

# Southern Reflections on the Climate Change negotiation process

**Bonn Climate Talks March 2009**

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## 1. Introduction

The Bonn Climate Change Talks March 2009 were the inception of the series of meetings to discuss the details of an agreement in Copenhagen conference (COP 15) in December 2009 to replace or extend the Kyoto Protocol. More than two thousand (2135) delegates from Government (1256), Observer States (2), United Nations Secretariat units and related bodies (43), Intergovernmental organizations (39), Specialized agencies and related organizations (36), NGOs (648), participated in the Bonn meeting.

During the Climate Talks, Negotiations were took place in two parallel forums, one is the 5th session of the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention



(AWG-LCA 5) and the other one is the 7th session of the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 7).

The Bonn Talks were mainly concentrated on the Bali Action Plan. It has to be noted that during COP 14 in Bali, Indonesia, the United States, India and China were indicated they would take part in a post-2012 arrangement.

The AWG-LCA sessions were focused on the strengthening of the international cooperation for reducing emissions, deforestation, climate change adaptation, options and the governance of finances.

## 2. Outcome of the Bonn Climate Talks march 2009

The first major UN climate meeting in Bonn ended on April 08, 2009 without substantial results. It happened due to the wide gap between developing countries and developed countries. During the evening of the last day of the Bonn Talks, many of the delegates from the Developing countries have shown their frustration that the Bonn talks has not delivered any indication of emissions targets for Developed countries as well as adaptation fund channelization.

**Consensus is still too far on CO2 emission reduction:** The positions on the medium- and long-term CO2 emission reduction were still in awkward state with huge differences from developing countries to developed countries. It was expected that the Bonn meeting might set emission reduction targets for the industrialized nations as a whole, if not country-by-country. The lack of commitment from the Annex I countries are delaying to set the proposed scale of emission reductions for the second period of commitment. It is unfortunate that the four years work of the AWG-KP has not yet been able put forward the emission reduction target. During Bonn Talks, developing countries urged the Annex I countries to cut emissions at least 40/45 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2020. However, the European Union is pledging to cut emissions 20percent below 1990 levels by 2020 (30 percent if other industrialized nations follow suit), while the Obama administration is aiming to bring U.S. emissions back down to 1990 levels by 2020. According to International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), emissions need to be reduced by 25 to 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2020. Regarding how to measure, report and verify mitigation commitments or actions, most Parties suggested building upon the existing provisions under the Kyoto Protocol.

**Creation of new disagreements on the Options and the governance of finances:** The talks have made diminutive progress on the finance issues; and mostly focused on how to raise and distribute \$100 billion annually to help poor countries for the climate change adaptation. Developing countries want to see the majority of funding come from public funds, whereas developed countries consider such funding should come mainly from the private sector. Countries have discussed about the ways to increase public funding without repackaging official development assistance. The role of market-based mechanisms in funding mitigation and

adaptation measures were also debated. Majority of the countries agreed that most vulnerable countries should be given priority in adaptation funding.

### 3. The new issues on the Bonn Talks

**Agriculture:** The Bonn meetings included a workshop on agriculture, which is the inception of this issue in formal UNFCCC negotiations. Parties noted that agriculture is responsible for about 14 per cent of total global anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is expected to have high emission growth rates, driven mainly by population and income increase, diet and technological changes. On the other hand, agriculture has significant mitigation potential in terms of the sequestration of carbon in agricultural soils, followed by methane and nitrous oxide reductions resulting mainly from livestock and rice cultivation. Parties have highlighted that nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) could be implemented in agricultural sector in the context of national mitigation strategies and sustainable development but it depends on technology, financing and capacity building support received for implementing NAMAs. Parties also noted that traditional wisdom, practices and culture, including the impact on indigenous and local communities, have to be taken into account when considering mitigation practices for the agricultural sector.

**Enthusiasm for the Proposal Development:** The AFRICAN GROUP, AOSIS and the G-77/CHINA called for a coherent financial architecture for adaptation under the COP. MEXICO highlighted the need to consider the most vulnerable groups within countries and made a proposal for a funding scheme for both mitigation and adaptation. Norway proposed on generating funds through the auctioning of assigned amounts units (AAUs). AAUs are assigned amount units of emissions allowed or allocated to each Annex I Party based on their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol. Norway said that it is possible to generate \$2,000 to 3,000 billion, if all Parties agree to limit the temperature rise to less than 2 degrees C. If the agreement is to limit temperature rise to a 2 degree C, then the value of the AAU is \$100 per tonne and if it were a 3 degree C rise, the price would be half. In essence, it is the polluter who pays.

**Low Carbon Economy:** One interesting aspect of the Bonn talks is that Climate Change talk is using the language of political economy. The developed nations are putting much emphasis on

negotiating to cut fossil-fuel emissions by improving the energy efficiency of vehicles and buildings, installing solar panels and adding wind farms. On the other hand, developed nations are reluctant to provide technology & financial support to the developing countries having limited opportunities to use alternative energy sources to harness their emissions.

**The New USA climate delegations:** “You will not hear anyone on my team cast doubt upon or downplay the threat of global climate change. The science is clear, and the threat is real. The facts on the ground are outstripping the worst-case scenarios. The costs of inaction or inadequate actions are unacceptable.” Yes, it is true that chief negotiator for the U.S. A Todd Stern made this comment. Moreover, this time USA is listening to the views of the developing countries for the first time with attentive mood.

