

Developing Countries and the Bonn Climate Change Session

At the Bangkok Climate Change dialogue held between March 31st, - April 4th, 2008, the parties arrived at a consensus on two major points for a work programme on long term climate policy. First, the 'development of a work programme' for the Ad-hoc working group on long term cooperative action. The main objective is to evolve a comprehensive work plan based on the main issues by 2009. Second, the adoption of additional new commitments to be undertaken after 2012 by the developed countries that are the signatories to the Kyoto Protocol. The mandate of the second group is under the purview of the Ad hoc working group on further commitments.

The conclusions indicate a shift towards a long-term perspective, and the development of a post-Kyoto Protocol framework. The Bangkok meeting actually charted out the work plan to achieve the targets of the Bali Roadmap decided at the UNFCCC COP-13 in December, 2007. The parties agreed on the identification of five themes namely shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer. The difference over sequencing the themes reflected clear division between the developed and the developing countries. The non-Annex-I countries demanded that the Annex-I countries should make ambitious targets on table to agree as per the Quantified Emission Reduction Principle (QELRO)¹. The developed countries on the other hand are keen to follow a systematic approach of agreeing on a shared

vision and are also expecting enhanced mitigation actions by the big developing countries². According to the views expressed by the developing countries, it is important to know the status of enabling factors like finance and technology as well as the issue of deeper cuts by the developed countries in order to develop a consensus on developing a work plan under the AWGLCA.

Developments at Bangkok:

- Parties agreed upon a work programme for long-term cooperation based on the Bali action plan
- India and Venezuela stressed on fulfilling historical commitments of developed countries on emissions
- All developing countries opposed to the idea of introducing sectoral caps on emissions reduction
- According to the Bali Action Plan, developed countries including the US have to make commitments for emission reduction and developing countries only need to take enabling actions for the same. But there was confusion when the US denied the interpretation of the Bali Action Plan by developing countries. In the process, US suggested the postponement of discussion on national action. It proposed that the reduction of emissions be based on a sectoral approach.

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¹ International negotiations through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) have led to the establishment of Quantified Emission Limitations and Reduction Objectives (QELRO) for industrialized countries – most notably the United States, European Union and Japan. QELRO are to be achieved through both domestic and international actions using an emerging international trading system for GHG emissions. One international approach available to these countries has been tested for several years: to offset their industrial emissions, parties in industrialized countries have invested in low-cost carbon dioxide mitigation projects in developing countries that reduce, avoid, or sequester GHG emissions.

² Shared vision represents an integrated approach to develop long term cooperative action and a long term goal for emission reduction to achieve ultimate objective of emission reductions in accordance with the principles of Convention. It is important here to notice that the developed countries pressed for its inclusion on a priority basis as this would open up the scope of forcing the developing countries like China and India to commit to legally binding levels of emission under the pretext of long term commitments.

- Due to lack of consensus on prioritising the themes, the parties have eventually decided to take up the issues in the remaining three sessions this year. These include Session II at Bonn in June, Session III at Accra in September and Session IV at Poznan in December 2008.
- Developing countries demanded the channelisation of financial resources only through the UNFCCC arrangement, rather than creating parallel funds like the ones initiated by the World Bank to avoid marginalisation of the UNFCCC Fund.

Uncertainty prevailed over the fate of evolving a meaningful framework for discussion. This was due to the reluctance of the developed countries on issues of financial support and technology transfer initiatives. The developed countries remained non-committal on the issue of mitigation actions in a post-Kyoto framework. Countries like US, Canada and Japan have already started softening the issue of developed country commitments by introducing new clauses and creating new confusions.

These efforts are essentially an attempt to slow down the process and also to put pressure on the key developing countries like India, China, to take GHG reduction commitments for future climate change regime. Due to the differences in sequencing the themes namely, shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology between the developed and the developing countries, the AWGLCA chair at Bangkok meeting, 2008 eventually concluded that the all the themes will be discussed in the remaining rounds within this year. The members unanimously decided on holding workshops on the themes to arrive at the final work plan by 2009. The forthcoming Session 2 at Bonn between June 2nd -13th , 2008 will focus on

- Advancing adaptation through finance and technology transfer

- Investment and financial flows
- Effective and enhanced means for removal of obstacles to the provisions of finance and other incentives for scaling up development and technology transfer to developing countries

In this context the SB28 at Bonn bears a lot of significance in deciding the course of climate change regime to address impacts and causes through long term policies and also securing the interests of developing countries. India needs not to undertake any sorts of commitments despite huge international pressure, with minimum per capita emissions and Sustainable Development and Policies Measures (SDPAMs)³ in place. The country will release its first 'National Policy on Climate Change' by June, but is unlikely that it is going to come up before the Bonn Session. The latest Climate Change Performance Index published by Germanwatch, which deals with the preparedness of top 56 countries accounting for emissions shows that India is among the top 10 countries to deal with climate change. Till date India has positive score in its favour mainly due to the fact that its per capita emission has increased less than the allotted level, even though having huge population⁴. The following table explains the details of scores for the year 2008.

