobacco for the 21st century.'

The *Atlas* was first published a decade ago, in 2002, and over that period significant forward steps have been taken in the fight against tobacco use.

In 2003, the World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which now covers 174 countries and more than 87% of the global population. WHO has set a goal of a 40% reduction in daily smoking among adults by 2025.

A year ago, in September 2011, the United Nations held its first-ever



A tuberculosis patient at a hospital in India. Smoking is estimated to directly cause 20% of all cases of TB worldwide.

high-level meeting on non-communicable diseases, where world leaders unanimously agreed to a plan that calls for strengthened international anti-tobacco collaboration.

Despite such steps, today nearly 90% of the world's population remain unprotected by smoking-related legislation. And according to WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, 'Measures to tackle the epidemic remain seriously underfunded.'

In fact, funding for tobacco control should have a significant advantage in at least two regards, says Ross,

the *Atlas's* co-author.

First, it offers national governments a largely untapped opportunity for a massively increased tax base. WHO itself has recommended that tobacco taxes be placed at around 70% of cigarette retail prices, although only five countries have reached that target.

'In many cases, this is a simple matter of political will, as control measures are not necessarily expensive – most countries already have some kind of tax system in place,' Ross says. 'There is an opportunity for the international community to help in building that political will as well as to offer technical advice for setting up, for instance, efficient taxation systems.'

In this regard, Ross says, positive examples are coming in particular from South-East Asia, where she highlights new government moves in Thailand, as well as in Laos and Vietnam.

Second, anti-tobacco funding offers something that many such public programmes do not: fast, measurable results.

'If you get people to quit smoking, the impact on health is visible within the first six months,' Ross says.

'Results are typically available very quickly, reflected in specific and measurable data. For better or worse, that's important to both the donor community as well as national policymakers.' – IPS



The World Health Organisation has recommended that tobacco taxes be placed at around 70% of cigarette retail prices.

IMF-WB meetings end with heightened anxiety on global situation

The mood at this year's annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group held in Tokyo was sombre with growing concern over the darkening global economic landscape.

THERE were sobering messages on global economic prospects emerging from the 2012 annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) held in Tokyo on 9-14 October.

Developing countries' finance ministers and central bank officials voiced their concerns on the failure of developed countries to deal with their economic situation and on the policy and political paralysis preventing solutions.

At the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee on 13 October, some of them voiced concerns on the spillover effects of policies adopted by some developed countries, particularly their provision of huge volumes of credit, the continuing European debt crisis, and the looming threat of the United States' 'fiscal cliff'.

According to a report by the Associated Press, China's deputy central bank governor said at the meeting that a durable solution to the euro area crisis would provide a much-needed boost to global recovery, and that uncertainty over government debts in the United States and Japan was slowing recovery and causing costly spillover effects to the rest of the world.

Guido Mantega, Brazil's Finance Minister, told the committee: 'Advanced countries should rethink their macroeconomic strategies and avoid simultaneous fiscal contractions and

Martin Khor



The respective heads of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, Christine Lagarde and Jim Yong Kim, at the organisations' annual meetings in Tokyo in October. The meetings were held in the shadow of expectations of deterioration in global economic conditions.

the consequent overburdening of monetary policies... In many advanced countries, fiscal and structural policies are hampered by political paralysis.'

He also expressed concern over monetary easing in the United States and other countries which is meant to encourage more bank lending, but which some worry could destabilise markets while failing to stave off recession.

South Africa's Finance Minister Pravin J Gordhan said: 'We should all be committed in our resolve to avoid a worst-case scenario where strains in

the euro area deepen, fiscal cliff and debt ceiling problems in the United States are not resolved, and growth in emerging market economies continues to decline.'

The IMF-World Bank meetings were held in the shadow of expectations of deterioration in global economic conditions. The IMF cut its growth projections for most major countries and said the risks of a serious global slowdown are alarmingly high in its *World Economic Outlook* report released on the eve of the Tokyo meetings.

Global growth slowed from 5.1% in 2010 to 3.8% in 2011. For this year, the latest IMF estimate is 3.3% global growth, with developed countries barely growing by 1.3%, while developing countries expand by 5.3%.

This 2012 forecast is optimistic, as it assumes the United States and Europe will resolve their problems in economic policymaking.

The IMF posed the key issue of whether the global economy is merely facing just another temporary bout of turbulence, or whether the slowdown will endure. It said the answer depends on whether the United States and Europe can deal with their short-term challenges.

That is putting the issue blandly. The truth is that it is more difficult today to get recovery going than it was in 2009 in the aftermath of the financial meltdown.

At that time, there was a consensus among the major countries that their collapsing economies had to be boosted through fiscal stimulus, low interest rates and a massive supply of credit. The coordinated actions led to the swift and sharp recovery of 2010.

The policy winds have changed in the past two years. Most developed countries are now more concerned about cutting their budget deficits, and have thus reversed their fiscal policy from stimulus to austerity.

Countries in the eurozone that are heavily dependent on foreign loans, and do not have the options of printing money or currency depreciation because they have the common currency, have little choice but to cut their public spending.

But even the United Kingdom, which enjoys much more policy space, chose drastic budget cuts that have now resulted in a recession.

During the IMF meeting in Tokyo, the raging debate on the wisdom of demanding extreme austerity targets for Greece and potentially other countries like Portugal and Spain in exchange for loans, broke out in an open clash.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde said Greece should be given two additional years to meet the drastic budget reduction targets that had been imposed by its creditors (the European Union, the European Central Bank and the IMF itself).

But the German Finance Minister strongly rebuked her, indicating Germany's insistence on Greece fulfilling the targets on time as a condition for further loans.

Meanwhile, Greece is reeling from the spending cuts already made, with its gross national product (GNP) falling by 6% and unemployment shooting above 25%. The public mood has reached boiling point, as evident from angry protests during German leader Angela Merkel's visit to Athens in October.

Areas of concern

Europe will remain the epicentre of the global slowdown, with its economy in recession this year and



Countries in the struggling eurozone have reversed their fiscal policy stance from stimulus to austerity. Picture shows a protest against such austerity policies in Athens.

possibly next, even though its crisis has eased with the European Central Bank's intention to buy government bonds of cash-strapped countries. Since the countries have to adhere to strict austerity and other targets as conditions, Europe's economy will face contraction.

The United States, by contrast, has done better with growth of 1.8% in 2011 and a projected 2.2% this year, but unemployment remains.

However, it faces the 'fiscal cliff' problem at the end of the year. If the Republicans and Democrats are unable to overcome their differences and arrive at a new budget deal, the package of tax and spending cuts mandated by law will kick in by January next year, and these measures are equivalent to reducing national income by 4%. The implications for the global economy would be enormous.

The major developing countries are also slowing down significantly. The latest IMF forecast is of GNP growth in 2012 for China of 7.8% (from 10.4% in 2010), India 4.9% (10.1% in 2010) and Brazil 1.5% (7.5% in 2010).

The developing countries have especially been affected by the sharp decline of exports to Europe.

Thus, the three main concerns about the global economy are the con-

tinuing financial crisis and a severe austerity response in Europe, the confrontational politics and probably greater austerity measures in the United States, and the cooling of the major developing countries' economies.

Another setback was the missing of the deadline to resolve the issue of altering the quotas of the IMF with the aim of providing developing countries with a higher overall share, to improve their say over the policies of the institution. The Tokyo meeting was supposed to settle the question but was unable to come to a decision.

The missing of the deadline was criticised by the G24 developing-country grouping. In a communique issued by the G24 after its ministerial meeting in Tokyo on 11 October (chaired by the Indian Finance Minister P. Chidambaram), the ministers stated: 'We note with concern that the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms did not achieve the required voting power majority for approval by the deadline set of the annual meetings of October 2012. This can result in serious reputational risk for the Fund.'

Martin Khor is Executive Director of the South Centre, an intergovernmental policy think-tank of developing countries, and former Director of the Third World Network.

Africa is rising! At least its 1% is...

Africa's economy may be booming, but this will do little to help unemployment and poverty if growth is jobless and its spoils are limited to the few.

'What we need in Africa is balanced development. Economic success cannot be a replacement for human rights or participation, or democracy... it doesn't work... it worries us a lot when we don't see the trickle-through factor, when gain goes to the top 1% or 2%, leaving the rest behind.' – Mo Ibrahim, 15 October 2012

Zainab Usman



Many African countries are bedevilled by high unemployment.

IT did not come as a surprise to many when, on 15 October, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation announced that there was no winner for its annual \$5 million African leadership award – for the third time since its inception in 2006. What was surprising, however, was that the foundation's chair, British-Sudanese billionaire Mo Ibrahim, also admonished the much-celebrated recent economic 'success' of the African continent for largely failing to translate into better human rights and social development, and for essentially creating a few elitist winners at the top whilst the rest were left struggling at the very bottom.

Recent reports, forecasts and editorials of influential financial magazines are incredibly optimistic about Africa – its booming economic growth, its investment opportunities and its growing middle class. Sub-Saharan African countries are reportedly among the fastest-growing in the world, with six out of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies, and recording growth rates averaging 4.9%, higher than the developing-country average and much higher than the developed-country average.

A December 2011 issue of *The Economist* was boldly titled 'Africa Rising' and in August 2012, the magazine again boldly proclaimed that 'A Continent Goes Shopping', under-

scoring the voracious purchasing power of the African middle class to buy consumer and even luxury goods. The current received wisdom in these sleek reports, glossy magazine pages and glass-panelled conference rooms is that sub-Saharan Africa really is the place to be and to invest in, with all its abundant opportunities.

Jobless growth

This much-trumpeted economic success is mostly true, until one looks at the other side. Then questions arise over the extent to which growth is spread across sectors of the economy, and whether such economic growth is translating into corresponding improvements in human and social development.

It is common knowledge that this new dawn of booming economic growth is largely the consequence of the recent rise in the global prices of natural resources, chiefly oil, while other sectors of the economy such as banking, telecommunications and construction trail behind in terms of growth. Many African countries primarily depend on the exportation of natural resources – an industry which

is highly capital- (and technology-) intensive, providing few jobs. Only five of Africa's 54 countries are currently not 'either producing or looking for oil'.

It is therefore no surprise that many African countries, especially the economic powerhouses of the continent, are bedevilled by high unemployment, particularly amongst young people – hovering at 25% in Egypt, 48% in South Africa and 42% in Nigeria. Thus, growth in capital-intensive sectors – such as resource exports, banking, and telecommunications – is barely trickling down to create jobs and economic opportunities for the vast majority of the people – a phenomenon commonly known as 'jobless growth'.

Many sub-Saharan African countries experiencing record-level economic growth still have low rankings in human development indices, despite marginal improvements in education enrolment and, with countrywide variations, maternal health. This contradiction is further reinforced by the growing inequality that characterises many of such African 'powerhouses'.

Luanda in Angola (thanks to flowing petro-dollars) and N'Djamena in Chad were, respectively, the second and eighth most expensive cities to live in as an expatriate in 2012 – ahead of Sydney, London and New York, according to Mercer's Cost of Living Survey. Juba in the newly independent South Sudan is also gaining notoriety for its high cost of living, while the price of select real estate in Abuja and Lagos in Nigeria reportedly rivals that of some Western cities. These expensive cities are in countries grouped within the



Development strategies for Africa must ensure that growth spreads to and strengthens sectors such as light manufacturing and small-scale enterprises which have a direct impact on the lives and incomes of citizens.

‘Low Human Development’ category of the United Nations Human Development Index based on indicators such as health, income and education.

A tale of two cities

There has certainly been some improvement – for one, there is now an identifiable middle class in Africa with money to splash around in the cinemas of Abuja and pricey hotels of Accra, the malls and retail outlets of Johannesburg and the exclusive residential estates of Lagos and Nairobi. However, once you step out of these glitzy inner cities and look to the outskirts, the glaring contrast be-

tween the shiny modernity and the urban deprivation in the slums hits you like the searing tropical sun.

As the African middle class go shopping with their swelled-up wallets and designer purses in Lagos or in London, many more Africans go to bed hungry as the gap between the nouveau riche shoppers and the underclass in the urban fringes grows wider. Increasingly, it begs the question of whether this bulging middle class is the consequence of a mass number of Africans leaving the poverty trap, as is the case in China and Brazil – both of which have seen tens of millions lifted out of poverty – or whether a previously existing middle

class in the margins was just buoyed back to vibrancy.

The task thus remains for governments to devise sustainable development strategies that are tailored specifically to suit the African context. Such strategies must sustain the momentum of economic growth while ensuring that growth spreads to and strengthens sectors such as mechanised agriculture, light manufacturing and small-scale enterprises, which have a direct impact on the lives and incomes of citizens.

Such transformational policies should ensure that revenue windfalls are utilised wisely towards social and welfare policies which will empower millions of Africans out of poverty, thereby creating a robust middle class rather than just enriching an already existing sliver. It also means that such funds can be saved to help with later needs, as with the sovereign wealth fund embarked on by countries such as Angola and the new oil producer Ghana.

Importantly, the African youth bulge needs to be transformed into a demographic dividend by providing employment and economic opportunities to an increasingly educated African youth and by providing critically needed infrastructure so that abundant innovative ideas, which are capable of transforming lives and societies, can materialise into reality.

Ultimately, these are still governance challenges that Africa has a long way to go to overcome, but the marginal improvements in some aspects of governance, especially women’s rights, as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s Index has shown, give room for some cautious optimism. Mo Ibrahim’s admonishment could not have come at a better time. ♦

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Johannesburg, South Africa: A glaring contrast between shiny modernity and urban deprivation.

Climate talks at new crossroads

Martin Khor warns that it is evident from the Bangkok negotiations in September that the future of global climate change talks hangs in the balance. The prospect of bridging the division within the international community on tackling the problem seems as remote as ever even as evidence of the devastating impact of climate change mounts.

THE global climate change negotiations are at a new crossroads, as evident after the latest round of meetings that ended in Bangkok on 5 September.

'Crossroads' because the talks and the emerging climate change regime may go into one of various directions, or else become stuck in an impasse. 'New' because the climate talks have faced crossroads several times before in the past five years.

The Bangkok negotiations of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held over a week, revealed a major split between developed and developing countries on what to do over many issues that the developing countries want to continue to discuss, because they have not been resolved.

Most developed countries, led by the United States, believe there is no need for further discussion because they have been closed off by a decision taken at the last Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Durban, South Africa last December.

The wrangling over a seemingly procedural issue of what remains on the agenda and what should be taken off is in fact a sign of a far larger question – what are the respective responsibilities of developed versus developing countries in the years ahead?

As evidence on the ground and in the science mounts over the devastating effects of climate change, it seems that the international community of nations has become less and less able to address the crisis.

At the heart of the problem is the continuing attempt of several developed nations' governments to run away from their earlier agreed dual obligations – to take the lead in sharp greenhouse gas emission reductions



Participants entering the venue of the climate change negotiations held in Bangkok on 30 August-5 September. The Bangkok meeting revealed a major split between developed and developing countries over the next steps to take on several unresolved issues in the talks.

in their own countries, and to provide finance and technology to developing countries for them to take their own climate actions.

Killing off the Kyoto Protocol...

It was also in Bangkok in a 2009 negotiation session that the rich nations were plotting to kill the Kyoto Protocol (KP), a treaty that implements the commitment of rich countries under the UNFCCC to cut emissions.

Under the legally binding KP, all developed countries (except the United States, which is not a Party) agreed to cut their emissions by specified rates; the overall average rate was 5% by 2012 compared to 1990.

Cuts for a second period starting 2013 have been negotiated in a KP working group since 2005. The new cuts are supposed to be at least

25-40% for all developed countries; the developing countries have demanded 40% or more.

Another working group on long-term cooperative action (AWG-LCA) was created in 2007 in Bali that mandated those developed countries that are not in the KP (only the United States at that time) to undertake a climate change mitigation commitment comparable to countries in the KP.

This LCA group also obliges developing countries to take enhanced mitigation actions, supported by finance and technology supplied by rich countries, and both the actions and the support would be subjected to measurement, reporting and verification (MRV). The actions would not be legally binding, and can take on various forms and rates.

Developed and developing countries are treated differently as the Convention recognises that the former are richer and also responsible for most

of the carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere.

For the past three years there has been a see-saw battle to save the Kyoto Protocol as one country after another indicated it was jumping ship to join the US in the relatively safe haven of the AWG-LCA.

At the 2011 Durban climate conference, it was clear that Canada, Ja-

pan and Russia would not take part in a second KP period of emissions cuts, while Australia and New Zealand took a wait-and-see attitude.

Thus only the European countries are left in the KP's active roll-call for post-2012 cuts. Up to now, well past the deadline, even they have not stated what cuts they are willing to commit to.

... and the AWG-LCA

With the virtual abandonment of the KP, the developed countries have plotted to now kill the AWG-LCA. The US dislikes the group and its Bali Action Plan for at least three reasons: it obliges all developed countries to make a comparable mitigation effort (the US is not willing to do as much

Extreme weather events on the rise

EXTREME weather events are taking place all over the world at an increasing rate, and with damaging intensity.

In late July, at least 77 people died and thousands were displaced in the worst flooding to hit Beijing in more than 60 years. This was due to a long and heavy downpour on 21 July. It was the heaviest rain in Beijing since records began in 1951, causing rivers to burst their banks and flood major highways, submerging cars with people trapped inside, and sweeping houses and people away.

Meanwhile, the United States is facing a severe heat wave and drought. This has caused significant falls in farm output, with serious effects on global food supply and prices.

The dry weather in the US is partly explained by La Nina, which has a cooling effect on the Pacific Ocean, bringing warmer and drier weather to the south of the US, including Texas whose agriculture has been devastated in the past year.

But many climate scientists are also linking the drought to climate change. According to Peter Stott of the UK government's Met Office Hadley Centre, La Nina is only part of the story.

Stott co-authored a recent study which links climate change with the Texas drought and other extreme weather events. Interviewed by the Voice of America, he said his study found 'clear evidence for human influence on the Texas heat wave and also in the very unusual temperatures we had in the United Kingdom in 2011'.

According to the study, the 2011 Texas drought was 20 times more

likely to occur than in the 1960s as a result of emissions causing climate change. The heat wave in England in November 2011 was 62 times more likely to have occurred than 50 years ago.

Scientists are cautious to note that it is difficult to pinpoint particular extreme weather events as being caused by climate change but new studies have found that climate change has made these events more probable.

Says Stott: 'It is the combination of natural variations of climate that is important here. We saw that in La Nina in Texas, but, over and above that, there is this additional climate effect that can and has indeed in the last year led to a greater vulnerability to extreme weather.'

In November 2011, a path-breaking report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change involving 100 scientists linked the increase in extreme weather events such as heavier rainfall and flooding, and heat waves to climate change.

The report evaluates that there is at least a 66% chance that climate extremes have changed as a result of greenhouse gas emissions, and also notes that 'economic losses from weather- and climate-related disasters are increasing'.

The global insurance industry has reported that 2011 was a record year for catastrophes (many of them weather-related), with economic losses of \$350-400 billion.

A report on extreme weather events and insurance by the Geneva Association shows that the number of natural catastrophes increased from almost 400 in 1980 to 800-1,000 in the period 2006-11. The associated economic losses rose from about \$70 bil-

lion in 1980 to \$380 billion in 2011.

Notable extreme weather-related events in Asia in recent years include Thailand's worst flooding in 50 years in September-October 2011 which had a devastating effect on manufacturing, agriculture and homes, with losses estimated by the World Bank at \$45.7 billion.

Pakistan suffered heavy rain and extensive floods in July-August 2010, which affected 20 million people, killed 2,000 and severely damaged agricultural production; in 2011, the country suffered another major flood which killed thousands more people.

Last year, a severe drought hit Eastern Africa, threatening an estimated 12 million people with food shortage.

Again, scientists were careful not to link the shortage of rain to climate change, but were of the view that the changing climate increased the risk of such events.

There are many lessons from all these recent developments, including that policymakers must pay greater attention to the changing weather in their countries, and that extreme weather events are not isolated and one-off events but part of a pattern.

Priority should be given to putting prevention measures such as flood control in place before the disasters happen, and flood management in anticipation of their happening.

And the growing evidence of the links between these extreme events and climate change should also prompt governments and social movements to increase their seriousness to tackle the causes of climate change. — Martin Khor ◆

The above is extracted from an article that first appeared in the South-North Development Monitor (SUNS, No. 7424, 3 August 2012). SUNS is published by the Third World Network.

as the European Union); it treats developing countries more leniently; and it links the developing countries' actions to the funds and technology transferred to them from the developed countries.

At Durban, a draft decision was put forward to end the life of the AWG-LCA by December 2012. This draft had not even been seen, let alone discussed, by developing countries, but was put on the floor in the last hours of the conference and adopted together with all other decisions on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

At Bangkok in September, many developing countries put forward proposals on several issues not yet resolved in the AWG-LCA, including financing of developing countries' actions, technology transfer, adaptation, mitigation, trade and other measures against developing countries, and capacity building.

The Chair of the AWG-LCA, Aysar Tayeb, prepared a compilation of issues drawn from countries' submissions that have to be resolved or transferred to other bodies, so that the working group can successfully conclude its work and close by December.

However, the developed countries, led by the US and the 'Umbrella Group' (non-European developed countries), vehemently opposed further discussion on most of these issues, and claimed the Chair's paper had no status and was wrongly rais-



Several developed nations' governments are attempting to run away from their obligation to take the lead in cutting greenhouse gas emissions in their own countries.

ing expectations.

It is quite evident that the US and its allied countries want to kill the AWG-LCA and its associated Bali Action Plan and get rid of their three inconvenient elements – comparability of efforts, different treatment of developed and developing countries, and the link between developing countries' actions and finance and technology.

Key principles

A new working group on the

'Durban Platform' was formed in Durban to negotiate a new agreement. The US is insisting that the Platform will not have the three disliked elements of the Bali Action Plan.

But to many developing countries, that is wishful thinking. For them, the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities are key in the Convention and in the new Platform as well.

If the LCA group is to expire, all its issues and principles have to be transferred to other bodies in the Convention, including the Platform.

At stake is whether globally agreed actions to address the climate crisis are fair, or whether the powerful countries will continue to escape from their obligations and shift the burden to the developing world.

Meanwhile, Nature continues to ignore the slow progress or rather backtracking of commitments going on in the sphere of human affairs. As emissions continue to increase and the average global temperature rises, a series of extreme weather events are wreaking havoc all over the world (see box). ♦

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Photo courtesy of UNFCCC/Earth Negotiations Bulletin



The ad hoc working group on long-term cooperative action (AWG-LCA) in session in Bangkok. Developed countries seek to terminate the working group and many of the issues on its agenda.

Sandy storms into US political agenda

The devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy has forced the US political class to lift its taboo on discussion of climate change. While the usual naysayers have sought to explain away its latest manifestation, it will be increasingly difficult to sustain a climate of denial in the face of relentless extreme weather.

Tom Mitchell

HURRICANE Sandy has parked the issue of climate change on the lawn of the White House whether the candidates competing for the keys like it or not.

In October, both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney stressed their commitment to developing oil and gas to improve energy security. Climate change was not mentioned. This position is senseless. The US Midwest has just experienced the worst drought in 60 years, one which has seen economic growth depressed by 0.4% GDP as a result and higher food prices resulting from a 13% drop in corn production. As the East Coast slowly emerges from the deluge and debris brought about by Hurricane Sandy, the job of counting the cost has only just begun.

The evidence suggests the US public has already woken up to the need for a change – 70% now believe the climate is changing and a greater percentage than before want a switch to clean energy. Ignoring numbers like that may be more difficult now for both campaigns.

Scientists recently concluded that the drought was made 20 times more likely by climate change and it seems the US public agrees. So the message for the politicians is as clear as it can be – more oil and gas equals more extreme weather and other climate change impacts, all of which equal greater economic losses.

The US public is concerned about the potential for climate change to increase the number and severity of extreme weather events. Why then is the US so reluctant to take a leading



An oceanfront house in New Jersey in the US wrecked by Hurricane Sandy. Indications from an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report suggest that Sandy-like hurricanes and related extreme storm surges will become more common.

role in the international fight to tackle climate change and why are the presidential candidates focused on outdoing each other on support for fossil fuels? Clearly there are some strong vested interests at play and maybe climate change is just seen as too risky as a campaign issue.

Despite significant progress to reduce emissions at state and city level, the US has done its best to block progress in international climate negotiations. It has consistently acted alongside Saudi Arabia and other oil states to ensure agreements are not reached, withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol and delayed climate finance support to developing countries. Now climate change has served up the October surprise. Hurricane Sandy – dubbed the Frankenstorm and linked widely to climate change in the US media – has brought widespread flooding and sizeable economic losses. Insurers are already talking of more than \$16 billion; more seriously the human cost is not yet fully known.

So first, let's be clear on the science. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report *Managing the risks of climate extremes and disasters for advancing climate change adaptation (SREX)*, of which I was an author, said:

- It is likely that there has been a poleward shift in the main Northern and Southern hemisphere extra-tropical storm tracks. Hurricane Sandy is an example, as was Hurricane Irene, which hit the same area last August. The IPCC also concluded that there is stronger confidence for a further poleward shift in the future, so the evidence is that Sandy and Irene are just the start. 'Studies indicate a northward and eastward shift in the Atlantic cyclone activity during the last 60 years with both more frequent and more intense wintertime cyclones in the high-latitude Atlantic.' A set of studies attribute this trend to climate change. There is less evidence on the intensity and frequency of such hurricanes.

- It is likely that there has been

an increase in extreme coastal high water related to increases in mean sea level. The record storm surge from Hurricane Sandy is probably the most destructive element, with the surge exceeding warnings in some places. In other words the potential for coastal flood damage from extreme weather is greater than before.

It will take time for scientists to assess whether Hurricane Sandy was made more likely by climate change. What we do know though is that indications from the IPCC report suggest that Sandy-like hurricanes and related extreme storm surges will become more common.

Hurricane Sandy has put climate change on the election agenda even if the candidates didn't want it. The important thing now is what happens next. Tackling climate change must become a focus of the next administration, just as healthcare was for Obama's first term. Continuing a fossil fuel focus and ducking international leadership on climate change is effectively a slow-motion robbery of the future.

The impacts of climate change have already become so serious in some developing countries that they are fighting for a financial mechanism to pay for climate-related losses and damage in the climate negotiations. They are also petitioning the UN General Assembly to request a hearing by the International Court of Justice on who should be held accountable for the damages caused by climate change. The leaders of this action fully expect the US and other industrialised countries to be the defendants.

Does the US president really want to be put on trial in this way? Bold action from the US on tackling climate change would help to stop all this. Whether they are in Baltimore or Bangladesh, the future ability of people to batten down the hatches is dependent on a grown-up response from America's top politicians. ♦

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Merchants of doubt deny climate change connection to Hurricane Sandy

Steve Horn

MANY serious, thought-provoking post-mortems have ensued in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, which recently tore through the heart of the financial capital of the world. The disaster will cost the city roughly \$60 billion to repair, according to an Associated Press report.

Figures such as New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, former President Bill Clinton, writer and activist Bill McKibben, environmental reporter Mark Hertsgaard, and numerous others all have connected the dots between the tragedy in New York City and its exacerbation at the hands of climate change.

On the other side of the spectrum, no matter how bad the tragedy, it seems, climate change denial will continue apace by the 'merchants of doubt'. Hurricane Sandy was no exception this time around.

