

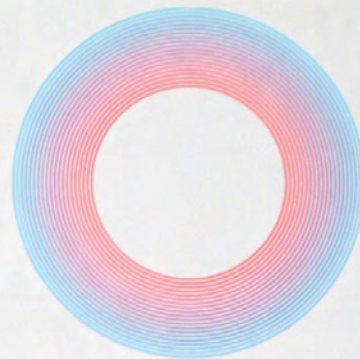
THIRD WORLD

RESURGENCE

ISSUE No. 292

KDN PP6738/01/2013 (031741)

www.twn.my



UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE LIMA COP20 | CMP10



From Lima to Paris

The difficult road ahead
to a 2015 climate accord



ISSN 0128-357X



9 770128 357003

Editor's Note

UNITED Nations climate change conferences are generally protracted affairs with eleventh-hour deals to avert a collapse. But even by the measure of previous conferences, the recent annual UN climate meet in Lima, Peru, proved to be a cliffhanger.

The conference, which began on 1 December, was originally scheduled to end on 12 December but it dragged on, with great uncertainty, for another 32 hours before it was finally salvaged by a last-minute consensus decision on the 14th.

The Lima conference was meant to prepare the way for the adoption in Paris in December 2015 of an international agreement to curb climate change. But the 'Lima Call for Climate Action' which supposedly outlines the way forward leaves open many of the critical issues for resolution within the next 12 months.

Climate negotiations have been going on for the past 21 years and for developing countries, it has been an odyssey of inequity and retrogression. It all began hopefully enough with the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. The UNFCCC established the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' for tackling climate change by recognising the fact that since the developed countries were principally responsible for the carbon emissions that have caused climate change, they alone should undertake the legally binding commitments to cut emissions. They were also obliged to financially and technologically assist developing countries to meet the challenge of climate change.

However, in the climate change conferences that followed, developed countries have sought to whittle away the equitable bases for tackling climate change established by the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. Despite the decision by the 2012 Doha climate change conference to, in effect, extend the operation of the Kyoto Protocol to 2020, the expiry of the Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 provided a convenient opportunity for countries such as Japan and Canada to free themselves from their obligations by refusing to ratify this second commitment period. Further, at the 2011 Durban climate change conference, the terms 'equity' and 'common but differentiated responsibilities' were discreetly left out of the text known as the Durban Platform which embodied the decision to launch negotiations for a new climate agreement.

The developed countries have also failed to live up to their commitment to provide financial support to the developing countries to address climate change. Even in cases where monies have been forthcoming, these have largely been a repackaging of funds originally slated for foreign development aid.

Having undermined the equitable foundations of the climate negotiations, the thrust of the West's offensive has been to push developing countries into making emission cuts. In this regard, China and India are particular targets, with the West charging that they are some of the biggest polluters and belong to the same league as the developed countries.

Given this inequitable approach to tackling climate change, it is not surprising that recent climate talks have so often become deadlocked. The Lima talks were no exception. When developing countries were presented with a draft of the Lima Call for Climate Action on 12 December, they rejected it on the grounds that it was unbalanced. The deadlock continued until 14 December when a new draft emerged incorporating some of the demands of the developing countries.

The new draft also included the clause on 'common but differentiated responsibilities' but this was qualified by the inclusion of the phrase 'in light of different national circumstances'. In other words, while the conference recognised the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities', this was subject to 'different national circumstances'. It is open to question whether the inclusion of the latter phrase vitiates the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' and legitimises the drive by the West to establish a basis for a new differentiation among developing countries. Such attempts at divide and rule cannot be ruled out as this has been the strategy of the West all along.

Whatever the case, while there is now a framework for a Paris agreement, the fact is the real battle over climate change will be fought out in the next 12 months. The more than 190 countries which were in Lima will have to set out their pledges to cut annual emissions of greenhouse gases after 2020. The fight over these specifics, with the West more determined than ever to drive a wedge between the developing countries, will almost certainly ensure that the road to Paris will be a rocky one.

Our cover story provides coverage of the Lima climate change conference. In addition to reports on and analyses of the conference, we also publish articles on the dire state of climate change and the looming catastrophe which has to be averted. We also include an informative article on China's renewable energy revolution which highlights the oft-ignored fact that China is taking important steps to tackle climate change.

— The Editors

Visit the Third World Network website at: www.twn.my

Third World
RESURGENCE

www.twn.my

No 292 Dec 14 ISSN 0128-357X



Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

The UN climate conference in Lima in December (pic) drew up the broad outlines of an agreement to be adopted in Paris at the end of 2015 to combat climate change. However, the difficult and protracted talks in Lima point to the enormity of the challenges confronting climate negotiators in forging a Paris accord. **5**

ECOLOGY

- 2 'Yes, we have no bananas' –
*Matt Canfield and Phil
Bereano*

COVER

**From Lima to Paris
The difficult road ahead to a
2015 climate accord**

- 5 Lima climate conference
averts collapse, defers key
issues to 2015 Paris confer-
ence – *Martin Khor*
- 7 The battle over the Lima Call
for Climate Action – *Meena
Raman*
- 11 'Common but differentiated
responsibilities' principle
restored – *Meena Raman and
Indrajit Bose*
- 14 Lima conference adopts
decisions on finance and loss

and damage mechanism –
Hilary Chiew

- 19 Dirty energy reliance under-
cuts US, Canada rhetoric at
climate talks – *Leehi Yona*
- 21 US polluters *über alles* –
John Miller
- 24 Climate justice is the only
way to solve climate crisis –
Jagoda Munic
- 26 Messages from the end of the
world – *Martin Khor*
- 28 Deforestation in the tropics
affects climate around the
world, study finds – *Robert
McSweeney*
- 30 China's renewable energy
revolution: what is driving
it? – *John A Mathews and
Hao Tan*

WORLD AFFAIRS

- 33 The CIA's secret killers –
*Alexander Cockburn and
Jeffrey St Clair*

- 35 The torture report: Latin
America's lessons for the
United States – *Jo-Marie Burt*

HUMAN RIGHTS

- 37 Mining interests in Guatemala
challenged by indigenous di-
rect democracy – *Jeff Abbott*

WOMEN

- 39 Child sex crimes: Uruguay's
ugly hidden face – *Diana
Cariboni*

VIEWPOINT

- 41 Hunger in Britain: A food
industry at war with nutrition
– *Jeremy Seabrook*

POETRY

- 44 Piano and Drums – *Gabriel
Okara*

THIRD WORLD RESURGENCE is published by the Third World Network, an international network of groups and individuals involved in efforts to bring about a greater articulation of the needs and rights of peoples in the Third World; a fair distribution of world resources; and forms of development which are ecologically sustainable and fulfil human needs.

THIRD WORLD RESURGENCE is published monthly by Third World Network, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728 Fax: 60-4-2264505.

Email: twnet@po.jaring.my

Printed by Jutaprint, No. 2, Solok Sungai Pinang 3, 11600 Penang, Malaysia.

Cover Design: Lim Jee Yuan

Cover Photos: (top) Courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin, (bottom) cc Oxfam East Africa

Copyright © Third World Network

Publisher and Chief Editor: S.M. Mohamed Idris; **Managing Editor:** Chee Yoke Ling; **Editors:** T Rajamoorthy, Lean Ka-Min, Evelyne Hong; **Contributing Editors:** Roberto Bissio (Uruguay), Charles Abugre (Ghana); **Staff:** Linda Ooi (Design), Lim Jee Yuan (Art Consultant), Lim Beng Tuan (Marketing), Yap Bing Nyi (Editorial)



'Yes, we have no bananas'

The drive by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to introduce a genetically engineered 'super banana' into the Ugandan market can only be viewed as part of a powerful and coordinated effort to transform Africa's agricultural systems to serve corporate and foreign interests.

**Matt Canfield and
Phil Bereano**

*Yes, we have no bananas
We have no bananas today.*

*Yes, we are very sorry to inform you
That we are entirely out of the fruit
in question*

*The aforementioned vegetable
Bearing the cognomen 'Banana'.
We might induce you to accept a
substitute less desirable,
But that is not the policy at this
internationally famous green
grocery.*

*I should say not. No no no no no no
no.*

But we have no bananas today.
— as sung by Eddie Cantor, 1923

RECENTLY student volunteers at Iowa State University in the US have become subjects in human feeding trials of what's being touted as a 'super banana'. As its name suggests, this is no ordinary banana; it has been genetically engineered to produce increased levels of vitamin A. Created for the Ugandan market, the 'super banana' was developed to mitigate nutritional deficiencies that cause blindness across the global South. Yet, in a nation where the banana is not just a staple food but also a cultural icon, Ugandans are furious about this latest international intervention into African agriculture.

Bridget Mugambe is one Ugandan concerned about plans for bringing this banana to her homeland. 'In my country,' she explains, 'there are over 50 varieties of local and indigenously cultivated bananas, and in my culture many of these varieties have individual cultural attachments. For



The Africa-US Food Sovereignty Strategy Summit held in Seattle in October sought to catalyse opposition to attempts at restructuring African agriculture to serve the interests of agribusiness corporations.

example, in celebrations of marriage, birth and funeral rites, we use different varieties of banana for these different purposes...' A social scientist working with the African Food Sovereignty Alliance, Mugambe argues that this new example of genetic engineering threatens not only Ugandan culture but also local economies and markets. And it is not even clear that the 'super banana' is necessary, since there are other low-cost existing means of addressing the problem of low vitamin A intake.

Before the banana can be brought to Uganda, the country would need to change its laws to allow genetically engineered (GE) crops to be grown and consumed there. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the US Agency for International Development (USAID, currently headed by a former Gates staffer, Rajiv Shah) have been pressuring Uganda to do so. By changing its laws, the Ugandan government would not only contaminate the heritage varieties of banana that Ugandans treasure; such changes would also open the way for Monsanto and other multinational corporations eagerly waiting to push

other GE crops to be approved for use.

Of course, with \$15 million in support from the Gates Foundation, the 'super banana' has some powerful backers. However, its opponents are organising. In October, Mugambe and eight other colleagues from the African continent travelled to Seattle, home of the Gates Foundation, to participate in the Africa-US Food Sovereignty Strategy Summit. In four days of conversations with US-based food activists, she and her colleagues discussed a much more worrying trend of which the 'super banana' is symbolic: new colonial attempts to dominate African agriculture.

The scramble for Africa: Neocolonialism and the rush for African agriculture

Over the last decade, Africans have witnessed an increasingly powerful and coordinated effort to transform their agricultural systems. While agricultural systems across the continent are diverse, agricultural production there remains dominated by smallholder producers and peasants. Together, they produce around 70%

© Alex Garland Photography

of food consumed in Africa. Because smallholders produce primarily for subsistence and secondarily for the market, they are not easily amenable to the profit schemes of multinational corporations.

This is not the first time that outside groups have called for an agricultural revolution. In the 1970s, the Rockefeller Foundation partnered with USAID to introduce American agro-industrial production methods in South Asia and Latin America. By introducing hybrid seeds and chemical inputs, the resulting 'Green Revolution' was hailed as a success for increasing the yield of food crops. Today, however, we know that the Green Revolution did not in fact solve global hunger, which increased by 11% between 1970-90, nor did it improve the livelihoods of those who adopted these new methods.

Third World farmers have simply been unable to compete with American crop exports that are low-cost because of US government subsidies. As a result, these farmers increasingly cannot afford to utilise the different technological systems (requiring the purchase of seeds, fertilisers and other inputs) that they were pressured to adopt in the 1970s. The violence of the Green Revolution is exemplified today by the thousands of economically ruined farmers who are committing suicide – tragically by ingesting those same chemical inputs that have degraded their land and driven them into debt.

While Africa was also a target of the original Green Revolution, most interventions there failed. Africa's strong network of smallholder agriculture is a testament to its farmers' resistance to previous development schemes and colonial endeavours seeking to dispossess them of their land and livelihoods.

In today's age of 'crisis capitalism', however, a new scramble for African resources has begun. Colonialism in Africa has always aimed at extracting resources for the global North. Now, big agribusiness, Northern countries and global 'philanthropists', seeking to increase the sales of agricultural inputs and to replace

The G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

The G8 'New Alliance' was founded in 2012 'to accelerate responsible investment in African agriculture.' In addition to the G8 leading industrial countries and the EU, 100 corporations are involved as donors, and 10 African countries are now involved. It has been criticised, however, for being a mechanism used to compel African countries to create a more favourable investment climate for international agribusiness, instead of the needs of small producers.

small-scale farming with large-scale market-oriented agro-industrial production, have joined together in calling for a new 'Green Revolution' in Africa. Looking for opportunities to profit from Africa's soil and mineral riches, they have mobilised images of impoverished farmers and utilised shrill narratives of crises – of hunger, climate change or population growth – to justify foreign land acquisitions, the introduction of biotechnology and the importation of new legal regimes aimed at 'harmonising' seed and agricultural laws.

Responding to capitalism's inexorable impulse for growth, these schemes aim to gain entry for foreign corporations into African markets. They are assisted by governments through agencies such as USAID and global partnerships like the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (see box) championed by US President Barack Obama. These 'public-private partnerships' employ public resources to support private investment and profitability under the guise of development. Like the first Green Revolution, these partnerships often do not benefit smallholder farmers. Instead, they seek to integrate farmers into global value chains that draw them into debt and competition with large multinational firms. Moreover, these partnerships are not accountable to citizens of either the funding or recipient countries.

The Gates Foundation's Green Revolution in Africa

Since 1997, the Gates Foundation has devoted over \$3 billion to 'improving' African agriculture under the banner of alleviating global hunger. Over the past two decades, its Agri-

cultural Development programme has grown to be one of the largest of Gates' philanthropic endeavours. As this investment has grown, so has the criticism; the Foundation is becoming increasingly scrutinised by those affected by its largesse.

As one of the world's largest economic entities, the Gates Foundation not only shapes approaches to development, it sets the agenda. Its grants are aimed at direct, on-the-ground interventions, as well as scientific research, public relations lobbying and advocacy. Across its programmes, the Foundation has promoted technological 'silver bullet' solutions, rather than tackling underlying problems. Nowhere is this more apparent than in its approach to African agriculture.

In 2006, together with the Rockefeller Foundation, Gates launched a subsidiary called the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The 'super banana' in Uganda is just one example of the Gates approach. Though vitamin A deficiency is indeed a widespread problem according to the World Health Organisation, companies and philanthropists have used this deficiency to peddle new genetically engineered food products fortified with vitamin A. As in the case of the widely touted but so far ineffective 'Golden Rice', a product created for South Asian markets, the Gates Foundation has supported the production of the 'super banana' for the Ugandan market.

The problems with this high-tech approach are plentiful. Firstly, it may not even be necessary, since programmes in the Philippines have been successful by distributing cheap vitamin A pills. Secondly, a recent report by *The Ecologist* cites how the 'su-

per banana' is a clear case of biopiracy – stealing the genetic resources of developing countries without remuneration for use in products and programmes that benefit developed countries. The gene spliced into the 'super banana' was taken from the Fe'i banana variety indigenous to Papua New Guinea. Thirdly, like with Golden Rice, farmers have raised important questions about the health and safety effects of this new genetically engineered variety. Finally, Ugandans are concerned that it could contaminate and otherwise harm the many indigenous varieties central to local Ugandan markets and culture. Even the developer of the 'super banana', University of Queensland researcher James Dale, acknowledges that it's been designed to open the door for the uptake of more GE crops in Africa and globally.

By promoting technologies not controlled by Africans, with unaccountable processes, the Gates Foundation and AGRA are actively attempting to subsume smallholder agriculture into the global food market. The African Centre for Biosafety, an organisation that supports ecological approaches to farming, argues in a 2013 report that AGRA is not a philanthropic endeavour but 'should be understood as a political project, a "proof of concept" to show private owners of capital that there are profitable opportunities for investment in African agriculture.'

An escalating counter-movement: Food sovereignty and agroecology

In 2008, the Seattle-based trade and food justice organisation, Community Alliance for Global Justice, founded AGRA Watch. AGRA Watch challenges the Gates Foundation's questionable agricultural programmes in Africa and argues that though the Gates Foundation and AGRA claim to be 'pro-poor' and 'pro-environment', their approach is closely aligned with transnational corporations such as Monsanto and foreign policy actors like USAID.

AGRA Watch contends that the

Gates Foundation/AGRA must be understood as a form of 'philanthrocapitalism' – the use of charitable funds to advance market-based approaches to social issues. The Foundation takes advantage of food and climate crises to promote high-tech, industrial agriculture that generates profits for corporations while degrading the environment and disempowering farmers.

Recently, AGRA Watch analysed Gates Foundation grants for African agriculture (2009-11) in order to understand how well they measure against the Foundation's claims of promoting solutions to hunger and fostering social justice. Although the Gates Foundation maintains that only a small percentage of its grants go to genetically engineered crops, AGRA Watch identified 42 Foundation grants related to genetically engineered organisms that amount to \$300 million. In addition, 29 of the 160 grants investigated involved 'market integration' – linking of smallholders to global markets – representing \$210 million or 40% of funding. These findings were recently corroborated in an independent study by the organisation GRAIN.

As part of its ongoing work to hold the Foundation accountable, AGRA Watch hosted the set of strategic meetings in Seattle between 14 US-based organisations and eight Africa-based ones, representing a mix of national NGOs, international networks, small-scale producers and farmer networks, and community-based organisations. The Africa-US Food Sovereignty Strategy Summit marks the beginning of a new collaboration between African and US groups to contest the policies that aim to transform Africa's vibrant smallholder farming systems into American agrobusiness.

The African and US groups were united through an alternative vision of the global food system guided by the principle of 'food sovereignty' – a term originated by La Via Campesina, a worldwide network of peasant farmers – which asserts that the people who actually produce, distribute and consume food should con-

trol the mechanisms and policies of their food systems, rather than corporations and market institutions. All people should have the right to decide what they eat and to ensure that food in their community is healthy and accessible for everyone.

Each morning, the Summit participants began their work by gathering in a *mística*, a powerful practice originated by the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST). Delegates contributed seeds, banners of struggle, and other meaningful objects to the centre of the room. Calling on ancestors, families, and joint moral and spiritual intention, this meditative activity cultivated a sense of trust and community among the US- and Africa-based organisations, strengthening their resolve to advance the struggle against philanthrocapitalism and the neocolonial scramble for Africa.

Just one month after the Summit, Mugambe signed a letter calling for an end to the human feeding trials in Iowa and the 'super banana' project altogether. Now, however, she was not alone. Joined by over 120 organisations worldwide, African and US activists have committed to fight colonial agricultural interventions in Africa and the Gates Foundation's call for a Green Revolution for Africa.

Today, over one billion people remain hungry in the world, including an estimated 30 million here in the United States itself. Yet the US government, corporations and non-state actors such as the Gates Foundation promote solutions that are profitable to them but not necessarily beneficial to people in the Third World. Our solutions must not be driven by a narrow ideology; we already have enough food to feed the world – it must ultimately be distributed more equitably and ethically. ♦

The authors are members of the Seattle organisation the Community Alliance for Global Justice, and activists in its AGRA Watch programme (<http://www.seattleglobaljustice.org/agra-watch>). Matt Canfield is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at New York University. His research investigates global governance and the transnational food sovereignty movement. Phil Bereano participated in the negotiations on the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol and its Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress as well as work of the Codex Alimentarius.

