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The New (Green) Arms Race



By: Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Hobbled by opposition from the carbon incumbents and their short-sighted allies on Capitol Hill, the Obama administration acknowledged has acknowledged that it would not return from Copenhagen with any ground-breaking commitment to control green house gases. Meanwhile, the US Congress is backsliding on the administration's wise commitment to impose a rational price on carbon. Behind the logjam, a treacherous U.S. Chamber of Commerce, always willing to put its obsequious scraping to Big Oil and King Coal ahead of its duty to the country, has battled every effort to accelerate America's transition to a market-based de-carbonized economy.

The Chamber has continued to argue, idiotically, that energy efficiency and independence will somehow put America at a competitive disadvantage with the Chinese. Meanwhile, the

Chinese have shrewdly and strategically positioned themselves to steal America's once substantial lead in renewable power. China will soon make us as dependent on Chinese green technology for the next century as we have been on Saudi oil during the last.

Indeed, the Chinese are treating the energy technology competition if it were an arms race. China is spending as much or more on greentech as it does on its military, hundreds of billions of dollars annually on renewable energy and grid infrastructure improvements. Those investments, if not vigorously countered, will effectively erode America's greentech industry leadership and secure China's dominance. China's economic stimulus package, targeted 38% of spending on greentech, as compared to a miserly 12% of the U.S. stimulus program. By

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2013, greentech will account for 15 percent of the Chinese GDP. While the United States is projected to roughly triple its wind generation by 2020, China will increase its capacity twelvefold to a wind generating capability more than twice that of America's. And, while the United States is projected to increase its installed solar generation a modest 33% by 2020, China's solar generation is projected to increase 20,000%.

China's investments in solar technology have so powerfully stimulated the growth of a Chinese solar market that Chinese solar panel manufacturers now far outnumber American ones, and they are achieving low-cost production much faster than their American counterparts. Chinese companies are now flooding the American market with cheap Chinese solar panels and devastating the American manufacturing sector that was gearing up to create tens of thousands of U.S. jobs for our own ailing economy. Hundreds of U.S. solar manufacturers now see their prospects as grim. BP Solar, Evergreen, and General Electric have already announced the closing of American-based solar panel factories and outsourcing, primarily to China. America's

leading solar manufacturer, Applied Materials, has opened the largest non-government solar energy research facility in the world in China. Of today's ten leading solar panel manufacturers, only one is American. The largest solar panel installation in the United States is a 70,000 panel, 14.2 megawatt array on Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. The array provides more than 25% of the base's power needs, and saves the Pentagon a million dollars annually in energy costs, but the panels' manufacturer was China's Suntech Power Holdings. Even in the thin film solar market, among the last redoubts of American dominance Chinese businesses are squeezing profit.

Last year, America achieved a milestone, building more wind power generation than all new oil and coal generation combined. We have led the world in wind installations for several years, and the wind industry already accounts for more American jobs than coal mining. At one point the U.S. enjoyed global domination of wind turbine manufacturing with great prospects for job creation. Yet today, of the five leading wind turbine manufacturers, only one is American. While

Congress dawdles, China is clobbering us. Shenyang Power Group recently inked a deal to be the exclusive supplier of turbines to the largest wind project in the United States, a 36,000 acre, 600 megawatt development in west Texas. The project will create 2,800 new jobs -- 2,400 in China, but only 400 in the United States. As Lu Jinxiang, chief executive of Shenyang's controlling shareholder noted, "This is just the beginning ... [the United States] is an ideal target." China is likewise poised to take away our lead in batteries and electric cars, and has already pulled far ahead of America in automobile fuel efficiency.

Capitol Hill Republicans will soon recognize that the arms race of the 21st century is already in progress with a totalitarian nation that they not long ago called "Red China." But America will not win with more warheads and better rockets. We can only prevail with robust investment in and support of U.S.-based greentech innovation.

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Scenarios and Generations

By: Richard Sherman, Stakeholder Forum

Everyone is talking about Copenhagen scenarios, these range from the pessimistic to the pragmatic, from the realistic to the idealistic. Over the last year, world leaders and diplomats have outlined the well known four key elements for success, namely: ambitious industrialised country emission targets, financing for developing countries, action by some developing countries and technology transfer. With this now seeming more and more elusive, some have argued that in order to produce an outcome, an engineered failure is need now in order to secure a future agreement, particularly in relation to a legally binding outcome. They cite examples such as the process that led to

Cartagena Protocol and the Marrakech Accords as precedents. But surely in today's polarized multilateral landscape, stage managing a calamity or even coordinating a walk out of the negotiations, as has recently been suggested by some developing countries, is an outdated belief that will do little to narrow the ever-widening South-North trust gap. Furthermore, how will this help consolidate the kind of outcome required by science and dictated by the swelling masses demanding urgent climate action and equity?