Patrick Michaels of the Koch-funded Cato Institute – who recently authored a report described by Greenpeace USA's Connor Gibson as a 'Counterfeit Climate Report to Deceive Congress' – denied any connection between climate change and Sandy, going so far as to raise the spectre of 'global cooling'.

'It's also consistent with a planet with colder temperatures as well as one with warmer ones,' he told Andy Revkin of the *New York Times*. 'More important, events like this are inevitable on a planet that has an ocean with the geography of the Atlantic (meaning a Gulf Stream-like feature), a large north-south continent on its western margin without a transverse mountain range to inhibit the merger of tropical warmth with polar cold, and four seasons in the temperate latitudes.'

Revkin neglected to mention that Michaels told CNN in August 2010 that 40% of his salary comes straight from the coffers of the oil and gas industry, which fuels the climate change denial echo chamber. In similar fashion, back in 2006, Michaels denied any connection between climate change and Hurricane Katrina.

Marc Morano – a climate change denier who gleefully lauded President Barack Obama as 'George W Obama' for his inaction on tackling climate change in any meaningful way at last year's United Nations climate conference in Durban – also inserted his own polemical take on Hurricane Sandy, stating:

'These new "Tabloid Climatology" claims by activists attempting to link any weather event to man-made global warming are disgusting. The "new normal" for climate activists is their ever shifting claims as they morph the entire AGW [anthropogenic global warming] argument to focus on extreme weather. They are exploiting any weather event to promote their religious-like cause and a storm like Sandy is shamelessly used to gin up fear.'

Fox News, as always, served as a key piece of the climate change denial machine's echo chamber. This time around it gave denier Joe Bastardi the megaphone on *The Sean Hannity Show*, where he denied any connection between climate change and Hurricane Sandy:

'Let me tell you, this storm was long overdue...Get used to it along the east coast...We are in a perilous time because the Atlantic's warming, the Pacific's cold, it's the 1950s all over again. The next 5-10 years we're probably going to see several more storms along the eastern seaboard. It has nothing to do with global warming, it has everything to do with nature and then we'll go back to where we were in the '60s and '70s.'

Above and beyond this trifecta denying any connection between Hurricane Sandy and climate change, the Climate Depot website has compiled a long list of statements from the denier world. The Media Matters website also showed that Fox News repeated the 'no connection' trope on multiple occasions.

If one thing's for certain, Sandy has made evident that no climate change-amplified catastrophe is too tragic for the tobacco playbook team to deny the ongoing climate crisis. ♦

Steve Horn is a research fellow with DeSmogBlog.com, from which this article is reproduced.

Climate change and the Caribbean

While global media focused on the destruction suffered by the US as a result of superstorm Sandy, the plight of the Caribbean countries which had earlier borne the brunt of the hurricane was almost completely ignored. *Kevin Edmonds* highlights the dire straits of these poor countries as they try to weather the ravages of one hurricane after another.

WITH Hurricane Sandy still vividly imprinted on everyone's mind, it is important to remember that the storm's destruction did not begin once the storm came ashore off the coast of New Jersey. Before the storm made landfall, it took the lives of 70 people, the majority occurring in Haiti (54) and Cuba (11), but also in Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas.

While many regard the Caribbean as being blessed with warm tropical waters and white sandy beaches, it has also been cursed by geography, as it sits in what can best be understood as 'Hurricane Alley'. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Climate Change Centre has stated that 'The two dozen island nations of the Caribbean, and the 40 million people who live there, are in a state of increased vulnerability to climate change. Higher temperatures, rises in sea level, and increased hurricane intensity threaten lives, property and livelihoods throughout the region.'

Just as Hurricane Sandy was described as a 'Frankenstorm' because it was a combination of the worst possible scenarios, the Caribbean has been dealing with increasingly intense storms – the result of which has torn at the economic, social, and political fabric of the region. Norman Girvan of the University of the West Indies reflected that '30 years ago, one expected to deal with major disasters of this kind, say, once every ten years. Nowadays, most islands expect at least one, and possibly two or three, every year. In other words this now has to be seen as a permanent, recurring phenomenon or integral feature of Caribbean development.'

According to Princeton University geosciences professor Michael



A man walking amidst the devastation wrought by Hurricane Tomas which hit St Lucia in 2010. Increased hurricane intensity threatens lives, property and livelihoods throughout the Caribbean.

Oppenheimer, 'Climate change will probably increase storm intensity and size simultaneously, resulting in a significant intensification of storm surges.' David Enfield, a senior scientist at the University of Miami and former physical oceanographer at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, stated that 'The severe hurricanes might actually become worse. We may have to invent a category 6.'

Perhaps out of necessity, CARICOM has avoided politicising the issue of climate change, choosing instead to develop ways to both minimise and cope with its undesirable and unpredictable effects. As far back as 1994, Barbados hosted the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. This resulted in the emergence of the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) project. The plan sought to integrate the impacts of climate change into the planning strategies of the region and strengthening technical capacity. De-

spite these moves, Mother Nature has been insistent on not giving the region a break from the intense storms.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan levelled Grenada, destroying 90% of the homes on the island and killing 12. The island literally looked like it had been hit by an atomic bomb. The Prime Minister's own home was flattened, and he had to relocate his office and residence to a British naval ship. Not surprisingly, the storm decimated the island's agriculture industry as well. At the time it was the most powerful hurricane to hit the Caribbean in a decade.

Hurricane Wilma later surpassed Ivan's power in 2005, claiming the lives of 12 in Haiti, four in Cuba, and one in the Bahamas and Jamaica. In 2007, while not as powerful as Wilma, Hurricane Dean took 28 lives in the Caribbean. In 2010, Hurricane Tomas smashed into St. Lucia, causing an estimated \$500 million in damages. The hurricane destroyed the island's banana crop, severely damaged the John Compton dam, washed out cru-



Sea level rise would submerge many of the Caribbean's beaches and deal a critical blow to the tourism industry, on which the region is highly dependent.

cial roads, and took the lives of 14 people. To put things in perspective, the United States is over 1,800 times the size of St. Lucia in regard to population; on this basis it would be equivalent to the United States dealing with \$916,000,000,000 in damages.

Given that much of the Caribbean is already in a dire economic situation, their ability to rebuild is severely hampered. Each superstorm chips away at already scarce infrastructure, increasing the debt burden of these nations and placing them in a more precarious situation. Unfortunately, the impact of climate change in the Caribbean is not confined to hurricanes – the region also has to deal with rising water levels and rising temperatures.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted in 2007 that the global average sea level would rise between seven and 23 inches by the end of this century. This would have a significant impact on the low-lying islands of the Bahamas and Anguilla. It would also submerge many of the region's beaches and deal the tourism industry a critical blow. Because the Caribbean is highly dependent on tourism, a decline in this sector would rob many governments of their most important tax base – resulting in declining support for healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Furthermore, 2010 saw a sharp

spike in ocean temperatures in the Caribbean. The increased temperatures lead to widespread coral deaths. In 2005, 80% of corals were bleached and as many as 40% died in areas on the eastern side of the Caribbean. Scientists studying corals in the Caribbean reported that the damage to corals in 2010 was more devastating than in 2005. It is estimated that 80% of marine life is found in coral reefs and that these reefs are found in only 1% of the ocean territory.

Thus the impact on reefs has social and economic consequences. In the Caribbean, fisheries employ nearly 200,000 people, noted Dr. Leonard Nurse of the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies at the University of the West Indies. Furthermore, the industry earns \$5 billion to \$6 billion per year in foreign exchange and provides about 10% of the region's protein intake. As another example of the Caribbean's near-total dependency on tourism, dive tourism and recreational fishing are also important revenue sources. In 2000, one study estimated that dive tourism and fisheries in the Caribbean provided an economic value between \$3.1 billion and \$4.6 billion. In a compounding manner, the rising sea levels would create higher storm surges during hurricanes, and the warming ocean waters would fuel

stronger storms.

When it comes to discussing climate change in the Caribbean, sharp inequalities in power and resources come to light. Despite climate change posing a major threat to their survival – and their playing an insignificant part in carbon emissions – the small countries of the Caribbean have extremely limited influence on the decisions being made (or not made). Extend this inequality to matters of trade and finance and the region is not only at a major disadvantage in preparing for and coping with disasters, both economic and environmental, but is also being assaulted on many fronts by issues they cannot control.

Dr. Girvan best articulated the seriousness of the situation when he remarked that 'When you combine acute climate change-related stress of this kind with (a) the acute economic stress arising out of erosion of trade preferences and the failure to develop a new "insertion" into the global economy, (b) fiscal stress due to unsustainable debt burdens and the impact of the global economic crisis, and (c) the seeming incapacity of governments to control the impact of transnational crime, one must wonder if we are not in fact experiencing an overlapping and interconnected series of challenges which in their totality, challenge the assumptions underlying the "national statehood" dispensation of the region.'

While it is hard to see any bright spots coming out of such a devastating event like Hurricane Sandy, perhaps it will force the issue of climate change onto the political agenda in such a way that it will be impossible to ignore. The Caribbean has not had the luxury to ignore climate change because the region was affected in more acute ways via hurricanes, rising sea levels, and warming currents. Hurricane Sandy has shown that this is now changing. ♦

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Kyoto Protocol second commitment period remains elusive

Even as scientific evidence mounts on worsening climate change, developed countries are not willing to meet their legal obligations to make deep greenhouse gas emission cuts under the Kyoto Protocol.

**Chee Yoke Ling and
Hilary Chiew**

BY the end of the most recent round of climate talks in Bangkok (30 August to 5 September), there was no movement from developed countries to increase the level of their ambition with regard to emissions reduction – the low pledges, subject to many conditions, made in Durban, South Africa last December remain unchanged.

The first commitment period for emission reductions under the Kyoto Protocol ends on 31 December 2012, and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) has been negotiating since 2005 to reach a new set of targets to commence on 1 January 2013.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 7) that met in Durban failed to finalise the details of the second commitment period and another year was given to do so.

The outstanding issues carried forward from the Durban CMP 7 include the following: the length of the KP second commitment period (five or eight years); quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives (QELROs), converted from the pledges made by Annex I Parties; implications of the carry-over of assigned amount units (AAUs) from the first commitment period; access to the KP mechanisms for Parties that are not participating in a second commit-



Civil society activists in Bangkok display a banner calling for emission cuts by developed countries. However, by the end of the Bangkok climate talks, there was no movement from these countries to increase their ambition with regard to emission reduction.

ment period; and legal issues to ensure the smooth transition from the first to the second commitment period.

Delegates at the Bangkok meeting worked in two groups: a contact group that exchanged views on the outstanding political issues and way forward, and a spin-off group on numbers/text, including QELROs, options of AAUs carry-over and the review (of second commitment period QELROs). The spin-off group was co-facilitated by Jürgen Lefevere (EU) and Sandea de Wet (South Africa), and it continued discussions that started in May in Bonn when the AWG-KP reconvened after Durban.

There were also informal consultations (continued from Bonn) by the AWG-KP Chair Madeleine Diouf (Senegal) and the Vice-Chair Jukka Uusukainen (Finland) on the legal and procedural issues relating to transition to the second commitment period.

The additional meeting in Bangkok was aimed at resolving the out-

standing issues so that the AWG-KP can successfully complete its work at the next CMP in Doha, Qatar in December 2012. The AWG-KP started its work in 2005, but the reluctance of several developed-country Parties to comply with their KP obligations, as well as Canada's withdrawal from the Protocol altogether, has resulted in years of delay. At the same time, Japan and Russia are not participating in the second commitment period (CP2). Australia, Monaco and New Zealand as well as Kazakhstan and Ukraine (economies in transition that are Annex I Parties) have not submitted their QELROs yet.

(Observers say that a gap between the end of the first commitment period – 31 December 2012 – and the beginning of the next period is increasingly inevitable since it will take time for ratifications to the amendment of the KP incorporating the second commitment period. In addition, some Parties will need to undergo domestic legislative steps to imple-

ment their international obligations. Different Parties and groups of countries have submitted proposals to avoid/address such a gap.)

A meaningful KP second commitment period was part of the package that led to the acceptance by developing countries of the 'Durban Platform' decision to start a new ad hoc working group to work on an agreement to be effective from 2020. Developing countries expressed disappointment over the substance and pace of the Bonn negotiations at the closing of the May plenary of the AWG-KP.

Severe disappointment

The situation did not change at the Bangkok meeting, with none of the outstanding issues closer to resolution.

During the closing plenary on 5 September of the AWG-KP's informal additional meeting, the African Group expressed severe disappointment over the lack of movement by Annex I Parties in raising the level of ambition for emission reductions. A joint statement by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) lamented that the environmental integrity of the KP, which is the only legally binding treaty, is eroding before our eyes. A group of 23 developing countries in a joint statement described the KP as being in an extremely sad state of affairs that bodes ill not only for the future of the current climate regime but, even more so, for the lives and prospects for better and more sustainable living conditions of the billions of people that their countries represent.

An informal paper dated 5 September was circulated in Bangkok, the 'Vice-Chair's non-paper on possible elements for a Doha decision adopting the Kyoto Protocol amendments'. This is an updated version of the non-paper circulated by the AWG-KP Vice-Chair in May, and contains proposals from several Parties and groups of Parties placed under the following headings: preamble; adoption of the amendments contained in the annex



The venue of the 1997 negotiations in Kyoto, Japan, which adopted the Kyoto Protocol. Up to now, there remains no agreement on the details of the second commitment period under the Protocol.

to the decision (on the commencement date and length of the second commitment period); urging Parties to ratify the amendments in an expedited manner with a view to facilitating their prompt entry into force; provisional application; any additional language related to legal continuity; operational and technical continuity; any outstanding consequential revisions of the previous CMP decisions, including by linking to any outstanding work under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA); other.

A second updated paper at the end of the Bangkok meeting was from the work of the spin-off group, titled the 'Co-facilitators' non-paper on proposed amendments to the Kyoto Protocol' with two options from the December 2011 Durban decision 1/CMP.7 and a third received from AOSIS dated 14 May 2012. This paper contains, among others, options for a table of the QELROs for each Annex I Party that will replace the current one in Annex B to the Protocol. The numerous conditions attached to many pledges/QELROs are also listed.

There is widespread concern that the ambition level of those Annex I Parties that have submitted the range of figures is not high enough for a meaningful CP2. According to the

AOSIS submission, the aggregate reduction for participating developed countries (relative to 1990 levels, and for a five-year commitment period ending in 2017) should be 33%, if the rules proposed by AOSIS are implemented. However, AOSIS estimates that the actual aggregate reduction of participating countries for the five-year period (based on figures supplied by these countries) would only be 23%, thus falling far short of what is needed. Moreover, the EU continues to prefer an eight-year period for the CP2, a period that AOSIS, LDCs and the African Group fear will lock in very insufficient reductions until 2020.

With fundamentally no progress made on the outstanding issues in Bangkok, CMP 8 in Doha thus promises to be very difficult. At the closing plenary of the AWG-KP on 5 September, Chair Diouf announced that she will prepare a text that captures the discussions so far for Doha. This will be available by October to enable Parties to give proper consideration domestically. She added that at the ministerial meeting in Seoul (South Korea) in the second half of October ministers will be able to consider this text in preparation for Doha. ♦

Chee Yoke Ling is Director of Programmes at the Third World Network. Hilary Chiew is a senior researcher with TWN.

Kyoto Protocol central to international response to climate change – G77

As the following report on the statements made at the closing plenary of the AWG-KP in Bangkok reveals, developing countries were emphatic in their insistence on a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol.

**Chee Yoke Ling and
Hilary Chiew**

ALGERIA, on behalf of the Group of 77 (G77) and China, said the group is engaging in constructive discussion on the translation of (emissions reduction) pledges to QELROs. It stressed the legal option to avoid a gap between the first and second commitment periods, adding that the CP2 under the KP is crucial for the group.

Algeria said that CP2 must be ambitious and the 1 January 2013 commencement date should not be delayed. It considered the KP as central to the international response to climate change and that it is essential to deliver a strong and legally binding outcome in Doha that ensures no gap. It emphasised that Annex I Parties should not use flexible mechanisms without making a commitment under the KP. It further urged those Parties which still have not put forward their QELROs to do so. It also said that those that have done so should consider how to improve on their QELRO ambition by Doha.

Swaziland, on behalf of the African Group, said the group came to Bangkok ready to engage in substantial discussions with the hope that they could produce a negotiating text for Doha. In this regard, the group submitted decision text on entry into force of amendments and transitional arrangements, and worked with partners to significantly improve and contribute to a proposal by developing countries on carry-over of surplus units.

Nevertheless, it said, the group remains deeply concerned about the



Madeleine Diouf, Chair of the AWG-KP working group tasked with hammering out the details of the Kyoto Protocol second commitment period, and Vice-Chair Jukka Uusukainen preside over the closing plenary session of the working group on 5 September.

slow progress witnessed in the KP discussions. It stressed that key for the group, as it has indicated repeatedly, is raising the level of ambition for Annex I Parties across the board, including Annex I Parties to the KP. The group remains severely disappointed that there doesn't seem to be any movement further forward in this respect.

Swaziland said that some Parties told stories about their national circumstances and domestic laws as a way of trying to justify why they are leaving the KP, staying out of the second commitment period or not taking QELROs at all. It said the countries of the African Group which have been negotiating since 2005 all have national circumstances; their circumstances are that the effects of climate change, which they did not cause, continue to ravage their countries, adding to poverty, underdevelopment and death. These are far more urgent circumstances and they urge their partners in the Annex I countries to take this matter seriously.

Swaziland stressed further that

the opportunity to avoid 2°C of warming – let alone a level of warming that keeps Africa safe – is closing. Failure by Annex I countries to raise ambition now in Doha, and delaying until a mid-term review or beyond, sends a worrying message and risks committing the world to a path of dangerous warming. At the same time, excessive use by the Annex I Parties of a limited atmospheric budget, valued by economists in the trillions of dollars, also denies it to non-Annex I Parties (developing countries), imposing new costs and limiting development. It undermines both their survival and their development.

The African Group lamented the lack of leadership from Annex I Parties in tackling the problem of climate change and the current low pledges on the table. No amount of spinning will serve to convince that the current pledges are in line with what science and equity require, or that they meet the Convention's requirement that Annex I Parties make a contribution to achieving the objectives of the Convention that is 'equitable and appro-

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

priate'.

After seven years of negotiations, faced with unambiguous scientific information, and in a world with disasters rising daily, there can be no excuse, said Swaziland. It lamented the resistance to raising the level of ambition, and the intent by partners to lock their low levels of ambition into an eight-year commitment period. It condemned this as reckless disregard for human life. People in poor developing countries are also human beings, but the poor and the most vulnerable suffer, and will suffer more, from the effects of climate change, while many countries which have used the common atmospheric space to develop their economies for many decades continue to unashamedly pollute without any regard to lack of adaptive capacities in developing countries.

The African Group insisted that those who caused this problem of climate change take the lead in fixing it. It was perplexed by the elevation of economic competitiveness over and above the lives of the poor. Africa did not cause this problem, and Africa's contribution to this problem even now is still tiny. On the contrary, Africa stands ready to offer solutions and to play its part.

Swaziland went further to say that Doha must effect the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol by adopting amendments to Annex B of the Protocol with credible and legally binding cuts for the developed countries (QELROs). This is the minimum position for Africa. It must surely be a minimum position for the planet.

The Gambia, on behalf of the Least Developed Countries and AOSIS, expressed concern that the environmental integrity of the KP, which is the only legally binding treaty, is eroding before our eyes. It stressed that this will require actions in Doha that prioritise limiting emissions according to the latest science.

It said that Annex I Parties that had not submitted their economy-wide emissions reduction targets should do so, and that all Annex I Parties should raise the ambition, without conditions. The CP2 should be for

a length of five years (not eight years, which would lock in insufficient emission reduction) and there must be a dramatic cut in surplus AAUs from the first commitment period. It added further that Annex I Parties must have QELROs inscribed in Annex B of the KP if they wish to participate in the KP flexible mechanisms. Annex I Parties not party to the KP must take on ambitious commitments under the AWG-LCA.

Slow progress

Saudi Arabia, speaking on behalf of the 22-member Arab Group, expressed concern over the slow progress of negotiations on the Protocol, and stressed the importance of agreement on a number of important outstanding issues which are of major concern for developing countries in general and Arab countries in particular.

Agreement on a CP2 of the Protocol is an essential requirement during the Doha conference, it said, calling for the CP2 to begin immediately with effect from 1 January 2013.

The group said it followed with interest the proposals put forward by a number of industrialised countries on emission reduction ambitions post-2012 to 2020. It is concerned about efforts by developed countries to make their mitigation contingent on mitigation action in developing countries. Industrialised countries have a historical responsibility to lead in cutting emissions. The group said it expects industrialised countries to demonstrate leadership in implementing reduction commitments required by the Protocol and to raise the level of ambition, taking into account the importance of the separation between the path of negotiation within the framework of the Protocol and any other negotiating tracks (referring to the working groups on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action).

It emphasised and reaffirmed the importance of reaching an agreement in Doha on a second commitment period that includes all its original Par-

ties, and called on all Annex I Parties to accede to the second commitment period, stressing also that access to the Clean Development Mechanism should be conditioned by the operationalisation of the CP2 through its full ratification.

Dominica spoke on behalf of the ALBA grouping, which includes Bolivia, Dominica, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. It said that the group came to support this process and to work together to reach a successful and balanced outcome. They knew this would not be easy, but felt it was not impossible.

It is deeply concerned that since Copenhagen (2009 meeting of Parties to the UNFCCC and the KP) there have been attempts to weaken the multilateral system through, for example, trying to develop a bottom-up approach based on voluntary pledges, which is not consistent with the urgency of addressing climate change, and the survival of the planet and humanity. The lack of political will is more and more evident in each Conference of the Parties, hence the need to act firmly in order to strengthen the multilateral framework required to address the impacts of climate change.

At this session in Bangkok, it said further, it had noticed with great dismay attempts made by some Parties to start considering the dilution of the legal character of the KP with even more flexibility provisions and 'options' that will further erode the strength of this legal instrument, taking note that not all Parties have put forward their QELROs as agreed in Durban. Meanwhile time is running out to produce the results that the planet needs, the adoption of the second and subsequent commitments of the Kyoto Protocol.

Dominica is also concerned that discussions on the KP are being also diverged to the Durban Platform. Cautioning against getting confused, it said the KP is not a mechanism but rather the only legal instrument to tackle the increasing amount of emissions from developed-country Parties, which have to assume their historical responsibility and leadership in contributing to combat climate change.

Dominica also recalled that the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June reaffirmed that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and expressed profound alarm that greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise globally, affecting all, particularly developing countries. The conference also agreed to urge Parties to the UNFCCC and to the Kyoto Protocol to fully implement their commitments, as well as decisions adopted under those agreements. It also underscored that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries. That is why global action is required through global agreements under the Convention, based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and equity, to protect the planet for the benefit of present and future generations. It's time to act on these agreements, Dominica stressed.

The main commitment is the adoption of the CP2 of the Kyoto Protocol, as agreed in Durban, according to ALBA, and this is a crucial matter for developing countries as part of the balanced package of the Durban outcome. It must be ambitious in terms of the emission reductions, and begin immediately on 1 January 2013. The goals for emission reduction should be based on science and not on political or economic interests.

It added that it was paradoxical that the Bangkok session had been discussing ambition for the Durban Platform for a post-2020 agreement when there wasn't enough ambition for the only existing, rules-based, legally binding instrument to combat climate change.

It also said that only by undertaking legally binding commitments under the Kyoto Protocol should Annex I Parties be able to benefit from flexible mechanisms established under the Protocol. Moreover, it is probably time to develop a compliance regime particularly in relation to the compliance of Annex I and II Parties with their obligations under the Convention.

Iran, speaking for a group of de-

veloping countries (Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, China, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Venezuela), reiterated that the Kyoto Protocol is the only legally binding, rules-based instrument with quantitative emissions reduction targets for Annex I Parties. It must be preserved.

The moment of truth has now been reached with respect to the Kyoto Protocol, it said further. The litmus test of the commitment of Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol is now being applied – and they are found to be wanting. One Annex I Party to the KP has left it for good, several others want to keep it at arms' length, while still others have halfheartedly promised to recommit themselves to it. This is not a very promising state of affairs for the Kyoto Protocol. It is, in fact, an extremely sad state of affairs – one that bodes ill not only for the future of the current climate regime but, even more so, for the lives and prospects for better and more sustainable living conditions of billions of people.

Nevertheless, said Iran, the group of countries continue to believe that the Kyoto Protocol and its second commitment period remains a key component of the current international climate regime that can help move the global community towards a more ambitious and equitable pathway for effectively and urgently addressing the risks, challenges and impacts of climate change. It would allow the reduction of a significant proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions to be kept as binding treaty commitments of Annex I Parties, even as efforts are made, through the work of the AWG-LCA and the ADP, to ensure the full, effective, and sustained implementation of the Convention and enhanced actions under it, in an ambitious and equitable manner.

The joint statement stressed that Doha must lay a firm foundation for further work under the Convention to address climate change in an ambi-

tious and equitable manner. For the Kyoto Protocol negotiations to be successful, the following must be considered as the benchmarks: Annex I Parties to the KP must commit at Doha to ambitious QELROs to be provisionally applied as of 1 January 2013, with such QELROs putting them on a pathway to reducing their emissions to at least 40-50% below 1990 levels by 2020. This means that developed countries, as a whole, must keep their emissions by 2020 to be low 9 gigatons from the more than 20 gigatons that they emit today.

However, their weak pledges, together with accounting loopholes, could result in emissions of well over 20 gigatons in 2020 by the developed countries – almost half of the global budget of 44 gigatons defined by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to keep global warming under 2°C – for only one-seventh of the world's population, leaving the rest of the globe – 6 billion people, most of them poor – to survive and develop on the remaining half. This is clearly not ambitious and just as clearly not equitable.

Iran said that success in Doha requires three elements. First, an ambitious and legally binding second commitment period that includes a fair and science-based contribution by Annex I Parties towards closing the ambition gap. Second, an ambitious agreed outcome under the Bali Action Plan that includes comparable mitigation efforts by Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol Parties (the United States being the single most significant country) and clear commitments for finance for 2013 and through to 2020, as well as progress on other unfinished business from the Bali Action Plan. Third, greater clarity over the role and mandate of the working group under the Durban Platform, including the discussions on ambition and on negotiations towards a 2015 outcome to come into effect in 2020. In the absence of these elements, work under the current working groups (on the KP, and on long-term cooperative action under the UNFCCC dealing with the Bali Action Plan) must continue.

These outcomes must be carefully balanced, reflecting the careful balance struck in the Durban package. Working groups cannot be closed if they have not finished their work. Nor can there be acceptance in good conscience of unambitious outcomes that would place the world almost irrevocably on a path for warming that is dangerous.

In Durban, according to the group of countries, it was strongly proclaimed that Africa will not be the graveyard of the KP. Likewise in Doha, the KP will not be allowed to be buried in the sands of Asia.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo spoke on behalf of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations (32 out of the 52 countries of the Coalition endorsed the statement). It emphasised the need for the AWG-KP to finalise as soon as possible issues such as the translation of pledges to QELROs, carry-overs and legal options to avoid a gap between the first and the second commitment periods, so that the second commitment period can start smoothly on 1 January 2013. It added that the Kyoto Protocol regime is suffering from the lack of ambition and political commitment of Annex B Parties (developed countries and economies in transition) and once again strongly called for deeper greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments by those Parties.