Lima climate conference averts collapse, defers key issues to 2015 Paris conference

The UN climate conference in Lima barely succeeded in salvaging a framework for a new climate change treaty and the outstanding critical issues will have to be thrashed out before the Paris conference next December. *Martin Khor* reports.

DELEGATES at the annual United Nations climate conference, held in Lima, Peru, on 1-14 December, averted the almost-total collapse of a round of talks that was supposed to be an important step towards a new climate change agreement scheduled for adoption in Paris in December 2015.

If the Lima talks had ended without a conclusion on its most important issue, the 'Durban Platform', it would have sent a negative signal that the world is unable to come to grips with its most important challenge – tackling runaway climate change.

Differences over draft

At the time the conference was initially scheduled to close, on 12 December night, many developing countries told the plenary session that they could not accept a resolution that had been prepared by the Co-Chairs of the Durban Platform working group. They found the draft did not contain what they demanded, and it was skewed in favour of the developed countries. Accepting such a draft would put the developing countries at a serious disadvantage.

Groups that rejected the draft included the Africa Group, the least developed countries and the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) group whose diverse members include Malaysia, China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Sudan, Mali, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

The Co-Chairs had to concede that their draft could not be passed,



Participants applaud the adoption, after difficult negotiations, of a decision on the Durban Platform at the United Nations climate conference in Lima.

and handed the task to the Conference President, Peru's Environment Minister, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal.

It was already 4 am on 13 December. The conference should have ended at 6 pm the day before. The meeting had moved into 'extra time', and with a new referee. Could the President salvage an agreement which could not be reached after two weeks of fierce contest under the Co-Chairs?

The Minister quickly got into the act on 13 December morning, meeting with all the groups and key countries, with all their different views.

A breakthrough came when a critical demand of the developing countries seemed to be accepted by the President and, more importantly, by the United States.



President of the Lima Conference, Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal.

It was the issue of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR), a term which is prominent in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It denotes that all countries have to act but that the developed countries have to undertake greater commitments be-

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

cause of their role in creating the climate crisis and of their higher economic status. Developing countries also have to act, but their actions are to be supported by finance and technology transfer.

This basic tenet of the Convention has been challenged by the US, the European Union and other developed nations. They want to end the 'differentiation' so that developing countries take on similar obligations as the developed nations. They also want to cut the integral link between the finance they provide and the extent of actions of developing countries.

They obtained an advantage when the terms 'equity' and 'common but differentiated responsibilities' were conspicuously left out when the decision was adopted in 2011 to launch negotiations (known as the Durban Platform) for the new climate agreement. Since then, the developing countries have fought hard to get the CBDR term back on the agenda.

When the final plenary meeting in Lima was convened at 11.30 pm on 13 December, delegates found that a paragraph had been added to the effect that the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC 'underscores its commitment to reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances'.

This is an important paragraph. It was seen by most developing countries as a victory, although they were not happy with the accompanying phrase 'in light of different national circumstances'.

Restored

At the plenary, Malaysia, representing the LMDC, stated that the inclusion of CBDR and also another paragraph in the preamble 'together suggests to us cumulatively that the CBDR principle has been restored and it has been given its rightful place in the context of the Convention and the work that we are going to continue in relation to the new agreement'.



A meeting of the Durban Platform working group in progress in Lima. Many developing countries rejected a draft decision on the Durban Platform prepared by the Co-Chairs of the working group, saying it was skewed in favour of the developed countries.



Civil society groups held a march in Lima on 10 December as the climate conference was ongoing. Tackling runaway climate change is one of the most important challenges facing the international community.

A few other demands of the developing countries were also met in the new text. This enabled them to go along with the new decision. The conference ended at 2 am on 14 December, 32 hours after its scheduled conclusion.

In fact, as critics pointed out, there is not much new in the adopted decision, except perhaps that the CBDR principle would be reflected in the 2015 agreement, something that should have been agreed to from the

beginning anyway.

This shows how difficult the negotiations will be in 2015. If it took two whole weeks to reach consensus on a simple text in Lima, imagine how much more contentious and difficult the negotiations will be for an entire new agreement. ♦

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. The above is an edited version of an article which first appeared in The Star (Malaysia) (22 December 2014).

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Yvonne Miller

The battle over the Lima Call for Climate Action

In the following article, *Meena Raman* provides the background to, and an analysis of, the protracted fight over the framework for a new climate treaty to be adopted at the 2015 Paris climate conference.

THE most important and most fought over outcome of the United Nations climate conference in Lima was a decision adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) which the Peruvian Minister in charge of the conference termed the 'Lima Call for Climate Action'.

This COP decision relates to the work of the Durban Platform, which is the track in the UN climate negotiations that is expected to lead to a new climate change agreement in Paris at the end of 2015.

The decision would normally have been prepared and agreed to by the group that had been negotiating the Durban Platform issues since January 2012, and then the COP itself would simply endorse the draft thus prepared. But what was significant at Lima is that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) could not reach any agreement on the draft decision.

Indeed, a supposedly final draft produced by the Co-Chairs of the ADP met with widespread criticism and outright rejection by a majority of developing countries, and had to be abandoned on what was to have been the last night of the conference.

In an emergency move, the President of the COP himself, Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, had to take over the process on the Durban Platform decision. After a full day of consultations that he personally conducted, a final draft was put before the Parties and finally adopted.

The approved draft was different in some significant points from the one that had been rejected a day earlier, and even more so from earlier drafts that had been prepared by the

ADP Co-Chairs.

The Co-Chairs' drafts, and the process they had overseen since March 2014, had been unpopular with a large number of developing countries, which perceived them as biased in favour of the positions of most developed countries. The developing countries felt that if the Co-Chairs' drafts were adopted, they would give an early and undue advantage to the developed countries in the design of the elements and framework of the 2015 Paris agreement itself.

Divisions on substance and process

The wrangling over the Lima decision between developed and developing countries was clearly a proxy fight on what would be the core elements of the Paris agreement. An underlying issue is whether Parties would be treated in a differentiated manner in their obligations, as clearly set out in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), or whether (as desired by developed countries) the Parties would all be treated in a similar manner in the agreement for post-2020 actions.

This proxy fight took place through the issue of 'intended nationally determined contributions' (INDCs), a term that was adopted a year earlier at the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP 19) in Warsaw.

This proxy fight over substance was accompanied by a fight over the process that was used during the ADP negotiations.

Developing countries wanted text-based negotiations with Parties able to make changes to draft texts placed on a screen (a normal UN

method that is transparent and party-driven). The developed countries preferred a process that was left in the control of the ADP Co-Chairs to produce draft texts, without clarity or transparency on how they were arrived at.

The Co-Chairs themselves insisted on the latter method, to the frustration of the developing countries.

COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013 adopted a decision which invited 'all Parties to initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their INDCs without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions, in the context of adopting' the legal outcome in Paris, and to communicate them well in advance of COP 21 (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) 'in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the INDCs, without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions.'

The Warsaw decision did not prescribe the scope or nature of the 'contributions', whether these contributions relate to mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity-building, which are the items for the Paris agreement, or only to one or some of them.

Developed countries, in the course of discussions in 2014, wanted to confine the scope of the INDCs to only mitigation, while developing countries wanted all the elements to be covered, including developed countries' contributions on finance and technology transfer to support the developing countries' mitigation and adaptation actions in the post-2020 period.

The Warsaw COP also gave the ADP the mandate 'to identify, by COP 20, the information that Parties will provide when putting forward their

contributions, without prejudice to the legal nature of the contributions.’

Thus, as pointed out by the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), the ADP, in relation to the INDCs, had only the mandate to produce a decision at COP 20 in Lima that was focused on the identification of information that Parties will provide when forwarding their INDCs.

Throughout 2014, there were concerted attempts by developed countries to make use of the issue of INDCs to shape the larger issue of the nature of the mitigation component of the 2015 agreement, even before the mature negotiation or conclusion of negotiations on this mitigation issue per se.

The developed countries insisted that INDCs were only about mitigation contributions and that all countries would have to forward their INDCs together with the up-front information accompanying them, by early 2015.

They also proposed a system by which these intended contributions would be assessed and reviewed (referred to as a process for an ‘ex-ante assessment’) in mid-2015, to see if they would be adequate in the aggregate to limit temperature rise to below 2°C.

Though some developing countries supported an ex-ante review, many others (especially the LMDC) were against it. The latter viewed the push by developed countries for an ex-ante assessment ahead of Paris as being outside the Warsaw mandate.

They also considered this to be prejudicial to the negotiations to be conducted for the 2015 agreement in Paris, especially as regards how the mitigation element of the Paris agreement is to be approached; how the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) would be applied across all the elements of the Paris agreement, including that relating to the contributions that Parties will make, as well as the up-front information relating to the contribution for the purposes of transparency.

They pointed out the imbalance of having developing countries’ miti-

gation ‘contributions’ assessed (and subjected to pressure for upgrading) whereas there was to be no assessment (or even information) on how much financial and technological support the developed countries are to provide. How could developing countries be expected to submit what they can do on mitigation when they do not know whether financial support is forthcoming and, if so, how much?

China had said clearly in the October session of the ADP that there can be no ‘early harvest’ by focusing only on mitigation when all elements of the 2015 outcome are ‘a package’. It said that INDCs cannot be focused only on mitigation, isolated from the consideration of the provision of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building support. Otherwise, this would lead to a rewriting of the UNFCCC, it stressed.

This view was shared by other members of the LMDC.

Besides the ex-ante assessment issue, a major issue of basic importance was that of ‘differentiation’.

Developing countries across the board wanted assurances in the decision that the CBDR principle would be applied in the Paris agreement and in the INDCs. They insisted on this as a ‘red line’.

The final draft produced by the ADP Co-Chairs, Kishan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago) and Artur Runge-Metzger (Germany), was viewed by most developing-country groupings as not acceptable.

On 13 December, when the ADP convened, many developing countries and their groupings criticised and rejected the draft on the grounds that it was imbalanced and did not reflect key issues such as differentiation between developed and developing countries, the principles of equity and CBDR; that there was a lack of any financial contribution for the post-2020 period; that the draft on INDCs was mitigation-centric with adaptation being downgraded; that there was a failure to include the issue of ‘loss and damage’; and that there was a very weak reference to pre-2020 climate action.

With the clock ticking beyond the

closing time of the conference, many developing countries appealed to Pulgar-Vidal to help resolve the deadlock, as the talks were clearly on the brink of collapse. The ADP closed without adopting a text, and the COP Presidency then took over the process, with the Peruvian Minister meeting with various negotiating groups and countries to assess their red lines and attempting to produce a text acceptable to all.

The President’s draft decision, which was finally adopted on 14 December at 1 am, was viewed by developing countries as being more balanced, as it dealt better with the issues of concern to them.

The principle of CBDR was mentioned (it had been absent in the original 2011 decision at COP 17 launching the Durban Platform), the scope of the INDCs is now open-ended, there is no provision for an ex-ante review of the INDCs, and there is reference in the preamble to the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage.

Highlights of the Lima decision on the Durban Platform

Some of the key points in the ‘Lima Call for Climate Action’ – the decision of 14 December relating to the Durban Platform – are set out below and compared to what was in the earlier Co-Chairs’ draft of 12 December (and in some cases the drafts of 8 and 11 December).

(The full text of the final decision can be found at <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>.)

Preamble 1 states: ‘Reiterating that the work of the ADP shall be under the Convention [UNFCCC] and guided by its principles...’

The earlier 12 December draft merely stated: ‘Guided by the Convention’. The final draft explicitly draws reference to the principles of the Convention; this is important for developing countries which point out that among the principles are equity and CBDR.

Preamble 4 states: ‘Affirming its determination to strengthen adaptation action through the protocol, an-

other legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention to be adopted at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (November-December 2015)'.

There was no provision in the earlier draft that referred to strengthening of adaptation action in the new agreement.

This was a major concern of developing countries which saw the developed countries pushing for a mitigation-centric agreement with the issues of adaptation and means of implementation being marginalised or omitted.

Preamble 5 states: 'Recalling decisions 2/CP.19 and X/CP.20 (Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts) and welcoming the progress made in Lima, Peru, towards the implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts'.

There was no reference in the 12 December draft to loss and damage. Developing countries had been calling for loss and damage to be part of the 2015 agreement, while developed countries have resisted this.

At the final plenary session, Tuvalu, speaking for the least developed countries (LDCs), made an interpretative statement that the reference to the Mechanism for Loss and Damage in the preamble and the term 'inter alia' in paragraph 2 of the Lima decision made clear the intention that the legal outcome to be adopted in Paris will properly, effectively and progressively address loss and damage.

Paragraph 1 reads: 'Confirms that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action shall complete the work referred to in decision 1/CP.17, paragraph 2, as early as possible in order for the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-first session to adopt a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties'.

Paragraph 2 states: 'Decides that the protocol, another legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force

under the Convention applicable to all Parties shall address in a balanced manner, inter alia, mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building, and transparency of action and support'.

Paragraph 3 reads: 'Underscores its commitment to reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities [CBDR-RC], in light of different national circumstances'.

This is an important paragraph. There was no provision for the reflection of the CBDR-RC principle in the 12 December draft. The mention of CBDR, especially the reference that it be reflected in the 2015 agreement, was seen by most developing countries as a major victory, although some countries were not pleased with the accompanying phrase 'in light of different national circumstances'.

At the final plenary, the LMDC (represented by Malaysia) stated that this 'clear provision in the operational part of the text and this read together with the preambular paragraph which requires the work of the Durban Platform to be guided by the principles of the Convention, together suggests to us cumulatively that the CBDR principle has been restored and it has been given its rightful place in the context of the Convention and the work that we are going to continue' in relation to the new agreement.

Paragraph 4 'Urges developed country Parties to provide and mobilise enhanced financial support to developing country Parties for ambitious mitigation and adaptation actions, especially to Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change; and recognises complementary support by other Parties'.

The 12 December draft, instead of 'and recognises complementary support by other Parties', had the following language: 'and invites other Parties willing to do so to complement such support'. An earlier 11 December draft had the following words: 'developed country Parties and other Parties in a position to do so...'

These words in the earlier drafts

were seen by many developing countries as diluting the CBDR principle, with developing countries also having to contribute to financing mitigation and adaptation actions, contrary to the provisions of the Convention.

Paragraph 5 'Acknowledges the progress made in Lima in elaborating the elements for a draft negotiating text as contained in the annex'.

This paragraph relates to the elaboration of the elements for the Paris agreement, contained in another document, prepared by the Co-Chairs.

The draft text of 11 December had provided that the ADP 'will intensify consideration of the elements for a draft negotiating text reflected in annex 1...' Many developing countries found this problematic, as it implied that the Co-Chairs' document, placed in an annex, would be the basis for the negotiations for the Paris agreement.

Although the annexed document – referred to as 'Elements for a draft negotiating text' – has a footnote that states that 'these elements for a draft negotiating text reflect work in progress' and that 'they neither indicate convergence on the proposals presented nor do they preclude new proposals from emerging in the course of the negotiations in 2015', many developing countries did not want the annex to be given a higher status than the proposals or submissions of Parties.

The final decision only acknowledges the progress of the work done under the ADP as reflected in the annexed document.

Paragraph 6 states: 'Decides that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action will intensify its work, with a view to making available a negotiating text for a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties before May 2015'.

Paragraph 9 'Reiterates its invitation to each Party to communicate to the secretariat its INDC towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2'.

The 11 December draft text, in an Option 3, provided that 'Parties'

INDCs ... will include a mitigation contribution, and may also include contributions on adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building and that the INDC of each Party will represent a progression beyond the current undertaking of that Party.'

The concern expressed by many developing countries over this option was that all Parties had to provide a mitigation contribution, which was mandatory, while contributions on the other elements were not so. This signalled a mitigation-centric approach which also did not differentiate between developed and developing countries and did not make it obligatory for developed countries to forward a finance and technology transfer contribution. The formulation that was finally agreed to leaves the scope of the INDC open, without a particular stress on mitigation.

In fact, the 8 December draft stated that 'Parties that are not ready to communicate their INDCs by the first quarter of 2015' were invited to do so 'by 31 May 2015 or as soon as possible thereafter'.

The 8 December draft also provided that 'each Party shall communicate a quantifiable mitigation component in its INDC which represents the highest level of mitigation ambition, beyond its 2020 commitment and actions ... guided by the principles of equity and CBDR-RC, in the light of evolving national circumstances.'

Many developing countries, especially the LMDC and the African Group, took issue with the term 'evolving national circumstances', which they said was not a term recognised by the Convention and use of which amounted to a redefining of the CBDR principle, prejudicing the negotiations in Paris.

Paragraph 10 states: 'Agrees that each Party's INDC towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2 will represent a progression beyond the current undertaking of that Party'.

This paragraph is to reflect the call by many developing countries to ensure that developed countries do not

backslide on their commitments in the post-2020 time frame.

Paragraph 12 states: 'Invites all Parties to consider communicating their undertakings in adaptation planning or consider including an adaptation component in their INDCs'.

This paragraph reflects the call by many developing countries that their INDCs could also be or include a contribution to adaptation actions, and that INDCs should not solely be about mitigation.

Paragraph 13 'Reiterates its invitation to all Parties to communicate their INDCs well in advance of COP 21 (by the first quarter of 2015 by those Parties ready to do so) in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the INDCs'.

Paragraph 14 states: 'Agrees that the information to be provided by Parties communicating their INDCs, in order to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding, may include, as appropriate, inter alia, quantifiable information on the reference point (including, as appropriate, a base year), time frames and/or periods for implementation, scope and coverage, planning processes, assumptions and methodological approaches including those for estimating and accounting for anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and, as appropriate, removals, and how the Party considers that its INDC is fair and ambitious, in light of its national circumstances, and how it contributes towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2'.

This paragraph relates to the information that is to accompany the INDCs. Given the use of the term 'as appropriate', Parties can decide what information will accompany their INDCs.

Concerns were raised by developing countries that the earlier draft texts did not reflect the CBDR principle as to how the information to be supplied by developed and developing countries should be differentiated. Although CBDR is not mentioned in this paragraph, its mention in paragraph 3 is taken by these countries to thus cover paragraph 6 as well.

Paragraph 16 'Requests the secretariat to: (a) Publish on the UNFCCC website the INDCs as communicated; (b) Prepare by 1 November 2015 a synthesis report on the aggregate effect of the INDCs communicated by Parties by 1 October 2015'.

Other than the preparation of a synthesis report by the secretariat on the aggregate effect of the INDCs, there is no mention in the final text that relates to ex-ante assessment or review of the INDCs prior to the Paris agreement.

The earlier draft of 8 December made provision for the following 'ex-ante' processes (in an apparent accelerated rate) to take place in 2015 after the communication of the INDCs:

- To provide opportunities for seeking clarification on the INDCs;
- For Parties to submit questions to each other and for responses to be supplied within four weeks;
- For a workshop in June 2015 and at COP 21 for clarity, transparency and understanding the INDCs communicated;
- For a technical paper by the secretariat on the existing methodologies relating to land use and use of market mechanisms;
- Organise a workshop on methodologies in June 2015;
- Technical paper by the secretariat on the aggregate effect of the INDCs;
- For observers to publicise their analyses of the INDCs on the UNFCCC website.