**LDC Nations proposed 'levy' on air tickets for climate change adaptation:** All the 49 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world urged in the meeting that aviation industry must help them cope with global warming by raising money from a tax on airline tickets and emissions trading scheme. The international air passengers should each pay a levy of about \$6 on every flight to help those nations adapt to climate change. The LDCs said a modest levy could raise up to \$10 billion a year considering annual 760 million air passengers. The proposed levy is based on the principle of individual responsibility and capability to deal with climate change and would increase the average price of an international fare by less than 1% for standard class passengers, but up to \$62 for first class.

**High School Students Lead the Way:** It is ironically true that the first money for the adaptation fund has come from the savings of the high school students. A group of students from Marienschule high school in Euskirchen, Germany, presented 131 Euros collected from their classmates to William Agyemang-Bonsu, a member of the Adaptation Fund Board, as a contribution to adaptation funding.



#### **4. The June negotiations**

The next round of negotiations will be held from Monday, 1 June to Friday, 12 June 2009 at the Hotel Maritim in Bonn. During June Climate Change Talks, the first drafts of negotiating texts will be on the table based on the country input to the climate change secretariat for further pinpointing the details of the actions needed. The June session will finalize these negotiating texts, which will be proposals for amendments to the Kyoto Protocol. The United States and China altogether release more than two-fifth (41%) of the world's greenhouse gases. Ironically, none of them is currently bound by international commitments to reduce emissions. The US has to come back with concrete proposals in June negotiations. "More ambition is clearly needed on the part of industrialized countries," said UN climate chief, Yvo de Boer on the final day of the first round of Bonn climate talks. All the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world are expecting to meet an eight-year old, promised support for adaptation to climate change in Copenhagen. This is very important for the LDCs to carry out a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) for addressing the most urgent adaptation actions needed.

#### **5. Observation of Bangladesh activities in the negotiations**

Bangladesh stated that adaptation must also be included in a shared vision and noted the need to link the long-term goal of the shared vision with poverty reduction. Bangladesh supported a legally binding instrument to sustain the most vulnerable countries and supported establishing a knowledge network & regional innovation centers for adaptation. Bangladesh underscored the need for detailed sectoral and regional vulnerability assessments and the development of a vulnerability index. Bangladesh called for region-specific financing mechanisms and capacity building. Bangladesh emphasized the need for funding on adaptation and called for increasing the LDC Fund from USD 200 million to USD 2 billion along with an insurance mechanism. Bangladesh called for a mechanism for prompt financial support to respond to localized extreme events and highlighted the proposal for an international air travel levy to raise additional funding for adaptation. Bangladesh stressed the need to conduct mitigation and adaptation simultaneously, and suggested measures such as developing new varieties of drought-resistant crops and agricultural practices with economized water use, as well as South-South cooperation on R&D. Bangladesh emphasized on the role of governments and the public sector in enhancing

mitigation. Referring to a study carried out by Bangladesh on Financial Viability of Crop Insurance, Bangladesh called for initiating crop insurance piloting in LDC countries with subsidized premiums from international and national sources.

**Bangladesh Presentation in the Ad-hock Working Group-Long Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) meeting in Bonn**



The slow-onset climate disasters like floods and droughts remain largely unnoticed and funding for these natural calamities reels on uncertainty as such funding often depends on media exposure. For example, in 2004 Tsunami fund was raised about US\$ 7000 for every victim against only US\$ 3 for every victim in the devastating floods in Bangladesh in 1998. Parties in the UNFCCC, should link climate change insurance and traditional disasters, and devising new and innovative insurance products, tailored to specified needs of communities, particularly in the areas of food security and agriculture. provision should be made for insurance related actions as part of the adaptation strategies. Measurable, reportable and verifiable (MRV) should be applied to ensure and allow for periodic refinement of the adopted provisions. We can start with few pilot activities, starting with LDCs, subsidized premiums from international, national and private sector sources can be mobilized for those projects. Governments and UNFCCC should support the mechanism on pilot basis taking it as a public welfare programme. Climate change action should not be confined within capacity building and awareness raising programmes only, risk reduction through prevention measures and infrastructure development should be emphasized. the micro credit programme and safety net programmes for poor are not sufficient when they are exposed to any risk despite being headquarters of innovations on micro-credit, our experience showed poor households with this support cannot cope with.

Presented by Mr. M Nojibur Rahman, Head of Bangladesh delegation,  
& Director General of the Department of Environment, Bangladesh

## **6. The Road to Copenhagen: Too many North-South Speed Breaker**

The World has until December 07, 2009, when the next climate change conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark to make a new agreement to become effective after 2012 for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, the negotiators in Bonn agreed to hold two extra rounds of negotiations in August 2009 and in November 2009, in addition to the three previously scheduled. This means that four sessions will be held prior to Copenhagen: 1-12 June in Bonn; 10-14 August in Bonn; 28 September-9 October in Bangkok and 2-6 November (location to be confirmed). The secretariat informed the AWG-LCA that conference facilities in Bonn and at other United Nations venues would not be available during that period. The AWG-LCA at its sixth session and the first part of its seventh session, will address all aspects of the Bali Action Plan in a balanced manner.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) agreed that it will meet informally from 10 to 14 August 2009 in Bonn, Germany. It also agreed to resume its ninth session from 29 October to 4 November 2009. The first part of the ninth session of the AWG-KP will be held from 28 September to 9 October 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand.

With regard to the informal meeting, observer organizations and the media will be able to register and attend meetings in accordance with current practice.

It is quite axiomatic that without strong political determination and consensus among the delegates, we might not witness the needed historic breakthrough in Copenhagen.