It said that REDD+ can offer a significant contribution to the closure of the ambition gap provided that finance to support results-based actions based on a national MRV process is enhanced.

(REDD+ refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.)

Engaging in good faith

Nicaragua spoke on behalf of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. It expressed deep concern on the slow progress in the negotiations during the Bangkok session and called on Par-

ties to intensify all efforts in accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, to ensure the establishment of the CP2 of the Kyoto Protocol by 1 January 2013, as agreed in Durban.

It said further that the possibility of being unable to avoid any gaps before the ratification of the CP2 and to establish ambitious targets for reducing emissions, is very real and disturbing. Now, more than ever, it is urgent to engage in good faith in this negotiating process to increase emission reductions by countries with legally binding reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

Nicaragua wondered if the necessary confidence and compliance system will be developed regarding voluntary pledges in reaching the requirements that science is recommending. The SICA countries, despite being economies highly dependent on their natural resources and having no legally binding obligations, are continuing to make meaningful mitigation actions voluntarily, using their own scarce resources which are urgently needed in their struggle for poverty eradication and sustainable development. They are doing more than what they are obliged to, therefore the developed countries must comply with their obligations and provide the SICA countries with all the necessary means of implementation for financing and new adequate, predictable resources in addition to official development assistance.

Being also highly vulnerable to climate change, the SICA countries continue to face and suffer the consequences of the unwillingness of Annex I Parties to comply and commit to increasing their emission reduction targets, Nicaragua stressed.

Switzerland, speaking for the Environmental Integrity Group (Mexico, South Korea and Switzerland), considered the discussion in Bangkok to have been very useful and said that it allowed options for Doha to be streamlined. Though Parties did not reach a final decision, there was better understanding on the outstanding issues. There is a text that the Chair will prepare with all the elements to ensure a smooth transition to a CP2 and a successful conclusion

of the work of the AWG-KP in Doha.

Australia, for the Umbrella Group (a loose coalition of non-European developed countries, among whom Australia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Norway, Russia and Ukraine endorsed this statement), spoke about the need to ensure a smooth transition to the CP2 from 1 January 2013 and to ensure that the KP infrastructure and mechanism continue to deliver. It added that securing the smooth transition will ensure a flow of environmental and economic benefits to achieve the global goal (of emissions reduction). A strong KP will ensure a global carbon market.

It said that the group stands behind its pledges wherever they are inscribed; the KP played a part and with the CP2 covering a fraction of global emissions, it is not a solution for the future. It said that including the Durban Platform will make Durban a reality.

The European Union said it left Bonn with mixed feelings and Bangkok in a good mood. It set out the need for Doha to adopt a ratifiable amendment to the KP for a CP2; inscribe QELROs in Annex B; agree on an eight-year CP2, to be combined with a review process. It noted that the CP2 coverage is significantly less than the first commitment period, and expressed disappointment that some Parties are not ready to reconsider their position regarding participation in the CP2. It also said that to ensure the current insufficient level of ambition is not locked in, ambition will be increased by 2020 when there will be a single legally binding commitment (referring to the Durban Platform outcome).

(Observers within the negotiations venue noted that the EU itself could do more but prefers to condition a higher ambition on increased commitments by developing countries through a new agreement. Meanwhile, outside the Bangkok meeting venue, protesters cried shame on the EU for its weak pledge/QELRO that, coupled with the KP flexible mechanisms and accounting loopholes, means that effectively there will be insignificant reduction within the EU itself for the CP2.) ♦

Developing countries call for resolution of outstanding issues under Bali Action Plan

In addition to a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol, the unresolved issues under the Bali Action Plan must be addressed before work begins on a new post-2020 climate agreement. In stressing this at the closing plenary session of the AWG-LCA in Bangkok, developing countries pointed out that this would be in accordance with the 'Durban package' agreed at the climate talks in South Africa last year.

**Hilary Chiew and
Meena Raman**

STRESSING the importance of a balanced outcome at the closing plenary of the session in Bangkok on 5 September, developing countries said outstanding issues in the Bali Action Plan must be resolved with clear direction on how to address them.

Developing countries including Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, China, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Venezuela, as well as the ALBA countries (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) and countries in the Central American Integration System (SICA) called on the Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), Aysar Tayeb (Saudi Arabia), to draft texts on the relevant issues to advance the negotiations in Doha.

China said that to have a meaningful and successful conclusion in Doha, Parties could not go to Doha empty-handed and wanted the AWG-LCA Chair to prepare draft texts to assist Parties. It referred to a Chinese saying that 'no matter how wise a housewife is, she could not cook a rice meal without rice'. China urged the Chair to get the 'rice' ready by Doha so that the Chair will not be a 'des-



Chair of the AWG-LCA working group dealing with the Bali Action Plan, Aysar Tayeb (pic), circulated an informal overview note that 'reflects the exchanges on the various topics on the AWG-LCA agenda and possible ways of how issues may be addressed'.

perate housewife'.

Gambia, for the Least Developed Countries, called for the extension of the mandate of the AWG-LCA for another year to reach an agreed outcome, as there were many issues that were yet to be resolved.

Developing countries also stressed that the Doha outcomes must be carefully balanced, reflecting the Durban package. A number of them could not see the closure of the working groups (referring to the AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP, the working group under the Kyoto Protocol tasked with finalising the second com-

mitment period of emission cuts by developed-country Parties) if they had not finished their work. Many developing countries also said that they could not in good conscience accept unambitious outcomes that would place the world almost irrevocably on the path for warming that is dangerous.

The Group of 77 and China expressed concern over the slow progress of work in Bangkok and called on Parties to move into areas of convergence and minimise divergence.

In response to developed coun-

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

tries who were reluctant to engage on the issues of importance to developing countries, the African Group said there could not be a situation in which Parties unpack the Durban package and pick and choose only their favoured elements, and then expect success in Doha. Movement in the process is predicated on balanced progress in all of the mandates (of the working groups), further stressed the African Group.

The ALBA group said that the agreed outcome of the AWG-LCA should be expressed in substantive decisions, and in areas where Parties are not able to finalise an agreement, the COP should take procedural decisions signalling the next steps to continue consideration of those issues.

India said that Parties cannot simply let the unresolved issues fall off the table because Parties did not reach agreement even though the BAP mandated them. While technical issues can go to the relevant UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies for further work, the unresolved issues which involve commitments and which require broad political consideration and direction must be taken on board by the ADP, which will be the only political forum for future work after the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP are successfully closed, added India further.

Chair Tayeb at the closing plenary of the AWG-LCA circulated an informal overview note of 35 pages which he had prepared. The note states that it '... brings together the work of the informal additional session of the AWG-LCA held in Bangkok ... It reflects the exchanges on the various topics on the AWG-LCA agenda and possible ways of how issues may be addressed. It does not represent consensus by Parties regarding the content, form or way forward, including on possible decision text. The note draws from views, interventions and options presented by Parties, including submissions and written inputs in their consideration of the various agenda items. It is intended to assist Parties in their reflection on progress made and remaining challenges.'

Developed countries raised objections to the informal overview note prepared by Chair Tayeb, saying that it did not reflect their views and was not balanced. They wanted closure of the AWG-LCA following the consideration of the limited issues mandated from Durban. There was reluctance to deal with issues raised by developing countries which were still outstanding from the BAP and that were not covered by the Cancun or Durban decisions. These issues include emission reductions of developed countries up to 2020, finance, technology transfer, capacity building, and adaptation support.

Substantial work needed

Representing the Group of 77 and China, Algeria said that to achieve a successful outcome for the AWG-LCA in Doha, substantial work must be achieved in the areas of adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building. The funding gap between 2013 and 2020 as well as all aspects related to finance, the arrangements between the COP and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), MRV (monitoring, reporting and verifying) of financial support, technology transfer, capacity building, adaptation in the light of new obligations agreed in Cancun (COP 16) and Durban (COP 17) are yet to be addressed. It expressed concern over the slow progress in the negotiations and called on Parties to move into areas of convergence and minimise divergence. It called for a fair, equitable and comprehensive outcome in Doha, taking into account the BAP and substantive progress made in Cancun and Durban.

Bolivia spoke on behalf of a group of developing-country Parties comprising Algeria, Argentina, China, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Venezuela. It said an outcome under the AWG-LCA must be ambitious and equitable and must effectively address all of the elements of the BAP in an

operational manner that also reflects the framework and balance of commitments of Parties under the Convention. It said that in Bangkok, developing countries were faced with a consistent and across-the-board refusal by some developed-country Parties to discuss and arrive at such ambitious and equitable outcomes on the very issues, such as the emission reductions of developed countries up to 2020, finance, technology transfer, capacity building, and adaptation support.

As a result of the decisions that have been taken in Cancun and Durban, developing countries will be contributing more in terms of overall emission reductions than developed countries, despite having less in the way of financial and technological resources from developed countries. Some developed countries are increasingly relieving themselves of their treaty obligations to take the lead in reducing their emissions and to provide finance and technology to developing countries under the Convention.

Bolivia pointed out that there continues to be many outstanding issues that need to be resolved and concluded by the AWG-LCA in accordance with its mandate. Developing countries have put forward submissions and proposed draft decision texts that reflect high levels of ambition and the application of equity on virtually all elements of the BAP.

There is a call on developed countries to reduce their emissions by 40-50% below 1990 levels by 2020 in a comparable manner, and texts have also been proposed that would provide further operational detail and modalities with respect to the provision of climate financing, technology transfer, adaptation support, and capacity building from developed to developing countries.

The AWG-LCA, in order for it to reach an agreed outcome in accordance with its mandate under the BAP and subsequent decisions that would allow it to close, depends on reaching agreement on ambitious and equitable results on all elements of the BAP. It is a complex task indeed to complete the work of the AWG-LCA

successfully.

Bolivia requested the Chair to give a listing of what issues were mandated by the BAP, which issues were successfully concluded, and which issues are still outstanding. To assist in the work, it requested the Chair to draft texts on relevant issues that can help in the negotiations in Doha.

Success in Doha requires three elements: (1) an ambitious and legally binding second commitment period that includes a fair and science-based contribution by Annex I Parties towards closing the ambition gap; (2) an ambitious agreed outcome under the BAP that includes comparable mitigation efforts by Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol Parties and clear commitments for finance for 2013 and through to 2020, the other aspects of financing including institutional arrangements between the COP and Green Climate Fund, long-term finance and MRV of financial support, as well as progress on other unfinished business from the BAP; and (3) greater clarity over the role and mandate of the working group under the Durban Platform, including the discussions on ambition and on negotiations towards a 2015 outcome to come into effect in 2020. In the absence of these elements, Parties must continue work under the current working groups, it added.

Bolivia said these outcomes must be carefully balanced, reflecting the careful balance struck in the Durban package. It could not see the closure of working groups if they have not finished their work. Nor can Parties in good conscience accept unambitious outcomes that would place the world almost irrevocably on a path for warming that is dangerous.

Swaziland, on behalf of the African Group, expressed concerns about the procedural engagements and challenges developing countries have continuously experienced from developed countries on issues of importance. It saw the need for important decisions on adaptation and means of implementation including finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building as a critical part

of the Doha package of decisions under the AWG-LCA.

It was specifically concerned over the lack of clarity and the potential financial gap during the 2012-20 period and looked forward to clear decisions in this regard. Doha must deliver a clear commitment relating to finance for 2013, and a roadmap through to 2020. As regards mitigation by developed countries, it was very concerned over the low level of ambition in pledges and lack of common accounting rules which in turn sends a bad signal to the future regime.

On 'shared vision', Swaziland maintained that shared vision cannot be simply defined as an emission reduction target for keeping warming way below 1.5°C and a peaking year, but should also include critical pillars that will lead to the target including: a global cut in emissions in which developed countries should take the lead coupled with provision of enabling means of implementation to developing countries including finance, capacity and technology to take actions. It is essential that the global goal is defined in the context of equitable access to sustainable development and atmospheric space.

It supported a comprehensive review under the Convention. The adequacy of the long-term global goal and overall progress towards it is intrinsically linked to the adequacy of adaptation and means of implementation. On new mechanisms and a framework for various approaches, environmental integrity of the regime should be safeguarded through establishment of robust common accounting rules for developed countries under the Convention.

Swaziland said the African Group had tabled concrete proposals on various aspects of issues during the Bangkok session. It said there is still a substantial amount of unfinished business under the AWG-LCA. This must be addressed if work is to be completed and the work of the AWG-LCA terminated as agreed in Durban.

Swaziland said that the Durban outcome was a package. There cannot be a situation in which Parties un-

pack that package and pick and choose only their favoured elements, and then expect success in Doha. Movement on each mandate is predicated on balanced progress on all mandates. It stressed that for the AWG-LCA to terminate its work at Doha, there is a need for an ambitious and comprehensive outcome addressing all outstanding issues with the aim of enhancing effective implementation under the Convention from 2012 to 2020 and beyond.

Speaking for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Gambia reminded Parties that the AWG-LCA was extended for another year because there is work to be done. The list of unresolved issues is long and the time available (until Doha) is short, and Gambia was concerned about the lack of progress in the Bangkok session. It called for the extension of the mandate of the AWG-LCA for another year to reach an agreed outcome. The year 2012 is likely to go down in history as the year when the Bali mandate concludes by reaching a balanced agreed outcome. It fully agreed (with other developing countries) on the importance of completing the work under the Bali roadmap (which includes the work of the AWG-KP) which is essential to lay a strong ground for the work of the ADP.

Representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Nauru said it is disappointed at the slow progress towards achieving a critical outcome in Doha. Their people demand the urgent addressing of the challenges of climate change but the progress of the past week was anything but urgent. If Doha is to be a success, this has to change.

It lamented that Parties continue to ignore the science in terms of the global goal for emission reduction and global peaking time frame which are critical to prevent dangerous climate change. In terms of emission reduction, it said Parties need to be clear on the necessary follow-up on the findings of the in-session workshop on the mitigation targets and pledges of countries. On finance, it expressed disappointment with developed coun-

try Parties which expect developing countries to address climate change with new obligations from the Cancun and Durban decisions without clarity on finance after the fast-start finance period ends in 2012.

Venezuela, speaking for the ALBA countries, said the AWG-LCA has been tasked to conclude its work at COP 18 but it is clear that the mandate from Durban is to produce an agreed outcome that encompasses all the issues where resolution has not yet been reached, and also reflect all the building blocks of the BAP as a coherent and integrated package.

To bring the AWG-LCA to a successful closure, efforts should primarily be directed to crystallising concrete results in, inter alia: identifying a global goal for substantially reducing global greenhouse gas emissions as well as a time frame for global peaking of emissions based on historical responsibility; addressing the most important questions related to 'means of implementation' for developing countries; the core elements of both finance and technology transfer in order to give real and meaningful substance to the institutions created in Cancun, otherwise, they will just be empty boxes; devising a concrete compliance system for developed-country Parties and establishing clear rules and methodologies to promote environmental integrity.

It also said the agreed outcome should be expressed in substantive decisions, and in areas where Parties are not able to finalise an agreement, the COP should take procedural decisions signalling the next steps to continue consideration of those issues. It supported the informal overview note of the Chair and also asked him to prepare draft texts on the way forward to Doha with a view to assisting Parties. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that a number of Parties have presented written contributions to the outcome of the AWG-LCA on several issues.

Egypt, representing the Arab Group, stressed the need for the full and faithful implementation of the delicate Durban package. It said a key component of that package is the suc-

cessful closure of the AWG-LCA upon reaching an agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali decision. Building on the concrete submissions of all Parties, as well as the efforts of the Chair and Secretariat to compile them, Egypt said, the AWG-LCA was well placed to arrive at the kind of agreed outcome in these negotiations that everyone feels ownership of and that contributes to building the much-needed trust and confidence necessary for the ADP collective journey for the coming years.

The Arab Group reaffirmed its call for the full operationalisation of the mechanisms created in Durban, and for ambition across all the building blocks of the AWG-LCA, including comparable mitigation efforts by Annex I non-Kyoto Protocol Parties and clear commitments for finance for 2013 and through to 2020, as well as progress on other unfinished business from the BAP. It emphasised in this regard the critical importance of adaptation, economic and social consequences of response measures, finance, technology, and capacity building.

Disappointed and frustrated

Nicaragua, representing the Central American Integration System (SICA), said it is disappointed and frustrated by the lack of progress in the AWG-LCA, particularly as it saw the persistent denial of some Parties to accept texts or draft decisions on issues that would have allowed progress in the work towards a successful COP 18. In this regard, in order to advance the work, it said it would appreciate receiving a draft text between now and Doha.

It reiterated that there are important elements of the work of the AWG-LCA which have yet to be completed in accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, and it is crucial that all such elements could have the proper allocation of time in Doha for their due consideration.

It further said it is imperative to have greater clarity on what is going to happen with all those unresolved

and pending issues in the AWG-LCA and to agree, once and for all, on the proper and adequate place where all these issues will be addressed. Parties must solve this before taking a final decision on the future of the AWG-LCA.

India said Parties must leave Bangkok bearing in mind that the AWG-LCA must fulfil its mandate in Doha by delivering an agreed outcome that comprehensively addresses all the elements contained in the BAP in a balanced manner. This is an essential element of the Durban package that ministers had agreed in Durban. It reiterated that the spirit of the Durban package must be fully respected as any imbalance in progress under different working groups will adversely impact the confidence of Parties and future climate change talks.

While Parties should fully aim to resolve all outstanding issues and reach agreed outcomes in Doha, it may be necessary, as a practical approach, to start considering how some of the issues that may perhaps remain unresolved would be addressed. It said Parties cannot simply let these issues fall off the table because the Parties did not reach agreement even though the BAP mandated them. While technical issues can go to the relevant Subsidiary Bodies for further work, the unresolved issues which involve commitments and which require broad political consideration and direction must be taken on board by the ADP, which will be the only political forum for future work after the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP are successfully closed.

At Doha, it said, Parties need a process-based decision to carry these issues forward. It welcomed the informal overview note by the Chair, which will enable Parties to reflect and see how it can help them to conclude the work in Doha on the pending issues as per the agreed agenda of the AWG-LCA.

China pointed out that all Parties wish for the AWG-LCA to reach an agreed outcome as quickly as possible as this was supposed to happen since 2009. Its head of delegation Su

Wei said the Durban outcome is a package which contained the 'mutual assurances' on various streams of work. The most important outcomes are to have the second commitment period (under the Kyoto Protocol), to meet the objectives in accordance with the BAP and to launch a process to be completed by 2015 for enhanced action to be implemented from 2020 (referring to the ADP).

He urged Parties to read carefully decision 1/CP.17 where the AWG-LCA was extended for a year so that it could continue its work in order to reach an agreed outcome pursuant to the BAP, at which time the AWG-LCA shall be terminated.

On the Chair's informal overview note, he said although it is not a negotiation text, it is useful for moving forward the work. To have a meaningful, successful conclusion, Parties need to do work and not go to Doha empty-handed. Referring to a Chinese saying that 'no matter how wise a housewife is, she could not cook a rice meal without rice', he urged the Chair to get his 'rice' ready by Doha so that he will not be a 'desperate housewife'.

Singapore said it was clear from the session in Bangkok that there were issues of divergence and convergence. It said for such a process, it is important that these are reflected as accurately as possible and only then can Parties start dealing with options that hopefully will lead to a common solution and consensus in Doha. It had concerns with the Chair's informal overview note as it did not reflect accurately the various topics of the agenda. It pointed out that on the issue of trade, the proposal by Singapore in CRP 39 was seriously misrepresented. It therefore reserved its rights to come back to its proposal. It acknowledged that the note is an informal one in an informal session and therefore it has no formal status.

Switzerland, speaking for the Environmental Integrity Group, said that the AWG-LCA has delivered an outstanding contribution to strengthening the global climate regime post-2012. It said the AWG-LCA decisions from Cancun and Durban constituted an essential part of the BAP. It is im-

portant to underline that concluding the AWG-LCA in Doha will not conclude the work in financing and adaptation. On the contrary, the full use of the institutions created through the AWG-LCA will help give attention needed for these issues, it added.

On the informal overview note prepared by the Chair, Switzerland said the note did not reflect the views achieved here in Bangkok. It would like to continue by working in the spin-off groups to further strengthen and complement the work.

Cyprus, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that as part of the politically balanced Durban package, the AWG-LCA should be closed in Doha. The focus on the AWG-LCA should be the issues from Durban which was addressed in the spin-off groups. Referring to other concerns raised by developing countries, the EU said that important issues will proceed under the relevant institutions, ensuring 'homes' for these issues. Depending on progress in Doha, it said further discussion and implementation (of these outstanding issues) will be carried forward in other bodies. It said Parties should be able to proudly say they reached an agreed outcome in Doha by closing the AWG-LCA and were transitioning from talking to doing.

Australia, representing the Umbrella Group (Canada, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Ukraine and the United States), said useful progress had been made on most of the Durban-mandated issues such as 'various approaches' and 'new market mechanisms'. There were emerging areas of commonality and there was a need to build on this momentum.

On mitigation, it said that there was lack of clarity on the pledges of developing countries. It wanted focus on how to advance the work on transparency and clarity of the pledges of all countries. On 'shared vision', it highlighted the need to set the long-term global goal and the time frame for the peaking of emissions. The context for this should be discussed.

It said that significant progress had been made under the AWG-LCA

with the creation of permanent channels. It said that Parties were enhancing implementation from the temporary body of the AWG-LCA to the permanent bodies of the UNFCCC.

Australia said that Parties did not have a shared understanding in the contact group on the issues. It noted the Chair's informal overview note but said that it did not fully reflect the divergent views of Parties. There was no understanding on the need for the consideration of additional issues apart from the limited issues mandated from Durban. The AWG-LCA must focus time on the specific issues mandated from Durban and the working group should not be extended.

The United States expressed concerns about the Bangkok session as it came into discussion with the understanding that the process would be simple, focusing on areas agreed in Durban and Bonn (in May) that there might be consensus on the issues of shared vision, review, REDD-plus financing and new market mechanisms. On other issues, it was clear that there is no agreement to see if convergence is possible. The decision in Durban was to close the AWG-LCA. The 35-page informal overview note is not helpful in closing the working group.

It lamented that in a number of areas, the informal note did not reflect issues raised by some Parties, including comments made by the US. It said there was a lack of balance and this was disturbing. It stressed that the closing of the AWG-LCA was not a reflection of a lack of progress but a reflection that a new ad hoc body would continue work (referring to the ADP). It was committed to reducing emissions and on finance under the new agreement with a new legal character. It said there is a need to conclude this phase of the process and move on to the next.

Chair Tayeb appealed to all Parties to look carefully at how far they have come and, in the short time remaining, to complete the work and bring the AWG-LCA to a successful closure in Doha so that Parties could close this rich and interesting chapter and move on to the next phase. ♦

Hilary Chiew and Meena Raman are senior researchers with the Third World Network.

Parties divided over way forward on Durban Platform

The Bangkok climate negotiations also revealed sharp procedural divisions over the way forward from the agreement reached in the 2011 Durban climate talks.

Meena Raman explains.

PARTIES were divided on the way forward to advance further work under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is tasked with developing a new agreement under the Convention which is applicable to all Parties and is to come into effect from 2020.

While some countries including the European Union, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the African Group wanted contact groups to be organised in Doha for the ADP at the forthcoming 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18) to the Convention, a large number of other developing countries wanted discussions in roundtables to continue (as was conducted in Bangkok) under the ADP as the way forward for further exploratory work to enhance further understanding among Parties.

While some countries including the Umbrella Group (non-European developed countries), the European Union and the LDCs supported a proposal by AOSIS for a ministerial-level roundtable in Doha, 24 developing countries led by Malaysia said that such a ministerial was premature and could only be organised under the directions of the COP.

The G77 and China stressed that successfully completing the work of the other two Ad Hoc Working Groups under the Bali Action Plan for Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) is necessary for the ADP process.

Two roundtables on the themes of 'vision' (for the new agreement) and 'ambition' (on how to increase the mitigation ambition) were held from



A view of the dais during the concluding plenary of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) in Bangkok. How to advance further work under the ADP was the subject of disagreement among countries at the Bangkok session.

30 August to 4 September and an informal plenary of the ADP was convened on 5 September to conclude its work in Bangkok. The Co-Chairs of the ADP are JM Mauskar (India) and H Dovland (Norway).

Mauskar at the closing plenary informed Parties that after the session, the Co-Chairs will prepare, under their own responsibility, two summaries to reflect the discussions at the roundtables.

Parties were informed that these summaries will have no formal status in the negotiations and will be made available to assist in their preparations. The Co-Chairs will also prepare, under their own responsibility, a note that will contain their reflections on the session as a whole and look forward to Doha and beyond. This note will also have no formal status in the negotiations and be made available to Parties to assist in their preparations.

Mauskar said that the outcomes of the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP will be central pieces for Doha but the

ADP will also have its own importance. He also said that workstream 1 (dealing with the post-2020 agreement) and workstream 2 (on the pre-2020 mitigation ambition) will have different characteristics and Parties were in a 'conceptual exploratory stage'. There will be a formal session of the ADP in Doha (the Bangkok session was an informal additional session) and some kind of outcome may be needed to indicate that the ADP was doing well, he added further.

Critical

Algeria, speaking for the G77 and China, said that the ADP process is critical to take the Convention forward. There is a need to ensure strong linkage between mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. It emphasised the need to successfully complete the work of the LCA and KP working groups and to provide the necessary solid basis for the ADP process. It said that the ADP should not rewrite the Convention and must

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

respect the objectives, principles and provisions of the Convention, especially the principles of equity, CBDR (common but differentiated responsibilities) and respective capabilities. Negotiations should be Party-driven, open and transparent. It said that under workstream 1, there should be further brainstorming to clarify conceptual ideas. It also wanted discussion on the means of implementation.

Malaysia, speaking for Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Venezuela, said that Parties have made some progress in expressing and understanding each other's perspectives in relation to the work of the ADP. At Doha, there would be merit in continuing discussions under the same format, so that Parties could strive to arrive at a much fuller understanding of each other's positions and objectives.

Given the early and exploratory stage of discussions under the ADP, Malaysia said it may be somewhat premature to launch contact groups immediately in Doha and discussions should continue in an exploratory fashion under a Group of the Whole. It said that the idea of a ministerial on ADP discussions is likewise somewhat premature. In any case, a ministerial can only be organised under the directions of the COP and, as such, must have a larger focus, not limited to the ADP, with key attention on the second commitment period of the KP, the most urgent task this year.

Malaysia said that work under the Durban Platform reflects an opportunity to enhance implementation of the Convention. It was looking for ambition and equity on all elements of the Durban Platform, particularly from developed countries that are committed to taking the lead in reducing their emissions and in providing support and the means of implementation so that developing countries can contribute equitably in a manner that also promotes their sustainable development.

It reiterated its fundamental belief that the work of the ADP, under both its workstreams, is 'under the Convention', which means that all the principles and provisions of the Convention shall apply to the work of the ADP and remain paramount in considering all or any other elements that relevant Parties attach importance to. This is necessary to fulfil the ultimate objective of the Convention. The responsibilities and obligations of all countries in any period must be built on the principles of equity and CBDR.

Malaysia said it was useful to hear this understanding shared by a large number of Parties in the roundtables. It is necessary to reflect a similar shared understanding in planning the work of the ADP. It said work of the ADP is at a very initial stage and Parties should continue to identify the various elements necessary to define the scope of work in Doha.