Developing countries, led by the LMDC, were of the view that these matters were outside the scope of the Warsaw mandate and could prejudice the negotiations for the Paris agreement and were also imbalanced since there was no similar ex-ante process (or even information) on the financial contributions that developed countries would make to support developing countries.

The final Lima decision also has other paragraphs on the issue of pre-2020 climate actions. ♦

Meena Raman is a senior researcher with the Third World Network.

‘Common but differentiated responsibilities’ principle restored

One cause for cheer at the Lima climate conference was the restoration to the negotiating framework of the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ which recognises that in undertaking the burden of tackling climate change, there has to be a distinction between developed and developing countries. This development was welcomed at the final plenary when Malaysia addressed the conference on behalf of the group of developing countries known as the Like-Minded Developing Countries.

**Meena Raman and
Indrajit Bose**

SPEAKING for the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) at the final plenary of the UN climate conference in Lima on 14 December, Malaysia said that the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ (CBDR) has been restored in the Lima decision.

Malaysia said this when it agreed to the adoption of the final decision on the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP).

Referring to the decision known as the ‘Lima Call for Climate Action’, Malaysia, on behalf of the LMDC at the final plenary of COP 20, said that as regards the CBDR principle, ‘there is a clear provision [in the decision] in the operational part of the text and this read together with the preambular paragraph which requires the work of the Durban Platform to be guided by the principles of the Convention, together suggests to us cumulatively that the CBDR principle has been restored and it has been given its rightful place in the context of the Convention and the work that we are going to continue’ in relation to the new agreement to be concluded in Paris in 2015.

Malaysia was referring to a preamble of the decision which reads ‘The Conference of the Parties ... Re-iterating that the work of the ADP shall be under the Convention and



Delegates from the Like-Minded Developing Countries in a discussion before the start of a session in Lima. The LMDC said the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ has been restored in the Lima outcome.

guided by its principles’, as well as to paragraph 3 of the decision that ‘Underscores its commitment to reaching an ambitious agreement in 2015 that reflects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances.’

The issue of differentiation between developed and developing countries and how the principle of CBDR will be applied in the new agreement has been a major bone of contention among Parties in the course of negotiations under the ADP, with developed countries calling for the removal of the ‘firewall’ and annexes of the Convention that currently reflect the Annex I (developed countries and countries with economies in transition) and non-Annex I (developing countries) differentiation.

The failure of the initial draft

texts proposed by the ADP Co-Chairs to reflect the principle of CBDR and equity was a ‘red line’ for the LMDC.

Malaysia, speaking for the LMDC at an earlier session of the ADP contact group to consider the draft decision text provided by the ADP Co-Chairs on 12 December (which text was later rejected by many developing countries including the LMDC), said that ‘for a large number of developing countries, the provisions [in the proposed draft decision] were seen as undermining equity and CBDR and this was another red line’ which should not be crossed ‘if we want to move the process forward’.

It stressed that the ‘bifurcation established under the Convention such as Annex I and non-Annex I’ has to be respected.

During the informal consultations conducted by the COP 20 President, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal (Environment

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

Minister of Peru), with the various negotiating groups, it seems that the LMDC made clear that its number one key issue was the need to reflect the principle of CBDR and equity in the work of the ADP and its outcomes.

(The final language in the decision text which refers to the principle of 'CBDR-RC, in light of different national circumstances' is the same as that agreed to by the United States in the US-China joint announcement on climate change on 12 November 2014. China is a member of the LMDC.)

During the final closing plenary of the COP in the early hours of 14 December, Malaysia, for the LMDC, said that it had some worried moments the previous night.

'We were presented with a text which was unbalanced. There were fears that it would be adopted on the basis of acclamation and that the "ghosts" of the past would be resurrected,' it said, referring to the previous COP sessions in Copenhagen, Cancun, Durban and Doha.

Referring to the earlier draft of the ADP Co-Chairs' text, Malaysia said 'that text represented an approach that would chip away at the fundamental construct of the Convention itself. We saw it as an attack on the core elements of the Convention. So, we set to work and in a way this provided solidarity [among developing countries] because the reactions were almost in unison [in rejecting the Co-Chairs' text].'

'In that sense, that presentation of that text brought us together and perhaps for that we have to thank those who presented that text because the solidarity was forged and we worked till very late hours of the morning,' it added.

'As far as our groups are concerned, we returned home at 6 am in the morning [on 13 December] and came back at 7.45 am [the same day]. We understand that as we left, the African Group was still working. So the whole idea was to try and recapture the balance in the text which was lost.'

Malaysia said that it still had concerns with the final Lima decision. It

said that there was no reference to Article 4 of the Convention (which refers to the differentiated commitments of developed and developing countries, including for providing finance and technology transfer).

On the contribution of finance for post-2020 action, it said, 'we asked for information on the annual quantitative targets' for the intended finance contribution of developed countries but 'we did not get that.'

On the pre-2020 ambition, Malaysia said that the LMDC had called for the operationalisation of paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision through a mechanism but all it got was a reiteration of the paragraphs to accelerate the full implementation of previous decisions and not their operationalisation.

(Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Warsaw decision refer to the implementation of decisions relating to the Bali Action Plan and the Kyoto Protocol.)

Malaysia said that there were 'many features' in the Lima decision that 'helped' the LMDC 'cross our red lines'.

Apart from the reflection of the CBDR principle, on the scope of intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs), it said there 'is expression of a balanced approach' (with the INDCs not being just about mitigation) and also that 'the ex-ante approach [in the consideration of INDCs] has been largely done away with'.

Malaysia said that the 'text is something we can accept' and 'the unhappiness is something that is sufficiently marginalised as to warrant our applauding the adoption of this text'.

Exhorting developing countries to stand together, Malaysia said 'we have forged solidarity of the developing world along lines we had not seen before. Diverse as we are, we share a culture, we share a history ... We ask, all of us, developing countries to come home together, come home to us.'

Commenting on the 'process' of the negotiations in Lima, Malaysia said that there 'has been a restoration of the process'.

'We have come back on an even keel and this is the kind of process we should think about, talk about and pursue. We also have a lot of work ahead to establish the 2015 agreement.'

(There has been widespread concern over the process in recent years, whereby major decisions of a contentious nature have been adopted through 'huddles' of selected Parties or 'gavelling' by the COP President in the final hours of COP sessions without the full and transparent participation of all Parties.)

To the developed countries, Malaysia urged 'our negotiating partners not to be quick to suggest that we are not constructive in the overtures we make, in calling for the use of conference room papers, asking for line-by-line negotiations, or to ask for texts on the screen.' It said that developed countries should not 'suggest that this is a subterfuge to block.'

It added that 'we are in the process of democratising ... this multilateral process and let us do it in a spirit of equal partnership. The days of imposition are over. So let us do it in ways that an outcome that is fundamental is not alien to percepts of transparency, inclusiveness and respect. Let us banish once and for all the "ghosts" of the past and signal a return to multilateral decision-making where countries, large and small, rich and poor, take their rightful place in the community of nations. Perhaps this is what we take away with us, that we have somewhat restored on an even keel this process of negotiations and this would be the spirit of Lima that has addressed a new dimension to the multilateral decision-making process.'

Malaysia said that the COP 20 President had 'ensured that the process is inclusive [and] transparent ... There were no tricks, no last-minute take-it-or-leave-it texts. You treated us in language, tone and dialogue with a sense of respect, and we of course reciprocated.'

Bolivia, speaking for the developing-country Group of 77 (G77) and China, stressed on five key issues for the 2015 agreement. It underscored

the importance of the principles and provisions of the Convention in the 2015 agreement, in particular equity and CBDR-RC, and for the agreement to be under the Convention.

Secondly, the agreement should be consistent with the Convention, including differentiation among developed- and developing-country Parties.

Thirdly, adaptation and loss and damage are key to the 2015 agreement and should be given their due space.

Fourthly, technology and capacity-building are essential for the 2015 agreement and it must be clear that developed countries shall provide finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support to developing countries.

Fifthly, the agreement must have an ambition to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Speaking for the least developed countries (LDCs), Tuvalu made an interpretative statement which it wanted reflected in the report of the COP.

It said that the reference to the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage in the preamble of the Lima decision, and to the term 'inter alia' in paragraph 2 of the decision (on the elements of the 2015 agreement) made clear the intention that 'the Protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force to be adopted in Paris will properly, effectively and progressively address loss and damage in these legal options.'

This statement of Tuvalu was greeted with wide applause in the conference hall.

(Developed countries had throughout the Lima talks objected to the inclusion of loss and damage as a standalone element in the 2015 agreement, and the last version of the Co-Chairs' text had removed all reference to loss and damage.)

Commending the efforts of the COP President in carrying all Parties together, Indian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar, hoped that the meeting in Paris would also follow the Lima spirit.



Indian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar: 'The best way to resolve [differences] will be to plan ahead and allocate three to four days for each substantive issue in 2015 and arrive at a working solution or consensus.'

Reiterating that Parties had achieved consensus on differentiation and the continuity of the Convention, India said there would always be issues of differences. 'The best way to resolve them will be to plan ahead and allocate three to four days for each substantive issue in 2015 and arrive at a working solution or consensus. Let us not leave all the differences for the very end and avoid last-minute stretching and huddles,' said the Minister.

Minister Xie Zhenhua, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of China, said that the Peruvian COP President had shown 'powerful and strong leadership' and that the Lima decision had laid a 'good foundation for Paris'.

South African Environment Minister, Edna Molewa, spoke for the BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) and said while some parts of the decision could have been strengthened, it managed to strike a delicate balance between very sensitive issues. She also said that the Lima decision had laid a solid foundation for work in Paris.

The representative from France, referring to the climate talks in 2009 that collapsed, said that in Paris, the 'haunting ghost of Copenhagen can be laid to rest'. (France is to host the next COP in 2015.)

Brazil said that the Lima spirit

had inspired the route to Paris and that there was a basis for negotiations to begin on the new agreement.

The European Union said that the Lima talks were difficult and that it had shown much flexibility in the negotiations, as did other Parties.

Speaking for the Environment Integrity Group, Mexico said that it was happy to send a clear signal that the ADP was moving forward.

The United States' Special Envoy for Climate Change, Todd Stern, said that the agreement delivered what was needed to go forward. 'First, to put forward INDCs well in advance of Paris; second, we agree to transparency requirements for the targets countries need to put forward in the first half of next year, to make sure that they put them forward in a clear and understandable manner; third, we agreed that Parties need to communicate their efforts to become more resilient and it would help to integrate adaptation into development planning; and four, we continue to make developments in the elements of the 2015 agreement. We now have a working document from which we can continue our conversations in February next year,' said Stern.

The next ADP session is scheduled to be held in Geneva in February 2015. ♦

Meena Raman and Indrajit Bose are senior researchers with the Third World Network.

Lima conference adopts decisions on finance and loss and damage mechanism

While it managed to adopt some decisions on finance and the loss and damage mechanism, the Lima climate conference was forced to defer a decision on the sticky issue of institutional arrangements to address the impact of the implementation of response measures to climate change.

Hilary Chiew

DECISIONS of the 20th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were adopted in three separate plenary sessions.

The bulk of the decisions were adopted in the morning of 12 December, and decisions on finance matters and the Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising were adopted in the late afternoon of 13 December, while the decision on the Durban Platform was adopted at around 1.30 am on 14 December.

Several agenda items on which agreement could not be reached were deferred for further consideration in 2015 and, as such, would be included in the provisional agenda of the next COP. These items are the two proposals by Parties to amend the Convention and the linkages between the Technology Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism of the Convention.

Among the major decisions adopted were as follows:

Matters relating to finance

Five finance items were discussed at COP 20 and they proved to be highly contentious. As the contact group established by the COP continued to work during the first and second weeks, the COP President appointed two ministers to also help in the process during the final days of the meeting. The ministers were the

South African Minister of Water and Environment Affairs, Edna Molewa, and the UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Davey.

The agenda items were long-term finance, report of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), report of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the fifth review of the Financial Mechanism.

Parties only managed to conclude their work on 13 December and the decisions were adopted at the plenary at 5 pm. Overall, Parties could not agree on a clear roadmap on scaling up finance in the pre-2020 period and on the definition of 'climate finance'.

Long-term finance

On long-term finance, the key outcome of Lima is from paragraphs 9 to 14 of the decision:

'9. Recognises that developed country Parties commit, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions

and transparency on implementation, to a goal of mobilising jointly \$100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries;

'10. Requests developed country Parties, in preparing their next round of updated biennial submissions on strategies and approaches for scaling up climate finance for the period



The Green Climate Fund headquarters in Songdo, South Korea. The GCF was among the climate finance-related subjects on which the Lima conference adopted decisions.

2016-2020, to enhance the available quantitative and qualitative elements of a pathway, placing greater emphasis on transparency and predictability of financial flows, as per decision 3/CP.19, paragraph 10;

‘11. Also requests the secretariat to prepare a compilation and synthesis of the biennial submissions on the strategies and approaches, to inform the in-session workshops;

‘12. Further requests the secretariat to organise annual in-session workshops through to 2020 and to prepare a summary report of the workshops for annual consideration by the Conference of the Parties and the high-level ministerial dialogue on climate finance;

‘13. Decides that the in-session workshops referred in paragraph 12 above will, in 2015 and 2016, focus on the issues of adaptation finance, needs for support to developing country Parties and cooperation on enhanced enabling environments and support for readiness activities in accordance with decision 3/CP.19, paragraph 12;

‘14. Invites the thematic bodies under the Convention, in particular the Standing Committee on Finance, the Adaptation Committee and the Technology Executive Committee, where appropriate, to consider the long-term finance issues referred in decision 3/CP.19, paragraph 12 when implementing their 2015-2016 workplans, as an input to the in-session workshops referred to in paragraph 12 above.’

Standing Committee on Finance

On the SCF, in paragraph 7 of the decision, Parties ‘noted with appreciation the 2014 Report on biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows.’

In paragraph 8, it invited ‘the relevant bodies under the Convention to take note of the summary and recommendations by the SCF on the 2014 biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows.’

In paragraph 9, it requested ‘relevant technical bodies to consider the recommendations contained in the report of the 2014 biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows

as part of their ongoing deliberations related to climate finance’.

It also requested in paragraph 10 for the SCF, ‘as part of its ongoing work on measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of support, and with a view to recommending improvements to the methodologies for reporting financial information, to consider the findings and recommendations of the biennial assessment in its annual report to the Conference of the Parties for its consideration at its twenty-first session (November-December 2015).’

In paragraph 11, it further requested the SCF, ‘in the context of its ongoing work, including the preparation of the biennial assessment and overview of climate finance flows, to further explore how it can enhance its work on the MRV of support, based on best available information on the mobilisation of various resources, including private and alternative resources, through public interventions.’

COP guidance to the GCF

In considering the report of the GCF to the COP, the COP in its decision gave guidance to the GCF. In paragraph 3, it welcomed ‘with appreciation the successful and timely initial resource mobilisation (IRM) process of the GCF that led to the mobilisation of \$10.2 billion to date by contributing Parties, enabling the GCF to start its activities in supporting developing country Parties of the Convention, and making it the largest dedicated climate fund’.

In paragraph 4, it requested ‘the GCF to ensure that the ongoing resource mobilisation efforts are commensurate with the ambitions of the Fund, and calls for contributions by other developed country Parties, as well as invites financial inputs from a variety of other sources, public and private, including alternative sources, throughout the initial resource mobilisation process.’

Paragraph 5 of the decision urged ‘the GCF, the Interim Trustee, and contributors to confirm the pledges in the form of fully executed contribution agreements/arrangements, taking

note that the commitment authority of the GCF will become effective when 50% of the contributions pledged by the November 2014 pledging session are reflected in fully executed contribution agreements/arrangements received by the secretariat no later than 30 April 2015 as provided for in GCF Board decision B.08/13, annex XIX, paragraph 1(c).’

Paragraph 7 welcomed ‘the GCF Board decision B.08/07 to start taking decisions on the approval of projects and programmes no later than its 3rd meeting in 2015.’

Paragraph 8 requested ‘the Board of the GCF to accelerate the operationalisation of the adaptation and mitigation windows, and to ensure adequate resources for capacity-building and technology development and transfer, consistent with paragraph 38 of the Governing Instrument.’

In paragraph 9, the decision also requested ‘the Board of the GCF to accelerate the operationalisation of the private sector facility by aiming to ensure that private sector entities and public entities with relevant experience in working with the private sector are accredited in 2015, expediting action to engage local private sector actors in developing country Parties, including small- and medium-sized enterprises in the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States, emphasising a country-driven approach, expediting action to mobilise resources at scale, and developing a strategic approach to engaging with the private sector.’

In paragraph 10, the decision further requested the Board of the GCF, ‘in the implementation of its 2015 workplan, to complete its work related to policies and procedures to accept financial inputs from non-public and alternative sources, the investment and risk management frameworks of the Green Climate Fund, the impact analysis on its initial results areas, including options for determining Board level investment portfolios across the structure of the Fund, and the approval process of the Fund, including methodologies for selecting

programmes and projects that best achieve the objectives of the Fund’.

The decision in paragraph 11 requested the GCF Board to consider ways by which to further increase the transparency of its proceedings.

It also requested the Board, in paragraph 12, ‘to accelerate the implementation of its work programme on readiness and preparatory support, ensuring that adequate resources are provided for its execution, including from the initial resource mobilisation process, providing urgent support to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States, led by their national designated authorities or focal points to build institutional capacities in accordance with Green Climate Fund Board decision B.08/11.’

It also encouraged, in paragraph 13, ‘the timely implementation of the accreditation framework and requests the Board of the Green Climate Fund, in its implementation, to pay adequate attention to the priorities and needs of developing country Parties, including the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States, emphasising the need to provide readiness support to those national and regional entities eligible for fast-tracking that request it.’

In paragraph 14, it invited ‘developing country Parties to expedite the nomination of their national designated authorities and focal points as soon as possible, as well as the selection of their national and subnational implementing entities, to facilitate their engagement with the GCF.’

Guidance to the GEF

In considering the report of the GEF, the COP gave guidance to the GEF as follows.

It noted in paragraph 2 of the decision that ‘the amount of funding available for the climate change focal area was reduced in the sixth replenishment period of the Global Environment Facility and that the country allocation of some countries, including some least developed countries, small island developing States, and African States has decreased as a

consequence, while highlighting that funding for climate change related interventions at the Global Environment Facility has continued to increase with pilot integrated approaches.’

In its paragraph 5, it encouraged the GEF ‘to continue to cooperate with all its implementing and project agencies as well as recipient countries in order to improve its project cycle, taking into account the report of the fifth overall performance study of the GEF and the recommendations contained therein.’

In paragraph 6, it also encouraged the GEF ‘to continue to increase the overall transparency and openness of its operations, particularly with regard to the disclosure of information on the status of the implementation of projects and programmes, the project-level accountability of its implementing agencies and with respect to the timely disbursement of funds as well as the advice provided to countries on co-financing.’