Writing last week in the Guardian newspaper, Paul Kingnorth suggested that Copenhagen might be to future generations what Neville Chamberlain's

1939 mission to Munich was to the World War II generation; a moment of great deception and and failed hope. Kingnorth's parallel with Copenhagen is such: "Chamberlain hoped for the best. He came back with a worthless agreement and everyone cheered. We forget now how the public loved Munich. They desperately wanted to believe peace was possible, precisely because it was obvious that it wasn't."

Some may see Kingnorth's analogy as being overtly cynically, but in the light of recent development, perhaps he raises a point worth further consideration? The scenario most likely to dominate in Copenhagen emerged last week at the final meeting of Heads



of State prior to the start of COP15. Leaders from 53 countries, representing over a third of the world's population and a quarter of UNFCCC Parties, meeting at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in Trinidad and Tobago, joined by Denmark, France and the UN Secretary-General, clearly spelled out the state of political will for sealing a deal.

In their adopted consensus statement, leaders agreed to "support Denmark's efforts to deliver a comprehensive, substantial and operationally binding agreement in Copenhagen leading towards a full legally binding outcome no later than 2010." While maintaining the resolute view that political will, at the highest level, is still in tack, the Port of Spain consensus solidified the view that while failure is not an option, success is not yet a certainty. Some may argue the Commonwealth is not a high stakes player in the climate world, and that it represents a low-intensity form of multilateralism based on the obsolete concept of the 'empire.' However, its uneasy conglomerate of Small Island Developing States, Least Developed

Countries, and the mixed group of developed (UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia) and middle income countries (India, South Africa, Nigeria), may have given us the closest indication that we may be heading towards 'our generations Munich.'

I say this because neither the Port of Spain consensus or Denmark's re-invigorated political approach have seemingly been able to breach some major obstacles. First, Heads of State would have to agree on the nature of the legally binding agreement to be adopted in 2010. This would mean deciding whether there is a continuation of the two-track approach as supported by developing countries or a merger of the two tracks into a new agreement as favoured by most industrialised countries. The two-track approach has been pinned by China, India, Brazil and South Africa as one of their bottom-line deal for continued participation in the process. Second, will there need to be an agreement on ambitious industrialised country emission reductions at levels suggested by the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, particularly for

short-to-medium-term levels. It is worthwhile noting that agreement on these levels has been elusive in the AWG process, as well as in G8 and G20 discussions. Third, assuming the above mentioned hurdles can be scaled, the real test of the political deal will be its universality, and therefore legitimacy, particularly since only two thirds of UNFCCC Parties seemed to be represented at the Heads of State level in Copenhagen.

The problem with this scenario thinking is its limitation of imagination. As the graffiti on the walls of Paris in '68 read "be realistic demand the impossible!" a mantra that needs to be imbedded in the minds of all participants. With Climate Tracker.org suggesting that current proposals will lead to a 3 degree increase by 2100, will Copenhagen mirror Paris, with realism only being seen in the streets, and the side and parallel events run by Civil Society. But how many of us remember the now faded graffiti on the walls of Paris, and how long can the Copenhagen generation keep being realistic before their faith in the multilateral process defuses into a Seattle-type disengagement from officialdom. Will the Copenhagen generation, the thousands of people who took to the streets on October 24, 2009, accept the political reality that says it is enough, for now, to secure a political declaration with a clear intent on resolving issues through 2010? James Hansen and a growing group of insiders think not, they argue no deal is better than a weak deal. Hansen was quoted by Reuters saying that "the whole approach is so fundamentally wrong that it is better to reassess the situation. If it is going to be the Kyoto-type thing then we will spend years trying to determine exactly what that means". While some would describe the current process as one of managing low expectations, the writing is not yet on the walls of Copenhagen. As is evident in this publication, Major Groups and other stakeholders have decamped in the city that gave the world its first major UN Summit on Social Development, with a clear and ambitious intent that a deal is realistic and possible now.