Table-1: India's Score of CCPI, 2008

Indicator			Score*	Rank (1-56)	Weight	Rank
Emissions Levels		CO ₂ per Primary Energy Unit	42.2	17	15.0%	8
		Primary Energy per GDP Unit	84.8	19	7.5%	
		Primary Energy per Capita	99.4	2	7.5%	
Sectoral Emissions Trends	Energy	Electricity	55.1	42	8.0%	4
		Renewables	12.2	34	8.0%	
	Transport	International Aviation	55.2	39	4.0%	
		Road Traffic	66.1	12	4.0%	
	Residential	Private Households	56.1	30	4.0%	
	Industry	Manufacturing and Construction	67.7	24	7.0%	
Target Performance Comparison since 1990			78.4	4	15.0%	
Climate Policy		International	47.7	41	10%	14
		National	85.1	8	10%	
Total			62.4		100%	5

Source: Germanwatch,
<http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/ccpi2008.pdf>,
 (accessed on May 28th , 2008).

³ SDPAM: Sustainable Development Policies and Measures

⁴ Climate change Performance Index, 2008, Germanwatch <http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/ccpi2008.pdf>.

The rationale for the index lies in the fact that it tries to quantify the common but differentiated responsibilities in its calculations through targeted performance comparison. Due to the differentiated approach, what India can actually benefit from the fact is that it can continue with its policies so as to converge to a common level within pre determined time frame. Given the fact that India is within the top 10 countries, it should utilise it to the fullest extent to build up its capacity to combat the adversities related to climate change. The index also reinforces the fact that the worst performers need to undertake substantial commitments to evolve a trajectory towards a low carbon economy. Countries like Canada, and USA, who are among the worst performers, should be stopped from undertaking the policies like production of oil from tar sands that are going to worsen climate further. Thus the upcoming Bonn meeting is really an opportunity for the parties to work further upon these aspects.

In addition to the state of discussions under UNFCCC, the other issue drawing the attention is the World Bank initiated climate funds. The developing countries, especially G-77 has objected to the fund as it undermines the UN efforts on financial resources. The main concerns are:

- A donor driven fund and the distribution of resource from the fund are subjected to the decisions of the donors.
- The World Bank initiated fund has the potential to divert money from the one proposed under the UNFCCC.
- The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) expressed that the financial resources outside the arrangements of UNFCCC might come with additionalities which may not be always acceptable to the recipients.
- The issues related to governance of these funds

which are outside the purview of the UNFCCC needs to be streamlined to avoid any complexities in future.

- Finally, the developing countries have expressed concerns about the marginalization of UNFCCC led funds due to a potential diversion of funds committed by developed countries. There is a possibility that such diversion would cause the developed countries to fall short of their present commitments to the UNFCCC Adaptation fund.

The differences between the developed and developing

Table-2: India's Position as a Prominent Emitter and CCPI rank

Country	CCPI Rank		Share of Global CO2 Emissions**	Share of Global Primary Energy Supply	Share of Global GDP	Share of Global Population
	2008	(2007)*				
Germany	2	(4)	3.00%	3.02%	3.97%	1.28%
India	5	(9)	4.23%	4.70%	6.16%	17.02%
United Kingdom	7	(4)	1.95%	2.05%	3.11%	0.94%
China	40	(44)	18.80%	15.18%	14.75%	20.39%
Italy	41	(35)	1.67%	1.62%	2.79%	0.91%
Japan	42	(39)	4.47%	4.64%	6.36%	1.99%
Russian Fed	50	(42)	5.69%	5.66%	2.53%	2.23%
Korea, Rep.	51	(48)	1.65%	1.87%	1.75%	0.75%
Canada	53	(51)	2.02%	2.38%	1.81%	0.50%
USA	55	(53)	21.44%	20.47%	20.13%	4.61%
Total			64.92%	63.97%	63.36%	50.62%

Source: Germanwatch, <http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/ccpi2008.pdf>]
(accessed on May 28th , 2008)

countries began surfacing at the recently concluded Bangkok meet. Countries like India, and Venezuela demanded that the Annex-I countries must comply with their historical responsibilities of reducing the GHGs emissions within the current legal regime. The issue of technology transfer and removal of barriers are being raised by Malaysia, and Venezuela. The countries demanded that transfer of technologies should be streamlined with appropriate financial mechanisms so as to adapt those technologies in the developing countries without any pressure on their existing financial arrangements.

While most of the issues remained unsolved at the Bangkok meet, they are sure to resurface at Bonn for instance, issues pertaining to technology transfer, finance and emission reductions will be raised again. As a part of the long term policies for emission reductions, the developing should be pressing more for the development of adaptation related efforts. The current adaptation related measures are less than sufficient in dealing with the existing crisis. The forthcoming negotiations must address the issues related to:

- Assessment of aggregate costs of adaptation required for the developing countries to meet the goals of reduction.

- The most vulnerable people must be given the most importance in developing adaptation policies and their implementation. The forthcoming meeting should explore the opportunities in this regard.
- There is a need to develop a coherent approach having active involvement of regional entities, including ministries, disaster managers, local authorities, private sectors. The idea of developing efficient private-public partnerships and protecting the interest of the vulnerable sections of the societies should figure among the priorities from the developing countries.
- There should be mainstreaming of the climate adaptation policies at the national policies of the countries. We should be moving towards having this as a mandatory requirement in days to come.

At the first of the three Sessions to be held this year at Bonn to evolve a work plan, the developing countries must deliberate on a common agenda to protect the adversities and pressure as well as protect their own interests.

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Disclaimer: The views and analysis are of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of Centad.

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