Paragraph 9 of the report took note ‘of the policy on co-financing of the GEF and the concerns regarding the implementation of this policy as raised by some Parties’. Paragraph 10 encouraged the GEF ‘to improve the communication of its co-financing policy so that it is better understood, and appropriately applied by accredited project agencies and the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility, while acknowledging the potential impacts of this policy on developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing States, and African States.’

Paragraph 11 encouraged the GEF ‘to finalise the accreditation of project agencies and to share, in its next report to the Conference of the Parties, lessons learned and progress made in its pilot accreditation of project agencies, particularly in the least developed countries, small island developing States and African States.’

Paragraph 12 requested the GEF ‘to continue to work with its implementing agencies to further simplify its procedures and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the process

through which Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention receive funding to meet their obligations under Article 12, paragraph 1, of the Convention.’

Fifth review of the Financial Mechanism

The operating entities of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention are the GEF and the GCF.

The COP decision noted that the ‘fifth review of the Financial Mechanism focused on the GEF owing to the fact that the GCF is still developing its operations and that therefore it was premature to review many aspects of the GCF.’

The decision in paragraph 1 welcomed with appreciation ‘the expert input to the fifth review of the Financial Mechanism provided by the SCF, contained in the technical paper referred to in paragraph 3 below.’

In paragraph 2, it also encouraged ‘the SCF to build on the same methodology and criteria in future reviews of the Financial Mechanism.’

In paragraph 3, it acknowledged ‘the executive summary of the technical paper on the fifth review, as contained in the annex, including the conclusions and recommendations made by the SCF.’

The decision in paragraph 4 encouraged ‘the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism to address, as appropriate, these recommendations in their future work, particularly with regard to the complementarity between the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism.’

The decision recognised in paragraph 5 ‘the general positive assessment of the performance of the GEF’, but in paragraph 6, it noted ‘that the least developed countries and small island developing States still experience challenges in accessing the resources from the GEF.’

In paragraph 7, the COP decided ‘to consider the timing of guidance provided by the COP to the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, especially that guidance which has resource implications vis-a-vis the replenishment cycles of the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism,

in order to ensure that key guidance is fully considered in the programming strategies and policy recommendations associated with each replenishment period’.

Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage

After days of wrangling over the composition and governance of the permanent Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage, Parties reached agreement on 10 December after the draft decision was transmitted to the COP for further consultation upon the closing of the 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.

The COP decision, in paragraph 5, agreed that the ExCom shall be composed of the following:

‘(a) Ten members from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties);

(b) Ten members from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties), comprising two members each from the African, Asia-Pacific, and the Latin American and Caribbean States, one member from Small Island Developing States, one member from Least Developed Country Parties, and two additional members from non-Annex I Parties.’

Paragraph 6 encouraged ‘Parties to nominate to the Executive Committee experts with the diversity of experience and knowledge relevant to loss and damage associated with climate change impacts.’

In paragraph 7, it is also decided that ‘members shall serve for a term of two years and shall be eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of office, and that the following rules shall apply:

(a) Half of the members shall be elected initially for a term of three years and half of the members shall be elected for a term of two years;

(b) Thereafter, the Conference of the Parties shall elect members for a term of two years;

(c) The members shall remain in



The panel at a meeting of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation in Lima. The SBI discussed, among other topics, the governance of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

office until their successors have been elected.’

It is further decided in paragraph 8 that ‘the ExCom may establish expert groups, subcommittees, panels, thematic advisory groups or task-focused ad hoc working groups, to help execute the work of the ExCom in guiding the implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism, as appropriate, in an advisory role, and that report to the ExCom.’

In paragraph 12, it is decided that ‘the ExCom shall meet at least twice per year, while retaining its flexibility to adjust the number of meetings, as appropriate’. In paragraph 13, it is decided that the ExCom ‘shall convene its first meeting as soon as practical following the election of its members commencing at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties but no later than March 2015, and at its first meeting shall adopt its rules of procedure and begin implementing its workplan.’

Forum and work programme on the impact of implementation of response measures

On 12 December, the COP decided to forward the text of a draft decision containing a four-page annex for consideration by the Subsidiary Bodies at their 42nd session in June 2015 with a view to recommending a

draft decision on this matter for adoption by COP 21 (in Paris in 2015).

The heavily bracketed annex was the draft decision that Parties arrived at on 6 December after the joint agenda item of the 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 41) and the 41st session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 41) agreed to transmit the matter to the COP, having failed to reach a conclusion on the matter.

At the closing of SBI 41 at the end of the first week of the Lima climate talks, COP 20 President Manuel Pulgar-Vidal instructed the SBI and SBSTA Chairs to conduct informal consultations under his authority to move the issue forward. Four informal consultations were undertaken during the second week.

In the final stocktake plenary on 11 December at 6 pm, the SBI Chair, Amena Yauvoli (Fiji), who had personally chaired the last informal consultation on this matter earlier in the morning, conceded that despite the efforts and hard work of all Parties, there was no agreement on the most sticky issue regarding institutional arrangements to address the impact of the implementation of response measures. Parties did agree to a continuation of deliberations based on the annex at the next session of the Subsidiary Bodies.

At the final informal consultation,

which was also attended by several heads of delegation, Parties tried to break the deadlock and focused on the contentious paragraph 6 which reads:

‘Requests the subsidiary bodies to review at their [forty-fifth] sessions the work of the forum, including the need for its continuation, [or propose other future institutional arrangements] with a view to providing recommendations to the Conference of the Parties at its [twenty-second session (November-December 2016);]’

In 2013, COP 19 in Warsaw also could not adopt a decision on this issue and it remains a highly contentious subject deliberated as a joint agenda item of SBI 40 in June and SBI 41 in Lima.

Development and transfer of technology and implementation of the Technology Mechanism

Parties adopted the joint annual reports of the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) for 2013 and 2014 respectively.

At COP 19 in Warsaw, the 2013 annual report could not be adopted as developed countries were opposed to the TEC having observer status at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The impasse was resolved at SBI 40 in June 2014 in Bonn. The decision is contained in the annex of FCCC/SB/2013/1 where the desire of developing countries to have observer status in the two international organisations outside of the Convention was not granted.

On the agenda item on linkages between the Technology Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism, no decision could be taken.

In its intervention at the COP plenary on 12 December, China, speaking for the G77/China, regretted that no decision could be adopted although Parties were close to getting an agreement. It welcomed the recommendations from the TEC on this matter, noting that the linkage was a key ele-

ment for the implementation of the Convention where the end goal was to develop and use climate technologies to help developing countries to implement climate actions.

It further said that as mandated by paragraph 62 of decision 1/CP.18 (in Doha), the two-year effort was highly appreciated and a clear link between the mechanisms needed to be established in Lima, including the creation of a funding window under the Green Climate Fund.

It also noted that the requests of developing countries during the deliberation of the matter were within the mandate but were not acceptable to developed countries although China and other developing countries had exhibited flexibility in accommodating the various concerns.

‘It is, therefore, regrettable that the matter will have to wait for another year for the chance to discuss this issue and it remains unclear how much longer it will need before the issue of technology development and transfer will enjoy the support of the Financial Mechanism,’ it concluded.

The Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising

The COP also adopted a decision entitled the Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising.

Through this decision, ministers and heads of delegation recognised that ‘education, including formal, non-formal and informal education, and public awareness programmes should promote the attitudes and behaviour needed to prepare our societies to adapt to the impacts of climate change.’

The decision in paragraph 1 stressed that ‘education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, knowledge and international cooperation play a fundamental role in meeting the ultimate objective of the Convention and in promoting climate-resilient sustainable development.’

In paragraph 2, Parties reaffirmed their ‘commitment to promote and

facilitate, at the national and, as appropriate, at sub-regional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within the respective capacities, the development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects, of public access to information on climate change and its effects and of public participation in addressing climate change.’

In paragraph 3, governments were encouraged ‘to develop education strategies that incorporate the issue of climate change in curricula and to include awareness-raising on climate change in the design and implementation of national development and climate change strategies and policies in line with their national priorities and competencies’.

Paragraph 4 urged ‘all Parties to give increased attention, as appropriate, to education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information on climate change.’

Paragraph 6 expressed the ‘resolve to cooperate and engage through multilateral, bilateral and regional complementary initiatives that aim to raise awareness and enhance education on climate change and its impacts, opportunities and co-benefits.’

Other decisions

In noting that ‘gender-responsive climate policy still requires further strengthening in all activities related to adaptation and mitigation as well as decision-making on the implementation of climate policies’, the COP also adopted the ‘Lima work programme on gender’ with a two-year work programme for promoting gender balance and achieving gender-responsive climate policy including effective participation of women in the bodies established under the Convention.

Parties were also informed that Morocco offered to host COP 22 from 7 to 18 November in 2016. ♦

Hilary Chiew is a senior researcher with the Third World Network.

Dirty energy reliance undercuts US, Canada rhetoric at climate talks

The US and Canada came under fire from activists at the Lima climate conference for their posturing as responsible climate leaders while maintaining strong domestic commitments and links with the fossil fuel industry.

Leehi Yona

WHILE US and Canadian officials delivered speeches about how the world needs to step up to their responsibilities at the UN climate negotiations in Lima, Peru, activists from North America demanded clear answers back home on their governments' relationships with fossil fuel corporations, as well as the future of several major oil projects across the continent.

US Secretary of State John Kerry spoke on 11 December about the role each country should play in tackling climate change and referred to the US-China agreement announced in November. The agreement, which pledged unforeseen emissions reductions for both countries, has been lauded by many countries as a progressive step forward at the UN negotiations.

However, civil society delegates have expressed concern over the disconnect between the messaging the United States was taking in Lima and its domestic fossil fuel reliance.

Pipeline of discontent

This international discourse collides with Washington's hesitance to repeal the Keystone XL pipeline, a proposed project that would transport over 800,000 barrels of bitumen a day from the Alberta tar sands to Texas oil refineries.

'The best way the US can support progress in the UN climate talks is to start at home by rejecting the Keystone XL pipeline now,' said



US Secretary of State John Kerry at the Lima conference. Civil society delegates expressed concern over the disconnect between the messaging the US took in Lima and its domestic fossil fuel reliance.

Dyanna Jaye, a US youth delegate attending the Lima conference with SustainUS.

TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline has been stalled in political procedures since 2011. Once considered to be a done deal, the project has grown to be a bone of contention among environmental groups, which have mobilised to put pressure on US President Barack Obama to reject it.

Having been presented as a bill to Congress numerous times, it most recently passed a House of Representatives vote but failed in the Senate by only one vote on 5 November.

Youth have taken a leading role in pushing for Kerry to reject Keystone XL, shining a spotlight on the influence of the fossil fuel industry in hindering progress. Following Kerry's 11 December speech to the UN,

Jaye and other US and Canadian youth activists organised an action in protest against proposed pipelines through the two countries.

Calling for the industry to be kicked out of the negotiations, youth have highlighted that a successful deal in Lima would necessitate a phasing out of fossil fuel use to zero production by 2050, as stated in a World Wildlife Fund report.

'Dirty fossil fuel projects like Keystone XL clearly fail the climate test,' Evan Weber, executive director of US Climate Plan, told Inter Press Service (IPS). 'We'll be drawing the line on any new fossil fuel infrastructure and calling for investment in renewable energy solutions.'

Protesters emphasised the need for domestic action at home in order for there to be any progress at the

Photo courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations Bulletin

United Nations.

Lack of ambition

The United States, however, isn't the only country whose domestic issues directly contradict their statements at COP 20. The Canadian government has been criticised for its lack of domestic ambition and its close relationship with fossil fuel companies.

While the government attempted to portray itself as a climate leader in the UN negotiations, members of civil society have pointed out discrepancies between the emissions goals it is promising and the emissions trajectory the country is actually on track to produce.

'Under [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper, Canada has no climate policy beyond public relations,' said Elizabeth May, a Canadian Member of Parliament and leader of the Canadian Green Party attending COP 20.

'The zeal to exploit fossil fuels has led to the evisceration of environmental laws. We have distorted our economy in the interests of exporting bitumen,' she told IPS.

Canada once again entered into the non-governmental spotlight at the



The proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline is a bone of contention among environmental groups in the US, which have mobilised to put pressure on President Barack Obama to reject it.

UN climate negotiations. On 9 December, uproar ensued when Harper stated that any regulation of the oil and gas industry would be 'crazy' considering the industry's current financial state.

On the conference's last day, Canada was also awarded a Fossil of the Day, a daily non-prize awarded by

civil society during the climate talks to the most regressive country, for its consistent meddling with and lack of participation in the UN process.

'As members of civil society, we've seen Canadian negotiators prioritise fossil fuel companies over public interest time and time again in Lima,' Catherine Gauthier of ENvironnement JEUnesse, a Quebec youth environmental organisation, told IPS.

Both the US and Canada have come under scrutiny for their promotion of climate action on the international level while promoting tar sands expansion and shale gas fracking projects at home. Shale gas has particularly been promoted by both governments as a bridge fuel to help wean societies off fossil fuels with the goal of increasing renewable energy sources.

'The use of fracking as a bridge fuel is the biggest lie the American public has ever been fed,' Emily Williams of the California Student Sustainability Coalition told IPS. 'It poisons our health and our communities, and destroys our environment. It cannot be part of the climate solution as it starves the renewable energy revolution of the investment it needs.'

— IPS



Open-pit mining in the tar sands region of Alberta, Canada. 'The zeal to exploit fossil fuels has led to the evisceration of environmental laws' in Canada.

US polluters *über alles*

Responding to the attempts by the *Wall Street Journal* to portray the climate crisis as the consequence of the ever-greater emissions of the fast-growing developing economies, *John Miller* demonstrates that it is the emissions of the United States and other industrialised countries that are at the heart of today's ecological problems.

Tens of thousands of environmental protestors paraded through New York City on Sunday, in a 'people's climate march' designed to lobby world leaders arriving for the latest United Nations climate summit.

One not-so-minor problem: The world's largest emitters are declining to show up. The Chinese economy has been the No. 1 global producer of carbon dioxide since 2008, but President Xi Jinping won't be gracing the UN with his presence. India's new Prime Minister Narendra Modi (No. 3) will be in New York but is skipping the climate parley. ...

[Over the last decade, China's carbon emissions have] jumped by more than the rest of the world combined and [China] is responsible for 24.8% of emissions over the last five years. Over the same period, developing nations accounted for 57.5%.

No matter US exertions to save the planet from atmospheric carbon, the international result will be more or less the same.

— 'People's Climate Demarche: The anticarbon campaign stalls even at the United Nations', *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 September 2014

ON 22 April 1970, 20 million people turned out for massive rallies and programmes held across the United States to mark the first Earth Day. The next day, the *New York Review of Books* published a review of the groundbreaking book *Population, Resources, Environment* by Stanford scientists and environmental and population activists Paul and Anne Ehrlich. In the review, Robert Heilbroner, the economist and historian of economic thought, argued that to stare down the impending 'ecological armageddon', capitalism's inexo-



Per capita carbon emissions in the United States were three-and-a-quarter times the global average in 2013.

rable economic expansion would need to be brought to heel by environmentally responsible and massively redistributive policies for the global economy as a whole. 'There are simply not enough resources,' wrote Heilbroner, 'to permit a "Western" rate of industrial exploitation to be expanded to a population of four billion – much less eight billion – persons.'

Four decades later, hundreds of thousands of climate marchers in the streets of New York City and over a million protesters across the globe – plus report after report confirming that an ecological armageddon is more likely than ever – were not enough to convince the *Wall Street Journal* editors of the need to impose tighter environmental regulations on the US economy.

Instead of facing up to the gaping inequalities of the global economy, the editors used these in-

equalities to justify their brush-off of the climate protesters. To hear the editors tell the story, the ever-greater emissions of the fast-growing developing economies, and not the emissions of the United States and other industrialised countries, are at the heart of today's ecological problems. And without China or India attending a preliminary New York meeting before the next environmental summit, the United States is powerless to reduce the industrial waste spewed into the earth's atmosphere.

That's hardly the case. By failing to recognise the inequalities of living standards and resource use in today's global economy, which are no less staggering than in Heilbroner's day, the editors have managed to obscure just which countries bear the greatest responsibility for dimming our ecological prospects. And no country bears greater responsibility for fouling the earth's atmosphere



Hundreds of thousands of climate marchers in New York were not enough to convince the *Wall Street Journal* editors of the need to impose tighter environmental regulations on the US economy.

than the one with the highest emissions per capita among the leading overall emitters – the United States.

Emissions inequities

Looking at the global emission record leading up to 2013, instead of that year alone as the editors do, exposes just how feeble a gambit the editors have deployed in their attempt to excuse the US economy from further environmental regulation.

The latest report of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows how close we now are to an ecological armageddon. Emissions during the period from 1870 to 2011 have already added to the earth's atmosphere 65% of the carbon dioxide necessary to raise temperatures by 2°C, after which the dangerous consequences of global warming are likely to escalate. Even more alarmingly, carbon emissions are currently on track to exceed that limit by 2040, according to IPCC estimates.

The industrialised countries are the source of the great bulk of those carbon emissions. For instance, the Earth Institute calculates that emissions from Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan, New Zealand and the United States accounted for more than two-thirds (68.4%) of global carbon emis-

sions from 1751 to 2012.

The same inequalities are apparent in the emissions records of the world's three largest emitters of carbon in 2013. China, whose population is now four times that of the United States, emitted but one-half of the 74,758 million tons of carbon the United States spewed into the atmosphere from 1950 to 2012. And India, whose population is also four times that of the United States, emitted just 13.9% of the US total over those years.

The economic gains from depleting the earth's capacity to absorb carbon emissions have gone overwhelmingly to the industrialised nations. Just 1.2 billion of the world's 7.2 billion people live in the more-developed economies, where they enjoy an average income of \$37,470, as of 2013. The rest of the world's population make do on much less. Approximately five billion people in less-developed countries had an average income of \$8,920, about one-quarter of that in the more-developed economies. Another nearly one billion people (916 million) in the least-developed countries had an average income of \$1,970 in 2013, just 5.5% of the average income in more-developed economies.

The differences in national income per capita of the three largest

emitters of carbon in 2013 were equally stark. The average income of US residents in 2013 was \$53,960; in China, \$11,850, about one-fifth of that in the United States; in India, \$5,320, about one-tenth.

But nothing throws the global inequities of carbon emissions and who has gained from them into sharper relief than the disparities in per capita carbon emissions between the United States and the other largest emitters. According to the most recent data published by the Global Carbon Project, per capita emissions in 2013 across the globe averaged 5.0 tons of carbon per year. While US and Chinese emissions top that global average, there are enormous differences in their per capita carbon emissions. China's per capita emissions have risen to 7.2 tons per person in 2013, or 44% above the global average. Emissions from the United States, on the other hand, stood at 16.4 tons per person in 2013, a whopping three-and-a-quarter times the global average. And while its per capita emissions are on the rise, India's average of 1.9 tons of carbon per person was less than two-fifths of the global average.

'Try telling India to leave its coal in the ground,' a recent *New York Times* article challenged its readers, 'after examining the latest data on per capita emissions of carbon dioxide.' Sadly, the *Wall Street Journal* editors seem not only quite up to the challenge, but determined to exploit those global inequalities to thwart further environmental regulation.