Working for a Just Transition

By: Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation

Hundreds of trade unionists will be in Copenhagen for the UN climate change conference and they will keep pressing world leaders to commit themselves to urgent emission reductions in developed countries, finance for developing countries' adaptation, creation of green and decent jobs and the implementation of "just transition" policies to ensure social justice in the transition to reduce carbon footprints of existing industries and create climate-resilient economies.

"Solidarity is definitely a key point on the road to success for this critically-important summit. The world can simply not wait any longer. Decisions should be made at Copenhagen and action has to start immediately. The human, environmental and economic costs will otherwise be massive."

Trade unions are committed to the fight against global warming, and governments need to recognise the role of trade unions in the UN Climate Convention's decisions and in the common global efforts to avoid catastrophic climate change in the future.

Urgent action to tackle climate change is the only way for massive economic, social and environmental damage or even catastrophe to be averted. The fact that an average 262 million people per year were affected by climate-related disasters during 2000-2004, underlines the scale of the threat. There is strong consensus on the science: the world is beginning to run out of time; we cannot wait any longer. And today we are meeting in Copenhagen under the auspices of a future climate deal.

For the worst effects of climate change to be avoided, or at least reduced, the global trade union movement is calling on governments to commit urgently to emission reductions. This must be done

in line with the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' and take account of countries' varying capacities.

However, this time of multiple crises – unemployment, food, fuel and climate – is also a time of opportunity. The current economic model not only has devastating effects on workers, but has limitations in terms of wealth distribution, natural resource management and development.

A Just Transition towards a low carbon economy is possible. It can make climate action a driver for sustainable economic growth and social progress, as well as a tool for improving the living and working conditions of workers.

"A Just Transition towards a low carbon economy is possible. It can make climate action a driver for sustainable economic growth and social progress, as well as a tool for improving the living and working conditions of workers."

For this to happen, trade unions must have a strong voice so that the views and needs of today's, and tomorrow's, workers are heard.

Build a Just Transition

The international trade union movement is committed to supporting ambitious action for combating climate change. We recognise the need to transform the economy and each of its sectors. If done effectively, this will have a net positive impact on the quantity and quality of employment. However, the effects will vary between and within sectors. There must be a positive

framework for change, which supports workers and their rights – and responds to the concerns of specific groups of affected workers. This requires Just Transition.

Just Transition is a tool aimed at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a 'green economy' to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all.

Government-driven 'green' investments, innovation and skills development policies, institutionalised forms of consultation with social partners (unions and employers), social protection and in-depth research about the concrete employment impacts of climate policies, are all core elements of Just Transition.

A Just Transition can provide new opportunities for decent jobs and local development, turn climate policies into engines for sustainable growth and social progress and protect poor populations from losing their livelihoods. This is essential for fairness and making change happen.

A new production model

The trade union movement believes that we need to develop an alternative to the model that brought about a socially unjust and environmentally unsustainable structure of production that undermines our capacity to provide decent livelihoods for the world's people and concentrates wealth in the hands of the few.

With the right policies and through Just Transition, millions of 'green' and decent jobs can be created in sectors such as renewable energies, energy efficiency and public transport. Climate change policies can also drive forward improvements in jobs in sectors with high carbon emissions, making them more socially and environmentally sustainable. 'Greening' jobs is another



means of ensuring long-term sustainability for existing jobs in a resource-constrained future.

Respect for rights is also critical to sustainable development. It is important that current workers are able, through their trade unions, to participate in and influence changes, just as it is vital that workers in new jobs created by a 'greener' economy have their rights fully protected, in particular their rights to organise and bargain.

Trade unions seek to contribute to the transformation aspects of a broader social and economic strategy for change, in which environmental concerns are integrated into our traditional demands – workers' rights, greater equality and social justice. The financial crisis has shown these to be more relevant than ever.

A major priority has been to ensure that Copenhagen is a first step towards the integration of social and labour concerns into climate change-related decision-making. Our focus is on both

policy and process – before, during, and after world leaders meet.

A strong trade union voice

Climate change affects all our lives and livelihoods and must not be left exclusively to the politicians and the realm of unregulated market forces. The labour movement needs to be given the possibility to engage in, and help develop policies, on climate change. Climate change will profoundly transform production systems and employment. Understanding the impacts of emission reduction measures on energy-intensive industries – manufacturing, energy production and transport – as well as the impacts of climate change on resource-dependent sectors – such as agriculture and tourism – is vital to develop a global picture of our future labour markets.