It said further that Doha should focus on delivering agreed outcomes in the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA. A firm foundation for the work in the ADP would be laid at Doha through the successful conclusion of the KP negotiations marked by having ambitious targets from Annex I KP Parties to be provisionally applied as of 1 January 2013; and ambitious and equitable results on all elements of the Bali Action Plan. These positive outcomes in the KP and LCA working groups would have a positive effect on the ADP's work. The Durban Platform is only one part of the package of Durban that includes results in the KP and LCA working groups, said Malaysia.

After Doha, it said, the focus should be on identifying the issues relevant to the work and preparing for the meeting of the subsidiary bodies at Bonn. This may be supported through in-session workshops at Bonn as may be necessary and agreed by the Parties, it added further.

Lack of engagement

Swaziland, on behalf of the African Group, expressed concerns about lack of engagement by developed

countries on critical aspects necessary for concluding work under the Bali roadmap, particularly on support for finance, technology, adaptation support by developed countries, including mitigation commitments of developed countries not Party to the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. This had the potential of contaminating the good spirit cultivated in the Bangkok session.

It reaffirmed that workstream 1 of the ADP negotiations should culminate in an enhanced multilateral rules-based regime that ensures the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention. The outcome is to be under the Convention, and must express principles and provisions of the Convention, including historical responsibility, CBDR as well as the overriding developmental priorities of developing countries. It further reaffirmed that the principles of the Convention equally apply to workstream 2, and emphasised that the work on ambition is for additional actions over and above the commitments inscribed under the Bali roadmap going to 2020. It is however important that such actions are recognised under the Convention; as such, clear accounting is necessary in order to understand their contribution to the reduction of the gap.

Swaziland said the ambition workplan is not a substitute for commitments under the Bali roadmap. It welcomed proposals by Parties shared in the ambition roundtable for the submission of proposed initiatives with an articulation of expected reductions, quantum of finance necessary, and the source of such financing, and the proposed delivery mechanisms, noting the proposal by the African Group for use of institutions established in Cancun and Durban. Demonstrating commitment to the reassurances made in Durban to the Durban package is essential. It looked forward to the stepping up of work in Doha, and establishing a contact group to prepare decisions on planning the work for 2013 on both workstreams.

(The Bali roadmap comprises the Bali Action Plan adopted by the UNFCCC COP in 2007 and the sec-

ond commitment period of emissions reduction by developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol.)

Strengthening the climate regime

Egypt, on behalf of the Arab Group, said the outcome of the ADP should strengthen the existing multilateral regime for climate change. It should be firmly grounded in the principles and provisions of the Convention under which it is negotiated, be applicable to all while respecting the principles of equity and CBDR and addressing all building blocks in a balanced manner, as agreed in Durban. Parties are not starting from a vacuum, it said.

Many efforts were exerted during the last few years under both the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA. Hence, the work of the ADP has to take as its point of departure the results of the work accomplished in these two working groups. These longstanding mandates must be delivered as a basis for determining the basis of work of the ADP.

Egypt said the Bangkok meeting has given a positive signal that the ADP has successfully been launched. It believed that it would be most useful if the Co-Chairs could prepare a matrix incorporating the various elements of the Durban decision and present for consideration of Parties their proposals on how these could be implemented as of the beginning of 2013. It also proposed two roundtables to be held in Doha touching upon the issues of means of implementation and of equity, and called for the ADP to be briefed of the conclusions of the workshop on long-term finance, as these would complement the discussions that took place in Bangkok, and provide an important input for the work in this working group.

It said that there is no contradiction between equity and ambition, and that equity in fact can and must be the gateway to an ambitious outcome under this working group. In fact, ambition should apply across the

board and not be of a selective nature. It also believed that all countries have the inalienable right to develop as well as the right to survival.

It also stressed that the success of efforts under the ADP will depend on the successful conclusion of the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA by Doha, and above all on the faithful implementation of the Durban package. It was still hopeful that by Doha, and with much stronger determination, Parties will achieve a quality legal second commitment period, comparable efforts by Annex I non-KP Parties under the AWG-LCA, as well as the much-needed progress in adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building.

Great concern

Cuba, on behalf of the ALBA group of countries, expressed its great concern on the impending gap between the first and second commitment periods of the KP (the first commitment period ends on 31 December 2012). Despite announcements made eight months ago, there are still no numbers (on emissions reduction) on the table. On the other hand, some Parties have not been willing to engage in work to bring about an agreed outcome under the AWG-LCA and thus fulfil this second track of the Bali roadmap. Just like the ADP, the AWG-LCA was created as a space for exchanging ideas with a view to improving the climate change regime in the light of the principles and provisions of the Convention, and its outcomes are of direct relevance to the ADP process.

It highlighted the need to safeguard the only rules-based multilateral system that exists. No society would tolerate a situation where initiating discussions on a 'new law' implies that one is not required to comply with the existing law. No one is above the ecological carrying capacity of the planet; that is the ultimate law. From now till 2020, however, it would seem that some Parties interpret this juncture as an opportunity to shirk responsibilities, said Cuba.

The implementation of this 'non-system' from now till 2020, comprised of loose promises, lacking rules and lacking clear targets, paradoxically occurs at a time when the effects of climate change demand more commitment, not less, and when equity, clear rules and solidarity are most needed. Its expectation from these roundtable discussions is to deepen understanding of root causes and barriers to addressing them. Key to this effort is the discussion on sustainable patterns of consumption and production and equity, said Cuba.

It further said that developing countries are showing much more ambition than developed countries on a voluntary basis. Nevertheless, this situation does nothing to address the inherent equity gaps in the climate change conundrum, in acting in accordance with CBDR and respective capabilities. If a system is going to replace the KP, it cannot be weaker than the existing one. Flexibility in taking actions to reach common goals, national circumstances and the applicability to all countries are all issues on which there is confidence that agreements could be reached. The principles and provisions of the Convention have ample provisions to accommodate such considerations. What cannot be allowed is to use these arguments as an excuse to reinterpret and in this way eliminate the principle of CBDR between developed and developing countries. This is unacceptable. The Convention applies to all Parties but historical responsibilities and use of the common atmospheric space (the carbon budget) cannot be sidelined.

Cuba said that the fate of Doha depends on the fate of the second commitment period of the KP; it is a legal instrument and to comply with it is an obligation. The Parties that refuse to do so cannot expect to 'have their cake and eat it'. It would not be fair to other countries that are making efforts to comply with commitments within the multilateral framework.

Nauru, for the Alliance of Small Island States, said the work of the ADP remains critical for the Doha

package. Work on mitigation ambition is of fundamental importance. The Doha outcome should raise the pledges for emission reductions, remove conditions for these pledges of developed countries and in tightening the rules. It stressed the importance of the means of implementation for developing countries to enhance their ambition. It further emphasised the importance of successfully completing the work of the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA to advance the work of the ADP. It stressed that the ADP is under the Convention. Parties could not pick and choose which principles they liked. On the way forward, it proposed a contact group to be established. It also proposed the need to have high-level engagement of ministers in relation to the work in workstream 2.

Gambia for the LDCs also stressed the importance of a balanced package in Doha and successful outcomes under the AWG-KP and the AWG-LCA. It proposed the establishment of two contact groups in Doha for both workstreams of the ADP. It also supported the idea of a ministerial-level discussion.

‘Mutual reassurances’

South Africa, speaking for the BASIC grouping (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), said the successful completion of the work of the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA was key to advancing the work of the ADP, which was part of the ‘mutual reassurances’ agreed to in the Durban Platform. It proposed further roundtables in Doha to help exploratory work in an open and flexible setting to enhance mutual understanding and build trust. On the call for ministerial engagement, it said that further discussions needed to be crystallised under the ADP before this was done.

Nicaragua, speaking on behalf of the countries that make up the Central American Integration System (SICA), expressed deep concern over the slow progress in the Bangkok session. It said it is urgent to achieve a greater commitment from all Parties so they can move into concrete actions based upon the principles and objec-

tives of the Convention. It underlined the need to advance in a balanced and equitable manner in all the tracks (the AWG-LCA, AWG-KP and ADP) in order to build a climate of confidence to move the whole process forward.

Despite being economies highly dependent on their natural resources and having no legally binding obligations, the SICA countries, Nicaragua said, are continuing to take meaningful mitigation actions voluntarily, using their own scarce resources which are urgently needed in their struggle for poverty eradication and sustainable development. It stressed the need to ensure implementation of the mechanisms on financing, capacity building and technology transfer in order to reinforce support of their national programmes to combat climate change.

The result of the work of the ADP is vital for the future of the Convention, to ensure an effective, equitable, and fair outcome in accordance with the principles of equity and CBDR in the implementation of the work and reach a legally binding agreement that includes all the pillars seen in the Bali roadmap and that does not jeopardise or undermine the second commitment period of the KP.

Common understanding

Peru, speaking for itself, Chile and Colombia, said that the future legally binding regime should set incentives for those who do so. It wanted a common understanding for equity, fairness, and a ‘dynamic approach to differentiation’ (as advanced by developed countries).

Australia in the Umbrella Group said that the Durban Platform called for the widest global response to climate change. There is a need to ensure countries were not ‘holding hostage’ its work for effective climate outcomes. It welcomed an opportunity for ministerial engagement in the roundtables at COP 18 on a number of key questions. On the new agreement, it suggested discussion on how to design an agreement applicable to all that takes into account countries’

national circumstances; builds ambition over time and has widespread global participation; has lessons from the UNFCCC; addresses domestic drivers, constraints and potentials; how the new agreement is relevant to enhance adaptation; and how to build agreement under the Convention but adapted to the world after 2020. On the raising of ambition under workstream 2, Australia said that this could be done through voluntary initiatives, actions by those countries which have yet to forward their pledges and other complementary initiatives such as in cities and the private sector. It said that the ADP was a core part of the Durban deal.

The European Union said that for a successful outcome in Doha, all work must be taken forward as agreed to in the Durban compromise. It wanted tangible progress under the ADP with concrete activities to raise ambition as well as planning work for a legally binding agreement post-2020. For the post-2020 agreement, it said the Convention principles will apply but said there is a need to work together to define how these principles would be applied such that all Parties participate in a collective way with fair and sufficient ambition and support given to those who need it. On the pre-2020 workstream, it suggested exploration of possibilities on how to enhance collective efforts before the new agreement in 2020. It wanted clarification of what the next steps will be with clear milestones. It supported the proposal for a ministerial-level roundtable to discuss preparations for the 2020 mitigation agreement. It proposed the setting up of two contact groups for both the workstreams whose deliverables are different.

Switzerland, for the Environmental Integrity Group, said there is a need to capture existing common ground from the roundtable discussions on the post-2020 regime and its characteristics. It said that real progress in the ADP is an essential part for the balanced package in Doha. In relation to workstream 2 on ambition, it wanted exploration of options under and outside the Convention. ♦

Work programme on long-term finance concludes activities

Finance is crucial to the success of international efforts to counter climate change as developing countries will require financial assistance to undertake adaptation and mitigation measures. To secure the provision of long-term financing for developing countries, governments decided to establish a Green Climate Fund (GCF) within the framework of the UNFCCC as a mechanism to transfer money from the developed to the developing world for this purpose. To kickstart environmental projects, 'fast-start' funding of the GCF has also been agreed, encompassing \$30 billion for the period 2010-12.

The first of the following two articles focuses on the continuing efforts to scale up long-term financing, while the second highlights the progress made to institutionalise the operations of the Green Climate Fund.

Marjorie Williams

THE 'work programme on long-term finance' under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) concluded its activities with the holding of a workshop in Cape Town, South Africa from 1-3 October.

The Cape Town meeting was the second and final workshop which was co-chaired by Zaheer Fakir (South Africa) and Georg Børsting (Norway), who are also Co-chairs of the work programme for 2012. The workshop's focus was on 'Scaling up of climate finance and enhancing enabling conditions (policies and instruments), and delivery and access'.

According to the Co-chairs in their closing remarks at the workshop, the long-term finance work programme contributed to 'ongoing efforts to scale up the mobilisation of climate change finance after 2012 through: enhanced collective understanding of options for mobilising climate finance and related work on financing needs; increased institutional knowledge on climate finance issues; and valuable knowledge-sharing experience and engagement with policy and climate finance expertise outside UNFCCC negotiations process for possible consideration in the future'.



An Ethiopian farmer lamenting the failure of his drought-hit crops. The UNFCCC's work programme on long-term finance was mandated to contribute to efforts to scale up the mobilisation of climate change finance after 2012.

At the wrap-up of the workshop, the Co-chairs recalled their mandate from the Durban meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 17) in December last year, where Parties decided to undertake a work programme on long-term finance in 2012, including workshops, to progress on long-term finance.

According to that decision, 'the work programme aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to scale up the mobilisation of climate change finance after 2012; analyse options for the mobilisation of resources from a

wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources and relevant analytical work on the climate-related financing needs of developing countries. It will draw its analysis from relevant reports including that of the High-level Advisory Group on Climate Financing and the report on mobilising climate finance for the G20 and the assessment criteria in the reports, and will also take into account lessons learned from fast-start finance'.

The Co-chairs also informed par-

ticipants about the previous activities undertaken under the work programme, which began with a first workshop on long-term finance that took place in Bonn, Germany from 9-11 July, and focused on the climate-related finance needs of developing countries and considered emerging early insights from lessons learned from fast-start finance.

They also informed participants that two webinars (web-based seminars) were also held this year – one on 13 September and the other on 21 September. The first webinar dealt with ‘Various approaches applied to assessment of climate-related financing needs in developing countries in the longer term’, while the second webinar dealt with ‘a range of important issues related to adaptation finance, including sources and options for adaptation finance; elements of design of multilateral funds that exhibit scalability and direct access features; the potential role of private sector in adaptation finance in developing countries, including [the] insurance industry’.

As mandated by COP 17, the Co-chairs said that they would submit a report to COP 18 following a review, analysis and digestion of information generated from analytical and technical discussions.

The second workshop was organised with interactive discussions (in the form of breakout groups and outreach to social media) involving climate finance experts from outside the UNFCCC.

Sizwe Nxasana, the CEO of FirstRand Limited, and Trevor Manuel, Minister in the South African Cabinet in charge of the National Planning Commission, set the scene for the three-day workshop with keynote addresses (through video link).

Minister Manuel set the political context for the discussions. He said that the issue of long-term finance cannot be deferred to 2020. He added that the commitment to fast-start finance of \$30 billion and the \$100 billion per year by 2020 are targets and that the \$100 billion target needs to be broken down into bite-size targets.

Manuel noted that additional

(of climate finance) is important and cannot be gotten rid of. The Green Climate Fund has additional responsibility to secure the funds and a mechanism must be found to avoid the voluntary pathways that drove the fast-start finance (the initiative to provide \$30 billion for 2010-12) and which will enhance predictability, certainty and clarity of funding of the Fund. He commented that there was a moral imperative, the backing of science, and certainty of existing decisions on the issue of financing for climate change. The Minister said that, in part, the solution is beyond the UNFCCC, where the right people, at the level of heads of state, must become involved and that no one can escape the responsibility.

Six principles

Mattia Romani of the London School of Economics and the Global Green Growth Institute and Nick Robins of Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC) kicked off the first session of the workshop, which focused on the scaling up of climate finance on ‘Sources’.

In his presentation, Romani, who also presented at the first workshop, cited six principles of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing: (1) taxing the bad: source of finance from generating externalities; (2) ‘additionality’ as newness or innovative finance; (3) all incidence must be only on rich countries; (4) public sources are needed for adaptation and market failure; (5) scalability, robustness and credibility; and (6) raising domestic revenues in developed countries.

Robins addressed the workshop through video link. He said that a major barrier to climate finance was the lack of credible market data which is linked to the lack of a common definition of ‘climate finance’. He said that private flows are not a substitute for public commitments but are going to be the largest flow to the developing countries in aggregate for climate finance. He further noted that it was important not to muddle these

two areas together and stressed the need to improve the transparency and accountability of private sector investment and financing, including consistent reporting and disclosure of climate impacts and climate actions by investors.

Session two on the theme of ‘enhancing enabling conditions: policies and instruments’ was kicked off by Amal-Lee Amin from E3G (Third Generation Environmentalism). She addressed the issue of barriers to mobilising, scaling up and catalysing low-carbon and climate-resilient investment including the role of public policy.

She said that the investment challenge by 2030 included: \$10 trillion in additional energy investment (to limit temperature rise to 2°C); shifting \$26 trillion from high- to low-carbon energy investment; \$145 trillion in infrastructure investment in 2030 needs to be in low-carbon climate resiliency; planning investment under uncertainty of the costs of adaptation and investment in major economies mainly in low carbon from 2020.

Amin identified policy, market and technology, and financial barriers which increase the risk and costs of investment, therefore inhibiting investment. Policy barriers, which are seen by investors as the greatest barriers, because they are out of their control, include: policy uncertainty and complexity; transaction cost to comply with policy/licensing/reporting etc.; and existing subsidies and policy support for high-carbon alternative. Market and technology barriers to investment include: relatively high upfront cost of technology; limitations of support infrastructure (e.g. Grid infrastructure – a capital-intensive investment); and immature supply chain and limited capacity of project developers. Financial barriers to investment include: traditional country risk; currency risk; and climate-specific financial risk such as deal flow problems (for example, insufficient number of commercially attractive deals, making diversification of investment portfolio difficult).

The third session of the workshop focused on the theme of ‘enhancing

enabling conditions: delivery and access' and was addressed by Josue Tanaka from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Mafalda Duarte of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Tanaka presented on the theme of the private sector and discussed this in relationship with the EBRD work in Central Europe.

Duarte focused on the closing of the infrastructure gap in Africa and identified lessons to learn from the AfDB projects such as in the water sector. A portfolio approach that mixes all forms of resources and financing instruments, including official development assistance, multilateral development banks, carbon finance and private sector, in different combina-

tions is needed. Governments have a role to play and public-private partnerships are important as a high level of concessional finance is needed especially for large-scale infrastructural projects and early-stage technology investments that are necessary for climate-related actions in Africa. This must be rooted in development (aligned with mitigation and adaptation). Duarte also added that investment in the water sector in Africa is critical and must be integrated to provide energy, food and water supply security. ♦

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independent secretariat and the selection of its Executive Director, the status of the resources and administrative budget of the GCF, and arrangements between the COP and the Fund.

The work plan and priorities of the Board

The Board agreed to work with a listing of 25 indicative priority matters in the work plan until the end of 2013. The top five of these were: the business model framework, private sector facility-related matters, resource mobilisation, results management framework and the establishment of the independent secretariat. These items also are the key agenda items proposed for discussion at the first Board meeting of 2013.

The work plan and priorities of the Board were hotly debated.

Many developing countries wanted to focus on the structural and institutional issues they saw as critical to fully operationalising the GCF, such as the arrangements for the establishment of the independent secretariat, including hiring of the Executive Director and host country arrangements and resource mobilisation (all items which were initially set to be discussed in the later part of 2013), with other members placing emphasis on the private sector facility and business model in the first meeting. Small Island Developing States also wanted the issue of readiness and preparatory support to have priority.

In the end, agreement was reached in principle on the elements of the Board's work plan and the indicative priority matters. The interim secretariat, working with a six-member board team, was requested to prepare a set of five documents for the first Board meeting in 2013, viz.:

(1) *Business model framework*, covering the issue of structure and organisation of the Fund (including structural options for the business model, models for the delivery of the Fund's resources, structural options and financial instruments in terms of leveraging potential of additional public and private sector finance, complementarity of the Fund with

South Korea to host Green Climate Fund

Marjorie Williams

SONGDO, Incheon City, in the Republic of Korea has been selected to be the home of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) by the latter's Board.

This decision was taken at the second meeting of the Board, which was held in Songdo from 18-20 October, and is expected to be endorsed by the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Doha, Qatar in late November.

Six countries had offered to host the GCF: Germany (Bonn), Mexico (Mexico City), Namibia (Windhoek), Poland (Warsaw), Switzerland (Geneva) and South Korea (Songdo).

The GCF was established at COP 16 in Cancun in 2010 and its governing instrument was approved in Durban in 2011 at COP 17. The selection of a host country brings the GCF one step closer to its operationalisation to help disburse climate funds to support mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries.

At its first meeting in Geneva in August, the GCF Board set in place a

host country Evaluation Committee to conduct an open and transparent process to assess the proposals received, based on the evaluation criteria. The Committee was chaired by Audrey Joy Grant (Belize).

At its second meeting in Songdo, the Committee reported on the outcome of the evaluation. Then, through a series of confidential balloting (with ballots cast only by Board members) supervised by representatives of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UNFCCC secretariat, the options were narrowed down to one candidate. During each round of balloting, the country with the least support was eliminated, with the final selection based on the country with the majority support of the Board members.

On 20 October, the Board by consensus agreed on Songdo as the permanent home of the GCF. The outcomes of the initial balloting rounds were not made public.

During the course of the three-day meeting, the Board discussed a wide range of issues including additional rules of procedure, its work plan and priorities, arrangements for the interim trustee, arrangements for an

other channels of climate finance and linkages with thematic bodies of the Convention); private sector facility and related matters; access modalities and result management framework;

(2) *Resource mobilisation*, including policies and procedures for public contributions and other contributions, including from alternative sources; process and policies, participants and timeframes for resource mobilisation and subsequent replenishments;

(3) *Modalities for readiness and preparatory support*, including priority areas for readiness and preparatory support, mechanisms for allocation, delivery and simplified approval process for readiness and complementarity of modalities for readiness and preparatory support with other channels of climate finance;

(4) *Establishment of the independent secretariat*, including selection of the Executive Director, review of staffing of the interim secretariat and guidance on administrative policies; and

(5) *Host country agreement* – relating to provisional legal arrangements for privileges and immunities for the establishment of the independent secretariat.

As regards the document on the business model framework, a six-member committee/team is to facilitate its preparation. The interim secretariat will also solicit input from consultants, experts and stakeholders, including private sector and civil society organisations on specific matters.

Board member Dipak Dasgupta (India) proposed the sponsoring of three standalone papers that will offer independent views in support of what the Board team will be doing on the vision of the GCF, resource mobilisation and how instruments can be



The Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) has selected Songdo in South Korea to be the permanent home of the Fund secretariat. Picture shows a congratulatory message displayed in Songdo after the decision was made.

matched with outcomes on the ground. He was of the view that these papers would complement and help to deepen the discussions.

Additional rules of procedure of the Board

Under this agenda item, three challenges confronted the Board.

First was the issue of funding the participation of advisers, in particular, for developing-country representatives. Developing countries argued for funding for the participation of advisers from developing countries and flexibility for the participation of more than one adviser per member and for alternate members to be present in the Board meeting room in

the case of multi-country seats. [Presently observers, including some advisers, are sequestered in a separate meeting room from where the Board members meet. Four 'active observers' (two from civil society organisations and two from the private sector) are allowed in the Board meeting room.] There was no final decision on this matter.

A second issue raised was the matter of the working language of the Board. Many developing countries argued that effective representation and transparency dictate the use of the UN languages, or at a minimum, the provision of interpretation on an individual or request basis, in particular for French speakers. There was no consensus on this matter as some Board members were concerned about the cost implications of interpretation and translation of documents.

A third issue was the role and nature of participation of observers in the GCF Board meetings, which was an important topic of discussion. The matter of 'active observers' was well debated, in particular, whether funding

should be provided for active observers. The Board agreed that funding for active observers should not go beyond funding travel and daily subsistence. There was no consensus as to whether active observers could sit at the table with Board members. This issue was particularly contentious as it was linked to the question of the parity of alternate Board members and their effective participation in the Board meetings.

On the issue of accreditation of observers to the meetings of the Board, it was proposed that provisional accreditation of accredited UNFCCC and GEF observers be agreed to until the Board approves its own process. There was some discussion to expand the list of potential



Civil society activists stressing the importance of climate finance during a demonstration near the venue of the Bangkok climate talks in September. The GCF is meant to help disburse funds to support developing countries' actions against climate change.

observers to include national development financial institutions.

As regards the process for selection of active observers, there was a general understanding that civil society and private sector organisations would decide themselves who would represent their constituencies.

A team of six Board members was established to further deliberate on the additional rules of procedure with a view to seeking consensus and reporting back to the Board.

Arrangements for the interim trustee

The representative of the World Bank (which is the interim trustee of the GCF), in presenting its report to the Board, questioned whether the interim trustee could enter into legal arrangements with the GCF or the Board as this related to the juridical personality and legal capacity of the GCF.

In response, while not questioning the legal status of the GCF (which was conferred juridical personality by the Durban COP), Omar El-Arini (Egypt) raised the issue of consistency of practice by the World Bank. He said that he had forwarded a document to the Bank that verified that the Bank had in fact signed an agreement with another entity before that entity had legal personality conferred upon it or

had concluded a host country agreement.

El Arini wondered why this should not be the same with the GCF. He said that the President of the World Bank had signed a similar agreement with the Multilateral Fund under the Montreal Protocol (on ozone-depleting substances) prior to the conclusion of it attaining juridical personality and the host country agreement. In this case, he said, the Bank did not see any impediment to finalising the agreement with the Multilateral Fund and it was very odd that the Bank was adopting a different posture on the same arrangements with the GCF. El Arini expressed concern over the insistence by the Bank that it could not conclude arrangements with the Board until the Bank had evidence of the host country agreement that verified the GCF's legal status, as this could delay the operationalisation of the Fund. He pointed out that having a different approach to the matter would save the GCF time as it was not yet clear when the host country agreement (which in some cases could take up to a year) would be concluded. Hence, the current posture of the World Bank, as the interim trustee regarding an interim agreement with the GCF and the Board, raised a question mark. El Arini argued that based on past precedent, such an agreement could be concluded now.

Gilbert Metcalf (US) was of the view that the host country will have to confer legal personality under domestic law for ensuring the GCF is on sound legal footing in that country. He argued that legal clarity is important and if there is legal uncertainty, it raises legal risks and puts at risk contributions to the GCF. Hence, the need for a solid approach to the legal arrangements under domestic law is critical, he said.

El Arini requested that questionable references to the legal personality of the GCF be removed from the document presented for approval to the Board by the interim trustee. This was accepted.

Arrangements for independent secretariat

There was consensus on the need to look for a highly qualified Executive Director for the GCF.

Zou Jiayi (China) argued that the candidate should have experience working in developing countries. This point was supported by other developing-country Board members, who noted that the person should have experience working on development issues and/or working in developing countries.

There was some tension over whether or not to hire a search firm to participate in the selection process for the Executive Director, given an anticipated cost of about \$200,000. Most developed countries were in support of engaging a search firm. Many developing countries, on the other hand, were of the opinion that the process could be managed internally and be cost-effective.

In addition, there were concerns that the interim secretariat (without instructions from the Board or oversight and knowledge of the Co-chairs) had already initiated and concluded a request-for-proposal process involving the identification of 14 search firms and submission of six proposals, apparently culminating in a shortlist of one search firm. This action had been undertaken even before the first Board meeting but was not communicated to the Board or the Co-

chairs until this meeting.

Many developing-country members of the Board queried the basis for the proposal for the search firm when the terms of reference for the Executive Director had not been established by the Board. Developed countries on the whole, however, were supportive of the actions taken by the interim secretariat as a 'proactive' step to be welcomed.