Capitalism, economic growth and global inequality

Despite rising total carbon emissions, countries have reduced their emissions per unit of output. Global carbon emissions per dollar of GDP fell by almost one quarter (23%) from 1990 to 2011, but carbon emissions across the globe nonetheless increased by almost half (49.3%), and far more quickly than that in the developing world. That same pattern holds for the world's three largest emitters, with China showing the most pronounced

decline in carbon emissions per dollar of GDP, but the most precipitous rise in total carbon emissions due to its economy's rapid growth.

That emissions from continued economic growth have swamped whatever has been done to reduce carbon emission per unit of output bears out Heilbroner's contention that the earth cannot tolerate a spread across the globe of industrialisation as we know it. Without a dramatic slowing of global economic growth – made possible by massive redistribution that addresses the unequal distribution of benefits from carbon emissions – or a fundamental transformation of technology far beyond the reductions that we have witnessed to date, we will surely soon hit up against the limited capacity of the earth to absorb our waste.

If nothing else, the *Wall Street Journal* editors' brush-off of the climate march is proof positive that Naomi Klein, in her new book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, is spot on: 'The actions that would give us the best chance of averting catastrophe – and would benefit the vast majority – are extremely threatening to an elite minority that has a stranglehold over our economy, our political process, and most of our major media outlets.'

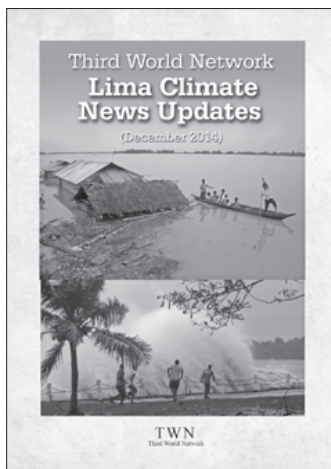
And that is yet another reason why it is imperative to carry out these actions – including a fundamental re-ordering of the global economy. ♦

This article is reproduced from Dollars & Sense (November/December 2014). John Miller is a professor of economics at Wheaton College in the US and a member of the Dollars & Sense collective.

Sources: Robert Heilbroner, 'The Ecological Armageddon', New York Review of Books, 23 April 1970; Andrew Revkin, 'Humanity's Long Climate and Energy March', New York Times, 22 September 2014; Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate* (Simon and Schuster, 2014); Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report – Longer Report, from the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change, 1 November 2014; International Energy Agency, *CO2 Emissions from Fuel Combustion, 2013 Edition*; Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, *Trends in Global CO2 Emissions: 2013 Report*; Population Reference Bureau, *Global Carbon Project, Global Carbon Budget 2014*, 21 September 2014; The Earth Institute, Columbia University, *The 2014 World Population Data Sheet*.

Lima Climate News Updates

(December 2014)



ISBN: 978-967-0747-05-7 156pp

This is a collection of 33 News Updates prepared by the Third World Network for and during the recent United Nations Climate Change Talks – the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP20), the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 10), the forty-first sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 41) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 41), and the seventh part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 2-7) – in Lima, Peru, from 1 to 12 December 2014.

	Price	Postage
Malaysia	RM14.00	RM2.00
Developing countries	US\$8.00	US\$4.00 (air); US\$2.00 (sea)
Others	US\$12.00	US\$6.00 (air); US\$2.00 (sea)

Orders from Malaysia – please pay by credit card/crossed cheque or postal order.

Orders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in own currency, US\$ or Euro. If paying in own currency or Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

Rest of the world – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in US\$ or Euro. If paying in Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

All payments should be made in favour of: **THIRD WORLD NETWORK BHD.**, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728/2266159; Fax: 60-4-2264505; Email: twnet@po.jaring.my; Website: www.twm.my or visit our online bookstore at www.twmshop.com to order.

I would like to order copy/copies of **Lima Climate News Updates (December 2014)**.

I enclose the amount of by cheque/bank draft/IMO.

Please charge the amount of US\$/Euro/RM to my credit card:

☐ American Express ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

A/c No.: Expiry date:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Climate justice is the only way to solve climate crisis

Preventing the climate crisis requires long-term thinking, brave leaders and a mass movement, says *Jagoda Munic*. And at the heart of this movement, there must be climate justice.

IN November, the world's top climate scientists issued their latest warning that the climate crisis is rapidly worsening on a number of fronts, and that we must stop our climate-polluting way of producing energy if we are to stand a chance of avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

Science says that the risk of runaway climate change draws ever closer. Indeed, we are already witnessing the consequences of climate change: more frequent floods, storms, droughts and rising seas are already causing devastation. Around the world people and communities are paying the cost of our governments' continued inaction with their livelihoods and lives and this trend is likely to increase significantly in the future.

Good energy, bad energy

The fact is that our current energy system – the way we produce, distribute and consume energy – is unsustainable, unjust and harming communities, workers, the environment and the climate. Emissions from energy are a key driver of climate change and the system is failing to provide for the basic energy needs of billions of people in the global South.

The world's main sources of energy like oil, gas and coal are devastating communities, their land, their air and their water. And so are other energy sources like nuclear power, industrial agrofuels and biomass, mega-dams and waste-to-energy incineration. None of these destructive energy sources have a role in our energy future.

There are real solutions to the climate crisis. They include stopping fossil fuels, building sustainable, community-based energy systems,

steep reductions in carbon emissions, transforming our food systems, and stopping deforestation.

Surely, a climate-safe, sustainable energy system which meets the basic energy needs of everyone and respects the rights and different ways of life of communities around the world is possible: an energy system where energy production and use support a safe and clean environment, and healthy, thriving local economies that provide safe, decent and secure jobs and livelihoods. Such an energy system would be based on democracy and respect for human rights.

To make this happen we urgently need to invest in locally appropriate, climate-safe, affordable and low-impact energy for all, and reduce energy dependence so that people don't need much energy to meet their basic needs and live a good life.

We also need to end new destructive energy projects and phase out existing destructive energy sources, and we need to tackle the trade and investment rules that prioritise corporations' needs over those of people and the environment.

So the goals are set, and it is time to act immediately towards a transition period in which the rights of affected communities and workers are respected and their needs provided for during the transition.

Climate politics at odds with climate science

So how are our governments tackling the issue? In the 20 years of the UN negotiations on climate change, we haven't stopped climate change, nor even slowed it down. Proposals on the table negotiated by our governments now are mostly empty

false solutions, including expanded carbon markets and a risky method called REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation), which will not prevent climate change, and will impact and endanger poor and indigenous communities while earning money for big corporations.

Our governments' inaction is obvious: they have failed to create a strong and equitable climate agreement at the UN for 20 years and their baby steps in Lima do not take us in the right direction. The reason is that, unfortunately, the UN climate negotiations are massively compromised because the corporate polluters who fund and create dirty energy are in the negotiating halls and have our governments in their pockets.

Major corporations and polluters are lobbying to undermine the chances of achieving climate justice via the UNFCCC. Much of this influence is exerted in the member states before governments come to the climate negotiations, but the negotiations are also attended by hundreds of lobbyists from the corporate sector trying to ensure that any agreement promotes the interests of big business before people's interests and climate justice. If we want any concrete agreement that would ensure the stopping of climate change for the benefit of all, we must stop the corporate takeover of UN climate negotiations by those corporate polluters.

There is also an issue of historic responsibility. The world's richest developed countries are responsible for the majority of historical carbon emissions, while hosting only 15% of the world's population. They emitted the biggest share of the greenhouse gases present in the atmosphere to-

day, way more than their fair share. They must urgently make the deepest emission cuts and provide the most money if countries are to fairly share the responsibility of preventing catastrophic climate change.

Of course, tackling climate change and avoiding catastrophic climate change necessitates action by all countries. But the responsibility of countries to take action must reflect their historical responsibility for creating the problem and their capacity to act. While the emissions of industrialising countries like China, India, South Africa and Brazil are rapidly increasing, these nations made a much smaller contribution to the climate problem overall than the rich developed countries, and their per capita emissions are still much lower.

Industrialised countries' governments are neglecting their responsibility to prevent climate catastrophe and their positions at global climate talks are increasingly driven by the narrow economic and financial interests of wealthy elites and multinational corporations. These interests, tied to the economic sectors responsible for pollution or profiting from false solutions to the climate crisis like carbon trading and fossil fuels, are the key forces behind global inaction.

This year in Lima there were big plans to expand carbon markets. Friends of the Earth International argues that carbon markets are a false solution to climate change that lets rich countries off the hook and does not address the climate crisis. Expanding carbon markets will make climate change worse and cause further harm to people around the world while bringing huge profits to polluters.

The UN climate talks are supposed to be making progress on implementing the agreement that world governments made in 1992 to stop manmade and dangerous climate change. The agreement recognises that rich countries have done the most to cause the problem of climate change and should take the lead in solving it, as well as provide funds to poorer countries as repayment of their climate debt.

But developed countries' govern-

ments have done very little to deliver on these commitments and time is running out. What's more, rich countries continue to further diminish their responsibilities to tackle climate change and dismantle the whole framework for binding reductions of greenhouse gases, without which we have no chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change.

What needs to happen in the climate talks?

Within the UN, rich developed countries must meet their historical responsibility by committing to urgent and deep emissions cuts in line with science and justice and without false solutions such as carbon trading, offsetting and other loopholes.

Our governments must listen to those impacted by climate change, not to corporations.

They must also repay their climate debt to poorer countries in the developing world so that they too can tackle climate change. This means transferring adequate public finance and technology to developing countries so that they too can build low-carbon and truly sustainable economies, adapt to climate change and receive compensation for irreparable loss and damage. This will help ensure a safe climate, more secure livelihoods, more jobs, and clean affordable energy for all.

For now, the UN talks are still heading in the wrong direction, with weak non-binding pledges and insufficient finance from developed countries, and huge reliance on false solutions like carbon trading and REDD. Unfortunately, if the UN climate negotiations continue in the same manner, any deal on the table at the UN climate negotiations in Paris in 2015 will fall far short of what is required by science and climate justice. To

achieve a binding and justice-based agreement based on the cuts needed, as science tells us, our governments must listen to those impacted by climate change, not to corporations, which by definition aim at more profits, not a safer climate.

Movement building and climate justice

Preventing the climate crisis and the potential collapse of life-supporting ecosystems on a global level requires long-term thinking, brave leaders and a mass movement. We have to challenge the corporate influence over our governments and exert real democratic control over the energy transition so that the needs and interests of people and the planet take priority over private profit. And at the heart of this movement we need climate justice – action on climate change that is radical, that challenges the system that has led to the climate catastrophe, and that fights for fair solutions that will benefit all people, not just the few.

It is already happening. In September we saw massive mobilisations around the world, with hundreds of thousands of people marching and actions across every continent, including 400,000 people on the streets of New York. And at the latest UN talks in Lima, we saw people from all walks of life – indigenous people, social movements, youth, farmers, women's movements – from across Peru, Latin America and around the world joining together in the People's Summit to collectively articulate the people's demands and the people's solutions to climate change.

But we need to grow much bigger and much stronger. We are calling on people to join the global movement for climate justice, which is gaining power and integrating actions at local, national and UN levels. The solution to the climate crisis is achievable and it is in our hands. ♦

Jagoda Munic is Chairperson of Friends of the Earth International. This article is reproduced from CommonDreams.org under a Creative Commons licence.

Messages from the end of the world

In October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which issues the most comprehensive reports on the state of climate change, met in Copenhagen. *Martin Khor*, who was present at this meeting, comments on the IPCC's synthesis report which, together with a 'summary for policymakers', distilled the main findings of the body's three earlier reports on climate change science, adaptation and mitigation.

IMAGINE our world getting more and more polluted, with little space left for the Earth to absorb more pollutants before all kinds of disasters take place. And imagine that we have not yet found the solutions to really slow down the emissions or to prevent the catastrophe that lies ahead.

This look into our scary future was evident at a meeting in Copenhagen in October to finalise the last climate change report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The IPCC produces the most comprehensive reports on the state of climate change. Over a thousand scientists came together to produce three huge reports on climate change science, adaptation and mitigation.

And then a synthesis report was finalised at the Copenhagen meeting, with hundreds of government representatives going over, debating and finally approving a 'summary for policymakers' (SPM) together with the authors.

Grim scenario

The synthesis report and its SPM make very interesting reading. You can find information on the damage that climate change has already caused and the many more harms that lie ahead, from increasing incidence of storms and heavy rainfall causing floods, to drought, reduced food supply, thinning of the Arctic ice and sea level rise.

But the most interesting scientific picture is found between the lines. The report reveals that between



At its meeting in Copenhagen in October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change finalised its 'synthesis report' on the state of climate change.

1750 and 2011, cumulative anthropogenic (human-induced) carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere were 2,040 gigatonnes. (One gigatonne, or Gton, equals a billion tonnes.)

About 40% of these emissions, or 880 Gton of carbon dioxide, have remained in the atmosphere. The rest was stored on land (in plants and soils) and in the ocean. The ocean has absorbed about 30% of the carbon dioxide, causing acidification of the seas.

Emissions have continued to increase in recent decades, reaching a 2010 level of around 49 Gton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Total carbon dioxide emissions since 1870 have to remain below about 2,900 Gton if global warming is to be kept at less than 2°C (relative

to the period 1861-80) with a probability of over 66%. However, about 1,900 Gton of carbon dioxide had already been emitted by 2011.

From the above figures in the IPCC synthesis report, you can do the simple maths, and it's frightening.

If total emissions since 1870 have to be kept at 2,900 Gton, and 1,900 Gton have already been emitted, then there is 'space' for only 1,000 Gton of carbon dioxide to be emitted from now to the future.

But the IPCC report also says that in 2011, the emission level was 49 Gton of carbon dioxide equivalent. Thus, in 20 to 25 years, if the current rate of emissions continues, the ability of the Earth to absorb the gases (within the limit of keeping warming below 2°C) would be exhausted.

Even in this scenario of 2°C



The IPCC report contains information on the damage that climate change has already caused and the harm that lies ahead, including increasing incidence of floods.

warming there would be widespread and serious damage with a rise of extreme weather events. With more warming, say 3°C, it would be catastrophic.

Short on solutions

While the IPCC synthesis report is rich in scientific data, with scenarios drawn from computer models, it is unfortunately very thin on how to achieve the global solutions.

It does assess the technologies and physical changes needed to reduce emissions in various sectors. It

also gives estimates of the economic costs needed to make mitigation work. But it is shy in even hinting at the kind of global deal that is needed to get both developed and developing countries to seriously take action.

In the negotiations under the aegis of the UN climate convention, the developing countries have long made the point that they require funding and technology to support policies that shift their economic growth towards environmentally sustainable pathways. The climate-related actions they take should blend with their continued development, and not be at the

expense of development.

The synthesis report hardly deals with the key issues of finance and technology for developing countries. Indeed, there were attempts by some developed countries to even strike out the term 'technology transfer' from the report's summary. It had to take quite a battle by several developing countries to reinsert that term.

The North-South tangle was most evident in a working group to draw up a box in the report on the key relevant messages to be transmitted

by the IPCC to the climate convention and its negotiators.

The draft by the IPCC authors was filled with data and required mitigation pathways, but developing countries' delegates complained that there was a near-total absence of any mention of sustainable development, finance, technology and adaptation.

After days of discussion, the scientists finally agreed to include a paragraph on sustainable development and a few lines mentioning financing, technology transfer and adaptation.

However, when the new draft was brought to the plenary, whose closing had to be postponed for a full day, it was rejected by several developed countries. They apparently rejected the new references put in by developing countries and agreed to by the report's authors.

Thus, the IPCC's final report is missing what was to have been its most important message – the box on the IPCC's relevant findings for the climate convention.

My conclusion after spending a week at this last meeting of the IPCC is that the science of climate change has made progress in showing why we have to act, but that getting action agreed to as a community of nations and people is still a long way off. ♦



If the current rate of carbon emissions continues, the world would face serious damage from climate change.

This article first appeared in The Star (Malaysia) on 10 November 2014.

Deforestation in the tropics affects climate around the world, study finds

A worldwide study on tropical deforestation reveals how far-reaching its impact can be. *Robert McSweeney* explains the findings of the study.

‘THE effects of tropical deforestation on climate go well beyond carbon,’ says Professor Deborah Lawrence, ‘[it] causes warming locally, regionally and globally, and it changes rainfall by altering the movement of heat and water.’

These are the conclusions of a worldwide study into the deforestation of tropical rainforests, which shows that cutting down trees can have immediate impacts on the climate and put agricultural productivity at risk.

Rainforests are more than just a carbon store

Deforestation and land use change account for approximately 11% of global carbon dioxide emissions. But the new research finds that cutting down trees doesn’t only affect the carbon they lock up.

The research, published in *Nature Climate Change*, reviews academic studies on deforestation of tropical rainforests in the Amazon basin, Central Africa and Southeast Asia. Many of the studies use climate models to simulate what happens if you remove these forests completely, and they suggest that deforestation in the tropics can affect the climate on the other side of the world.

The models suggest deforestation in the Amazon, for example, can reduce rainfall over the US Midwest and even in northeast China. Deforestation in Central Africa can cause a drop in rainfall in Southern Europe, and loss of trees in Southeast Asia can bring wetter conditions in Southern Europe and the Arabian Peninsula.



‘Tropical deforestation results in immediate climate impacts independent of, and in addition to, its contribution to the greenhouse effect.’

Lead author Lawrence tells the Carbon Brief website in an email: ‘These are physical effects from removing trees that are not simply related to the loss of carbon dioxide stored inside them. Tropical deforestation results in immediate climate impacts independent of, and in addition to, its contribution to the greenhouse effect.’

Tropical deforestation is a global problem

So how does it work? How can cutting trees down in the Amazon affect rainfall in China?

First you have to bear in mind that rainforests cool the air above them by turning water from the soil into moisture in the air. Chop the trees down, and you remove the cooling effect from this additional moisture. The effect is so pronounced, the study finds, that if all the trees in the trop-

ics were cut down, global temperature could increase by as much as 0.7 degrees.

With the trees gone the air warms up, creating large, rising masses of warm air. When these air masses hit the upper reaches of the atmosphere, they create ripples called teleconnections that flow towards the mid- and higher latitudes.

Lawrence compares it to boiling water: ‘Imagine steam rising off a pot of boiling water, hitting the ceiling in your kitchen and flowing outward, along the ceiling, out the door to your hallway.’

So these changes to the atmosphere in the tropics can flow out to the atmosphere of temperate regions and alter their climate, Lawrence says.

Worst-case scenario

It seems unlikely we’ll ever cut down an entire rainforest. So why do

scientists run these experiments? Lawrence explains: 'We want to understand just how important rainforests are to sustaining the life support system on earth, and we start with a worst-case scenario. Large-scale tropical deforestation is the outcome of business-as-usual economic development, it is the path we took in the US and Europe during the course of our development.'

Scientists also use more realistic scenarios, Lawrence says, which help identify potential tipping points if deforestation continues at current rates. For example, some studies show that clearing 30-50% of the Amazon would trigger a drop in rainfall that could cause a significant decline in how the rainforest functions as an ecosystem.