Trade unions must have a strong voice and this voice must be heard. We are not captives of industry, advocacy groups or governments. Our positions will continue to be independent and

reflect the interests and needs of today's – and tomorrow's – workers. We must drive the transformation process so that jobs can be created in new sectors, others can be transformed to serve new purposes, workers can be re-skilled, and social dialogue can be used to resolve conflicts fairly and to build consensus.

The trade union movement is striving to put social justice on the climate change agenda. We have made progress, but we have a long way to go. An environmentally-engaged trade union movement is no longer a theoretical possibility. It now forms part of our collective identity. Together, we can and will make a difference.

Guy Ryder is General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Read more about the ITUC and their position on climate change at: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org>

Outcome Must Be Gender-Sensitive

By: Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance

Over the next two weeks, government representatives from nearly every country in the world will gather here, at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 15th Conference of Parties (UNFCCC COP-15), to face an unprecedented task: to come to global consensus on nearly every major aspect of coping with climate change—the most urgent issue of our time. The good news is: history has already been made.

Never before have gender equality issues been integrated into climate change negotiating documents. Beginning in early 2009, over 40 specific gender-sensitive texts made were included in the AWG-LCA text; the next round had 23; Bangkok produced 8, and the Barcelona non-papers still had 3. Never before have over a third - 37.7% - of all delegates been women, and of 177 countries, two thirds - 66.1% - had both women and men on their delegations. Never before has a Women and Gender Constituency been formally established under the UNFCCC. Just last month, the Constituency was granted provisional status to help facilitate bringing the voices, needs and expertise of thousands- perhaps millions- of women to these discussions.

It has long been recognized that women are disproportionately affected by climate change. From women’s roles in agricultural production to water and forest management, women’s lives, livelihoods, families and communities will feel these impacts. Existing gender inequalities and discrimination result in greater impacts on women than on men during climate-related disasters such as flooding or drought. However, it has also been duly noted that women’s meaningful, capable, equitable participation, agency for change, and capacity to act as innovators, leaders, technology experts, organizers and caretakers are integral to effective and efficient climate



Photo courtesy United Nations, Tim McKulka

change solutions. Global leaders are standing up for women’s leadership in climate change solutions, and high-level declarations and calls to action have come from every continent, as well as the most vulnerable islands in between.

Just days before commencing the UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen, Denmark, Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated that we need to recognize how women’s “insights can point the way toward sustainable natural resource management and green prosperity for all”. His tenure has been significant for women: he made a pledge to appoint more women to senior posts at the United Nations leading to a 40 percent increase of women in senior posts at the United Nations—more than at any time in UN history. He also noted that many of these senior positions now held by women have traditionally been held by men.

The Secretary General’s statement was powerful, timely and necessary as negotiators race toward one of the largest decisions of our lifetime. But, sometimes business as usual still stands in the way; simultaneous to the SG’s press release on women’s leadership in climate change, the UNFCCC released its

final newsletter of 2009 – featuring statements from men, and only men.

Powerful women leaders from around the world will be present in Copenhagen representing their governments, speaking on panels, and joining in efforts to ensure gender equality language remains in the documents. We are at a pivotal point in history where gender equality is being championed by many and we cannot let the momentum falter. Gender language introduced into the text earlier this year must remain on the table, despite pressures to dismiss the issues of half the world’s population. Without securing a commitment to gender equality and justice, the goals of the final global climate change outcome will a any crucial component for addressing climate change comprehensively.

In order to be in alignment with global goals, as well as other United Nations agreements—particularly the related Conventions on Biological Diversity and Combating Desertification—the final outcome must retain strong gender sensitive text. Negotiators: keep up your history-making work – but don’t forget that the outcome, whatever it is, won’t be effective without both women and men involved.

