From Barcelona to Copenhagen: can we reach an equitable post-2012 agreement on climate change ?

Discussion paper:
Recommendations from the organisations of the "climate and development" network for a post-2012 regime on climate change

The next 16 months will be decisive for the future of our climate. A new agreement for the fight against climate change is to be signed by the end of 2009, at the COP 15/MOP 5 in Copenhagen. It will be come into force on 1 January 2013. The stakes are high: the new agreement has to reconcile essential developmental requirements with those of the fight against climate change.

Within the framework of these "post-2012" negotiations, the "Climate and Development" Network[1], with members throughout Europe and Africa, met this May in Bamako. The objective: to work together on the negotiations' essential topics (emission reduction, including the fight against deforestation and the degradation of forests, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, technology transfer and financing).

The network set itself the goal of drawing up proposals that could raise the awareness of the negotiators in both Southern and Northern countries with regards the stakes of climate change negotiations and contribute constructively to the negotiations already underway. For each of the key subjects dealt with in the negotiation, the network's recommendations are listed below.

1. Reducing greenhouse gases emissions

A reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions is decisive in the long-term fight again climate change. The reduction objectives adopted by some industrialised States for the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol have clearly not been sufficient to allow the climate to stabilise.

Today the challenge consists of considerably expanding the reduction objectives of all the industrialised countries as well as encouraging some developing countries – notably emerging economies – to abandon their current emission path. Without a drastic reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions, the adaptation to the impacts of climate change will reach its limit.

Clearly more ambitious future targets for the reduction of emissions in industrialised countries

- The international community should set itself the objective of limiting global warming to well below 2ºC (in comparison with pre-industrial levels) before the end of the century. This is the threshold beyond which the consequences of climate change, particularly for the poorest countries and populations, will be irreversible.
- All industrialised countries should adopt binding, absolute objectives for reducing their emissions.
- Future reduction objectives should be based on science. The latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report indicates that, in order to have the best chance of remaining below the 2ºC threshold, global emissions must reach their highest levels by 2015 and then drop by 50-85% before 2050, relative to their 2000 levels. However, even this scenario, based on a greenhouse gas concentration of 450 ppm (Parts per million) CO2-equivalent in the atmosphere, only gives us a 50% chance of avoiding a global warming of 2ºC! Therefore, this emission reduction target should merely be an absolute minimum figure for the international community.
- Thus, industrialised countries will

have to reduce their emissions by 25-40% before 2020 (relative to their 1990 levels). In accordance with the precautionary principle, industrialised countries have to reduce their emissions by 40% by 2020.

Industrialised countries' necessary support for emission reduction in some developing countries

- In order to stabilise the climate, emerging economies will have to limit the increase in their emissions in some sectors by 2020. In order to achieve this, and, in accordance with the commitments made in Bali, industrialised countries must support them through financing, technology transfers and capacity building.

- The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) must be revised. In future, only high-quality environmental and social projects should be eligible for classification as CDMs. They must fulfil quality criteria at least equivalent to those established by the Gold Standard (http://www.cdmgoldstandard.org/how_does_it_work.php), and their geographical distribution should be improved.

- The programmatic CDM approach, or the regrouping of projects, should be promoted in order to move away from a project approach towards a wider approach more based on programmes or sectoral policies. This is in order to favour low greenhouse gas emission development in all sectors: housing, agriculture, water, transport, etc. This will make it easier to deal with development issues in Southern countries.

The differentiation of reduction actions in developing countries

Developing countries face different realities in terms of the level of economic development. A uniformly applicable agreement for all developing countries is thus hard to conceive. Future national emission reduction actions in developing countries should thus be determined on the basis of equitable criteria, such as responsibility, capacity to act or

2. Reducing emissions form deforestation and degradation (REDD)

The fight against deforestation and forest degradation is not included in the current international climate change regime. However, deforestation alone is responsible for around 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions! Keeping global warming below 2ºC will be simply impossible if deforestation and forest degradation are not addressed in the new climate agreement.

A complementary mechanism to other mitigation strategies

REDD should be integrated into a broader strategy focused on securing deeper reductions of emissions from the use of fossil fuels rather than simply offsetting carbon emissions.