The study also looks at changes that have already happened as forests have been cleared. In Brazil, for example, the rainy season starts 11 days later in deforested areas, and scientists think that the loss of trees in Central Africa may have caused a more than 20% decline in rainfall from the Congo basin to the east coast.

Implications for agriculture

Scientists have also modelled the impact climate changes from defor-



A study has found that rainfall over the US Midwest can be reduced as a result of deforestation in the Amazon.

estation could have on farming in the tropics.

Warmer and drier conditions caused by deforestation could put agricultural productivity at risk, the study finds. Yields of soy in the Amazon, for example, are projected to drop by up to 60% if more trees are cut down, and cattle production may not be viable in some areas as the quality of pasture declines. Adaptation measures might reduce the impact of these effects to some extent, of course.

Deforestation can also cause

longer dry seasons and delays to the start of the rainy season, the study suggests. Because forests help moderate high daytime and low nighttime temperatures, cleared land is more susceptible to temperature extremes, which some crops may not tolerate.

Limiting deforestation is therefore important for farming as well as tackling climate change, Lawrence argues: 'Agriculture and forestry need to be considered together. Maintaining large tracts of tropical forest is essential for maintaining a climate that sustains tropical agriculture. Forest conservation is an essential aspect of planning for agricultural development.'

And alongside climate change, cutting down trees will make growing crops and raising livestock even harder: 'We are already anticipating worldwide challenges to food security because of what we are doing to the atmosphere. Now we have to worry about additional climate challenges because of what we are doing to the surface of the earth.'

Robert McSweeney covers climate science for the Carbon Brief website (www.carbonbrief.org), from which this article is reproduced. He holds an MEng in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Warwick and an MSc in Climate Change from the University of East Anglia in the UK. He previously spent seven years working on climate change projects at the consultancy firm Atkins.



A soy plantation in Brazil. Yields of soy in the Amazon are projected to drop by up to 60% if more trees are cut down.

China's renewable energy revolution: what is driving it?

Although China is well known as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, less often acknowledged is the fact that it is now leading the world in the installation of electrical capacity from alternative energy sources. *John A Mathews and Hao Tan* consider the dynamics behind this drive to create the world's largest renewable energy system.

CHINA is known as the world's largest user and producer of coal, and the world's largest emitter of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. This is China's 'black face'. But less well known is China's 'green face': the country is building the world's largest renewable energy system – which by 2013 stood at 378 GW and generated just over 1 trillion kilowatt hours, by far the largest in the world. In terms of generating capacity, by 2013 China's WWS sources (water, wind and solar) accounted for more than 30% of capacity (exceeding the unofficial 2015 target of 30%), and in terms of electrical energy generated, the WWS total was close to 20% of energy generated – exceeding the combined total of electrical energy produced by the power systems of France and Germany. The question arises: what are the drivers and implications of this extraordinary commitment towards renewables?

China's drive to create the world's largest renewable energy system is widely recognised by specialists. Dr James Hansen, prominent climate scientist, in a posting in early 2014 asserts that 'China is now leading the world in installation of new hydropower, wind, solar and nuclear electricity generation'.

The most recent data for 2013 lends support to Hansen's assertion, as well as very new data for the first half of 2014. Three sources of data may be drawn on: installed capacity (measured in gigawatts of power); generation of electrical energy (measured in billion kWh or TWh), where different sources are utilised with different capacity factors; and investment data. Together, these sources provide a realistic and multifaceted assessment of China's renewable energy revolu-



A wind farm in China's Xinjiang region. China added more energy capacity in 2013 from renewable sources like wind power than from fossil fuels.

tion, and the progress made in accomplishing the goals laid out in the 11th and most recent 12th Five-Year Plan (FYP) covering the years 2011 to 2015.

1. Installed capacity

In terms of installed capacity, China now has the largest electric power system in the world, rated at 1.25 trillion watts (TW), exceeding the US power system's capacity at 1.16 TW (and Germany's at 175 GW). Renewables (water, wind, solar) accounted for around 30% of China's capacity by 2013, while fossil fuels, mainly coal, still accounted for 69% – it is still a very black system.

The year 2001 was the inflection point – which coincides with China's entry to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This signalled to the world that China was 'open for business' and manufacturing started to migrate to China in a big way – calling for drastic expansion of the energy system. In the time-honoured way, replicating the actions of the West in the 19th

century and Japan in the 20th century, what was expanded initially was the coal-burning system.

The leading edge in capacity expansion is demonstrably getting greener. In 2013 China added about 100 GW of new capacity, of which 58% came from renewable (hydro, wind, solar PV) sources and just less than 40% from thermal (mostly coal) sources. China also added just 2.2 GW nuclear capacity in 2013. So China added more capacity in 2013 sourced from WWS than from fossil fuels and nuclear sources combined. In the first half of 2014 this proportion has dipped slightly, with 20 GW being added from WWS and 15 GW being added from fossil fuels (or 53% from WWS) – with WWS still a majority of the new capacity added.

2. Electricity generation

Installed capacity is one thing, actual electrical energy generated is another. By 2013 China was generating a total of 5,361 billion kWh (or TWh), including 4,196 TWh from

thermal power stations and 1,056 TWh – or just under 20% – from renewable WWS sources. If the share of WWS in electricity generation continues to increase with its average growth (about 5% per year) since 2007 when China adopted a lower-carbon strategy, then WWS would account for more than 26% of the electricity generation mix by 2020.

In this case the leading edge is also getting greener. For the year 2013, of the additional electrical energy generated (according to the 2014 BP *Statistical Review*) year-on-year, amounting to 373 TWh, 280 TWh came from thermal sources and 82 TWh from WWS – or WWS amounting to 22% of new additional energy generated. This is a higher proportion for WWS in additional energy generated than in the system as a whole.

Now it is true that large hydro has been the dominant component of this WWS category, driven by huge projects like the Three Gorges Dam. Large hydro accounted for 912 TWh of renewable electrical energy generated in 2013, compared with 132 TWh for wind and 12 TWh for solar PV – but the latter two sources are increasing rapidly. Of the *additional* electrical energy generated from WWS sources in 2013, more than half came from wind and solar PV (39.5 TWh for hydro, 35.9 TWh for wind and 5.7 TWh for solar PV). Solar and wind power are widely anticipated to be the dominant (combined) renewable sources by 2020.

3. Investment

The most revealing sign of the renewable energy revolution is from the investment data. Since 2007 the share of investment in renewable electric generation has increased steadily, from 32% of the total in 2007, passing 50% in 2011 and reaching 52% in 2013. Adding the investment in nuclear power, the proportion of investment in all non-fossil-fuel-based electric generation increased from 37% in 2007 to 75% in 2013 while investment in thermal power plants declined from 62% to 25%. Here too investment in green sources consistently outranks investment in fossil fuels and nuclear.

Thus our conclusion is that in 2013, China's leading edge of change in its electric power system is mov-



Chinese workers checking on an electricity pylon. In terms of installed capacity, China has the largest electric power system in the world.

ing in a green direction, away from fossil fuel dependence. We have demonstrated that this is so in terms of capacity added and in terms of investment, while in terms of generation of electrical energy the new WWS sources account for a higher proportion of new energy generated than for the system as a whole.

Our argument is that these leading-edge changes are consistent with trends towards renewables that are visible over several years, and place China in a leadership position. What we are demonstrating is that China is on track towards meeting its ambitious goal to build a 'green' renewables-based energy system alongside its 'black' coal-fired system over the course of the 12th FYP; indeed it is exceeding expectations. The most recent target from the National Development and Reform Commission (ND&RC), issued in March 2014, namely that China should have reduced the share of coal in total energy consumption to less than 65% by 2017, is likely to be fulfilled.

'Leading edge' versus total system change

We emphasise that we are making a clear distinction between the state of China's total energy system (in particular the electric power system) and its leading edge of change, as captured in the 2013 full-year data. China's is a very large electric power system – as noted, now larger than that of the US. In terms of the slow-moving total system, China now has around 20% of its total electrical energy generated sourced from renewables, while around 30% of its

generating capacity is built on renewables. (The difference is due to the lower capacity factors of renewable generating sources – themselves improving year by year.) The leading edge is clearly greener than the total system, which is why we can predict the direction of change of the total system as moving towards greater reliance on renewables.

The sources that are most widely discussed are wind power and nuclear. In terms of capacity, wind overtook nuclear by 2008, and by 2013 had grown to 91 GW, compared with less than 15 GW for nuclear – so that wind capacity exceeded nuclear capacity sixfold. In terms of actual electrical energy generated, wind drew level with nuclear in 2012, and has remained ahead as the preferred source since then.

What are the likely future trends of these two sources? China is allowing the construction of four AP-1000 nuclear reactors by Westinghouse, with the first due to come on-line in 2014 and all four expected to be operational by 2016. The ND&RC envisages a target for growth in nuclear capacity to reach 50 GW by 2017 (generating 280 TWh), by which time wind plus solar are targeted to reach 220 GW. By 2017 the ND&RC expects China to have built 150 GW of capacity in wind power. How much electrical energy is this likely to generate? If we take the historic capacity factor of 20%, this would be expected to generate 255 TWh. But if we take the recently completed Salkhit wind farm in Mongolia as best-practice example (50 MW, construction cost \$120 million, output 168.5 GWh or capacity factor of 40%), then the 150

GW by 2020 should be adding 500 TWh of electricity in a year – around a fifth of China's current needs. If we take the mean between these two extremes, and assume a capacity factor of 30% for wind, then the 150 GW target should be generating 375 TWh of electrical energy – comfortably exceeding the amount expected from nuclear. These are the trends in China.

Based on China's abundant wind power resources, a 2009 article in the journal *Science* projected that China could build 640 GW of wind power by 2030. This is entirely consistent with recent trends, which have seen a doubling of capacity every two years, and with an anticipated target of 300 GW by 2020. Thus, while we agree with Hansen's assertion that China is building the world's largest low-carbon energy system, it is difficult to agree with his follow-up assertion that China can only continue to do this by relying on nuclear power. On the contrary, China appears to be banking on a variety of low-carbon sources for its energy revolution – with the capacity to build a system based on manufacturing that can scale to grow with the country's expanding economy, without impinging too aggressively on other countries' fossil fuel resources.

What are the implications?

The common assumption is that it is concern over climate change (global warming) that drives China's shift to renewables. Carbon emissions are certainly a topic of great concern to the Chinese leadership, as well they should; statements going back to 2009 and the Copenhagen conference indicate that by 2020 China is aiming to reduce carbon emissions as a proportion of GDP (carbon intensity) by 45% from 2005 levels. Our calculations reveal that this appears to be a realistic target.

Important as this motive of reduced carbon intensity might be, we believe it is the least likely of the explanations for China's shift. We believe the more plausible explanation for China's new trajectory – and for the determination with which it is being pursued – is energy security.

All countries face a choice between, on the one hand, continued reliance on fossil fuels, with its geopolitical implications, including threat of military entanglements, and, on the other, an increasing reliance on renewables, which are based on manufacturing activities. So long as China is able to tap renewable sources of energy for manufactured devices to work on (solar and wind energy), it appears that it would be able to generate superior energy security through renewables than it would through continuing (or deepening) its reliance on fossil fuels. This appears to be well understood by the Chinese leadership. It is also reflected in China's broader goals to reduce dependence on fossil fuels (particularly oil) in the transport sector, by increasing reliance on high-speed rail systems (where China leads the world) and on electric vehicles, including the charging infrastructure for EVs. These are seen as highest-priority national infrastructure goals in China.

The other motivator for China's push towards renewables is of course the scandal of the smog-blackened skies that are making the air unbreathable and life unliveable in the major cities. Scarcely a week goes by without some new story of terrible air pollution in Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin or some other major industrial centre. The Chinese leadership have to breathe the same air – at least up to a point. And this is clearly a powerful motivator in the drive to develop an energy system that is becoming less reliant on 'black' fossil fuels and more on 'green' renewables. It is notable that in 2013 China enacted several moves to cap coal consumption, particularly in coastal cities and in Beijing. The ND&RC policy noted above has banned construction of new coal-fired power stations in China's most advanced regions including the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta, and Beijing and its surrounding areas; a decline of the total coal consumption by 2017 is required as a performance indicator of the local governments in those areas.

Manufacturing is the platform upon which China's shift towards

low-carbon sources of energy (and renewables in particular) is based, which in turn provides a platform for reducing costs due to learning-curve effects. While the US is swinging behind an 'energy revolution' based on alternative fossil fuels (shale oil, coal seam gas), China is clearly shifting towards greater independence of extractive activities and greater reliance on manufacturing to meet its growing appetite for power supplies. Manufacturing generates increasing returns and can be expanded almost indefinitely – particularly if it works off recirculated materials, consistent with China's goal of building a Circular Economy. By contrast, extractive activities are faced with eventual diminishing returns. This is why China's swing towards renewables is good for China, and for the world. ♦

This article is reproduced from The Asia-Pacific Journal (Vol. 12, Issue 44, No. 3, November 3, 2014, japanfocus.org), where the full text with illustrations, notes and references is available.

John A. Mathews is Professor of Management at Macquarie University in Australia, and Eni Chair of Competitive Dynamics and Global Strategy at LUISS Guido Carli University in Italy. His research focuses on the competitive dynamics of international business, the evolution of technologies and their strategic management, and the rise of new high-technology industries. He researches the development of the institutional capacities of firms and governments in the Asia-Pacific, internationalisation processes of firms and the theoretical explanations for latecomer firms' success. His work has focused in recent years on the emergence of the 'green economy' and the transition to renewable energies, and the institutional changes needed to provide industrial capitalism with genuine long-term sustainability. He is the author of Strategizing, Disequilibrium, and Profit. Recent articles include 'Knowledge flows in the solar photovoltaic industry: insights from patenting by Taiwan, Korea, and China' (with C Y Wu) (Research Policy, 2012, 41(3)); and 'Fast-follower industrial dynamics: the case of Taiwan's emergent solar photovoltaic industry' (with M C Hu and C Y Wu) (Industry and Innovation, 2011, 18(2)).

Hao Tan is a Senior Lecturer in International Business at the Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle, Australia. He also serves as a Convenor for the Master of International Business Programme. Dr Tan's current research interests are in the interplays of international business strategy, innovation and economic geography, with a focus on the energy, resource and renewable energy sectors. Since 2009 he has published over 20 scholarly journal articles and book chapters.

Their article 'Economics: Manufacture renewables to build energy security' appears in Nature, Vol. 513, Issue 7517, 10 September 2014; their article 'The Transformation of the Electric Power Industry in China' appears in Energy Policy, Vol. 52, January 2013.

The CIA's secret killers

Assassination has always been an arm of US policy and although President Obama continues to keep a lid on still secret crimes committed by the CIA (and other US government agencies) in the War on Terror in the Bush years, more terrible stories will probably surface. The CIA is clearly positioning itself for further disclosures and engaging in preemptive damage control.

SOME time in early or mid-1949 a CIA officer named Bill (his surname is blacked out in the file, which was surfaced by our friend John Kelly back in the early 1990s) asked an outside contractor for input on how to kill people. Requirements included the appearance of an accidental or purely fortuitous terminal experience suffered by the Agency's victim.

Bill's contact – internal evidence suggests he was a doctor – offered practical advice: 'Tetraethyl lead, as you know, could be dropped on the skin in very small quantities, producing no local lesion, and after a quick death, no specific evidence would be present.' Another possibility was 'the exposure of the entire individual to X-ray.' (In fact these two methods were already being inflicted on a very large number of Americans in lethal doses, in the form of leaded gasoline and radioactive fallout from the atmospheric nuclear test programme in Nevada.) 'There are two other techniques,' Bill's friend concluded bluffly, which 'require no special equipment beside a strong arm and the will to do such a job. These would be either to smother the victim with a pillow or to strangle him with a wide piece of cloth, such as a bath towel.'

As regular as Congressmen being taken in adultery or receiving cash bribes, every year or two the Central Intelligence Agency has to go into damage-control mode to deal with embarrassing documents like the memo to Bill, and has to square up to the question – does it, did it ever, have its in-house assassins, a Double O team?

In mid-July 2009 the news headlines were suddenly full of allegations that in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Vice President Dick Cheney had or-

**Alexander Cockburn and
Jeffrey St Clair**

dered the formation of a CIA kill squad and expressly ordered the Agency not to disclose the programme even to Congressional overseers with top security clearances, as required by law. As soon as CIA officials disclosed the programme to CIA director Leon Panetta, he ordered it to be halted.

And regular as the Congressmen taken in adultery seeking forgiveness from God and spouse, the CIA rolled out the familiar response that yes, such a programme had been mooted, but there had been practical impediments. 'It sounds great in the movies, but when you try to do it, it's not that easy,' one former intelligence official told the *New York Times*. 'Where do you base them? What do they look like? Are they going to be sitting around at headquarters on 24-hour alert waiting to be called?' The CIA insisted it had never proposed a specific operation to the White House for approval.

With these pious denials we enter the theatre of the absurd. We're talking about a US agency that ran the Phoenix Program, that supervised executive actions across Latin America, that ...

Before irrefutable evidence of its vast kidnapping and interrogation programme in the post-2001 period surfaced, the CIA similarly used to claim, year after year, that it had never been in the torture business either. Torture manuals drafted by the Agency would surface – a 128-page secret how-to-torture guide produced by the CIA in July 1963 called 'Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation', a 1983

manual enthusiastically used by CIA clients in the 'contra' war against Central American leftist nationalists in President Reagan's years – and the Agency would deny, waffle and evade until the moment came simply to dismiss the torture charge as 'an old story'.

In fact the Agency took a practical interest in torture and assassination from its earliest days, studying Nazi interrogation techniques avidly and sheltering noted Nazi practitioners. As it prepared its coup against the Arbenz government in Guatemala in 1953, the Agency distributed to its agents and operatives a killer's training manual (made public in 1997) full of hands-on advice:

'The most efficient accident, in simple assassination, is a fall of 75 feet or more onto a hard surface. Elevator shafts, stair wells, unscreened windows and bridges will serve. ... The act may be executed by sudden, vigorous [excised] of the ankles, tipping the subject over the edge. If the assassin immediately sets up an outcry, playing the "horried witness", no alibi or surreptitious withdrawal is necessary.

'...In all types of assassination except terroristic, drugs can be very effective. An overdose of morphine administered as a sedative will cause death without disturbance and is difficult to detect. The size of the dose will depend upon whether the subject has been using narcotics regularly. If not, two grains will suffice.

'If the subject drinks heavily, morphine or a similar narcotic can be injected at the passing out stage, and the cause of death will often be held to be acute alcoholism.'

What about targets of assassination attempts by the CIA, acting on

presidential orders? We could start with the bid on Chou En-lai's life after the Bandung Conference in 1954; they blew up the plane scheduled to take him home, but fortunately for him, though not his fellow passengers, he'd switched flights. Then we could move on to the efforts, ultimately successful in 1961, to kill the Congo's Patrice Lumumba, in which the CIA was intimately involved, dispatching among others the late Dr Sidney Gottlieb, the Agency's in-house killer chemist, with a hypodermic loaded with poison. The Agency made many efforts to kill General Kassim in Iraq. The first such attempt, on 7 October 1959, was botched badly, and one of the assassins, Saddam Hussein, was spirited out to an Agency apartment in Cairo. There was a second Agency effort in 1960-61 with a poisoned handkerchief. Finally they shot Kassim in the coup of 8/9 February 1963.