Call for Climate Sustainability

By: Climate Sustainability PLATFORM

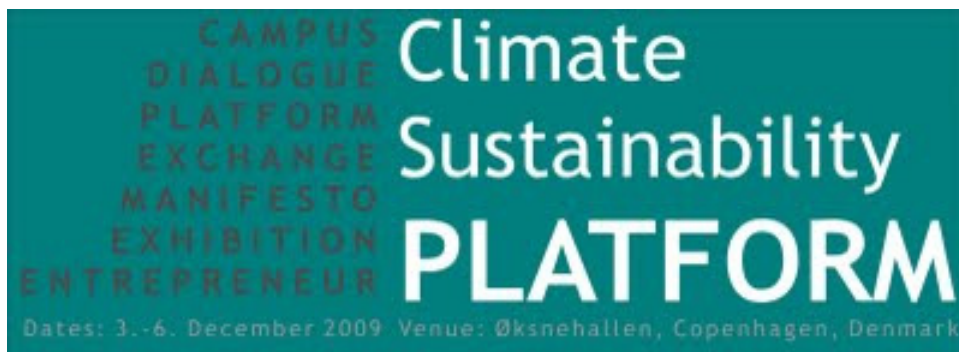
Apprehensive of what COP15 would hold in sealing a climate agreement for the world, over the last number of days forty sustainability experts from all continents converged on Copenhagen. Between the 3rd and 6th of December this group engaged with hundreds of participants at the Climate Exchange at Øksnehallen to ascertain, deliberate and articulate public sentiment regarding the anticipated result of the international negotiations.

The responses varied from skeptical to optimistic. However, the overwhelming message emanating from the Climate Sustainability PLATFORM is loud and clear. In the words of the convenor, Uchita de Zoysa, "We will not wait for someone else to determine our destinies. We will rise as a global community to determine our own sustainable future".

Dr. Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, a Swedish scientist working in the University of Leiden says; "We as a species will live far beyond 2050. It is my conviction that we can rise above the climate challenge and emerge in better wellbeing as one species on Earth". Dr. Simron Singh, an Indian scientist working at the Institute of Social Ecology, Austria expressed the challenges ahead and warned the community to be determined on this path. "From the Rio Earth Summit, through the Johannesburg Sustainability Summit, and now to Copenhagen, we have just been value-adding to processes that control the normal lives of people".

Dr. Simad Saheed, a Maldivian environmental consultant referred to the fear that rising sea levels would threaten the existence of his island nation and it was up to the world community to prevent this. "For the past twenty years we have been appealing to the international community to save us from our climate plight, and we are still destitute". Mr. Souleymane Bassoum, an organic

"Climate and Sustainability need to be addressed together, not decoupled. Therefore, the world needs a binding international agreement on 'Climate Sustainability'. An agreement on Climate Sustainability will be decisive in coming together as one world to reverse decades of irresponsible consumption, production, and trade patterns and to build an equitable, fair, and just world. Climate sustainability must be the shared vision of the UNFCCC because it is the aspiration of the people. Climate Sustainability addresses the pressing issues of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation through relevant strategies for mitigation, adaptation, finance, and technology sharing. Governments must demonstrate political will and vision by signing a binding 'Climate Sustainability Agreement' enforced through strong compliance mechanisms. Only this will empower people to live in harmony with all species in a healthy planet that ensures wellbeing and happiness to all."



agricultural expert from Senegal argued for the present development paradigm be brought to a halt. "Money coming from the West is not to create wellbeing for our people, but often to maintain corrupt governments that help to continue exploiting our resources".

Dr. Arthur Dahl from the International Environment Forum said that the growth-based economic development model would end by 2020. "Economic growth has failed to eliminate poverty and bring wellbeing to the poor, and has created more obstacles in achieving sustainability". Ms. Flora Ijjas, a doctoral researcher from Hungary likened rich

economies to cancer cells growing at the expense of poor nations. "The exploitation of rich countries creates hunger in the poor countries". Summing up the frustration of the world's citizens, Mr. Victor Ricco, a human rights lawyer from Argentina said, "I gave-up my job as deputy minister for climate change to rejoin the peoples' movement, as only talk cannot save us anymore from the challenges of climate change".

These and other members of the Climate Sustainability PLATFORM have all come together to take their destinies in their own hands.

Water World

why the global climate challenge is a global water challenge

By: Hannah Stoddart, Stakeholder Forum

Over the next two weeks governments from North and South will begin to flesh out the elements of a treaty which will, ostensibly, seek to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Though the finer details of the treaty are likely to be left until next year, the world is waiting with baited breath for the agreement of principles that will define collective global action to tackle climate change, and pave the way for a better future.