An ecosystem approach for forests

REDD should take into account the multiple functions and benefits of forests for biodiversity values, ecosystem functioning and local livelihoods. It should focus on enhancing the natural processes for the sequestration and storage of carbon, protecting existing forests and restoring degraded ecosystems. Special emphasis should be given to the maintenance of biodiversity and carbon-rich forests.

Allowing equitable participation from local level stakeholders

REDD should ensure that social equity, gender, land-use rights and tenure and poverty reduction are adequately taken into consideration throughout the design and implementation of REDD activities. Positive incentives and benefit-sharing mechanisms should be put in place to encourage sustainable forest management and conservation activities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be taken into account, in particular the free, prior and informed consent principle.

Promoting sustainable forest management policies

REDD should complement and reinforce ongoing forest governance reform processes aimed at promoting sustainable forest management, taking into account all policies that have an impact on land-use change into line, and agricultural policies in particular.

Deforestation in Bornéo

Guaranteeing sustainable and adequate funding

REDD should include sufficient and diverse financial resources for developing countries to prepare for REDD activities, including capacity building for sustainable forest management and design of distributional mechanisms that contribute to poverty reduction and benefit local communities and indigenous peoples that depend on forest resources.

3. Adaptation to climate change

The Convention and the Protocol oblige industrialised countries to help developing countries adapt to climate change. However, up to now, the governments' attention has focused on emission reduction. But climate change is already having an impact and affects above all the most vulnerable countries, which have less capacity to deal with this.

Industrialised countries should respect their obligations with regards to adaptation

- Adaptation should benefit from the same level of political attention as the efforts aimed at emission reduction.

- Industrialised countries should respect their obligations to help developing countries adapt without waiting for the conclusion of the new climate change agreement. In particular, they should support the rapid implementation of the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) drawn up by the least developed countries.

- Financing for the adaptation of developing countries should be increased considerably in order to meet the requirements that are estimated at several billion dollars each year. This financing should be sustainable, stable and predictable, and thus closely linked to the emission reduction system. In particular, it can result from an emission taxation system or other mechanisms (for example be linked to the carbon market etc.). It must be additional.

- The industrialised countries' financial support should be based on the "polluter pays" principle, and on their respective capacities, in other words their "economic health" to deal with the problem.

Giving priority to the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change

- Priority must be given to the urgent and immediate responses needed for the most vulnerable countries, so that they adapt to the impacts that are already affecting them.

- Experts in developing countries should moreover be integrated into the current IPCC in order to take greater account of the future impacts of climate change in developing countries, notably in the least advanced countries.

Involving local populations in the conception and implementation of adaptation strategies

- Adaptation strategies should be based on the local populations' initiatives and involve the latter in their creation and implementation. Involving, training and raising the awareness of the decision-makers and local populations in adaptation strategies constitute a key factor in their success. Support for initiatives and climate change adaptation projects at a local level should be encouraged, maintained and be granted specific funding.

- Women in particular should be more involved in decision-making processes, not only because they are more affected by the impacts of climate change, but also because they play a key role in the conception and implementation of the adaptation strategies.

Integrating the adaptation to climate change into development policies and projects

There is a fine line between adaptation and development. For greater efficiency, adaptation should be systematically integrated into development projects and sectoral policies. However, additional funding should be made available to include the incremental cost linked to adaptation.

Integrating ecosystem management into adaptation strategies

Biodiversity and ecosystems play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of local populations' means of survival and their improved management should allow the resilience of the most vulnerable communities to increase.

4. Technologies transferts

Technology transfer constitutes a key element but also an impasse in negotiations. In Bali, developing countries firmly reminded industrialised countries of their obligations in this area. In order to stabilise the climate and adapt to the impacts of the changes currently underway, a rapid deployment of technologies is required and, moreover, on an unprecedented scale.

Technology transfer for emission reduction AND adaptation to the impacts of climate change

- Technology transfer for adaptation should be viewed in the same way as transfer for emission reduction.

- In the domain of adaptation, a great deal of technologies and know-how already exist and could benefit from wider diffusion. One of the solutions consists of sharing knowledge (notably through South-South exchanges) in order to allow for the more widespread appropriation and application of adaptation technologies.

Technology transfer taking into account different specificities and contexts

- The successful appropriation of a technology is linked to specific local contexts. The private sector and local populations play a key role in facilitating and accelerating the diffusion and appropriation of technologies.