The Kennedy years saw deep US implication in the murder of the Diem brothers in Vietnam and the first of many well-attested efforts by the Agency to assassinate Fidel Castro. It was Lyndon Johnson who famously said shortly after he took office in 1963, 'We had been operating a damned Murder Inc. in the Caribbean.' Reagan's first year in office saw the inconvenient Omar Torrijos of Panama downed in an air crash. In 1986 came the Reagan White House's effort to bomb Muammar Qaddafi to death in his encampment, though this enterprise was conducted by the US Air Force. Led by that man of darkness, William Casey, in 1985, the CIA tried to kill the Lebanese Shiite leader Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah by setting off a car bomb outside his mosque. He survived, though 80 others were blown to pieces.

In his *Killing Hope: US Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*, Bill Blum has a long and interesting list starting in 1949 with Kim Koo, Korean opposition leader, going on to efforts to kill Sukarno, President of Indonesia, Kim Il Sung, Premier of North Korea, Mohammed Mossadegh, Claro M. Recto (the Phil-

ippine opposition leader), Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Norodom Sihanouk, José Figueres, Francois 'Papa Doc' Duvalier, Gen. Rafael Trujillo, Charles de Gaulle, Salvador Allende, Michael Manley, Ayatollah Khomeini, the nine comandantes of the Sandinista National Directorate, Mohamed Farah Aideed, prominent clan leader of Somalia, Slobodan Milosevic...

And we should not forget that the CIA is by no means the only US government player in the assassination game. The US military have their own teams. A friend of ours once had a gardener – 'a very scary-looking guy' – who remarked that he'd been part of a secret unit in the US Marine Corps, murdering targets in the Caribbean.

In sum, assassination has always been an arm of US foreign policy, just as in periods of turbulence, as in the Sixties, it has always been an arm of domestic repression as well. This is true either side of the executive order, issued by President Gerald Ford in 1976, banning assassinations. 'No employee of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, political assassination,' states Executive Order 11905.

One way to read the recent brouhaha is as an effort at preemptive damage control by the CIA. Remember, in the months following the 2001 attacks, Americans were looking for blood. They wanted teams to hunt down Osama and his crew and kill them. They cheered the reports – now resurfacing – of US, British and French special forces presiding over and directing the slaughter in November 2001 of about 1,000 prisoners of war by the Northern Alliance at Mazar-e-Sharif, with the Taliban prisoners shut in containers left out in the sun with an okay by US personnel, till their occupants roasted and suffocated.

Over the next few months and years, more terrible stories will probably surface. Attorney General Eric Holder told *Newsweek* he was 'shocked and saddened' after reading the still secret 2004 CIA inspector general's report on the torture of de-

tainees at CIA 'black sites'. 'Shocked and saddened', after what we know and what we have seen already? It must be pretty bad. As William Polk remarked on CounterPunch.org regarding the evidence of sodomy, rape and torture captured in the photograph collection that Obama first wanted to release and then changed his mind: 'Those who profess to know say that what these pictures show is truly horrible. Some have compared them to the vivid record the Nazis kept of their sadism.'

The CIA death squads and kindred units from the military killed and tortured to death many, many people and most certainly there was extensive 'collateral damage' – meaning innocent people being murdered. As regards numbers, we have this public boast in 2003 by President George Bush: 'All told, more than 3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries. And many others have met a different fate. Let's put it this way: They are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies.'

The CIA's former counter-terrorism chief of operations, Vincent Cannistraro, remarked that 'There were things the agency was involved with after 9/11 which were basically over the edge because of 9/11. There were some very unsavoury things going on. Now they are a problem for the CIA. There is a lot of pressure on the CIA now and it's going to handicap future activities.'

Just because Vice President Cheney may have been supervising Murder Inc, it doesn't mean that CIA officers who became his operational accomplices shouldn't be legally vulnerable. President Obama continues to keep the lid on still secret crimes committed by US government agencies in the Global War on Terror in the Bush years. The CIA is clearly positioning itself for further disclosures. So is Dick Cheney. ♦

This article, reproduced from CounterPunch.org, is adapted from a piece that ran in CounterPunch in July 2009. Alexander Cockburn's Guillotined! and A Colossal Wreck are available from CounterPunch. Jeffrey St. Clair is editor of CounterPunch. His new book is Killing Trayvons: An Anthology of American Violence (with JoAnn Wypijewski and Kevin Alexander Gray).

The torture report: Latin America's lessons for the United States

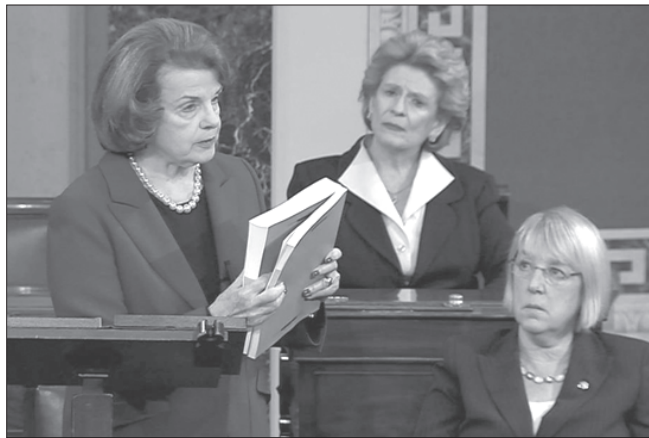
The Senate report on torture obligates the United States to prosecute those who sanctioned its use. Latin America's efforts can help show how.

THE US Senate Select Intelligence Committee report on torture was released in December. It has caused great impact, reviving debate worldwide about the United States' use of torture in the aftermath of 9/11.

Some have applauded the report – including organisations such as Human Rights Watch and the Center for Constitutional Rights that have pushed for a full accounting of the use of methods prohibited by US and international law as well as accountability for those who made such methods official state policy, even as they note its significant shortcomings (including failure to release the full report, a four-year delay in releasing the report summary, and redaction of key information, such as details that would help establish a clear chain of command). Those who supported this policy – including some of those who put it in motion, such as former Vice President Dick Cheney – have decried the report, accusing its authors of bias and reasserting their claims that torture helped keep the United States safe from further terrorist attacks (a claim never proven). But they do not deny that torture was used.

As an academic and long-time human rights activist, I welcome the release of the Senate report. Hard-nosed fact-finding and truth-seeking is important in the aftermath of atrocity. A report of this nature can help set the record straight about what happened, and determine, based on care-

Jo-Marie Burt



US Senate Intelligence Committee Chair Dianne Feinstein discussing the committee's report on torture in the Senate. The report has revived debate worldwide about the US' use of torture in the aftermath of 9/11.

ful review of the evidence, whether such atrocities were the doing of a few 'bad apples' or of systematic state policy. This is important even when it was known long before the report's release that the US use of torture was indeed official state policy during the George W Bush years. A report like this can also generate national debate about controversial methods, help citizens evaluate and reevaluate their view of such methods, and determine whether they should be followed by other actions – including, potentially, criminal prosecutions.

Many of my fellow US citizens vehemently repudiate the use of torture, at home or abroad. I have worked over the years with hundreds of academics, practitioners and activists in the United States who have dedicated their lives to ending torture and other human rights abuses in Latin America

and around the world. Others believe the official discourse repeated ad nauseam during the Bush years that torture – referred to euphemistically as 'enhanced interrogation techniques' – was both necessary and effective to obtaining key information to prevent future attacks. As I write this, I'm listening to an NPR reporter interview a former CIA official during the Bush years repeat such claims. When the reporter presses him for concrete examples, he only cites opinions of government officials, demurring that perhaps such information could have been obtained using other methods but, if so, would have taken more time.

Such disingenuous statements should fool no one at this point, yet I know that many continue to hold this belief. It is my hope that they will read this report and be abhorred by its revelations: that the United States of America, which purports to be a beacon of freedom and liberty, a defender and advocate of human rights, sanctioned the use of torture – and that this is not only a juridical aberration but a moral one as well. It is my hope that it will lead them to rethink their views, and repudiate torture and its use forever, here and around the globe.

Which leads me to my second point about the Senate report. Its revelations are important on their own, but they also underline the fact that the US government engaged in patently illegal behaviour, both by the standard of its own law and by the

standard of international law. The Convention against Torture, which the United States signed and ratified – and as such is bound by its provisions – establishes not only the illegality of torture but also the obligation of states to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible for committing torture. The United States stands in blatant violation of its international obligations by failing to move forward on a credible path of criminal prosecutions of those most responsible for the torture programme. As such, it undermines its standing in the international arena, and obliterates its credibility as a defender and advocate of human rights around the world.

My own research focuses on Latin America, a continent that, when I first began working there, was beset by brutal military dictatorships and fratricidal civil wars. Many of the countries emerging from the dark night of authoritarianism and civil conflict turned to a relatively new practice: the creation of official commissions of inquiry, dubbed truth commissions, that set out to investigate fully the abuses of the past, acknowledge the horrors endured by victims, and make recommendations to provide repair to victims and ensure that such abuses never occur again. The catchphrase ‘*Nunca mas!*’ – ‘Never again!’ – became the rallying cry of a generation emerging from the dungeons of dictatorship and one of the cornerstones of the modern human rights movement.

Several Latin American countries, including Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru, created official truth commissions to investigate the abuses of past dictatorships. In the early experience of truth commissions, only Argentina sought to link truth-seeking with criminal prosecutions of those most responsible for the design and implementation of a systematic policy of forced disappearances. Several former generals



Many Latin American countries have moved past a situation of impunity for human rights abuses. Picture shows former Argentine dictator Jorge Videla at his trial in 2012.

were indeed prosecuted and convicted as the intellectual authors of these crimes, but military unrest led the new democratic government to impose amnesty laws to limit further prosecutions. Later a blanket amnesty was imposed, ending prosecutions completely, and those few prosecuted were set free, installing institutionalised impunity.

Elsewhere, fragile transitions in which the army remained powerful and seemingly threatened the new democracies led leaders to avoid prosecutions altogether, focusing primarily on truth-seeking and, in some cases, reparations for victims. In Chile, for example, President Patricio Aylwin, heeding the warning of outgoing dictator General Augusto Pinochet that ‘not a hair on the heads of my men will be touched’, demurred in favour of a policy of ‘justice insofar as possible’. That meant that torturers continued to enjoy their freedom, while victims were robbed of their right to justice for the wrongs committed against them – torture, forced disappearance, extrajudicial execution, sexual violence.

But today, years later, many Latin American countries have moved past this situation of impunity for human rights abuses. Amnesty laws have been overturned or ignored, and criminal trials have moved forward in several countries, including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru and Guatemala. This has not been a linear or uncontested process – indeed in many

instances there have been setbacks, as in the quick overturning of the genocide verdict against former Guatemalan dictator Efraín Ríos Montt in 2013 – but the fact is that Latin America is leading the way in demonstrating that it is possible to investigate and prosecute some of the worst abuses committed during prior governments.

Some of the most heinous dictators of the region have been tried and convicted – Videla, Fujimori, Bordaberry, to name a few

– and democracy in those countries is the stronger for it. The Brazilian National Truth Commission – 50 years after the military carried out a coup d’état and established one of the longest-standing dictatorships in modern Latin American history, and 29 years after the transition to democracy in 1985 – is releasing its own report, outlining the abuses committed during its dictatorship and calling for prosecutions of the still-surviving military officers responsible for these horrendous abuses.

I refuse to believe that it is not possible for the United States to do the same. We are a wealthy, powerful nation with a robust democratic tradition. If we do not prosecute those responsible for torture, we run the risk not only of such heinous practices being used again, but of destroying the very democracy we claim to hold so dear. Torture is an affront to human dignity. It cannot be justified, ever. And when it is done in our name, it is our responsibility to act: to stand up, say ‘Never Again!’, and to insist that those responsible be held accountable. ♦

Jo-Marie Burt teaches at George Mason University in the US and is a Senior Fellow at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). She worked for the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and was an international observer to the Fujimori and Ríos Montt trials. She is currently writing a book about human rights prosecutions in Latin America. She is a former editor of NACLA Report on the Americas published by the North American Congress on Latin America, from the website of which (nacla.org) the above article is reproduced.

Mining interests in Guatemala challenged by indigenous direct democracy

Indigenous Mayan communities in Guatemala have stepped up their resistance to the predatory activities of multinational mining companies. *Jeff Abbott* reports.

CONFLICTS over mining are expanding across Guatemala. According to a recent report by Amnesty International, the Canadian government and Canada-based multinational mining companies have played a major role in the conflicts and abuses of human rights in indigenous communities.

‘Canada – like many other states – has shown itself willing to take action with extraterritorial effect to promote and protect corporate interests,’ state the authors of the Amnesty International report. ‘The failure to take action – in line with the requirements and recommendations of UN human rights treaty bodies – to effectively regulate Canadian companies operating abroad is enabling these companies to benefit from human rights abuses occurring outside of Canada.’

The report, which was published in September, states that Canada, which is headquarters for three-quarters of global mining companies, and the government of Guatemala have failed to provide space for community involvement and voices in the expansion of mining. The inadequate protection and unwillingness of the Guatemalan government of President Otto Perez Molina to guarantee the rights of indigenous communities has exacerbated the situation.

‘In promoting the involvement of Canadian corporations in global resource extraction activities, the government of Canada continues to rely almost exclusively on the national laws, regulations and enforcement mechanisms of the host countries to ensure that Canadian investment abroad does not contribute to human rights abuses,’ states the Amnesty In-



Residents of Santa Maria Chiquimula wait in line on 26 October to receive their ballot in a community vote on mining in their territory.

ternational report, ‘even when there is reason to believe that those laws are inadequate or are not enforced.’

The right to be consulted

For the indigenous Mayan communities of Guatemala, the process of participatory decision-making takes the form of the community *consulta*, or consultation, which has played an important role in the interactions between indigenous peoples and the government.

According to articles 1, 66 and 67 of the Guatemalan constitution, the government is required to respect indigenous land and protect their communal ownership system. In the event that a mining permit is issued on the land of indigenous communities, the government must consult the population two weeks prior to the issuing of permits for explorations.

This process is supported by several international laws and declarations on the rights of indigenous communities by the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation which require that the government

consult the communities prior to issuing permits for exploration or exploitation of resources. Article 18 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, for example, states that ‘Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures.’

Despite these laws, and the fact that Guatemala is a signatory to these international declarations, the government has done little to consult the communities affected by mining operations.

In the face of growing social conflict over mining, communities have organised to defend their land from the interests of multinational companies, and have chosen to declare their resistance to extractive projects that threaten the environment and their livelihoods.

Since 2006, the Consejo de los Pueblos Occidentales, or CPO, is one Guatemalan organisation that has been at the forefront of the movement in defence of indigenous territory.

‘According to the law, the Guatemalan government is obliged to consult the indigenous communities prior to the passing of any law,’ said Nim Sanik, of the Kaqchikel Maya branch of the CPO in the department of Chimaltenango. ‘But we have never been consulted.’

By failing to consult the communities on the development projects, the Guatemalan state is in violation of international law, the Mayan organisation points out. This failure, however, has not stopped the communities from holding their own consultation in what the spokesman of the indigenous community of Cantel, Quetzaltenango, referred to in a press conference as a ‘deeply and profoundly democratic process.’

Community direct democracy

On the chilly morning of 26 October in the highland municipality of Santa Maria Chiquimula about 125 miles from Guatemala City, residents came out to participate in a community vote deciding whether or not they would resist the exploitation of natural resources.

The consultation was held in response to the Guatemalan government’s issuing of a permit to a Guatemalan subsidiary of the Italian mining firm Enel for the exploration of geothermic energy within the municipality. As in past cases, the government failed to consult the indigenous people prior to issuing the permit.

The practice of the community consultation represents a form of indigenous direct democracy, which Sanik refers to as a ‘non-Western form of social organisation.’ It also serves as an important tool to the indigenous communities as they organise to defend their lives and territory.

According to Sanik, the process of the community consultation comes from the Kiche Mayan holy book the Popol Vuh. In a *consulta*, every resident within a community over the age of seven has a vote and a part in the decision-making process for the community. The large *consultas* can take months to plan to ensure that everyone is equally informed about what the

vote is on. In the end, the results represent the consensus of the community.

Efforts to limit the *consulta*

Not only has the Guatemalan government made little effort to listen to the community’s concerns and decisions – despite the regular community consultations and the constitutional right of consultation – it has taken steps to limit the right of the *consulta*.

In 2005, the indigenous communities of Sipakapa in the department of San Marcos held a *consulta* on a mining project in their territory. They voted unanimously to resist the project, but the government did not respect the community’s decision and issued a permit for the Los Chocoyos mining project to a Guatemalan subsidiary of the Canadian mining firm Goldcorp.

Communities have responded by demanding the Guatemalan Congress pass a law protecting their right to consultation. Indigenous rights activists have found support in Guatemala’s Constitutional Court, which in 2010 ruled in favour of the indigenous communities, citing Convention 169 of the International Labor Organisation in its decision. The court’s finding states that the Guatemalan government is violating the rights of indigenous peoples by failing to consult the communities prior to the issuing of permits for exploration and exploitation of mineral resources.

‘The Ministry of Energy and Mining must take into account the right to consultation of indigenous peoples before issuing mining licences,’ the court’s decision read. ‘Government agencies must simply comply with [the right to consultation].’

Voting yes to life, and no to mining

Communities have increasingly returned to the *consulta* to express their disapproval of mining and extractive projects in their territories. The consultation held in Santa Maria

Chiquimula was the 73rd consultation held since 2005 within the Mayan communities of Guatemala. In each case, the communities have voted overwhelmingly against the mega-projects in their territories. For residents, it is yes to life, and no to mining.

Back in Santa Maria Chiquimula, by the end of the day, the 40,000 residents had overwhelmingly declared their resistance to mining operations within their communities, with over 39,000 people voting against the exploitation of natural resources in the area. From young to old, community members expressed a deep understanding of what the mining operations would mean for their livelihoods and environment.

‘We vote no for our children,’ said Maria, a resident of Santa Maria Chiquimula. ‘We’ve read about the negative health impacts from the mining operations in the department of San Marcos, and environmental effects of other projects. We don’t want to see those consequences in our community. That is why we are here to vote no to mining near Santa Maria Chiquimula.’

On 4 November, the community leaders of the 18 communities of Santa Maria Chiquimula delivered the official results of the *consulta* to governmental ministries, including members of the congressional commission on indigenous peoples, the minister of mining and energy, and the minister of natural resources.

‘The people demonstrated their rejection of these types of projects,’ said Jose Carlos Carrillas, the spokesman of the communities. ‘Because we believe that [this type of] development to our communities only provokes exploitation of the mediums of life, the division of the people, and the increase of social and economic inequality.’ ♦

Jeff Abbott is an independent journalist currently based out of Guatemala. He has covered human rights, social movements and issues related to education, immigration and land in the United States, Mexico and Guatemala. His work has appeared in Truthout, Upside Down World, and North American Congress on Latin America. This article is reproduced from WagingNonviolence.org under a Creative Commons licence.