It is therefore surprising that even in establishing the broadest principles for a climate change treaty, there is a conspicuous absence of any meaningful discussion on the role of water. The world is already committed to a certain level of climate change, and water is the primary medium through which climate change impacts will be felt by human populations and the environment.

Changes in quantity, quality and timing of water due to climate change stand to have potentially devastating impacts on people's livelihoods, and undermine progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As the flow of rivers that rely on glacial melt changes, this will alter water availability in downstream states and put pressure on in many cases already strained relations.

A report published by the Global Public Policy Network on Water Management (GPPN) for COP15 outlines why water is such a critical consideration for climate change, and makes the case for negotiators to take it seriously. *Water World – why the global climate challenge is a global water challenge* looks at water as a cross-cutting issue for livelihoods, land, ecosystems, transboundary relations, energy and gender. The report is the culmination of almost a year of activities by the GPPN to raise the profile of water issues in the negotiations - from side events and workshops, to a 'Water Day' that was held during the recent negotiations in Barcelona in November.

Partly as a result of GPPN activities, water became considerably more prominent in the adaptation text during the intersessional negotiations this year. It remained a feature of the text until shortly before the negotiating session in Barcelona, when Non-Paper 31 was issued which threw out any reference to water issues. Since then, the subsequent Non-Papers 41 and 53 have re-inserted one reference to water, but the recognition of its central role should be strengthened. Building on the discussions of water day and the key messages from the report, the GPPN would like the following points to be reflected in the text:

Understanding and managing the impacts of climate change on the water cycle is critical for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Water is the primary medium through which climate change impacts will be felt by populations and the environment. Failure to integrate water management and climate change adaptation will compromise efforts to build resilience and have potentially devastating impacts on people's livelihoods. Resilience must be built in the water supply and sanitation sector, and effective integrated water resources management must be implemented as an adaptation action prioritised through National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)

Integrated Water Resources Management is a fundamental adaptation action

IWRM is critical for managing the many and increasing demands for water globally. As climate change stands to exacerbate existing pressures on water resources, IWRM offers a holistic management arrangement that considers multiple users and sectors, and should be prioritised in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs).

Regional and trans-boundary cooperation and co-ordination is required for successful adaptation

Climate change impacts through the water cycle will not respect national and political boundaries. Any adaptation plans must recognise the trans-boundary and regional dimensions of climate change adaptation in order to cope with the additional strains that changes in water availability will put on relations between states.

Ecosystem-Based Adaptation builds resilience to climate change

Healthy ecosystems provide natural resilience and 'buffers' against climate change impacts. Climate change will only exacerbate degradation caused by other pressures - to build resilience it will be necessary to restore and protect freshwater ecosystems through reducing non-climate pressures and maintaining minimum environmental flows

Climate change adaptation through water management must consider the roles of particular groups and users

Women are the primary managers of water in many developing countries, for both domestic and agricultural purposes, and stand to suffer considerably as a result of climate change impacts. Measures to adapt to these impacts through the hydrological cycle must take into account the needs and roles of women.

Responding to climate change impacts through water management requires additional resources, capacity building and sectoral knowledge-sharing

The above recommendations require institutional arrangements that support their implementation. This includes the availability of finance for adaptive water management and the development of functioning IWRM plans, as well as the provision of capacity building - especially in the most vulnerable developing countries. Resources for knowledge-sharing with a specific focus on adaptation and water management should also be enhanced, including through any successor to the Nairobi Work Programme.

The International Youth Climate Movement Just Keeps Growing

By: Liz Mc Dowell of the YOUNGOS

As one of the key stakeholders at the climate negotiations, young people have a vested interest in seeing a strong global climate deal. As a result, we've got a long history of involvement at past COPs from Buenos Aires to Poznan and of taking personal and political action in our own countries, universities, workplaces and communities. In Copenhagen, over 1,000 young people have traveled from more than 100 different countries to remind negotiators that we are the ones who will live with the decisions they make over the next two weeks.

We are an incredibly diverse group made up of students, entrepreneurs, farmers, innovators, sons and daughters, lawyers, indigenous activists, artists and many others, but we're all united by one simple truth: we will bear the brunt of decisions made at this COP. We are here to make sure this truth isn't forgotten, and to stand in solidarity with people around the world whose survival is at stake right here and now because of climate change.