The Board proceeded to establish an Executive Search Committee of six of its members to explore these issues, including the terms of reference for the Executive Director, to decide on whether or not a search firm should be contracted as part of the selection process and if so, to develop terms of reference for contracting such a firm. The Committee would ultimately recommend a shortlist (not ranked) of three names to be considered for the Executive Director position. Up to \$200,000, including the potential cost of a search firm, was allotted for this selection process.

The budget of the interim secretariat and interim trustee

The budget issue was also a hotly debated agenda item on two grounds: (1) the limited amount of resources currently available to the GCF Trust Fund (established by the interim trustee under its Financial Intermediary Fund arrangement, to receive and disburse contributions for the GCF) and (2) the financial gap between resources available and the proposed expenditures in the budget.

Board members especially from developing countries had a great deal of difficulty with the presentation of the budget, which they said lacked clear explanations of the assumptions behind the proposed budget lines for items such as staff travel (especially the relative costs for GEF staff versus UNFCCC staff), information technology, Board meetings and consultants (over 200 hours budgeted for this item).

Many developing-country members such as El Arini, Dasgupta, Zou and Paul Gomes (Guinea Bissau)

raised issues over the request to approve a budget with a large resource gap and which was primarily based on pledges. While developed-country members such as Metcalf, Kjetil Lund (Norway) and Rod Hilton (Australia) expressed their comfort with this practice, several developing-country members raised the issue of principles and best practices used by international organisations and multilateral funding institutions.

Gomes said that approving a budget based on pledges goes against the best practice at multilateral level. He highlighted that with the international financial institutions, a developing country will not have its programme approved unless its resource gap is closed. He further argued that for the GCF to be driven on pledges to close its budget gap will not look good and said that the Board should seek to adopt what is the current best practice.

Dasgupta said the GCF needed valid resources and that pledges are not resources, given all that is known about pledges in practice. He said that approving the present 14-month budget was not prudent fiscal management.

The budget and related documents were revised to reflect the input and requests made by Board members.

Given that approval of the budget was also necessary in order for the trustee to approve and disburse funding, including to the interim secretariat, the budget was approved with the recording of funds available for disbursement at \$2.7 million; previous pledges amounting to \$2.5 million; pledges made at the meeting of \$1.5 million and strong commitments for additional pledges. The administrative budget of \$7,481,000 was approved for 1 November 2012 to 31 December 2013.

Arrangements between the COP and the GCF

There were differences of opinion among Board members as to whether or not the Board should initiate the arrangements between the

COP and the GCF or if this was the prerogative of the COP.

Developing-country members on the Board such as David Kaluba (Zambia), Zou, El Arini and Dasgupta strongly argued that based on the provisions of the Convention as well as the GCF's governing instrument, and the Durban COP decision, the arrangements should be determined by the COP.

Kaluba pointed out that the COP is the superior organ or body that gives the guidance and it should be left to form its mandate and its role. He said that the Board should not assume the role of the COP on how the arrangements should be handled. Zou agreed that the Fund is a mechanism under the guidance of the COP and as such, the arrangements should be initiated by the COP not the Board.

On the other hand, Metcalf, Hilton, Nick Dyer (UK) and Arnaud Buisse (France) were of the opinion that the Board should take the initiative and undertake the draft arrangements.

Given the disagreements, the Co-chairs concluded that there was no consensus on the issue.

The Board also established the practice of subcommittees or teams as useful working modalities.

Thus far there have been four operational six-member teams: (1) the Evaluation Committee for the selection process for the host country; (2) a team for working on additional rules of procedure [consisting of Per Callesen (Denmark), Dasgupta (chair), El Arini, Beata Jaczewska (Poland), Metcalf and George Zedginidze (Georgia)]; (3) a team to deliberate on the work plan [consisting of Buisse, Dyer, Derek Gibbs (Barbados), Lund, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Adriana Soto (Colombia, chair)]; (4) an Executive Director Selection Committee (also with six Board members whose names are to be announced) to oversee the selection process and make recommendations to the Board.

The next meeting of the Board of the GCF will take place in Berlin, Germany, on 12-15 March 2013. ♦

‘Loss and damage’ – the next frontier of climate change

As climate change impacts grow in scale and frequency, developing countries are now confronted with more damage and even permanent losses. In December 2011, governments adopted a work programme under the United Nations climate treaty and regional meetings were held for Africa (June), Latin America (July), Asia and Eastern Europe (August), and Small Island Developing States (October). These will provide inputs to the decision on loss and damage to be adopted in Doha in November. Below is the text of a Third World Network brief on lessons learned from the regional meetings, key issues for Doha and recommendations for future action on loss and damage.

**Juan P Hoffmaister and
Doreen Stabinsky**

Loss and damage – a new reality for developing countries

THE phrase ‘loss and damage’ refers broadly to the entire range of damage and permanent loss ‘associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change’ that can no longer be avoided through mitigation nor can be avoided through adaptation.

The loss and damage associated with climate change is expected to increase over time, due to increase in frequency and magnitude of extreme

weather events, as well as impacts of slow-onset events. With current levels of committed warming, we also face the risk of passing tipping points of important climate system elements that may trigger a process of abrupt and non-linear climate change. All vulnerable countries as identified in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are currently at risk from levels of loss and damage that will have significant impacts on lives, livelihoods and the prospects for sustainable development.

Relevant lessons learned from the work programme and regional meetings

According to the mandate from decision 7/CP.17 adopted by the Con-

ference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in 2011, the expert meetings were to examine a range of approaches to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including impacts related to extreme weather and slow-onset events.

Participants at the regional meetings (Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe, and Small Island Developing States) discussed multiple approaches to address loss and damage. They recognised that some approaches might have synergies with adaptation efforts, while others will require taking action through new arrangements and standalone approaches. Many have concluded that obligations under the UNFCCC related to loss and damage require attention by the Parties, and the regional meetings so far have provided a unique window to contextualise local, national and regional challenges in a manner whereby the Parties to the Convention can decide adequate next steps at COP 18 in Doha, Qatar in November.

A number of key lessons were learned through the work programme and regional discussions:

1. There are limits to adaptation. The continuing accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the denial of historical responsibility by developed countries, and the limited support that has been forthcoming for adaptation, limit how much



Low-lying islands are vulnerable to rises in sea levels.

developing countries can do. Moreover, there are real physical limits to adaptation, particularly to the impacts of slow-onset processes. As temperatures and sea levels rise, territories will become uninhabitable and unproductive. Soil moisture levels will decrease to the point where cultivation of crops is no longer viable in entire regions. Groundwater sources in coastal areas will become too saline to provide drinking water for people living there. Adaptation will become impossible on low-lying islands and in the most arid regions; this will lead to permanent loss of lands, livelihoods, and cultural resources.

2. There are limitations to risk reduction, risk retention and risk transfer approaches to loss and damage. Risk reduction, like adaptation, becomes impossible after a certain point, for example, when a territory becomes uninhabitable. Migration and planned relocation are only coping mechanisms in that situation. Risk retention, when countries assume the costs of damage and loss in national accounting, is not an option for many countries. Risk transfer is a broad category of mechanisms to transfer the cost of damage and loss to a third party, usually through some form of insurance. There is potential for risk transfer and other risk-sharing mechanisms like insurance to address a subset of losses and damage; however, insurance works best for low-probability, high-impact events. Insurance is not appropriate for events of 100% certainty, such as sea level rise and increased temperatures.

3. Both economic and non-economic shocks must be considered in both the assessment of loss and damage and in the analysis of approaches to address loss and damage. Examples of economic losses include structural damage from floods or hurricanes, or crop loss due to drought or extreme heat. Non-economic losses include cultural loss, loss of livelihoods or territory, or species extinction. Some damage can be rehabilitated (such as damage to infrastructure), while other damage and loss cannot (e.g., cultural loss, loss of

The need for systematic consideration and support on loss and damage

THE current work of the work programme indicates that loss and damage will grow to become a major issue affecting economies and livelihoods in developing countries. A systematic approach to addressing loss and damage could be achieved through establishing an international mechanism to address loss and damage under the UNFCCC, as called for by developing countries in negotiations. The mechanism would be a facility to support developing countries' needs with respect to loss and damage; drive enhanced understanding and means of assessing loss and damage; facilitate coordination and cooperation on addressing loss and damage around the world, including through a compensation mechanism; and would be a means for the UNFCCC to exercise leadership in coordinating a global response on loss and damage. Below we briefly point out three of the elements that such a systematic approach should address:

Extreme events and slow-onset impacts are surpassing the capacities of countries to cope, and the associated losses and damage require new approaches. Because the Earth is slow to warm, accumulated historical emissions will cause warming, and impacts, for years to come – even if all emissions are halted immediately. We are facing the risk of passing tipping points and triggering a process of abrupt and non-linear climate change.

Finance alone cannot adequately compensate people for the loss of family, homes, territory, culture or livelihoods that will result from radical changes in climate, whether at local, regional or global levels. Approaches to address non-economic losses need to be central to

a holistic framework to support developing countries in coping with loss and damage. This systematic approach needs to give consideration and support to national and subnational social safety nets and how to strengthen these approaches through the Convention, which can tackle some of these non-economic losses.

There are limitations to humanitarian approaches to respond to disasters. Traditional approaches to respond to emergencies, particularly at the international level (e.g., pledge-based responses, ad hoc bilateral support for recovery), are not sufficient to address recurrent loss and damage. Therefore, there is a need to consider relevant experience on financial and other measures to assist developing countries affected by extreme losses, such as debt relief and concessional loans. Such schemes could be designed to help developing countries recover after terrible tragedies. Relevant examples can be drawn from the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, when a trust was created for international debt relief efforts when countries meeting certain criteria are hit by the most catastrophic of natural disasters. Such debt relief and similar concessions can free up additional resources to meet exceptional balance-of-payments needs created by the disaster and the recovery, complementing direct financing at preferential terms and in some instances concessional liquidity support. There are other relevant experiences and approaches that should be part of a range of approaches to address loss and damage and where the Convention must take the lead. ♦

ecosystems, melted glaciers, loss of human life). Traditional approaches to risk management to address economic losses have been considered extensively in the context of both climate change and other natural hazards. The UNFCCC work programme needs to expand efforts to understand new approaches, including approaches to address non-economic losses. The

UNFCCC, as the policy-relevant forum, must drive discussions on possible financial measures to assist countries in coping with loss and damage, for example deferral of payments to international institutions, debt relief, and other similar measures, as well as measures to strengthen social safety nets to support vulnerable groups and cope with non-economic

losses.

4. Loss and damage is an issue of equity. The countries most vulnerable to loss and damage are not responsible for the climate change that is destroying lives and livelihoods. Equity as the basis for defining action is operationalised in Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC: *'The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and*

respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.'

5. Distinctions can be made between avoidable and unavoidable losses. Avoidable losses, as the name implies, can possibly be prevented with anticipatory action. Avoidable losses are not always avoided, as countries may decide to not act, or limited capacity may prevent action. But many climate change impacts are

unavoidable, including many slow-onset changes. Examples of unavoidable losses are coral bleaching, sea level rise, and temperature rise that leads to land being taken out of production.

6. Loss and damage are fundamentally the result of climate impacts, not inherent vulnerabilities. Vulnerability and risk drivers are not the cause of losses: loss and damage result from climate impacts. Damage and loss can be exacerbated due to underlying vulnerabilities, but vulner-

Addressing loss and damage and the needs of developing countries

THE UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) will meet in Doha and will make recommendations on loss and damage for consideration by COP 18. A COP decision should contain several elements, many of which have been already outlined by developing countries in the negotiations. First, the COP should establish an international mechanism to address loss and damage and determine the process to elaborate on the modalities and other details to make such a mechanism functional by COP 20. Additionally, work similar to that already undertaken should continue in the SBI, further examining some of the issues that have emerged from the work programme and considering how to extend the work to other appropriate bodies under the Convention. The COP 18 outcome should contain standalone elements and recommendations, such as a request to the financial mechanisms and actions related to capacity building. The COP could also establish pilot programmes to address the needs of developing countries identified over the course of the last two years, whether individually under the Convention or in collaboration with other institutions.

A. Addressing needs under the Convention

The UNFCCC is the relevant policy forum to take concrete action to address loss and damage, both under and outside the Convention, and the COP must exercise its responsi-

bility as such. The Convention contains relevant principles for addressing loss and damage that should be taken into consideration as Parties debate next steps on loss and damage. For example, Article 3.3 of the Convention states that: *'...where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.'* This principle must be applied consistently in the development of inputs for a COP 18 outcome.

1. Elaboration of the modalities of an institutional mechanism on loss and damage. Negotiations in Doha must focus on filling the existing gaps in institutional and legal frameworks to address loss and damage, including through an institutional mechanism to address slow-onset impacts and other unavoidable damage. An institutionalised process to address loss and damage needs to be put in place, with roles assigned to the Adaptation Committee (AC), and consideration of the matter taken up also under the financial mechanism, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The decision establishing the mechanism should give guidance on the governance and functions of the mechanism. As identified by developing countries in Bonn, these functions could be:

a) Assessment of loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change: The special needs of particularly vulnerable developing countries must be accounted for in assessing the avoidable or unavoidable nature of loss

and damage from the adverse effects of climate change. This role could include coordinating and providing guidance on standards for assessing loss and damage, such as guiding the data collection and analysis activities of relevant institutions.

b) Addressing loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change, including through a compensation and rehabilitation fund: Unavoidable loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change may be addressed through risk-sharing mechanisms, but total loss and damage from the adverse effects of climate change will need to be redressed through compensation and rehabilitation mechanisms. This role could include coordinating and supporting technical assistance and action, and establishing and supporting regional networks of collaborative partners within and external to governments. It could also require dedicated support through the GCF to facilitate approaches to address loss and damage at the regional and national levels.

c) Leadership and promotion of cooperation and coordination outside the Convention: The mechanism should be situated under the umbrella of the Convention and housed within the UNFCCC Secretariat, where administrative support can be provided, with support and guidance of a Board constituted by Party members and with involvement of stakeholders. The Convention could under this mechanism take systematic efforts to support responses to slow-onset damage, link with UN institutions managing human mobility, coordinate cross-boundary issues and resources, link with other UN convention processes such as the Convention on Biological

ability is not the cause of drought or sea level rise. If an old person slowly crossing a street is hit by a car, she is hurt by the car, not by her underlying vulnerability of being old and walking slowly. As codified in international law in Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), States have *'the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.'*

The duty of States to abide by the 'no-harm' rule applies to the harm caused from the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases. This duty is not exonerated by the vulnerability of those affected, especially when some of those vulnerabilities are due to uncontrollable or historical circumstances, such as geophysical conditions, unfair global economic conditions, structural conditions created under colonialism, etc. In this context, it is worth noting that no group or country-category is defined as more

vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change than another under the Convention. Vulnerability is defined according to geophysical conditions identified in the preamble of the UNFCCC, while some articles identify the special needs that groups or country-categories may experience arising from other issues.

7. There is a need for specialised support for addressing impacts from slow-onset processes. With COP decision 1/CP.16 adopted in 2010, Parties agreed to consider slow-

Diversity and Convention to Combat Desertification, and other UN and international organisations as appropriate.

2. Role of the Adaptation Committee. The Adaptation Committee has the duty to promote coherence on adaptation. Given the important overlaps and synergies between adaptation and approaches to address loss and damage, the AC can be asked to provide technical support and guidance to the Parties with a view to facilitating the implementation of adaptation activities in a manner that fosters approaches to address loss and damage.

Similarly in performing its role, *inter alia*, in strengthening, consolidating and enhancing the sharing of relevant information, knowledge, experience and good practices, at the local, national, regional and international levels, taking into account, as appropriate, traditional knowledge and practices, the AC could play an active role in providing technical support and guidance to the Parties on some of the work remaining specific to loss and damage. This role could include the elaboration of modalities and technical aspects of an international mechanism to address loss and damage, as well as to provide recommendations to bodies of the Convention and strengthen related work under the Convention.

Additionally, the AC could be requested to play an active role and engage actions necessary outside the Convention, in accordance with its role of promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organisations, centres and networks, in order to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, in particular in developing-country Parties, including to identify and recommend ap-

propriate actions to address emerging needs and gaps, including outside the Convention. This work could include matters related to engaging relevant stakeholders in advancing agreed actions related to loss and damage, such as other UN institutions and civil society. Some of the issues to consider under this work can be matters related to, *inter alia*, migration, disaster risk reduction, agriculture and fisheries. For example, the AC could engage with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction where parallels might be sought with the governance system for addressing impacts of extreme events and identify common actions on disaster risk reduction and humanitarian intervention as part of a proactive and reactive response to loss and damage.

A particular issue that could be tasked to the AC in the interim is to further explore the multiple challenges for developing countries in operating catastrophe insurance and alternative non-market instruments. The work under the work programme to date appears to identify this area as a gap. This work could be done in collaboration with the SBI as part of a second phase of the programme of work.

3. Role of the SBI. A second phase of the programme under the SBI could help maintain the momentum and focus on some of the emerging issues under the current three themes, particularly employing leadership from constituted bodies and subsidiary bodies. Such an extension should in no way detract from a separate parallel process for making the international mechanism to address loss and damage operational by COP 20. The current work programme has identified opportunities and challenges for developing countries with respect to

approaches to loss and damage, many of which have been mentioned in this article. For example, additional work focused on the implementation of approaches to address slow-onset events could be a key element under a second phase of the work programme on loss and damage, including on how insurance and non-insurance tools could be employed to manage adverse effects from slow-onset processes whilst longer-term solutions are being explored. As noted, slow-onset processes will require action and measures to address loss as well as to remediate and rehabilitate damage – to livelihoods, to both natural and managed ecosystems, and other productive resources. The SBI could work to further elaborate approaches to address slow-onset processes, particularly at national level. In this sense, collaboration with the ongoing work on the development and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) could be timely. Additionally, the SBI could also work in collaboration with experts and stakeholders on how to strengthen social safety nets, such as social security and other measures directed to responding to local and community needs.

Similarly, discussions on the elaboration of modalities for support of NAPs, including on the identification of needs at national level, require special consideration of elements related to work on loss and damage. The assessment of loss and damage, in particular, could be an element included in the formulation of NAPs, and bodies under the Convention, as well as other

(Continued next page)

onset events in the work programme on loss and damage. There is a list of impacts considered to be slow-onset events:¹ sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinisation, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification. (Slow-onset events are further discussed below.)

However, there are still some gaps in responding to the fullest extent to the questions mandated by

COP 17 to better understand the full range of approaches and tools that can be used to address the risk of loss and damage, at all levels and for a broad range of sectors and ecosystems, considering both extreme weather events and slow-onset events. Approaches such as national social protection measures, approaches drawing from social capital, and others that could address concerns related to non-economic losses need to be discussed in much more detail.

Key topics for work post-Doha

The regional meetings were instrumental in focusing on certain key issues that help answer important questions needed for a successful COP 18 outcome: understanding approaches to address non-economic losses; the challenge posed to sustainable development due to lost development opportunities; the challenges and opportunities to support particu-

experts involved in the modalities, could collaborate in a second phase of the work programme to make loss and damage part of such ongoing work.

The work under themes 1 and 2 of the loss and damage work programme has begun to identify and better understand slow-onset processes. This work could be continued with inputs of the work ongoing in the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) under Article 5, including to enhance understanding of tipping elements and tipping points, and possible early warning mechanisms for the potential triggering of key tipping elements, both ecological as well as societal. Based on this enhanced understanding, this collaboration between the SBI Loss and Damage second phase could recommend appropriate actions.

The SBI could also continue to explore macroeconomic tools to manage loss and damage to create a buffer for developing countries, as well as help the international community better plan for financial needs associated with the additional challenge posed by loss and damage. This work could complement, without pre-empting or replacing the need, the work required for the elaboration of the modalities of an institutional mechanism on loss and damage discussed above.

4. Role of the financial mechanism. The level of funding required to prevent, manage, and compensate for loss and damage related to slow-onset impacts varies greatly from country to country and between regions, although it is clear that overall significant amounts will be needed above and beyond financial needs for adaptation. Therefore, there is an immedi-

ate need for consideration of financial resources required related to loss and damage, in order to develop a collective understanding of where overlaps might occur with current adaptation finance and where there may be unique needs. Clearly resources specific for loss and damage will need to be new and additional to existing resources. Discussions on finance for loss and damage must be integrated into ongoing processes related to long-term finance.

To fully adhere to the precautionary principle in the context of loss and damage requires the support and implementation of proactive approaches to manage slow-onset climate hazards. Allocation of finance to specific actions related to loss and damage, particularly where synergies with adaptation are not sufficient, must become part of the conversation on long-term finance.

B. Promoting cooperation and coordination outside the Convention

While the UNFCCC is the relevant policy forum to take concrete action to address loss and damage, there are many critical issues that do not fall within its mandate and the scope of its work. Therefore, the extent to which the Convention is able to achieve its objective under Article 2 will have consequences for matters outside the Convention, and the Convention should seek to collaborate with other institutions to address such issues. As mentioned before, the AC could be requested to play an active role and engage in actions necessary outside the Convention, in accordance with its role of promoting synergy and strengthening engagement with national, regional and international organisations, centres and networks, in order to enhance the implementation of adaptation actions, in particular in devel-

oping-country Parties, including to identify and recommend appropriate actions to address emerging needs and gaps. The AC could be charged with carrying out an element of a continued work programme on loss and damage focused on external cooperation and coordination. Such work could include:

1. Integrating the work of regional centres and networks. Regional centres and networks could have an important role to play in the assessment and addressing of loss and damage, enhancing synergies related to research and regionally appropriate mechanisms. The AC could incorporate this coordination into its work plan with regard to the work related to regional centres. The role that some institutions are already playing, such as the CCRIF on regional risk transfer mechanisms, and SPREP and CCCCC supporting research, modelling, and decision-making, as well as project implementation, exemplifies the role that these actors could have both in the context of an international mechanism, as well as under a second phase of the SBI work programme.

2. Climate change-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation. The Adaptation Framework already calls for work on measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels.¹ The COP has the capacity to make recommendations to other international bodies along these lines; the Doha outcome could specifically target this issue and call for joint discussions with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration as part of the SBI Loss and Damage Work Pro-

larly vulnerable countries through providing safety nets in the context of loss and damage; and a contextualisation of the challenges and opportunities of insurance and insurance-like mechanisms are among the most important issues. Specific topics include the following:

1. Loss and damage needs to be considered in the context of lost opportunities to achieve sustainable development. Added to the existing challenges of development are the

gramme Second Phase, with the collaboration of the AC. Existing international frameworks dealing with issues of displacement and migration will need to be expanded to handle movement resulting from the pressures imposed by slow-onset processes.

3. Making international finance respond to the loss and damage context. The Convention, as the policy-relevant forum, has the capacity to convene discussions on how financial measures could assist countries in coping with loss and damage, for example deferral of payments to international institutions, debt relief, and other similar measures. Financial shocks and lost development opportunities from the potential for large-scale economic disruption brought on by slow-onset climate change hazards will require significant coordination of international trade and investment flows. Addressing loss and damage resulting from slow-onset processes, in the context of sustainable development, will require different approaches than those used to address financial shocks resulting from extreme events. For example, slow-onset impacts may permanently diminish the tourism industry in many developing countries due to the loss of ecosystems, animal and plant diversity, and other tourist-attracting resources. These issues need to be considered as part of the Loss and Damage Work Programme Second Phase, in collaboration with actors outside the UNFCCC, and could be systematically addressed through the international mechanism. ♦

Endnote

1. Decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 14(f).



Desertification is one of the slow-onset impacts of climate change.

challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change, and now of addressing loss and damage. Therefore, discussions on loss and damage go beyond traditional approaches to disaster risk management and adaptation, and in fact are principally concerned with the *additional burden* to sustainable development caused by the failure to reach the objective of the Convention to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, discussions must include *direct harm* [i.e., the direct costs of actual (unavoidable) harms] and *forgone development* (i.e., the costs of lost and diminished opportunities in developing countries caused by having to forgo development options) from extreme events and slow-onset events.

2. Further consideration should be given to the limitations to risk reduction, risk retention and risk transfer approaches to loss and damage and alternatives. Over the past decade, policymakers and negotiators have discussed a range of approaches to address loss and damage, from disaster risk reduction to risk transfer and insurance. These existing approaches should be further evaluated with a view to identifying gaps in addressing the range of loss and damage.

For example, a number of organisations are trying to design insurance products that can reach and benefit the poorest agriculturalists, such as weather index-based insurance. However, as noted above, insurance works best for low-probability, high-impact events. Insuring climate risks be-

comes less and less tenable when events become more frequent, as premiums will rise accordingly. More frequent droughts, or high temperatures that kill crops or livestock, will become less and less insurable as these events increase in frequency with the rise in global temperature. Insuring climate risks is also inappropriate for slow-onset events that will occur with 100% probability, as mentioned above. All these limitations to risk transfer approaches must be further considered in the context of the work programme.

3. The analysis of approaches to address loss and damage needs to consider economic and non-economic dimensions, particularly in the context of slow-onset events. Much attention has gone into the traditional approaches to risk management to address economic losses, but the work programme needs to redouble efforts to understand approaches to address non-economic losses. The work programme needs to identify actions to strengthen existing or identify new approaches to address non-economic losses. Non-insurance mechanisms can provide the liquidity needed for recovering from disaster shocks and provide capital for prevention.² However, the work programme still has not explored the full potential of approaches to address non-economic losses at micro-, meso- and macro-scales.

4. Loss and damage requires consideration of approaches to address economic shocks. Conven-

Loss and damage in Africa

A REPORT by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides robust scientific information on what can be expected from changes in weather and climate extremes in various regions and sub-regions of Africa.¹ Droughts have affected the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa particularly since the end of the 1960s. The report finds that, in relative terms, Africa (especially Madagascar and Mozambique) has the largest increase in physical exposure to tropical cyclones. Damages from tropical cyclones are perhaps most commonly associated with extreme wind, but storm-surge and freshwater flooding from extreme rainfall generally cause the great majority of damage and loss of life. Additionally, projected sea level rise is expected to further compound tropical cyclone surge impacts.

Future impacts of changing climate extremes may result in a broad range of impacts on both human and ecosystems including economic losses, impacts on different sectors such as tourism and agriculture, on urban settlements and on access to water. The IPCC report also finds with high confidence that economic losses from weather- and climate-related disasters are increasing, albeit with large inter-annual variability.

Agriculture is affected directly by both temperature extremes and rainfall, and is the economic sector most vulnerable and exposed to climate extremes in Africa. As average temperatures rise, so will heat extremes. Crops, animals and humans have physiological limits to the temperature extremes they can tolerate, and crop and livestock productivity will decrease with increasing temperatures. Moreover, increasing nighttime temperatures can also reduce crop yields. Overall, significant yield reductions are anticipated in most major crops and most major regions in Africa. Average predicted production losses by 2050 for African crops include 22% in maize, 17% sorghum, 17% millet, 18% groundnut, and 8% cassava.² Yield

loss due to changes in both temperature and rainfall will seriously affect food security across the African continent, threatening permanent loss and damage to both lives and livelihoods.