Child sex crimes: Uruguay's ugly hidden face

Although Uruguay enjoys more affluence and provides greater social welfare benefits and protection for its citizens than most other states in the continent, it is plagued by a serious problem of sexual exploitation of children and teenagers. *Diana Cariboni reports.*

KARINA Nunez Rodriguez was only 12 when she was forced into prostitution. Now aged 50 and a mother of six, she is an outspoken fighter against sexual exploitation of children and teenagers in Uruguay, a country reluctant to recognise this growing scourge.

Her mother's surname, Rodriguez, 'has everything to do with what I am', she says, explaining that her grandmother was also an exploited child. Karina proudly says she broke this family burden when her youngest daughter turned 12 as a smiling girl ready to go to high school. It was an assurance that her own children have a bright future, even though Karina still makes a living selling her body.

In Uruguay, a countless number of children, mostly girls, have their childhoods stolen, to be sold for a pack of cigarettes, a cellphone card, food, clothes, shelter or plain cash. Some are exploited by their own relatives, others by neighbours or organised criminal networks.

One grocer threw dance parties in her shop on the paydays of local rural workers and lured the men with 12-year-old girls from the neighbourhood. The girls would spend the night drinking alcohol and having sexual relations with adults on the premises of a nearby chapel.

A 74-year-old owner of a hotel in a beach resort paid for the travel of a 15-year-old girl, who lived hundreds of kilometres away, to have sex. Afterwards, despite sending money to her pimps, the man avoided punishment by claiming he didn't know she was underaged.

A high-ranking provincial public official organised a party with teenagers, alcohol and cocaine in a gov-



At the launch of the 'No Excuses' campaign against sexual exploitation of children in Uruguay.

ernment facility, and was caught drunk while driving away with one of the girls.

And a network of lorry drivers and the fathers of two victims forced girls into sexual encounters with drivers in three different towns.

These types of cases hit the news almost twice a week. Authorities established 7 December as the national day against sexual exploitation of children. But they still have no accurate statistics on this crime, punishable by up to 12 years in prison under a 2004 law. Adult prostitution is legal and state-regulated.

There are as many as 1.8 million children exploited in prostitution or pornography worldwide, according to Ecpat, a global network of organisations working to end commercial sexual exploitation of children. Nearly 80% of trafficking is for sexual exploitation and over 20% of the victims are children.

From 2010 to September 2014, the judiciary heard 79 cases involving 127 defendants. Only 43 were convicted, according to a report published by the judicial branch.

But police reports are increasing. In 2007, there were just 20. In 2011, the number jumped to 40, in 2013 there were 70, and in 2014 there were

more than 80.

'Each case is not just one boy or girl. It can involve four or five,' says Luis Purtscher, president of the National Committee for the Eradication of Commercial and non-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Teenagers (Conapees). Perpetrators outnumber victims. 'In a single night, a girl can have five or 10 sexual partners,' he says.

'[Its] being a problem whose underlying causes are the power of capitalism to seize territories and the male workforce migrations, we could hypothesise that when both the economy and the mobility grow, child sex crimes also rise in places colonised by investors,' says Purtscher.

In the last five years, Conapees has trained 1,500 public servants, including teachers, social workers, police officers and prosecutors. 'We have 3,000 extra ears and eyes skilled somehow to detect and report,' he adds.

Gender violence plays a role. On a list of 12 Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal, Uruguay has the highest rate of killings of women by a former or current partner, states a recently released report by the regional Gender Equality Observatory.

To graphically illustrate the depth of the problem, Conapees published an advert in the press: 'Very young girls', followed by a phone number. It received 100 calls the first day and 500 the first weekend.

Karina became an activist after witnessing the suffering of girls subjected to 'breaking-down practices' in brothel-bars: torture, forced and collective penetrations and beatings, 'aimed to create such a bond of fear between the victim and her exploiter that she can stand night after night in

a corner in Europe without even thinking to go to the police’.

Her record includes 27 crime reports to the authorities. ‘I was instrumental in nine indictments, and I’m honoured by people who trust me and give me more evidence.’ She checks the facts and relies on a network of eight friends in different cities. ‘Thank God we have WhatsApp,’ she says with a smile.

In 2007, she and other colleagues created Grupo Vision Nocturna (Night Vision Group) to promote an independent stance on health-related issues and demand respect for sex workers.

Shortly after she reported to a small city’s police station that three girls were about to be trafficked in 2009, a supposed client picked her up. They travelled 20 kilometres away from town. ‘There were nine guys who gave me a beating. I was 11 days in an intensive-care unit and three months unable to walk. Once I could, I returned to report the same crime,’ she recalls. Karina has been threatened and fears she could be killed at any time.

Making public accusations is dangerous, yet the crime and the victims are not hidden. Belgian photographer Susette Kok visited many sites for an exhibition and book and portrayed 27 adults – 24 women, two transgender women and a young man – who were child victims and now, invariably, are sex workers.

‘I found the exploitation easily. It is all over the place,’ says Kok, who was assisted by Karina’s knowledge and web of contacts.

The ‘little house of love’, a group of dilapidated and unroofed walls, the floor covered with used condoms, is just next door to a church in Fray Bentos, in the southwest of Uruguay. An oxidised ‘container of passions’ – situated in a sports field and, again, next to a church at the entrance of the western city of Young – has the door open when it is vacant.

Dozens of places like it are scattered throughout the area: a bench in a communal football field, a huge tree by a bridge, known for what is ironically called ‘ecological sex’, shacks, clubs and ‘waitress bars’.

In west Montevideo, bus stations, parks, canteens and even private

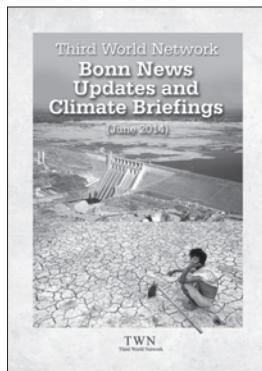
houses are sites of child sex offences, according to the survey ‘An open secret’, authored by Purtscher and seven other experts who interviewed more than 50 sources.

The area is attracting major investment and a predominantly male workforce, which could worsen the situation, but it does not have mecha-

nisms to assist the victims. Nor does the country as a whole. A governmental programme established in 2013 is underfunded and counts just two teams.

This slow official response exasperates Karina. ‘When a child is exploited,’ she says, ‘we cannot wait.’ – IPS

Bonn News Updates and Climate Briefings (June 2014)



ISBN: 978-967-0747-01-9 168pp

This is a collection of 31 News Updates and a Briefing Paper prepared by the Third World Network for and during the recent United Nations Climate Change Talks – the fortieth sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 40) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 40), as well as the fifth part of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 2-5) – in Bonn, Germany from 4 to 15 June 2014.

	Price	Postage
Malaysia	RM14.00	RM2.00
Developing countries	US\$8.00	US\$4.00 (air); US\$1.00 (sea)
Others	US\$12.00	US\$6.00 (air); US\$1.00 (sea)

Orders from Malaysia – please pay by credit card/crossed cheque or postal order.

Orders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, USA – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in own currency, US\$ or Euro. If paying in own currency or Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

Rest of the world – please pay by credit card/cheque/bank draft/international money order in US\$ or Euro. If paying in Euro, please calculate equivalent of US\$ rate. If paying in US\$, please ensure that the agent bank is located in the USA.

All payments should be made in favour of: **THIRD WORLD NETWORK BHD.**, 131 Jalan Macalister, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. Tel: 60-4-2266728/2266159; Fax: 60-4-2264505; Email: twnet@po.jaring.my; Website: www.twntw.my or visit our online bookstore at www.twntwshop.com to order.

I would like to order copy/copies of **Bonn News Updates and Climate Briefings (June 2014)**.

I enclose the amount of by cheque/bank draft/IMO.

Please charge the amount of US\$/Euro/RM to my credit card:

☐ American Express ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

A/c No.: Expiry date:

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Hunger in Britain: A food industry at war with nutrition

A report that over 900,000 people in Britain had been forced to turn to food banks during the year to make ends meet has raised concern, especially since more than a third of these were children. *Jeremy Seabrook* comments on the paradox of such privation in the midst of plenty.

A CHURCH-FUNDED report in December, supported by all the main political parties in Britain and by the Archbishop of Canterbury, revealed that over 900,000 people had had recourse to food banks during the year; of these, more than a third were children. That hunger should once more be the fate of the poorest is no chance occurrence. Almost half of those who use food banks do so as a result of delay in payment of benefits they are entitled to, or because they are victims of what are euphemistically called ‘benefit sanctions’— government policy which halts payments to people who do not comply with stringent new rules over applying for jobs (which often do not exist).

The theory behind welfare cuts is that if people are driven to such straits that remaining on benefit (‘state hand-outs’, as they are now disparagingly called by the press) becomes a punitive visitation, they will find work somehow or other. And there is evidence that, to some extent, this is indeed happening. But most of that work is part-time, on ‘zero-hours’ contracts, or at such a low rate of pay that government has to supplement income, effectively subsidising employers who fail to pay a living wage. This is especially true in London, where housing costs can take up 50% of earnings. As a result of cuts, chancellor (finance minister) George Osborne observed that ‘the sky has not fallen in.’ This is no doubt true for him and his gilded colleagues, but those who do not have the money to feed their families speak of humiliation and despair.

The churches’ report contains many horror stories: an unemployed woman taken to hospital with malnu-



A line of people waiting outside a food bank in the British city of Newcastle. According to a church-funded report, over 900,000 people in Britain had recourse to food banks during the year.

trition because she had not eaten for five days; a pregnant woman and her partner sleeping in a tent outside a wealthy town in Southern England; a man crushed to death when a refuse lorry caught up the bin in which he was scavenging for food.

Providing for the hungry

The charity best known for setting up food banks for the growing legions of hungry people is the Trussell Trust. In partnership with communities and churches, it is responsible for more than 400 free food stores in Britain; it aims to ensure at least one in every major town. It should not be imagined, however, that the philanthropic satisfaction of immediate hunger solves the problem. In many homes where the principal daily meal consists of chips and gravy, or instant mash and pasta sauce, there

is a cumulative effect of malnutrition: a condition neglected in Britain, since it has been assumed that a food industry on which £196 billion is spent annually must cater for all nutritional needs.

One explanation for the increasing number of food banks has been eagerly advanced by the Right: namely, that the existence of ‘free food’ attracts idle scroungers and adherents to the ‘something for nothing’ culture; that supply calls forth the demand. The reality, in cold church halls, impersonal centres and warehouses which serve as ‘food banks’ (even the term takes on a borrowed lustre from the sheen of money), is that the eatables on offer are bare, functional comestibles that will at best keep hunger at bay.

People who use food banks do not see what they receive as anything resembling a feast. ‘What you get is

dry pasta, cereal, powdered milk, tinned carrots and peas, powdered potato-mash, noodles that you just have to add water to. You wouldn't go there from choice. Believe me, it is only dire necessity. If anybody had told me six months ago that I'd be using a food bank, I would have laughed at them.' This testimony is from an unemployed man whose benefits had been stopped because he failed to apply for a 'sufficient' number of jobs each week; discouraged by rejection and silence, he had lost the will to pursue work that remains, in this part of the West Midlands, elusive.

It is significant that in this former industrial heartland (where I am currently working), places of ruined factories and abandoned workshops, poor people stand out, because they are either grossly obese or dangerously skinny. It is one of the paradoxes of wealthy Western societies that food seems to be at war with nourishment, and the least well fed may appear as overweight or as starvelings.

Significant numbers – by no means all elderly – carry so much weight that they need motorised buggies and chairs to move around; others depend on crutches, sticks and the arms of friends and relatives. Twenty-five percent of people in Britain are obese, 37% 'overweight'. At the same time, there can be seen, standing on windy street corners, groups of thin, almost concave, young men, in canvas shoes and frayed trousers, a cigarette cupped between their fingers, scarecrows whose meagre income is used up – who knows how? – in the betting shops and gaming-machine establishments with which poor communities are over-provided, in paying off debts, maintenance to abandoned families or dues to drug dealers.

There has been a long tradition in Britain of upper-class women admonishing the poor for their unhealthy diet, and the contemporary crisis is no exception. 'It is cheap to eat nutritiously,' has been the refrain ever since the early industrial age, as though people wilfully went hungry in order to embarrass their well-fed



The production and marketing of food has shifted from concern for the nutritional condition of the people towards market-determined choice.

bettors. 'Poor people do not know how to cook,' said Baroness Jenkin, a Tory peer, in December, who virtuously declared she had breakfasted on a bowl of porridge which cost six US cents. She later retracted her ill-chosen words, explaining that she meant that 'we as a society' had lost the art of cooking.

Dangerously denutritified food

All this is only one aspect of the scandal of a 'food industry' which, as well as creating hunger in the heart of Western feasting, is also responsible for what a well-known consumer activist in Malaysia some years ago called 'commerciogenic malnutrition'. In other words, the food conglomerates, by whose grace we are provided with our daily bread – or rice or corn – have succeeded in producing a population almost as ill-nourished as it was in the Victorian era, although this fact is masked by the availability of pharmaceutical products which undo some of the ill effects of a diet that undermines health and well-being: the availability (and abuse) of antibiotics is attributable, at least in part, to the lowering of resistance to infection by unhealthy eating habits. Pharmacies in Britain are vast storehouses of remedies for stomach

disorders, indigestion, heartburn, flatulence, constipation and every imaginable affliction of the digestive system: eating itself has become a kind of disorder. No wonder clinics are full of people with anorexia, obesity and bulimia – we live in a culture where the collective daily sharing of sustenance has been jettisoned in favour of consumption by individuals of the products of a food industry.

We should by now have become used to 'food scandals.' In recent memory, we had the association of beef with BSE ('mad cow disease') and its link to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which led to a ban by the EU on British beef; salmonella was widely present in eggs in 1998; in 2002 prawns and shrimps imported from South Asia were contaminated with carcinogenic chemicals; and in 2005, Worcester sauce made by Premier Foods had been adulterated with Sudan 1 dye from imported chilli powder. In 2005, a school meals favourite, 'turkey twizzlers', was shown by chef Jamie Oliver to contain only about one-third turkey and twice the recommended quantity of fat. Pork production in Ireland was disrupted in 2008 by the discovery that dioxin had contaminated animal feed. In 2013, lasagne contained horsemeat, which had also entered many other

beef products in British supermarkets, while in November 2014, 70% of 'fresh' chickens in supermarkets were contaminated by campylobacter. Writing in *The Guardian* in February 2014, Felicity Lawrence reported that consumers were being sold soft drinks containing brominated vegetable oil, which is designed for use in flame retardants, while some mozzarella contained less than half real cheese, and ham or poultry on pizzas was 'meat emulsion', mechanically recovered remnants; while frozen prawns were by weight half water. Even a herbal slimming tea proved to be 'neither herb nor tea, but glucose powder laced with a withdrawn prescription drug for obesity at 13 times the normal dose.' In 2013, the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs estimated 20,000 hospital admissions as a result of food poisoning, and 500 deaths.

George Monbiot wrote in *The Guardian* that 'the growth rate of broiler chickens has quadrupled in 50 years: they are now killed at seven weeks. By then they are often crippled by their own weight ... overfed factory-farmed chickens now contain almost three times as much fat as they did in 1970, and just two-thirds of the protein. Stalled pigs and feedlot cattle have undergone a similar transformation. Meat production? No, this is fat production.'

Apart from its dependency upon dangerously denutritified food, according to official government figures, Britain throws away 15 million tonnes of food and drink each year, almost half of it from homes, and at least four million tonnes of it edible. In November 2013, it was reported that the average family wasted about \$100 a month throwing away the equivalent of 24 meals, especially bread, potatoes and milk. In October of the same year, Tesco estimated that 35% of its bagged salad, 40% of its apples and almost half its bakery items are thrown



Food scares in recent times include the association of beef with 'mad cow disease' and its link to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which led to a ban by the EU on British beef.

away.

In spite of all this, the preparation and cooking of food has become something of a spectator sport in Britain: the number of TV programmes devoted to cookery, gastronomic diversity, the celebrity status of chefs, the availability of ingredients and dishes from all over the planet, suggest a fascination with food. Is this because we are forfeiting our knowledge of how to grow, harvest and prepare food ourselves, as we become more and more dependent upon restaurants, cafes and places of refection, in a country where 'eating out' is no longer a treat but a daily routine for the money-rich, time-poor?

There is, clearly, no shortage of food in Britain. There is badly distributed food, carelessly processed food, inappropriate food, adulterated food.

From nutrition to choice

It is a great historical irony that the Ministry of Food was set up in 1939 with the intention of ensuring that all the people of wartime Britain received a fair allocation of scarce food. Rationing, which existed from 1940 until 1954, established the quantity of nutrients required. Shortages compelled changes in diet, and less meat, fat, sugar and fewer eggs were consumed. At the same time, those whose diet had been inadequate were enabled to increase their intake of protein and vitamins, because they re-

ceived a fair share of available food. As a result, there was a decline in infant mortality and an increase in life expectancy. It has been argued that the overall nutritional status of Britain was probably at its highest in those lean, austere times.

Of course, with the dismantling of controls in the 1950s, everyone was free to choose what they ate; the production and marketing of food shifted from concern for the nutritional condition of the

people towards market-determined choice. The effects of this are everywhere visible in the rich world; and if, despite obesity, diabetes, heart disease and alcohol-induced sickness, longevity continues to increase, this is perhaps because, as was revealed in December, half the adult population of Britain are on some form of medication, not the least to remedy dietary disorders, those spectral attendants of our consumer freedoms.

But not for the poorest. Outside the church hall, the queue begins to form early in the morning. People, ashamed to be seen waiting for charitable donations, shuffle uneasily when I ask them what has brought them here. They are humiliated, conscious of the indignity of standing in line when all around them, the air is filled with hymns to the festival of excess that Christmas has become. One woman said if it were not for food banks, she would steal to feed her children: if she were imprisoned, at least both she and they would eat enough to survive.

The coexistence of hunger with obesity, of malnutrition with overeating, of the market-starved with the extravagantly self-indulgent, are visual metaphors for the inequalities which distort not only the bodies of people but all the relationships of humanity in this best of all possible worlds. ♦

Jeremy Seabrook is a freelance journalist based in the UK. His latest book is The Song of the Shirt (published by Navayana).

Often referred to as 'the Nigerian Negritudist', *Gabriel Okara* (b.1921) is also a novelist. A pioneer of modern literature, he has won both local and international literary awards.

Piano and Drums

Gabriel Okara

*When at break of day at a riverside
I hear the jungle drums telegraphing
the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw
like bleeding flesh, speaking of
primal youth and the beginning
I see the panther ready to pounce
the leopard snarling about to leap
and the hunters crouch with spears poised;*

*And my blood ripples, turns torrent,
topples the years and at once I'm
in my mother's laps a suckling;
at once I'm walking simple
paths with no innovations,
rugged, fashioned with the naked
warmth of hurrying feet and groping hearts
in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing.*

*Then I hear a wailing piano
solo speaking of complex ways in
tear-furrowed concerto;
of far away lands
and new horizons with
coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint,
crescendo. But lost in the labyrinth
of its complexities, it ends in the middle
of a phrase at a daggerpoint.*

*And I lost in the morning mist
of an age at a riverside keep
wandering in the mystic rhythm
of jungle drums and the concerto.*