We may be here with vested interests, but we are not a special interest group – simply put, we are the next generation, and we refuse to accept a weak deal in Copenhagen. We will not be victims of circumstance – instead, we are standing up to reclaim our future right here and now. We may not have made any of the decisions that got us to this point, but we are determined to be involved going forward.

Over the past two months, young people throughout the world have made efforts to have our voice heard. On October 24, led by 350.org we organized the world's biggest day of action across 170 countries, a number of our colleagues have begun a month-long hunger strike to show our leaders just how seriously we take these



Photo: Robert van Waarden

negotiations, and we have followed negotiators to intersessionals meetings in Bonn, Bangkok and Barcelona.

More recently, over the past two days, we've come together for the fifth annual Conference of Youth, a powerful gathering organized by and for young COP participants. This entirely youth-led event brought together the 1,000 young people in Copenhagen to build connections, develop our skills, share knowledge and strengthen our common position ahead of the first day of the COP. Over the course of two days, workshops were held on utilizing a day at COP effectively, climate impacts and justice, using new media, art and activism, understanding specific policy issues from REDD to carbon trading, running effective meetings, and setting up national youth climate coalitions.

The main highlight from Sathya Balasubramaniam, 22, from India was

learning how to get the most out of a day at COP. Reiko Ichimura, 28, from Japan was excited by how many more people are here this year than at the past two previous COPs, and how much more diverse we are this year.

Over the next two weeks, we'll be meeting with negotiators, reporting to people back home and staging colourful, creative actions to remind negotiators that the world is watching them. This year is the first that we have provisional constituency status here at the UNFCCC – as YOUNGOS – but the thousand young people at this COP representing the International Youth Climate Movement is just the tip of the iceberg. We are many times stronger back home in our communities, and whether inside the Bella Centre, outside in the streets or back home in our own countries, we will be watching the negotiations unfold closely. History will judge what happens next.

Food for Thought...

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

Two Elephants in a Room

I was very pleased to see the Optimum Population Trust publish a report last week calling for some offset money to be used for family planning in the developing countries. They argue that cutting down the number of children being born is more cost effective than using solar panels or planting trees. They estimate that the one child policy in China has prevented 400 million Chinese citizens from been born, and that this has had very significant impact on reducing CO2 emissions. I would add, however, that this should never condone the way in which China carried out its policy.

The Optimum Population Trust estimates that every £4 spent on contraception saves one tonne of CO2 being added to global warming; a similar reduction from tree planting would cost £8, wind power would £15 and £31 for solar energy.

The scheme is called Popoffsets. I fully support good family planning in developing countries, and if this scheme is robust then it could be an important contribution towards living within in the carrying capacity of the environment.

Which brings me to the an elephant in the room - the developed countries' consumption patterns and the crazy economic model that supports it. If we

were working within the planetary limits then it isn't the family planning of developing countries that needs to be addressed, it is the family planning in the developed countries. Those of us who live in the developed world consume more than the developing world, and produce more environmental bads.

I wonder what the impact would be if the developed countries were to take the radical move to also introduce a one child policy, or even guidance on limiting their family numbers. If we who live within the developed world kept our population down, and instigated a one child policy, what would be the reduction in the carbon? I believe it would be significant.

Perhaps there is even another elephant in the room. If governments do not secure a planetary stability of only a 1.5 degrees rise, then we are going to see more and more displaced people. At present our answer to migration seems to be to build walls and restrict migration. I wonder what our response will be to – say the melting of the Himalaya glaciers - which could displace millions of people perhaps even hundreds of millions. Only on Saturday the Bangladesh Financial Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith said he expected that by 2050 there could be 20 million

environmental refugees from his country alone and called on developed countries to take action and recognise that they will need take in some of them.

Do we need to start preparing our populations in the developed countries for a much more flexible and human response to the future 'environmental refugees'. These displaced people will need somewhere to go. After all, the effects of Climate Change that we will see is due to the historical contribution that developed countries have made in their development. Maybe we need to be starting to have a contingency plan for a new Marshall Plan.

Of course there is an obvious answer to this before we get there - that is to keep the temperature rise under 1.5 degrees, through the signing of a legally binding global agreement.

Population, consumption patterns, migration, not to forget water, food, and energy security. A new landscape is developing which does remind me of a saying of Albert Einstein: "There are two infinities, the universe and human stupidity and I am not sure of the former." Let's hope he is wrong, let's hope we can come together here to agree a lasting long term agreement.

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