Permanent loss and damage from slow-onset disasters will go far beyond economic loss – livelihoods will be lost, territory will have to be abandoned, and migrants from non-productive lands will lose both homes and community. In Egypt, almost 800,000 hectares of land has already been lost in the Nile Delta due to sea level rise and saline intrusion; an estimated 12-15% of the productive land in the delta could be lost in the coming century, and 6-7 million persons may eventually be forced to migrate.³

'Low-lying coastal areas and megadeltas are major sources of environmentally induced migration. This is particularly true in countries such as Bangladesh and Viet Nam, and regions such as the Egyptian Nile Delta and the Niger Delta in Nigeria. Those regions are vulnerable to slow-onset environmental phenomena related to sea level rise and change in precipitation patterns and are also increasingly affected by natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, storm surges, soil erosion and soil salinisation.'⁴

Many people will be forced to move from affected areas, including from low-lying islands and coastlines and from areas affected by permanent changes to the ecosystems and other resources on which they depend for their lives and livelihoods. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of people impacted by natural disasters in Africa has doubled in the past two decades, up from 9 million in 1989 to nearly 17 million in 2008.⁵ Those most vulnerable to climate change will be hardest hit, particularly in drought-prone areas. Industrialised countries should do their fair share in helping these people build new lives, and in some instances accept their fair share of the people exiled from their homes and countries by climate change. The complicated issue of displacement, mi-

gration and planned relocation requires adequate and considered attention, including further research and collaboration among a range of relevant international institutions. The African Union adopted the Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (or Kampala Convention), though it has not entered into effect. The Convention would be the first legally binding regional treaty recognising the multiple causes of internal displacement, establishing state responsibilities for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons whose displacement is the result of 'natural or human made disasters, including climate change.'⁶ ♦

Endnotes

- 1 IPCC. 2012. Summary for Policymakers. In: *Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* [Field, C.B., V. Barros, T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, D.J. Dokken, K.L. Ebi, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, G.-K. Plattner, S.K. Allen, M. Tignor, and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. A Special Report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, pp. 1-19.
- 2 Schlenker, W. and D.B. Lobell. 2010. Robust negative impacts of climate change on African agriculture. *Environmental Research Letters* 5, doi:10.1088/1748-9326/5/1/014010.
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tional insurance is generally not appropriate for slow-onset climate impacts. Other instruments may be needed in this case. The UNFCCC must drive discussions on how financial measures could be fostered to as-

sist countries in coping with loss and damage, for example deferral of payments to international institutions, debt relief, and other similar measures. Economies in particularly vulnerable countries rely on climate-sen-

sitive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, and forests. Limited resources for coping with and recovering from climate and socio-economic shocks and stresses threaten to derail efforts for sustainable development.³

Loss and damage in Asia

RECENT climate change events across Asia – including the 2010 floods in Pakistan, 2011 floods in Thailand, worsening soil degradation in Iraq, and the increasing loss of Himalayan glaciers – have impacted millions of people and resulted in tragic loss of life and livelihoods, with massive social, environmental and economic costs. For example:

- Widespread flooding in Pakistan in 2010 affected 20 million people, killing 1,781,¹ displacing millions, and damaging 1.6 million homes. The World Bank places the cost of damage at \$10 billion (\$5 billion in the agriculture sector) while the estimated recovery and reconstruction needs range from \$6.7 billion to \$8.9 billion.² As well as damage to infrastructure, which affected governance, education, energy, business and communications, the flooding led to widespread health risks from malaria, cholera, and severe malnutrition. With the economy heavily dependent on agriculture, the economic impacts are grave: 5.3 million jobs were lost, according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO); growth dropped from a predicted 4.5% to -2%/-5%; and the \$55 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) debt will grow as Pakistan is forced to borrow in order to recover.³ The 2011 floods in Sindh and Balochistan further impeded recovery, affecting 9 million people – most of whom were still suffering from the previous devastating flooding – and inflicting \$3.7 billion in damage, \$1.8 billion to agriculture alone.⁴ Minimum reconstruction costs amount to an additional \$2.7 billion. Many of those displaced by the 2010 floods remain so.

- Flooding also afflicted Thailand in 2011, affecting more than 3 million people – killing over 700, destroying 766,267 homes and inundating 1.3 million hectares of paddy.⁵ The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) estimated

that the total cost of damage and loss across all sectors was 1.425 trillion baht (\$45 billion) and the cost of recovery around \$47.5 billion.⁶ Among others, the manufacturing sector reported losses of over \$31.7 billion, the agriculture sector \$1.3 billion, and the housing sector sustained losses estimated at \$2.7 billion. Seven major industrial estates were flooded, and the production of cars and electronic goods was suspended, with knock-on effects for global supplies, prices and labour. The World Bank estimated that the economic impact would include a reduction in real GDP growth of 1.1 percentage points. The flooded industrial estates had an accumulative insurance of \$19.5 billion, of which 30% may be paid out.⁷

- Himalayan glaciers, the crucial 'Water Towers of Asia', are disappearing, with transformational implications for the 1.3 billion people making their livelihoods in the river basins fed by the glaciers, including from predicted increases in winter drought and summer floods. In Nepal, the annual costs of the floods and landslides were \$14.7 million between 2001 and 2007, according to the World Bank.⁸ The droughts cost Nepal up to 30% of its rice yield in 2007, as well as electricity, which would have otherwise been generated using hydropower. As the glaciers melt, they form glacial lakes, some of which are growing so fast that they pose a threat of glacial lake outburst floods. The cost of assets that are at risk of being lost to these floods is between \$1.8 and \$8.7 million,⁹ not to mention the number of lives at risk, and the potential loss of traditional knowledge and practices developed in this unique part of the world.

- In Syria, increased desertification threatens food, water, and job security. Across the region agriculture will continue to bear the brunt of the impacts of desertification, with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) estimating an additional \$241

million per year is needed to counteract the effects on nutrition.¹⁰ The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says that in Syria, 79% of the population is at risk from desertification and that the projected agricultural production capacity is likely to decrease by 16% in coming years.¹¹ Given that agriculture provides 30% of the workforce with employment and 25% of the country's GDP, this drop in productivity is extremely worrying: there is already 26% youth unemployment. The Syrian government reported to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification that it has seen a 61% decrease in pasture productivity and estimates the loss of crops at 5.7 billion Syrian pounds per year. Economic impacts are already evident; Syria now only produces cotton for its domestic market.¹² After a severe drought in 2006-09 led to basic crop yield dropping by 79% in some areas and vegetation for grazing to disappear, 1.5 million people migrated to urban centres as the income of severely affected populations nosedived by 90%, according to the World Bank.¹³ ♦

Endnotes

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- 2 World Bank: Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment (2010)
- 3 Brookings
- 4 Pakistan Government: Flood Impact Assessment (2011)
- 5 Wikipedia – original sources in Thai
- 6 UNESCAP: Thailand floods damage and loss assessment: lessons learned
- 7 Guy Carpenter: Floods in Thailand
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- 10 IFPRI: Climate Change Impacts on Agriculture and Costs of Adaptation
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- 12 IISD: climate change and conflict in the Middle East
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Loss and damage in Small Island Developing States

RECENT climate change events in Small Island Developing States provide vivid examples of loss and damage. These events have affected lives and livelihoods, with massive social, environmental and economic costs. For example:

- The 2010 hurricane season in the Caribbean was the third most active hurricane season on record, with most number of named storms, according to historical records.¹ The economic impact on the region became unmanageable, requiring countries to look for support outside existing regional risk management mechanisms, such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF). In the case of St. Lucia, for example, total damage after Hurricane Tomas was estimated at about 34% of its total GDP,² and the country sought immediate assistance nearing \$8.2 million in the form of loans through the Rapid Credit Facility and the Emergency Natural Disaster Assistance of the International Monetary Fund.

- Salinisation in the Marshall Islands and the associated decline in agricultural yields have been reported over the last decade. Extreme events such as droughts and tropical cyclones can lead to increased salinity of soils, thus impairing food production. Higher rates of erosion and coastal land loss are expected in many small islands as a consequence of the projected rise in sea levels. In the case of the Majuro Atoll in the Marshall Islands, it is estimated that for a 1-m rise in sea level, as much as 80% of total land could be lost to production.³ Production of key staple crops has been disrupted by climatic extremes such as typhoons and droughts, shifting consumption to imported foods, putting pressure on the national economy and with implications for nutrition and health.⁴ FAO also reports increasing pressure on coastal and marine environments, a particular concern given the role of seafood in the diet.

- Three different slow-onset processes threaten coral reefs around the world – sea level rise, an increase in

ocean temperatures and ocean acidification – as well as extreme warming periods of shorter duration. Potential long-lasting or permanent impacts on coral reefs from climate change are immensely troubling, as reef fish provide fundamental food security for millions, and developing countries earn substantial amounts of foreign exchange from reef tourism. Extreme heat in 2010 put the world's coral reefs under such severe stress that scientists feared widespread die-offs, endangering not only the richest ecosystems in the ocean but also these extremely important fisheries.⁵ ♦

Endnotes

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Dealing with long-term challenges of slow-onset processes

Slow-onset events, as noted in decision 1/CP.16, include sea level rise, increasing temperatures, ocean acidification, glacial retreat and related impacts, salinisation, land and forest degradation, loss of biodiversity and desertification. These slow-onset 'events' – more appropriately termed slow-onset processes, hazards or impacts – are an important element in the conversation on loss and damage, distinct from extreme events.

Much of the discussion on approaches to address loss and damage has focused on extreme events, e.g., floods, drought and heat waves. As already mentioned, risk transfer approaches are particularly appropriate for certain types of extreme events, albeit taking into consideration the limitations of such approaches.

Slow-onset events will have significant and wide-ranging impacts on



Demonstrators making a call for debt relief. Debt relief is one possible measure to assist countries in coping with loss and damage from climate change.

people's lives and livelihoods and are irreversible in our lifetimes if temperatures continue to rise. The losses that result from slow-onset processes will affect many more people than extreme events over a long period of time. As already discussed, because of the certainty of their occurrence and because they are persistent and

develop over time, they are not amenable to many of the approaches currently under consideration for addressing extreme events, such as index-based insurance. Moreover, because these 'events' progress and increase in impact over time, adaptation is a decreasingly viable option, as we noted earlier.

Loss and damage in Latin America

RECENT climate change impacts from Latin America provide vivid examples to consider in the current assessment of approaches to addressing loss and damage:

- Long-term drought in the northern states of Mexico has devastated cattle herds and crops. Over the last 12 months, 350,000 head of cattle starved to death in the state of Chihuahua alone. Maize production in 2011 in Chihuahua dropped from 100,000 metric tons to just 500 tons. The head of the Climate Change Programme at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City wondered, 'Is it really a drought, or the region's new climate?' A permanent shift in the regional climate would mean thousands of farmers losing use of their lands and their livelihoods.

- Flooding in Colombia and Venezuela in 2010 left devastating consequences for society, with hundreds dead, millions of people homeless, and damage in the order of billions of dollars to their economies. In Colombia alone, the government estimate of the damage caused was up to \$6 billion. The floods and landslides affected 70% of the country and left homeless more than 2.2 million people.

- Andean glaciers are rapidly receding, and this will continue due to

slow-onset temperature rise, with significant near-term impacts, including impacts on mountain ecosystems, on water supplies for major cities, and on farmers' livelihoods and food security in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. As with other slow-onset impacts, such as sea level rise and the associated salinisation of aquifers, where access to freshwater is slowly eroded, the right to development is at the same time actively undermined. Rather than increasing options to improve livelihoods, life in mountain areas becomes more and more unviable.

- The region of Central America has been severely hit by extreme events in the last few decades, washing away years of investment in sustainable development. In 1998 Hurricane Mitch struck when Central America was just recovering from the economic effects of El Niño 1997-98, whose floods, forest fires, and droughts had weakened the countries' productive systems. Honduras and Nicaragua were the hardest hit, but the damage spread through the whole region. The Pan American Health Organisation reported that this event left almost 10,000 dead, and destroyed almost 4,000 schools, 600 health centres and 1,800 water and sanitation services. The recovery from this disaster took years, with some areas still showing signs of the devastation today. ◆

Parties will need to undertake further work under the UNFCCC to enhance the understanding of slow-onset processes, the types of loss and damage associated with various types of slow-onset impacts, and how these impacts might be addressed in multiple contexts. There is also a need to enhance coordination and cooperation with other regional and multilateral institutions. The mandate of the work programme requires Parties to look at approaches for dealing with both climate change-related extreme weather events and slow-onset hazards. However, up to this point, the work programme has given much more consideration to the issues raised by extreme events. This deficiency in identifying and evaluating approaches to

address slow-onset events must be recognised by COP 18 for future work.

Additional to slow-onset events already identified, there is also a need to better understand permanent state shifts and tipping points. For example, long-term extreme droughts may actually signal a shift to states of permanent aridity. State shifts are qualitative changes in the state of a system. Such changes are often, though not always, irreversible. While most often we think of state shifts in biological or climatological terms, we can also consider socio-economic state shifts, brought about when land is no longer able to produce food, to provide fodder for animals, or when fisheries no longer provide enough

fish for the fishing communities dependent on them. These permanent shifts in state can happen slowly or rapidly. The drying described above will result from a slow shift in the temperature and precipitation regime. Major tipping elements in the earth system, such as the annual West African and Indian summer monsoons, the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or the Amazon rainforest could be pushed towards tipping points that would bring about more rapid state shifts with impacts felt at the global level.

The work already achieved under the work programme supports the need to move towards a systematic approach to address loss and damage, including through specialised support for addressing impacts from slow-onset processes and to observe and take appropriate action as tipping points begin to be identified. The UNFCCC needs to find a way to systematically support developing countries as they address slow-onset impacts, rather than with an ad hoc humanitarian pledge approach, as has been historically the case with major disasters in developing countries. Slow-onset events will require action and measures to address loss as well as to remediate and rehabilitate damage – to livelihoods, to both natural and managed ecosystems, and other productive resources. ◆

Juan Hoffmaister is a researcher with the Third World Network. Doreen Stabinsky is Professor of Global Environmental Politics at College of the Atlantic in Maine, USA. Nathan Thanki contributed to the writing of this article.

Endnotes

1. These impacts are listed in a footnote in decision 1/CP.16.
2. FCCC/TP/2008/9, 2008. Mechanisms to manage financial risks from direct impacts of climate change in developing countries – Technical Paper. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn.
3. FCCC/TP/2008/3, 2008. Physical and socio-economic trends in climate-related risks and extreme events, and their implications for sustainable development – Technical Paper. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn.

Agriculture, food security and climate change

The need to get the framing right

Lim Li Ching

ONE hundred and twenty-two civil society and farmers' organisations sent a statement of concern to the organisers of the 2nd Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change. The meeting was held in Hanoi, Vietnam from 3-7 September and was co-organised by the Governments of Vietnam and the Netherlands, with the support of the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Civil society's understanding of the problems and solutions differed fundamentally from the framing posed by the organisers, which appeared to push climate change mitigation responsibilities onto small farmers in the South. Furthermore, even though smallholder women and men across the world provide food and food security for billions of people, they were not adequately consulted in the process and in the run-up to it.

Civil society highlighted that the key problem still remains with emissions from developed countries, which are already contributing to climate change and causing impacts on food production. They called on developed countries to urgently and immediately undertake drastic emission reductions to prevent further damage to our agriculture systems and food production.

Moreover, the Conference did not address the key contributor to global agriculture emissions – emissions from industrial agriculture. Civil society argued that any real attempt by the global community to address agricultural emissions must recognise



'The best hedge against the increasing instability of local climates in the future is a diversity of varieties and breeds to address the threat of increasing floods, drought and storms.'

the primary responsibility of developed countries to transform their agriculture systems.

For developing countries, adaptation to climate change has to be the main priority, adequately supported by developed-country public finance. The agricultural challenges faced by the poorest and most vulnerable, in Africa but also in Asia, in small-island states and in Latin America, are adaptation challenges. The Conference unfortunately did not place emphasis on this urgent need of devel-

oping countries.

Civil society also raised concerns about the false solutions of carbon markets that do not decrease greenhouse gas emissions, but merely displace emissions and enable developed countries to continue emitting high levels of greenhouse gases. When the carbon offsets market is linked to 'climate-smart agriculture', past experience and recent studies have shown that the main beneficiaries are carbon market traders, brokers and consultants, not smallholder farmers.

The real solutions, civil society pointed out, lie in agroecological practices and sustainable agricultural systems, using techniques, breeds and varieties developed and selected by small farmers for millennia. They called on the Conference to champion a global transition to sustainable ecological agriculture, focus on enabling peasants, small-scale producers and local and indigenous communities to adapt to climate change, ensure adequate public financing for agriculture, and avoid questionable technological fixes and market mechanisms.

Because of these concerns raised by civil society before and during the Conference, the final 'key messages' and summary report from the Conference were only a co-Chairs' summary and were not negotiated nor enjoyed consensus. The organisations attending the Conference maintained that so long as the framing of the critical issue of agriculture, food security and climate change was not right, they would continue to raise their concerns about the process.

The text of the civil society statement is reproduced below.

WE, the undersigned civil society organisations from around the world, are concerned that the objectives of this Conference reflect the same flawed approach as the first Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, held in The Hague in October 2010. The approach also regrettably continues to marginalise peasants and small-scale food producers, yet they are the ones whose livelihoods are most at risk and who most urgently need to be heard.

The central themes of the 2nd Global Conference, including ‘climate-smart agriculture’, ‘green growth’ and the ‘landscape approach’, are heavily contested. Many civil society organisations believe these approaches have not been sufficiently considered from the perspective of peasants, small-scale producers and indigenous peoples, who are suffering the worst impacts of climate change. We remain concerned about the continued lack of transparency, participation and consultation with many governments, farmers and civil society in preparing for the Conference. We note that the ‘Roadmap’ from the first Conference was neither endorsed by attending governments nor accepted as a binding outcome.

Address the impacts of the climate crisis on food production

The most important agenda for a conference on food security, agriculture and climate change should focus on the protection of agriculture from climate change. Climate change is already threatening the livelihoods and food security of the poor and vulnerable. The industrial model of agricultural production threatens the viability of ecosystems and contributes massively to climate change. Nothing less than a system change – towards ecological agriculture, based on principles that create healthy soils and cultivate biological diversity, and which prioritise farmers’ and tradi-



‘The industrial model of agricultural production threatens the viability of ecosystems and contributes massively to climate change.’

tional knowledge – is needed in the face of climate change. There is also a critical need to reverse the economic concentration of global markets – particularly for grains, livestock and food processing – that has led to unsustainable forms of industrial agriculture worldwide and the bulk of the emissions from the agriculture sector. Unfortunately, the programme fails to address these necessary system changes. Instead, it appears to endorse a greater role for the private sector to invest in schemes that will commodify natural resources and disenfranchise local and indigenous communities.

A focus on adaptation

Resources must be urgently directed to adaptation, given the serious current threats posed by climate change to agriculture. Agroecology is the most important, reliable set of practices to protect yields in the face of climate change and should be supported significantly with public finance. The Conference should emphasise identified adaptation priorities of developing countries and the provision of steady and reliable public finance to developing countries that will have to cope with the worst consequences of climate change. In addition, adaptation financing should be in the form of grants, not loans.

Key policy developments should

be to work with local food providers and help them to conserve, store and further develop their own varieties and breeds. It is clear that the best hedge against the increasing instability of local climates in the future is a diversity of varieties and breeds to address the threat of increasing floods, drought and storms. Industrial agriculture has reduced the number of farmers’ varieties and breeds drastically and thereby dangerously reduced the basis of food security for the future. This must end now; we need **new policies centred on the real needs of peasants, small-scale producers and indigenous peoples.**

Critical review of market-based approaches needed

The framing of the Conference agenda appears to endorse market-based approaches. Yet evidence from the last two years suggests that carbon markets and market-based approaches linked to them are not appropriate for peasants and small-scale producers. These approaches need open and critical review. Carbon markets have repeatedly failed to deliver real funds to projects on the ground. Moreover, carbon market mechanisms actually finance the emissions reduction commitments of developed countries through ‘offsetting’ projects in developing countries. This not only



'We are frustrated that the peasants, small-scale producers and indigenous peoples who provide 70% of the world's food continue to be left out of the debate.'

increases the threat of climate change by allowing developed countries to continue rather than change their unsustainable production and consumption patterns, but also forces emissions reduction responsibilities onto peasants and small producers in developing countries. Developed country mitigation and 'offsetting' priorities should not and cannot drive discussions on the nexus between climate change, food security and agriculture.

We note that the landscape approach, promoted by the World Bank, has a high profile in the agenda. We believe that the Bank's role as both policy adviser and carbon broker for soil carbon and landuse credits makes it an inappropriate institution to guide

governments on the pros and cons of landuse offsets. Using a market-based approach to convert large tracts of landscapes that include water, land, agriculture and forests into commodities is unethical when it comes to questions of food security. Land-grabbing in the developing world has become an ever greater concern since the first Conference, particularly as financial assets become unreliable and both State and private actors secure land for financial gain and food security. The impacts of 'climate-smart agriculture' and the landscape approach should be examined in this new economic context where land and the food grown on it have become financial assets for financial speculators and institutional investors.



The 2nd Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change was held in Hanoi on 3-7 September.

Implement rather than ignore IAASTD findings

The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), initiated by the World Bank and FAO, sponsored by UN agencies and approved by 58 governments, contains some of the most complete and authoritative sets of policy options to strengthen the productivity and resilience of the world's food and agricultural systems, while prioritising social equity and sustainability. We call on the Hanoi Conference to endorse the recommendations of the IAASTD, and for governments and international organisations, including the World Bank and FAO, to commit to the implementation of the IAASTD findings.

Conclusion

We are frustrated that the peasants, small-scale producers and indigenous peoples who provide 70% of the world's food continue to be left out of the debate. The Hanoi Conference is an opportunity to support fair and effective solutions to the agriculture and climate crises. We call on the conference organisers to champion a global transition to ecological agriculture, focus on enabling peasants, small-scale producers and local and indigenous communities to adapt to climate change, ensure adequate public financing for agriculture, and avoid questionable technological fixes and market mechanisms.

We believe that peasants, small-scale farmers, labourers, indigenous peoples, women and civil society organisations engaged on issues of food security, food sovereignty, the right to food, and the preservation and use of traditional knowledge are essential to this debate. They provide practical, just and affordable solutions to the problems of food security and climate change. They need to be heard. No process that ignores their voices can be considered legitimate. ♦

A researcher with the Third World Network, Lim Li Ching coordinates TWN's sustainable agriculture work.

‘We demand climate justice now!’

In 2011, in advance of the annual UN climate conference that took place in Durban, South Africa, Jubilee South – Asia/Pacific Movement on Debt & Development (JSAPMDD), together with other organisations such as Third World Network, Friends of the Earth and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, initiated a ‘Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice’. Almost 200 organisations and networks signed up from various parts of the world, and the call is a continuing one.

Prior to the August/September climate negotiations session in Bangkok, more than 60 of the signatories met for a strategy meeting on 27-30 August to flesh out the campaign and plan for actions for the next few years with 2015 as a watershed, the year ‘a protocol or another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force’ under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is due to be concluded.

Below is the campaign call.

WE are movements and organisations engaged in many struggles for a new world – a world in which the needs, interests, rights and aspirations of peoples everywhere have priority over the profit of corporations and the excess of elites. In the years ahead, our solidarity and collective action is extremely crucial. Climate change is already having devastating impacts globally and is accelerating. The window for preventing the breach of tipping points and stopping climate catastrophe is rapidly closing.

Climate change is more than multiplying the sufferings of people already burdened by the global injustices of hunger, dispossession and violation of human rights. It is a crisis that also threatens to wipe out vast populations and profoundly change life on Earth. We must act with clarity, cohesion and courage if we are to stabilise the Earth’s climate system and secure a just and sustainable world.

Like other global crises, climate change arises principally from historically unequal economic and social structures, from practices and policies promoted by rich, industrialised countries, and from systems of production and consumption that sacrifice the needs of the many to the interests of a few. The affected peoples of the world bear little responsibility for the climate crisis yet suffer its worst effects and are deprived of the means

to respond.

Addressing these challenges requires profound social transformation in all countries and at all levels – local, national and global. It requires a rapid shift to systems and methods of production and consumption that are compatible with the limits of the planet and are aimed at meeting the needs of peoples rather than the relentless pursuit of profit.

Part of the process of profound social transformation is fighting for and achieving immediate concrete results in terms of drastic reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and enabling people to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis.

It is in this light that we are engaged in the fight for an international climate architecture that is rooted in science, equity and justice.

Rather than honouring their historical responsibilities and legal commitments, governments of rich industrialised countries have been trying to reverse Climate Convention principles and dismantle existing agreements. This effort started with the so-called Copenhagen Accord, was advanced by the Cancun outcomes, and was further served by the adoption of the Durban Platform. Among other things, they are seeking to impose a domestic ‘pledge and review’ system, deregulate multilateral climate rules and promote false solutions such as the expansion of carbon markets.

Their efforts must be met with intensified resistance.

**‘The window for...
stopping climate
catastrophe is rapidly
closing.’**

As part of a broader struggle to achieve climate justice, reparations for climate debt and a profound global transformation – we demand from all governments that if international negotiations are to mean anything, they must deliver outcomes that will:

Prevent catastrophic climate change and ensure just and fair sharing of drastic emissions reductions. Limit temperature rise to well below 1.5°C and bring it down to 1°C as fast as possible; Rich industrialised countries to fulfil their existing legally binding commitments and undertake drastic emissions cuts without offsets in line with their fair share of the global carbon budget that takes into account historical per capita emissions; Offsets and other loopholes must be removed; The US must commit to comparable targets, based on its historical responsibility;

Stop false solutions. Stop the implementation and pursuit of false solutions such as carbon trading, market-based approaches to forests, soil

and water, large-scale geo-engineering and techno-fixes, nuclear energy, mega hydro dams, agro-fuels, and clean coal;

Ensure adequate and appropriate finance on the basis of countries' responsibility for climate debt and obligation to make reparations to all affected peoples. Rich, industrialised countries to cover the full costs of enabling peoples of developing countries and other affected communities to deal with the impacts of climate change (including past, present and future losses) as well as the costs of enabling developing countries to shift to equitable, post-carbon sustainable systems; Climate finance must not be in the form of debt-creating instruments and should be channelled through a democratic and accountable global fund that is independent of other international financial institutions and upholds the principles of direct access and country-determined, participatory decisions on the use of funds;

Ensure appropriate technology transfers without intellectual property barriers. Developed countries must ensure free sharing of safe, appropriate and ecologically and socially sound technologies; Advance the transformation to equitable, democratic, post-carbon systems;

Take decisive steps towards the profound transformation of the system based on equity, science and the rights of peoples to live well in harmony with and respect for Mother Earth. Transform social and economic structures and technologies and re-orient policies to move away from profit-driven, growth-oriented, high-carbon, elite-dominated exploitative systems and instead ensure a just transition to people-driven, equitable, and democratic post-carbon sustainable development.

We call on governments to end years of delay and meet their moral, historical and legal obligations.

We urge all movements, peoples' organisations, civil society groups and all concerned citizens to come together in a Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice! ◆

For more details contact the Global Campaign International Facilitation/Outreach Group at demandclimatejustice@gmail.com

TWN Submissions to the United Nations Climate Talks – Ideas and Proposals on the Elements Contained in Paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan

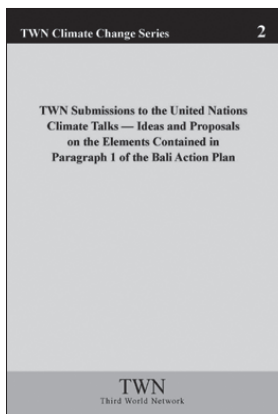
The failure of developed countries to fulfill their commitments is a major reason for the weak implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) over the last 15 years.