- Adaptation technologies should be prioritised in order to focus on those that favour the development of the most affected and poorest populations rather than those linked to investments in large infrastructure projects.

Effective technology transfer, accompanied by the necessary legal framework and financing

- Technology transfers must be easy to measure and check. The group of technology transfer experts was sent to draw up performance indicators to judge the effectiveness of these

transfers. These indicators should ensure a deployment of technologies on the required scale and adequate funding.

- Massive additional financing is necessary for the development and diffusion of technologies. This new funding should be obligatory.

- The market cannot develop or spread technologies at the speed and on the scale required by the climate change challenge. An international and legally binding framework should be put into place within the new post-2012 agreement for technology deployment and transfer, accompanied by adequate sustainable funding and an obligation to build capacities and eliminate the main barriers that currently exist in technology transfer.

- Intellectual property rights should not be an obstacle for the transfer of technology. Obligatory licenses could thus be envisaged for technologies of great benefit to the environment (similar to what occurs in the field of medicine). At the same time, the diffusion of technologies "that have fallen into the public domain" should be accelerated.

- In order to favour the rapid development and diffusion of technologies that respect the climate, grants for fossil fuel-based technologies should be eliminated and those based on renewable energies and/or allowing energy efficiency to be increased should be reinforced.

- A project's financial risks often prevent it from emerging. Thus, for projects that are of great interest in terms of emission reduction and the development of the host country, the financial risks could be taken care of by a fund financed in an obligatory manner by the industrialised countries. In order to reduce the cost of any risks, project regroupings (small projects within a larger project or the same project carried out in several countries) should be favoured.

Download conclusions and papers from the Bamako workshop at http://www.ccee-bamako.org

5. Financing climate policies

Like technology transfer, the matter of financing is crucial in the negotiations currently underway. Emission reduction and the adaptation to climate change impacts should indeed by supported by sustainable financing proportional to requirements.

In Bali, the developing countries accepted to carry out national emission reduction actions on condition that they were provided with support, and financial aid in particular. According to a report by the Convention's secretariat (Investment and financial flows to address climate change, UNFCCC 2007), simply stabilising global emissions at their current level by 2030 alone would require an annual investment of 97 billion dollars in developing countries. Adaptation requirements are estimated at 28-86 billion dollars per annum between 2015 and 2030 (UNFCCC 2007, UNDP 2007, OXFAM 2007), whilst the Convention and the Protocol's funds can only generate a few million.

Creating new sources of adequate sustainable financing

New financing proposals have been offered by the Parties: tax on emission rights or on international air or sea transport, the allocation of part of the GDP to the fight against climate change, etc. These options have the merit of ensuring the financing's future sustainability. In no case should new funding depend solely on the countries' voluntary contributions.

Ensuring consistent financing

Several new funds have been created to fight against climate change (for example, the World Bank's climate fund). However, funds already exist under the Convention and the Protocol, but remain underfinanced. These funds function in accordance with governance rules adopted by the whole international community. Priority should be given to raising the level of financing of the existing funds as well as improving their implementation.

Reinforcing the funds aimed at local communities

Funds directly benefiting local populations should be favoured (for example, the Global Environment Facility's "Small Grant Programme").

Accelerating the implementation of NAPAs (National Adaptation Programmes of Action)

NAPAs respond to urgent adaptation needs identified by the most vulnerable countries. Their implementation should be accelerated immediately. Bilateral cooperation can help in this matter, whilst waiting for the Protocol's

The "Climate and Development" Network

Set up in 2007, it is made up of representatives from:ENDA Third World; Climate Action Network - France; HELIO International and HELIO Africa network, Mali Folkcenter Nyeetaa; Members and partners of IUCN including Ministry of Environment of Cameroun, Ministry of Environment of Mali, UNFCCC focal point from Benin, University of Jos, Civic Response Ghana, AMADEPELCODE, SPONG, FECOND, SPANA, Civic Response Ghana, Ecological Movement from Algeria, Tunisian society for nature and environment, IUCN-KYB project; REPAOC (Network of West and Central African NGO National Platforms); Nicolas Hulot Foundation; OFEDI (Organisation of Women's Management of Energy, Environment and the promotion of Integrated Development); IDID (Initiatives for Sustainable Integrated Development); NGO-EDER "Energy and Environment for Rural Development"; JVE Togo; Guinée Ecologie, and other francophone NGOs from West Africa

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