At the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 13) held in Bali, Indonesia on 3-15 December 2007 the Bali Action Plan was adopted. It launched "a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision" at COP 15 in Copenhagen in December 2009. A new Ad Hoc Working Group on long-term cooperative action was established under the UNFCCC for this purpose.

In response to an invitation by UNFCCC Parties to accredited observer organizations to submit ideas and proposals on the elements contained in paragraph 1 of the Bali Action Plan by 30 September 2008, Third World Network (TWN) submitted five documents, particularly on finance and technology. A second opportunity to submit more ideas and proposals arose and on 6 December 2008 TWN submitted two more documents.

Some of the suggestions were included in a document prepared by the Chair of the Working Group that evolved further into draft negotiation text that will be debated and negotiated throughout 2009.

The TWN submissions are reproduced in this publication.



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Reinforcing Washington's Asia-Pacific hegemony

The Asia-Pacific region has now become one of the key geostrategic concerns of the US. Central to the exercise of US hegemony over the region is the encirclement of China through a network of military and economic agreements with the neighbouring countries. *Joseph Gerson* explains.

A YEAR ago, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signalled a major transformation in US foreign policy in an article titled 'America's Pacific Century', which announced the US 'pivot' toward Asia, the Pacific, and the strategically important Indian Ocean. 'One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade,' she wrote, will be 'to lock in a substantially increased investment – diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise – in the Asia-Pacific region'. The increased engagement, she wrote, would be underwritten in part by 'forging a broad-based military presence'.

Shortly thereafter, the Pentagon published its new 'strategic guidance' paper, which, signalling at a shift away from Iraq and Central Asia, named the Asia-Pacific region and the Persian Gulf as the nation's two geostrategic priorities. To emphasise the new commitments, Clinton, Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, and President Barack Obama made high-profile visits to allied Asian and Pacific nations. Republicans, in Mitt Romney's foreign policy white paper, upped the ante, insisting that the United States 'expand its naval presence in the Western Pacific' and pressure its allies to 'maintain appropriate military capabilities'.

The continuing pursuit of Asia-Pacific hegemony

The pivot is best understood as an extension of a century and a half of US foreign and military policies. In the 1850s, US Secretary of State William Seward argued that if the United States were to replace Britain as the world's dominant power, it



The nuclear-capable *USS George Washington* aircraft carrier is based in Tokyo Bay in Japan. The US has committed to deploying 60% of its nuclear-armed and high-tech navy to the Asia-Pacific.

would first have to dominate Asia – hence the purchase of Alaska, the northern route to Asia. By the 1890s, Washington had finally assembled the navy needed to challenge Britain's mastery of the seas. Meanwhile, amidst an economic depression and related domestic turmoil, policymakers saw access to the Chinese market as a way to put the unemployed to work while increasing corporate profits and establishing the United States as a global power. The turn-of-the-century sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana harbour provided an excuse for the United States to declare war on Spain, seize the Philippines and Guam (as well as Puerto Rico and Cuba), and annex Hawaii to secure the refuelling stations needed to reach China.

After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the Pacific became an 'American Lake'. Hundreds of new US military bases were established in Japan, Korea, Australia, the

Marshall Islands, and other Pacific nations to reinforce those in the Philippines, Guam, and Hawaii, which were greatly expanded. Together these bases 'contained' Beijing and Moscow throughout the Cold War, serving as launching pads for the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as for military interventions and political subversion from the Philippines and Indonesia to the Persian Gulf.

In the late 1990s, when China was first seen as a potential strategic competitor for Asia-Pacific hegemony, the Clinton administration adopted a two-track policy of engagement and containment. Deng Xiaoping was welcomed to Disneyland, President Clinton was welcomed in Beijing, and China was given the green light to join the World Trade Organisation. Meanwhile, the US-Japan military alliance, which has long functioned as the NATO equivalent in East Asia, was reinforced. The Clinton administration sent nuclear-capable

aircraft carriers through the Taiwan Strait and accelerated missile defence deployments designed to neutralise China's missile capabilities. Before they were sidetracked by the 'war on terror', President George W Bush and company promised to 'diversify' US Asia-Pacific military bases, reducing their concentration in North-East Asia in order to distribute them more widely along China's periphery.

Although the Bush administration extended the 'war on terror' to Indonesia, the Philippines, and southern Thailand, it otherwise largely neglected Asia and the Pacific. This opened the way for growing Chinese influence, deepening the integration of South-East Asian nations into China's surging economic orbit. With the pivot, the Obama administration has signalled its determination, according to the *Guardian's* Simon Tisdall, 'to beat back any Chinese bid for hegemony in the Asia-Pacific', even at the expense of a new Cold War. As General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, put it, 'the US military may be obliged to overtly confront China just as it faced down the Soviet Union.'

The new Cold War and its footprint

Joseph Nye, Bill Clinton's Deputy Secretary of Defence and a primary author of US Asia-Pacific policy, previewed the pivot's intellectual foundations in a piece for the *New York Times*. He warned of the potential dangers of rivalry between rising and declining powers. Twice during the 20th century, Nye noted, the United States and Britain failed to integrate Germany and Japan into their world order, resulting in two catastrophic world wars. To avoid an apocalyptic repeat of history, he urged the United States to simultaneously engage and contain China. Months before the 'pivot' was launched, in words reminiscent of the 1890s, Nye wrote that 'Asia will return to its historic status, with more than half of the world's population and half of the world's economic output. America must be present there. Markets and

economic power rest on political frameworks, and *American military power provides that framework*' (emphasis added).

Now, even as the Obama administration repeats that 'a thriving China is good for America' and pursues engagement via various diplomatic channels, it is hedging its bets.

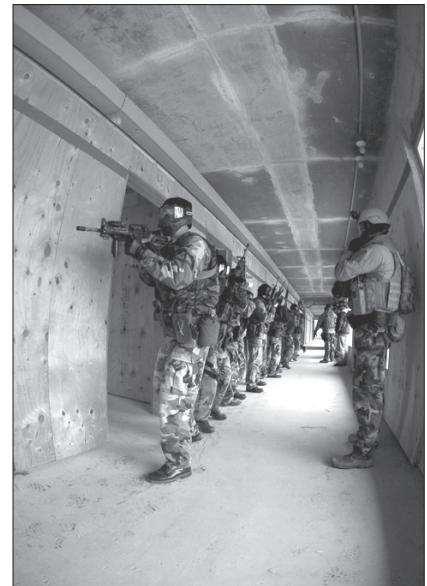
Military alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, which serve as 'the fulcrum for our strategic turn to the Asia-Pacific', are being revitalised. Having adopted an air-sea battle doctrine, the Pentagon has committed to deploying 60% of its nuclear-armed and high-tech navy to the Asia-Pacific. According to the *New York Times*, this includes 'six aircraft carriers and a majority of the Navy's cruisers, destroyers, littoral combat ships and submarines, [and] an accelerated pace of naval exercises and port calls in the Pacific'.

Recognising that relying on military power alone is not a winning strategy, especially given the near-equal influence of economic power, the Obama administration has also pressed a diplomatic campaign to negotiate a 'Trans-Pacific Partnership'. The goal is to create the world's largest and most demanding free-trade area in ways that deepen the economic integration of the US and its Asia-Pacific allies while simultaneously reducing their economic dependence on China.

The expansion has come at a price for the region's people.

In Japan it means reaffirming the nuclear alliance, despite President Obama's ostensible commitment to creating a nuclear-weapons-free world. It also means amplified efforts to pacify Okinawan resistance to decades of US military colonisation, the continued and dangerous basing of the nuclear-capable *USS George Washington* aircraft carrier in Tokyo Bay, the deployment of accident-prone Osprey aircraft in the urban Futenma base in Okinawa, accelerated missile defence deployments, and expanded joint intelligence operations targeting China and North Korea.

In South Korea, where the US



The US' military alliances with Asia-Pacific countries like South Korea are being revitalised. Picture shows South Korean soldiers taking part in a military exercise with US forces.

military continues to have authority over all South Korean military operations in wartime, joint military exercises have been expanded – including in the Yellow Sea, where in defiance of Chinese warnings, the United States recently deployed the *George Washington*. To take the naval challenge closer to the Chinese coast, a massive Korean naval base is being built at a World Heritage site in Jeju Island's Gangjeon village, which according to Yonhap News will 'accommodate submarines and up to 20 warships, including US Aegis-equipped destroyers and their missile defence systems'. This has sparked intense and disciplined non-violent resistance in Korea.

In South-East Asia, the Obama administration upped the military ante by responding to China's increasingly militarised claims to nearly all of the mineral-rich South China Sea – through which 40% of the world's commerce passes – by declaring (US-policed) free navigation of the seas a US strategic priority. Reinforcing Philippine claims to the 'West Philippine Sea', the Pentagon has also increased weapons sales to the Philippines, accelerated joint military exercises, and explored the return of military bases. The pivot also entails

strengthening the US military's relationships with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and Vietnam, with the latter engaging in joint military exercises and, under its 'friends with all nations' policies, providing access for US and allied navies at Cam Ranh Bay. Washington's renewed ties and military-to-military contacts with Burma, which could restrict China's access to the Indian Ocean, have also raised serious concerns in Beijing.

To complete China's encirclement, the Obama administration has established a new Indian Ocean base in Darwin, Australia, pursued a tacit alliance with India, and is expanding its 'partnerships' with New Zealand and Mongolia. In April, the United States even won an agreement to keep a yet-to-be-determined number of US forces in Afghanistan through 2024. Closer to home, Hawaii is to host nearly 3,000 more Marines, Osprey warplanes, and further base expansions.

Meanwhile the Chamorro people of Guam, whose tiny island nation's strategic location makes it an ideal fallback site for the day when US troops are finally ejected from Japan, are bearing the brunt of the pivot. Even though US bases already occupy 28% of the 500-square-mile island, 3,000 more US Marines and their families are scheduled to be redeployed to Guam from Okinawa, and there are plans for massive expansions of existing bases.

In an August speech in Japan, Cara Flores-Mays of Guam explained what the pivot will mean for her Chamorro grandfather: 'He has not known freedom,' she said, 'and it's likely that he never will.' The same applies to the peoples of many other Asia-Pacific nations, who have largely been shunted aside in the great-power calculus governing US policy in the region. ♦

Joseph Gerson directs the Peace and Economic Security Programme for the American Friends Service Committee's Northeast region. He is a member of the Working Group for Peace and Demilitarisation in Asia and the Pacific. The above is extracted from an article which was published on the Foreign Policy In Focus website (www.fpi.org) under a Creative Commons licence.

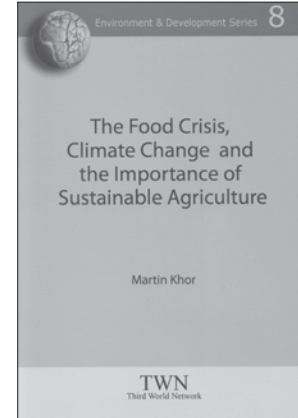
The Food Crisis, Climate Change and the Importance of Sustainable Agriculture

By Martin Khor

The recent crisis of high food prices and the serious problem of climate change point to the grave challenges confronting global agriculture. This paper looks at the difficulties the farming sector faces on these two fronts and how it can respond to them.

The food price crisis has highlighted the importance of strengthening food security. Over the years, domestic food production in developing countries has been undermined often as a result of wrong-headed policy prescriptions from international financial institutions and the inequitable provisions of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. This paper calls for reform in national and international agricultural policies in order to better safeguard food security and farming livelihoods in the developing world.

Climate change poses another serious threat to the agriculture sector, which both affects and is affected by global warming. While climate change can adversely affect agricultural output, current farming methods themselves are a major contributor to climate change. However, as this paper points out, agriculture does have great potential for mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change – potential that can be realized with a shift from conventional industrial farming to ecologically sound sustainable agriculture practices.



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The Cuban missile crisis in retrospect

It is now 50 years since the Cuban missile crisis brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war. Although the crisis was defused, Washington's policies which created the crisis still continue.

Jane Franklin

FIFTY years ago, on 22 October 1962, I was pregnant with my third child when President John F Kennedy spoke on national television and I learned, with the rest of the world, that we were on the brink of nuclear war. Satellite photos had revealed Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, and President Kennedy had ordered a naval blockade to stop any Soviet ships on their way to the island.

In that moment, lives changed. Our daughters and our unborn son and the other children of the world were threatened with annihilation. For six days, until negotiations between Washington and Moscow defused the crisis, people lived through the Missile Crisis, which became an enduring part of our personal histories.

Operation Mongoose

Not until years later did we learn about Operation Mongoose, Washington's new secret plan to overthrow the Cuban government – the plan that provoked the Missile Crisis. Cuban intelligence agents found out about it soon enough and tried to stop it, to no avail. Although some declassified documents about Operation Mongoose were made public in 1989, few people in the United States have even heard of it, much less understood its profound and sinister significance.

The covert activities of Operation Mongoose began on 30 November 1961, a mere seven months after Cuba defeated the invasion at the Bay of Pigs. As I wrote in *Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History*:

'President Kennedy issues a



President John F Kennedy making a televised speech about the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. Few in the US know, however, that what had provoked the crisis was a secret plan by Kennedy to overthrow the Cuban government.

memorandum to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and others who will be involved in his decision to launch top-secret Operation Mongoose "to help Cuba overthrow the Communist regime". This leads to the creation of a new control group, the Special Group (Augmented) (SGA), to oversee Mongoose.¹

William K Harvey was put in charge of the CIA's Task Force W that would participate in Mongoose with about 400 people working at CIA headquarters in Washington and in the Miami CIA station.

To coordinate Operation Mongoose with the Departments of State and Defence, Kennedy appointed Air Force General Edward Lansdale, the CIA official who had engineered the presidency of Ramón Magsaysay in the Philippines against the Hukbalahap rebellion and then set up the Vietnamese puppet regime of Ngo

Dinh Diem in Saigon.

In frequent reports about his new job, General Lansdale presented his plans, which could better be called his fantasies but nevertheless were going to be used to try to overthrow a sovereign government. As Lansdale stated in 1975, he tried to remove Fidel Castro by any means, including assassination. Yet by May 1962, Operation Mongoose had managed to put only four small teams onto the island, many fewer than planned. Yet Lansdale believed that the Cuban people would rise up to overthrow Fidel Castro while the United States would 'give open support', including 'military force, as necessary'.

When Cuban intelligence agents learned of Operation Mongoose, Cuba took their discovery of another planned invasion to the United Nations, which paid no attention to Cuba's warnings (just as the UN paid no

attention when Cuba tried to stop the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion). The British delegate on the Security Council called Cuba's charges a 'propaganda exercise'.

In this context, in July of 1962, Raúl Castro visited the Soviet Union, which did pay attention; deployment of nuclear missiles began that month. After all, Soviet missiles in Cuba were no closer to the United States than US missiles in Turkey were to the Soviet Union.

In August an Operation Mongoose report from Lansdale mentioned the possibility of a lengthy US occupation after 'military control of the island'. When precisely was the overthrow scheduled to take place? October 1962. Thus Washington's plan for regime change in October led to Cuba's getting nuclear missiles for defence against that invasion, which led to the Missile Crisis.

Agreement

On 27 October, President Kennedy sent a letter to Premier Nikita Khrushchev with a proposal that the Soviet Union immediately withdraw its missiles from Cuba while the United States would end the naval blockade and pledge not to invade Cuba. This agreement would be made public. Meanwhile, Attorney General Robert Kennedy met with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F Dobrynin and agreed privately that once the crisis was resolved, the United States would withdraw its Jupiter nuclear missiles from Turkey.

On 28 October, after six days at the nuclear brink, the worst of the Missile Crisis ended when Moscow Radio broadcast Premier Khrushchev's letter to President Kennedy accepting the 27 October proposal.

On 30 October, the Special Group (Augmented) ordered a halt to all the sabotage activities of Operation Mongoose. However, the CIA's Task Force W, created as part of Operation Mongoose, was not terminated. Its hundreds of agents remained in action in Washington and Miami. Sabotage teams on the island were not with-



A US naval destroyer in Guantanamo Bay at the time of the Cuban missile crisis.

drawn despite the SGA order. For example, on 8 November one of the CIA teams blew up its industrial target.

But on 20 November, President Kennedy lifted the naval blockade of Cuba after the Soviet Union and Cuba agreed to remove Soviet IL-28 bombers from Cuba.

Hit-and-run attacks on Cuba continued – for decades. In January 1963, Desmond Fitzgerald replaced William Harvey as head of Task Force W and proposed various plots to assassinate Fidel Castro. In that month alone three children were killed in two attacks on the island.

People here in the United States continue to know little about the State of Siege that is US policy toward Cuba. Now in 2012 Washington maintains its trade embargo, which was initiated to starve the Cuban people into submission (there are declassified documents about that, too). Ironically, the full trade embargo that took effect 7 February 1962 was part of Operation Mongoose. And while Operation Mongoose ended, the policies that created it continue. Regime change by any available means has continued to be Washington's goal. ♦

Historian Jane Franklin has written two books about Cuba: Cuban Foreign Relations 1959-1982 (Center for Cuban Studies, New York, 1984) and Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History (Ocean

Press, New York, 1997). This article is reproduced from the ZNet website (www.zcommunications.org/znet).

Endnote

1. The participants in the Special Group (Augmented) included the top formulators of US foreign policy, including National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, Deputy Under Secretary of State Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary of Defence Roswell Gilpatric, CIA Director John McCone, and General Lyman Lemnitzer, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – augmented by Attorney General Robert Kennedy and General Maxwell Taylor, who was appointed SGA chair. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara sometimes attended SGA meetings. Richard M Helms, replacement for Richard Bissell as CIA chief of covert operations, became a major participant, along with Richard Goodwin of the State Department, and Ed Murrow and Don Wilson of the United States Information Agency (USIA). This information is part of the fuller account of Operation Mongoose and its aftermath in Jane Franklin, *Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History* (Ocean Press, New York, 1997); it is available online at www.janefranklin.info.

Giving women land, giving them a future

Customary laws and practices that discriminate against women's land rights have taken a heavy toll on the well-being of Cameroonian women. Although the president of this West Central African state has endorsed a call by civil society groups for reform, it will be some time before change finally comes.

CLARISSE Kimbi barely ekes out a living from a tiny parcel of land in Kom village in the North-West Region of Cameroon. Today, the mother of six finds it hard to put food on the table for herself and her children. But five years ago she, her husband and children were considered well-off.

In 2007, farming on five hectares of land, Kimbi could comfortably feed her family, and still have enough surplus food to sell. In a country where 40% of the population live below the poverty line, her family was counted among the wealthy.

But things changed when her husband died five years ago. Almost everything was taken away from her and her children.

'Just one day after my husband was buried, my in-laws confiscated the five hectares of land my husband and I had farmed for 27 years,' she told Inter Press Service (IPS). Traditional practices in the area give the right to inherit land exclusively to men.

'Things have become so difficult that I have had to take some of my kids out of school,' she said.

Two of her children are no longer attending secondary school, and three others are struggling through primary school. President Paul Biya decreed free primary education in Cameroon in 2004, but parents are still required to pay fees to help poorly-equipped schools function.

Kimbi's problem is not an isolated one. Figures from the National Institute of Statistics for 2010 indicate that women constitute 52% of Cameroon's 20 million people.

And although women produce 80% of Cameroon's food needs, according to the Ministry of Agriculture

Ngala Killian Chintom

and Rural Development, they own just 2% of the land, according to 2011 statistics from the Cameroon Gender Equality Network.

'If we are talking about a just and equitable society, then women should be able to control at least 35% of the land,' Judith Awondo, the coordinator of the network, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works for women's empowerment, told IPS.

Although the 1974 Land Tenure Ordinance in Cameroon guarantees equal access to land for all citizens, customary laws and practices that discriminate against women's land rights prevail over statutory laws. This has taken its toll on the economic well-being of women.

'The inability of women to freely access and control productive resources places them in a weaker position in terms of agricultural productivity and economic growth, food security, family income and equal participation in governance,' Fon Nsoh, coordinator of the Cameroon Movement for the Right to Food, a local NGO, told IPS.

According to the 2007 household survey, 52% of people living in Cameroon's poor households are women.

The problems of access to land for women and communities have been worsened by the land grab perpetrated by multinationals and society's wealthy, according to Nsoh. He particularly cited the case of Herakles Farms in Cameroon's South-West Region as the 'hottest and the most contested'.

On 7 November 2011, the High

Court of Kupe-Muanenguba Judicial Division in the South-West Region ordered that the project be halted. But Nsoh expressed concern that the company was going ahead with the creation of a 73,000-hectare oil palm plantation with a 99-year lease based on 'scandalously negotiated conditions'.

The US-based Oakland Institute and Greenpeace, the international environmental watchdog, released a report suggesting that the project, situated in what is described as a biodiversity hotspot between four major conservation zones, could negatively impact up to 45,000 people.

Environmental groups are accusing the New York-based agricultural company Herakles Farms of going forward with plans despite two court injunctions and a lack of government authorisation, and in the face of significant community opposition.

'There are thousands of people there who might lose their farmlands, particularly women who were not part of the negotiations,' Nsoh told IPS.

He is now working together with other NGOs and civil society organisations to effect reforms on the 1974 Land Tenure Ordinance that regulates land issues in Cameroon.

'The 1974 Land Tenure Ordinance is obsolete. It was enacted about 38 years ago and no longer corresponds to modern-day reality,' Nsoh said.

Article 1:2 of the Ordinance says 'the state shall be the guardian of all lands. It may in this capacity intervene to ensure rational use of the land or in the imperative interest, defence or the economic policies of the nation.'

Nsoh contends that such a clause excludes communities from land ne-

gotiations, citing several cases where the state has expropriated land for purposes of investment, without consulting with the communities that lived on the land.

Along with other NGOs and civil society organisations, Nsoh's movement is pushing for more inclusive legislation, advocating that the law should specify not only that communities be involved in land negotiations, but that a very high premium should also be placed on women and vulnerable groups when it comes to negotiations on land issues, so that they can at least 'have access and control'.

Since last year, these groups have been working on a draft land rights bill that should help break the barriers to women's access to land. The proposed legislation seeks to ensure that the law prevails over the discriminatory traditional practices that constrain women's access.

'Land certificates for matrimonial property should be instituted in the joint names of the husband and wife so as to do away with the patriarchal system of inheritance practised in most of Cameroon,' Nsoh said. He added that such a requirement would make it difficult for women like Kimbi to be deprived of their land by other family members if a spouse dies.

Besides the call on women to be included in all committees that deal with land issues, civil society organisations in this West Central African nation are also pushing for a simplification of the rather long and cumbersome procedures for acquiring land certificates, and for the cost of acquiring such land titles to be brought down to levels attainable by women, typically impoverished over time by existing policies.

'We need to revise this law and give it a gender twist,' Nsoh said.

He said that although the government has not yet reacted to the demands of civil society, he is hopeful that this will be done eventually. During the 2011 Agro-Pastoral show organised in Ebolowa in Cameroon's Southern Region, President Biya underscored the need for a revision of the law.

'It may take a long time, but com-

ing from the country's highest political authority, there is no doubt that it will be done,' Nsoh said. However, he is still frustrated at the slow pace

at which events are unfolding, because this means more years of suffering and deprivation for Cameroonian women. – IPS ♦

Bangkok News Updates and Climate Briefings

(August/September 2012)



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This is a collection of 25 News Updates and three Briefing Papers prepared by the Third World Network for and during the recent United Nations Climate Change Talks – the informal additional sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (AWG-LCA), the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), and the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) – in Bangkok, Thailand from 30 August to 5 September 2012.

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Girls determined to fight guns with books

Not even the attempted assassination by the Taliban of 14-year-old Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai has undermined the determination of young girls in that country to acquire an education, says *Ashfaq Yousufzai*.

SHAZIA Begum, one of three girls injured in the attack on the Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, says the Taliban had sought to silence a very influential schoolgirl.

'Malala is a source of inspiration for all of the students in Swat,' Shazia Begum told Inter Press Service (IPS) at the Combined Military Hospital in Peshawar where she is being treated. 'She encouraged us to get education when the Taliban banned it.'

Malala, 14, who suffered gunshot injuries to her head in the 9 October attack in Swat, is recovering in the hospital in Rawalpindi to which she was moved. She remains in serious condition. (Since this article was written, Malala has been transferred to a hospital in Birmingham in the UK for further treatment.)

'Her articles on the BBC gave us hope and enhanced our love for education. It was because of her that thousands of girls attended schools despite the Taliban's opposition,' Shazia Begum told IPS.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain told IPS that Malala had helped the government bring girls back to school when the Taliban were trying to slam the doors of education on them.

Despite being on the hit list of the Taliban, she never missed going to school, and this encouraged female students in the violence-wracked Swat, Hussain said.

Swat, one of the 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, remained under Taliban control from 2007 to 2009. The Taliban destroyed about 500 schools in that period, depriving about 80,000 students of an education. The Taliban were evicted following a military offensive in 2010.



Schoolgirls at a demonstration in Peshawar, Pakistan, in support of Malala Yousafzai.

'Every day the Taliban hanged bodies of their opponents from electricity poles after executing them,' lawmaker Bushra Gohar told IPS. 'The residents of Swat kept silent due to reprisals by the Taliban but Malala proved a blessing not only for men but also for women.'

Pakistan Tehreek Insaf chairman Imran Khan, who visited the hospital on 10 October, said Malala was braver than all men. 'When all the people went into hibernation due to Taliban fear, she remained steadfast and served as a beacon of hope for fellow students,' Khan said.

Her outspoken criticism of militants had earned the wrath of the Taliban but she refused security, which speaks of her matchless bravery, he said.

Threats to Malala's life increased manifold when she received the National Peace Award in recognition of her services for education and peace in December 2011. She was also among the nominees for the International Children's Peace Prize. She is

the first Pakistani girl nominated for that award.

Malala joined her father Ziauddin Yousafzai, an educationist and social activist, in supporting a peace deal in 2009. But instead of laying down arms, militants began to operate from the adjoining Buner district. Malala and her family were among those displaced in the violence. Malala wrote of her experiences in that period under the pen name Gul Makai.

Hussain has announced a 10 million rupee (\$105,000) award for information leading to the arrest of individuals who attacked Malala. He said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had offered to bear all expenses for her treatment here or abroad.

'We will trace the terrorist who shot Malala and will bring her attackers to justice. They will not survive for long,' he said. The Taliban militants, he said, had started attacking children, which was a sign of weakness and desperation.

He said the government would

provide security to her family because the terrorists could hit them anytime.

School students all over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have been moved by the attempt to kill Malala. A barrage of demonstrations have been condemning the barbarism of the Taliban.

'We are deeply shocked by the attack on Malala who is our sister. We would follow her in struggle against militancy and protection of schools,' Spogmay, a student of University Model School in Peshawar, told IPS. Holding a banner to condemn the incident during a protest demonstration, she said students would stand like a rock to safeguard their schools.

Militants can attack the schools with bombs but they cannot weaken the students' beliefs, she said.

The Taliban have been targeting schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in the adjacent Federally Administered Tribal Areas since 2008. 'Those getting English and modern education in the schools are not Muslims. Girls' education is not allowed in Islam, therefore, the Taliban wouldn't allow these schools,' Taliban spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan told reporters.

Some attacks on school buildings have continued. 'The schools are destroyed mostly during the night. They plant explosives which damage the schools,' Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Minister Sardar Hussain Babak told IPS.

Babak said that they will build 100 new schools for every one that the militants destroy. He said the government had allocated \$460.4 million for promotion of education over the next two years.

The government is particularly promoting education for girls, he said. 'We are paying more attention to female education as they had suffered at the hands of Taliban militants,' he said.

About 200 schools damaged by the Taliban have been reconstructed in Swat while students from the rest manage in tents.

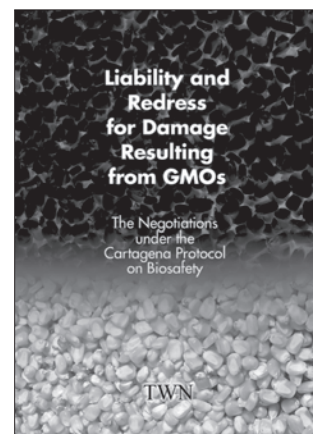
On 12 October, the schools across the province remained shut to show solidarity with Malala and to offer prayers for her early recovery. — IPS

Liability and Redress for Damage Resulting from GMOs

The Negotiations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

Concerns over the potential health, environmental and socio-economic risks posed by genetically engineered crops and food have been at the heart of longstanding calls for an international regime to assign responsibility for and deal with any damage caused by these genetically modified organisms (GMOs), specifically to provide compensation or take redress measures. The need for such a regime was finally realised in October 2010 with the adoption of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

This landmark treaty was the culmination of long and difficult negotiations among Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. This book, a collection of contemporaneous reports from Third World Network publications, charts the challenging journey from the setting of the negotiating mandate in 2004 to the 2010 adoption of the liability and redress accord. While the agreement is seen to fall short of what its proponents had originally envisaged, it remains a beginning in the journey for



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liability and redress. Remaining gaps will need to be addressed at the national level, or through future work under the Supplementary Protocol.

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A hall of shame for Venezuelan elections coverage

If Hugo Chávez emerged triumphant in October's Venezuelan presidential elections, the Western media which carried out a vicious campaign against him only suffered a further loss of credibility.

Keane Bhatt

HUGO Chávez, as a number of us expected, won the Venezuelan presidential election in yet another landslide on 7 October: 55.1% to his opponent Henrique Capriles's 44.2%.

To understand why Chávez's electoral victory would be apparent beforehand, consider that from 1980 to 1998, Venezuela's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) declined by 14%, whereas since 2004, after the Chávez administration gained control over the nation's oil revenues, the country's GDP growth per person has averaged 2.5% each year.

At the same time, income inequality was reduced to the lowest in Latin America, and a combination of widely shared growth and government programmes cut poverty in half and reduced absolute poverty by 70% – and that's before accounting for vastly expanded access to health, education, and housing.

However, the establishment media broadly anticipated that the 7 October election would be a repudiation of the Chávez administration's policies. Consider the *Guardian* headline, 'Hugo Chávez: A Strongman's Last Stand', for example. To be sure, if Chávez were to win, the press explained, it could be chalked up to a climate of fear and repression or voter suppression. Even with a tight victory, his now-anaemic support would still augur the beginning of the end to a failed, 14-year experiment.

Inconveniently for this narrative, over 19 million people in a country of 29 million were registered to vote, and any supposed intimidation did not prevent a historic turnout of 81%.



Supporters celebrate Hugo Chávez's victory in the Venezuelan presidential election. Chávez won by a landslide although the establishment media had broadly anticipated that the vote would be a repudiation of his administration's policies.

With 96% of the votes counted, the country's National Electoral Council showed that Chávez had received 1.5 million more votes than Capriles. And the electoral system's credentials are sterling – Jimmy Carter, who received a Nobel Peace Prize for his democracy-promotion work with the Carter Center after his presidency, commended the record of Venezuela's voting process a month before the elections:

'Although some people have criticised the result – which is Hugo Chavez having won – there's no doubt in our mind, having monitored very closely the election process, that he won fairly and squarely. As a matter of fact, of the 92 elections that we've monitored, I would say that the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world. They have a very wonderful voting system...'

This, apparently, wasn't as newsworthy as the inane question of

whether Venezuela is a dictatorship. A LexisNexis search for all English-language news containing the terms 'Jimmy Carter' and 'Venezuela' between 11 September, when Carter made those comments, and 7 October, returned 45 results. In that same time period, 78 news items mentioning both the terms 'Hugo Chavez' and 'dictator' appeared. (To be fair, some of the 78 pieces refuted the notion that Chávez is a dictator, but even these articles are a reflection of the pervasiveness of the nonsensical topic.)

This contrast in the media's priorities is symptomatic of the overwhelmingly disgraceful portrayal of Venezuela's elections. The hall of shame that follows is a sampling of some of the most typical distortions, gratuitous slurs, and incorrect predictions that readers have been exposed to over the past few weeks:

- In a 6 October editorial, the *Washington Post* falsely attributed the

Ewan Robertson

question ‘If Hugo Chavez is an autocrat, how could he be in danger of losing the Venezuelan presidency in an election on Sunday?’ to economist Mark Weisbrot, ‘one of Mr Chavez’s dwindling band of American supporters’. In fact, Weisbrot energetically argued, using statistical analysis of polling data, that there was virtually no chance that Chávez was in danger of losing. The editorial went on to compare Chávez to Putin and Ahmadinejad, incorrectly claiming that Chávez controls ‘most television channels’. In actuality, the BBC reported that ‘some 70% of Venezuela’s radio and TV stations are in private hands,’ while ‘just under 5% are state-owned.’

The *Post* misleadingly asserted that ‘many voters, too, are intimidated by high-tech polling machines that read their fingerprints; polls show that they suspect their votes will not be secret.’ But whether these fears are well-founded was left unanswered. The editorial board ignored the Carter Center’s report on the technical features of Venezuela’s voting system, which concluded that ‘this concern has no basis...The software of the voting machines guarantees the secrecy of the vote.’

Finally, the *Post* ended its editorial by conjuring up a menacing hypothetical scenario: ‘Venezuela’s neighbours, and the Obama administration, should be ready to react if [Chávez] attempts to remain in power by force.’ Nevermind that during the elections Chávez repeatedly said, ‘We will recognise the results, whatever they are,’ and previously demonstrated this when, after losing a referendum vote in 2007, he publicly stated, ‘I congratulate my adversaries for this victory.’

• Jon Lee Anderson, writing for *The New Yorker*’s News Desk, erroneously declared that ‘Venezuela leads Latin America in homicides.’ That distinction actually goes to Honduras, which leads the world in per capita homicides. But a mention of this would have been off-message, as Honduras’s illegitimate post-coup regime receives \$50 million a year in arms and training from the United

States for its repressive security forces. And unlike in Venezuela, being an opposition activist in Honduras carries a significant chance of being disappeared or killed.

Anderson continues by predicting that, irrespective of the election’s outcome, ‘this will probably represent the final eclipse of the long, heady reality show that his leadership has become.’ Capriles ‘or someone else like him’, says Anderson, can ‘carry on with the task of making Venezuela a fairer and safer society’. His piece (originally titled ‘The End of Chavez?’), but quietly revised to ‘Chavez the Survivor’) concludes with a quote from a journalist who ponders the prospect of a defeat for Chávez, while also using the term ‘autocrat’ in reference to him – somehow, a ruler who by definition has absolute power can also be defeated in a competitive election. This is not the first time that Anderson has obscured the differences between democratically elected leaders and actual autocrats: he once lumped Haiti’s ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide with the country’s Duvalier dictators – in Anderson’s rendering, they were all ‘despots and cheats’.

• The *New York Times*, a day before the election, ran an op-ed with the instantly dated headline, ‘How Hugo Chávez Became Irrelevant’. Its author, Francisco Toro, offers a confused attempt to separate Latin America’s left into ‘radical revolutionary regimes’ – Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Cuba – and a ‘more moderate set of leaders’: Brazil, Uruguay, and Guatemala. In Toro’s account, apparently, Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina, a School of the Americas-trained special forces officer once in charge of counterinsurgency operations under military dictator Efraín Ríos Montt, is now one of the left-leaning Latin American leaders who do not turn ‘their backs on democratic institutions’.

Toro also contends, without providing evidence, that ‘behind closed doors’, Brazilians ‘sneer’ at Chávez. While it is impossible to refute such a claim, it is worth noting the effu-

siveness with which, at least publicly, former Brazilian president Lula da Silva endorsed Chávez’s re-election bid in July. In a video statement, da Silva said: ‘Chavez, count on me...Your victory will be ours... and thanks, comrade, for everything you have done for Latin America.’

• The *Times* also ran a 5 October news article by William Neuman reporting that a young law student intended to vote for Chávez for fear that voting on a secret ballot for her preferred candidate, Capriles, would expose her to professional retribution. As the Center for Economic and Policy Research found, however, a quick search on Twitter showed that the law student had no qualms about publicly uploading a photo of herself kissing a poster of Capriles. (Neuman might be remembered as the author of a *Times* piece on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange which bizarrely claimed that Assange ‘had refused to flush the toilet during his entire stay’ at the Ecuadorian embassy in London. The sentence was later erased on the *Times*’ website with no explanation.)

• And as a final example (even though there are countless more articles to criticise), one of the most glaring acts of journalistic misconduct within the mainstream press appeared in *US News & World Report*. Other prominent media outlets have taken some small steps to veil their denunciations against Chávez. *US News & World Report* was much more brazen: it published a news, not opinion, article by Seth Cline on 1 October that put Venezuela’s ‘fair and free elections’ in quotation marks but offered no scare-quotes in its very first sentence, which introduces the reader to ‘President Hugo Chavez, the Venezuelan dictator’.

Keane Bhatt is an activist in Washington, DC. He has worked in the United States and Latin America on a variety of campaigns related to community development and social justice. His analyses and opinions have appeared in a range of outlets, including NPR, The Nation, The St. Petersburg Times and CNN En Español. He is the author of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) blog ‘Manufacturing Contempt’ (nacla.org/manufacturing-contempt), which critically analyses the US press and its portrayal of the hemisphere, and on which this article was first posted.

The Syrian conflict: Echoes of the 1930s?

Fouad Ajami, an adviser to former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and an unabashed proponent of Western military intervention in the Arab world, has in a recent article lamented the absence (in contrast to Libya) of 'a foreign cavalry' coming to the rescue of the Syrian insurgents. *Jeremy Salt* takes issue with Ajami's view, in particular his spurious comparison of the Syrian conflict with the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s.

IN a recent article ('Viewpoint: Echoes of Spanish civil war in Syria', BBC News Magazine, 9 October 2012), Fouad Ajami has drawn parallels between the Spanish Civil War and the conflict in Syria. He compares the cruelty of the warring sides, which is accurate enough. He compares the bombing of Guernica with the bombing of Aleppo, which is not.

Guernica was a Basque city attacked without warning by German aircraft. Aleppo is a Syrian city infiltrated by thousands of armed men, mobilised, financed and armed by outside governments. Guernica was bombed without warning on a peaceful afternoon. Aleppo has been the site of vicious fighting for months, with the Syrian army and air force being used to drive armed groups out of the suburbs they have infiltrated. The degree to which aircraft have actually been used, as opposed to the headline-seeking claims of 'activists', makes the parallel even more questionable. Most of the damage seems to have been done in ground fighting. Most of the armed men inside Aleppo are not from Aleppo and many are not even Syrian. They are sponsored by the collective calling itself 'The Friends of the Syrian People', in much the same way as the fascists and national socialists would have described themselves as the friends of the Spanish people in the 1930s.

And here is the true parallel with Spain, missed or avoided by Ajami: the determination of the German national socialists and Italian fascists in



Armed opposition forces prepare to leave for battle against the Syrian army in Aleppo. Syria 'has been savaged at the behest of those who want to bring down its government for reasons that have nothing to do with the aspirations of the Syrian people.'

the 1930s and of the combination of 'liberal democracies' and Gulf autocracies in 2011-12 to destroy a government standing in the way of their strategic interests.

Foothold

In Spain, opposition to the republican government gave Germany and Italy their foothold, in much the same way as the US, Britain, France and the Gulf states used an authentic protest movement to wage war on the Syrian government. In Spain religion was an elemental factor. Spanish Catholics were told by their priests

that the republican government – socialist and atheist – was the instrument of the devil. In Syria sectarian hatred of the Alawis is pervasive within the ranks of the armed groups, especially amongst the foreign Salafist jihadis paid and armed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Germany and Italy had Franco on hand. The anti-Syrian collective has the armed groups. German planes bombed Spain and the anti-Syrian collective would have started bombing Syria long ago but for the opposition of Russia and China. What they would have done would have eclipsed Guernica 1,000 times over.

The Spanish republican government was elected democratically while the Syrian government was not, but to say this is to miss the main point. Germany and Italy wanted to destroy the republican government because it was a leftist canker close to the heart of Europe, an example that must not be allowed to spread. Knowing that Germany and Italy were arming the Spanish fascists, the British policy of non-intervention and an arms embargo was a supine way of supporting them. Except for some arms supplied by the Soviet Union, which was playing its own game in Spain anyway, the republicans were on their own. Anti-fascist volunteers came from the US (the Lincoln Brigades) and the UK, but the British establishment did not want socialism taking root in Spain any more than Hitler did. It rather liked him. He was the strong man who was going to stop Bolshevism

from seeping across western Europe, right up to the point where he brought on the crisis in Czechoslovakia, and even then it was prepared to deal with him.

The prime lesson from the 1930s is that if Britain and France had ever joined hands with the USSR and stood up to Hitler, had they perhaps called his bluff when he sent troops into the demilitarised Rhineland, there might have been no Second World War as well as no bombing of Guernica. By blocking an open military attack which could have ended in a regional war and much worse, given the actors and interests involved, as well as destruction and loss of life in Syria on the scale of Iraq, Russia and China have done what Britain and France should have done in the 1930s. There are the parallels and the lessons to be learned. There is no paradox in the fact that the 'liberal democracies' have behaved with as much (if not much more) violence and disregard of the law as the national socialists and fascists did in the 1930s because they do it all the time.

Sectarian cliché

Ajami describes Syria as the 'minority regime'; the 'dictatorship'; the 'godless regime' (repeating the war cry of the armed groups and the ranting sheikhs in Saudi Arabia and Qatar); the 'tyranny'; the 'brazen' regime, all of it a caricature of more complex realities. Ajami claims there is war between 'the dictatorship' and the 'vast majority of the population'. He produces no evidence that the 'vast majority' is at war with the government, leaving aside the question of whether it is accurate even to describe it as a dictatorship rather than a deeply entrenched authoritarian system with interests not necessarily or automatically the same as Bashar al Assad's.

The notion of a 'Sunni-majority country' conquered by the Alawis is a sectarian cliché. The Baathist government could not have survived over decades without coopting the Sunnis in business and government. The majority of people demonstrating in support of the government in the mass

rallies held across the country last year were Sunnis. The majority of soldiers in the Syrian army are Sunnis. If they are so aggrieved, if they are feeling so conquered, why haven't they crossed over to the opposition? Amidst such turmoil, why would they stick by the government? Why have defections been so few at the political and military level despite the cash on offer from the Gulf states? How is it that the army has held together despite the battering it has taken? Could it be because its loyalty to the country is greater than individual adherence to a sect and that Syrians – the majority – are correct in seeing this not as a Sunni-Alawi war but as a project fomented from the outside to destroy a government which is Iran's strongest regional ally?

There is no evidence that the majority of Syrian Sunnis are with the armed groups or the outside governments backing them. The peaceful domestic opposition certainly is not, even while demanding the formation of a 'transitional' government. The referendum held in February and the elections held in May were not perfect but were still unmistakable signals that most Syrians want a negotiated end to the crisis gripping their country.

'Magical alignment'

Ajami refers to the 'magical alignment of the stars' which resulted in Britain, France and the US riding to the rescue – the 'cavalry', he calls it, although anyone familiar with what happened as a consequence might prefer 'calvary' – of the Libyan people. Like the Americans riding into Iraq to repair and protect, rifle in one hand and wrench in the other, as Ajami once wrote, they were apparently just good guys chasing out the bad. Yes, the Arab League flashed a green light for the aerial attack on Libya, but this toothless body simply did what it was told by Saudi Arabia and Qatar and regretted what it did once it saw the scale of the destruction.

As for the Americans, the US policymakers who 'did' Libya, and here Ajami is very aptly using the lan-

guage of the rapist, warned that Syria would not be another Libya and in this at least they were right.

The killing of Qaddafi came as 'vicarious relief' for 'the Syrians', writes Ajami. If true, not for 'the Syrians', only for the armed gangs already massacring and kidnapping across the country and thirsting for the day when Bashar's body would be dragged through the streets. There was nothing magical about what happened in Libya. Sirte was pulverised by British, French and US aircraft, Qaddafi was slaughtered, his supporters in Sirte were massacred and those who fought for him near Misurata were ethnically cleansed. What was magical about any of this? The air assault was grim and it was brutal, and it left behind another broken country on the Middle East map. There is no security even in Tripoli. Only now is the United States showing signs of nervousness at what it did in backing the Salafist jihadis who played a key role on the ground under the umbrella of its jet fighters and missiles. So it is okay for them to kill and destroy in Libya or Syria but not where they might next turn their attention, against those who used them. That cannot be allowed.

There is no 'magical alignment' in Syria any more than there was in Libya. The country has been savaged at the behest of those who want to bring down its government for reasons that have nothing to do with the aspirations of the Syrian people. This is the exercise of brutal power politics, irresponsible, bereft of law or morality, and therein lies the parallel with the attack on Spain in the 1930s. Not that Syria is the only parallel. For exactly the same reasons the US government decided to destroy the Allende government in Chile in the 1970s; the socialists had to be stamped out and they were; in both cases, and in many others, in Latin America and around the world, a dictator came to power who crushed the people for decades. ♦

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Norodom Sihanouk dies

Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's former king who led his country to independence from French rule and for decades thereafter sought to steer his country from being dragged into war or the clutches of the superpowers, died in October. *Sebastian Strangio* looks back at the turbulent life of one of the Non-Aligned Movement's pioneers.

CAMBODIA'S former king Norodom Sihanouk, the charismatic monarch whose name was synonymous with the struggles and upheavals of his country for more than six decades, died in Beijing on 15 October at the age of 89. Sihanouk, who abdicated the throne in 2004, had been dogged by poor health for years and had suffered a variety of illnesses, including cancer, diabetes and hypertension.

Prince Sisowath Thomico, a royal family member and adviser to the current king, said Sihanouk died of a heart attack early on 15 October morning. 'He had been very weak since the beginning of the year,' he said. The present monarch, King Norodom Sihamoni, flew to Beijing to retrieve Sihanouk's body, accompanied by Prime Minister Hun Sen and other senior officials. [The body was returned to Cambodia on 17 October and is now lying in state at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh before cremation in February.]

During a storied career stretching across more than 60 years, Sihanouk saw his country transformed from a French colony to a nascent modern state before it was consumed in the fires of civil war and the cruel communist dictatorship of the Khmer Rouge. He served as king, prime minister, communist figurehead, leader in exile, and then as 'constitutional king' until his retirement in 2004.

'The whole Cambodian people will mourn his death,' Thomico said. 'Most of all, he will be remembered as the father of Cambodian independence.'

Throughout his life, Sihanouk's chameleon-like changes masked an unwavering conviction that he had a unique ability to foster national rec-



onciliation during an era of great upheaval for Cambodia. In his biography of the monarch, Milton Osborne described Sihanouk as 'much more concerned with achieving a limited number of practical goals than with developing a coherent political philosophy' – something that confused and frustrated Western observers.

Norodom Sihanouk was born in Phnom Penh on 31 October 1922, and grew up in ornate surroundings in French colonial Indochina. In 1941, after the death of King Sisowath Monivong, the French authorities placed Sihanouk on the throne, expecting the chubby 19-year-old prince to be malleable.

After his first uncertain years, however, Sihanouk grew into a powerful political figure, outmanoeuvring the French authorities and helping to win Cambodia's independence from France in 1953. In 1955, constrained by what he later termed the 'terrible servitude and crushing responsibilities' of kingship, Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favour of his father to take a more active role in politics.

His political movement, the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, leveraged his popularity among Cambodia's

predominantly rural population and set Cambodia on its first steps as a modern nation, building up the education system and expanding the country's agrarian economy.

As the Cold War deepened and neighbouring Vietnam slipped into the maelstrom of civil war, Sihanouk attempted to keep his country neutral, dancing delicately between the United States and the communist bloc. Sihanouk was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement – through which he struck up his lifelong friendship with North Korea's reclusive leader Kim Il-sung – but he accepted US aid and maintained relations with communist China. Premier Zhou Enlai was a close personal friend.

The country's 'golden age' – as many Cambodians would later remember the 1950s and 1960s – was dominated by the personality of Sihanouk, who combined bravura statesmanship with stints as a filmmaker, jazz musician, socialite and playboy. (Like many of his royal forbears, Sihanouk had dozens of concubines and fathered a total of 14 children.)

To outside observers, Sihanouk's rapid political shifts and well-cultivated diletantism made for an often bewildering mix – the descriptor 'mercurial' quickly became compulsory in journalistic copy – but Sihanouk maintained that he was motivated throughout by a single consistent aim: 'the defence of the independence, the territorial integrity and the dignity of my country and my people'.

Though often depicted in foreign news reports as a fairytale kingdom steeped in timeless tradition, rule under Sihanouk's modernised form of

feudalism left little room for dissent. He outmanoeuvred his parliamentary opponents, convincing (or forcing) many to abandon their parties and join his own.

Those who held out were ruthlessly pursued by the prince's security forces. Chief among these was Cambodia's nascent communist movement, which Sihanouk famously dubbed the 'Khmers Rouges', led by Saloth Sar, later to emerge from obscurity under the *nom de guerre* Pol Pot.

Fluid loyalties

By the mid-1960s, Sihanouk's diplomatic high-wire act, designed to keep Cambodia out of the Vietnam War, had started to backfire. Domestic opposition mounted. Convinced that the Vietnamese communists would eventually prevail over the US-backed South Vietnamese regime, Sihanouk unwillingly acquiesced to the transport of communist supplies along the 'Ho Chi Minh trail' through eastern Cambodia and up from the port of Sihanoukville.

This inflamed the anti-communist and anti-Vietnamese opposition and added to the discontent around the regime's widespread corruption and growing economic mismanagement. In 1969, the US unleashed a bombing campaign against the communist supply lines in Cambodia, by 1973 devastating large swathes of eastern Cambodia and killing tens of thousands of rural Cambodians.

Eventually, in March 1970, a small clique of military officers – led by General Lon Nol and a royal rival, Prince Sisowath Sirikmatak – overthrew Sihanouk while he was abroad, threw their lot in with the US, and proclaimed a republic. From his new exile in Beijing, where he was given a residence and comfortable stipend, Sihanouk raged against the coup plotters and controversially threw his support behind his former enemies in the Cambodian communist movement.

With the prince at their head, the Red Khmers attracted a wave of rural support and, supported by the Vietnamese communist forces, eventually defeated Lon Nol's corrupt and incompetent government. The Khmer

Rouge, led by Pol Pot, marched into Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975. They immediately emptied the cities and embarked on a radical communist experiment that led to the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million people from execution, starvation and overwork. As he feared, Sihanouk, the formal head of state of 'Democratic Kampuchea' until 1976, 'was spat out like a cherry pit' by the Khmer Rouge. He became a prisoner, confined to an empty palace in an empty city, and fell into a deep depression.

But instead of turning against Pol Pot when the regime was overthrown by the Vietnamese military in early 1979, Sihanouk flew to the UN General Assembly in New York to denounce Hanoi's intervention. In 1982, he became head of an awkward coalition of nationalist, republican and Khmer Rouge elements that opposed the new Vietnam-backed regime in Phnom Penh. Throughout the 1980s, the prince travelled the world and held lavish soirees at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in an attempt to rally diplomatic support for the resistance.

But Sihanouk was to play a key role in the eventual solution to the Cambodian conflict through the brokering of the Paris Peace Agreements, which were eventually signed in October 1991. A month after the signing of the accord, he returned triumphantly to Phnom Penh as the head of a UN-backed interim authority that presided over elections held in May 1993. Sihanouk had little respect for the UN mission that descended on Cambodia during 1992-93, proffering and withholding his support via a string of petulant faxes dispatched from his residences in Beijing and Pyongyang.

The 1993 election was won convincingly by Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, largely by appealing to the deep reservoir of support for Sihanouk and the memories of pre-revolutionary peace and stability. However, Sihanouk forced his son to accept a power-sharing relationship with Hun Sen, the pre-existing prime minister, whose Cambodian People's Party (CPP) still controlled the Cambodian administration. Sihanouk was re-crowned king and, after several attempts to form a new government

under his own presidency, settled grudgingly into his role of monarch who, according to the constitution adopted in 1993, 'reigns but does not rule'.

From the mid-1990s, Sihanouk remained aloof from Cambodian politics, spending most of his time in Beijing or Pyongyang. Cut off from day-to-day politics, Sihanouk nonetheless retained great moral authority, sparring with Hun Sen (who ousted his co-prime minister and rival Ranariddh in a bloody coup de force in July 1997), and continuing to play an important, though oft-times distant, role in Cambodian public life.

In the role of mediator, Sihanouk helped broker power-sharing deals after both the 1998 and 2003 elections which marginalised his son Ranariddh and strengthened the position of Hun Sen. King Sihanouk was also an avid blogger *avant la lettre*. Before his retirement and after, he posted on his website regular missives, written out in beautiful cursive French, which communicated his acerbic thoughts and opinions about Cambodian politics and its personalities. He also kept up his range of non-political enthusiasms, including film and music.

In October 2004, frustrated by the aftermath of a year-long political deadlock that paralysed Cambodia's government, Sihanouk again abdicated the throne in favour of his son Norodom Sihamoni. In retirement, Sihanouk spent little time in his country, remaining in Beijing for medical treatment, but his portrait continued to hang from public buildings alongside those of King Sihamoni and his wife, Queen Monineath.

Sihanouk also increasingly came to support his former rival Hun Sen, describing his CPP-dominated government in 2009 as 'the younger sibling' of his own pre-revolutionary regime. It may be the wily Hun Sen, prime minister now for nearly three decades, who will in time be seen as Sihanouk's true successor. ♦

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The Indonesian dramatist, poet, actor, director and activist *WS Rendra* (1935-2009) was well known for his literary innovations, his defence of human rights and his advocacy of ecologically sustainable living.

The world's first face

Rendra

In the pale moonlight
He carries his bride
Up that hill,
Both of them naked,
Bringing nothing but themselves.

So in all beginnings
The world is bare,
Empty, free of lies,
Dark with silence —

A silence that sinks
Into the depths of time.
Then comes light,
Existence,
Man and animals.
So in all beginnings
Everything is bare,
Empty, open.

They're both young,
Both have come a long way.
Passing through dawns bright with illusion,
Skies filled with hope,
Rivers lined with comfort,
They have come to the afternoon's warmth,
Both of them dripping with sweat —

And standing on a barren coral reef.
So evening comes,
Bringing dreams
And a bed
Lined with gleaming coral necklaces.

They raise their heads:
Millions of stars in the sky.
This is their inheritance,
Stars and more stars,
More than could ever blink and go out.

In the pale moonlight
He carries his bride
Up that hill,
Both of them naked:
The world's first face.

Translated by Burton Raffel