

**FROM KYOTO TO MARRAKECH:  
GLOBAL CLIMATE POLITICS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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**Executive Summary**

*This briefing paper provides a background on the threat posed by climate change, particularly on the Global South and on poor and impoverished communities. It also gives an overview of the history of the international response to climate change, including the key issues that have been and will probably continue to be negotiated. The opportunities available to maximize local participation in these ongoing processes are identified in the paper which concludes with a proposal on a strategy for intervention.*

Climate change, expected to result in global warming, is probably the most serious environmental problem that the world faces. While the threat is long term, the expected impacts – on ecosystems, livelihoods, human health, and food security – are enormous. While the biggest contributors to global warming due to increases in greenhouse gas emissions are the industrialized countries, the greatest impacts of climate change will be felt first and seriously by the poorest countries of the world and, in those countries, the burden will fall disproportionately on local and impoverished communities. These countries and communities depend greatly on climate conditions and natural resources for their daily survival and sustenance and they do not have the resources to adapt to the changes global warming will bring.

Communities relying extensively on natural resources for their food and livelihoods will bear much of this burden especially at an early stage. Climate change will aggravate the problems already being faced by communities affected by the related threat of desertification, particularly in the arid and semi arid zones of Africa. Those living in coastal and low-lying areas are also especially vulnerable because of sea level rise. An expected surge in extreme weather events (typhoons, floods, and drought) is expected to result in more catastrophic and damaging natural resource disasters that would exact the heaviest toll on poor communities. Together with the anticipated increases in global mean temperatures, these disasters are expected to result in public health outbreaks among particularly the poor (malaria, dengue and other vector borne diseases) that otherwise could be avoided.

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To combat climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted in 1992 by dealing with its causes and responding to its adverse effects. Its objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level and within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change was agreed upon by countries as a further step to meet this objective. Since then, countries have been negotiating the details of this protocol with the aim of having it enter into force by September 2002 when the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) is convened in Johannesburg. These negotiations, which lasted for three years, were completed in Marrakech last November 2001 following a successful political agreement in Bonn in July 2001 (arrived at even with the United States, the biggest GHG emitter, abandoning the process). Consequently, there is high expectation that the Kyoto Protocol will come into force by late 2002.

The progress that has been made on fashioning a global response to climate change is actually remarkable given the complexity of the politics of climate. In understanding these politics, a North/South perspective is inadequate and does not go very far. Industrialized countries from the North have not responded in the same way to the issue, with positions ranging from a call for accelerated action by the North as an early step (European Union and other European countries) to equivocation in the face of lingering scientific and economic uncertainties (United States, Australia). While there is unanimity among the countries of the Global South that technology and new and additional financial resources must be transferred to them if they are to respond effectively to climate change, there is a debate among developing countries on the extent to which they also should take action and participate in the global effort to mitigate climate change. In the politics of climate, the most difficult challenge is bringing the United States back to the negotiating table. This will be difficult because the issues it has raised against the Kyoto protocol are not particularly persuasive.

While there is a high level of participation by civil society organizations and industry in global climate processes, the participation of local and impoverished communities leaves much to be desired and need to be expanded and made more effective if the outcomes of these processes are to be consistent with environmental sustainability and social justice. Enhancing participation of local and impoverished communities can only happen if the communities themselves realize what is at stake for them in the climate processes. An effective strategy includes the following elements: (a) Supporting information and education campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of local stakeholders on the threats climate change pose to their communities; (b) Promoting participation of representatives of these communities in UNFCCC processes through capacity building; (c) Promoting Coalition building at the national and global levels with constituencies who share the concerns of local communities; (d) Supporting local programs on adaptation to climate change and related threats such as loss of biodiversity and desertification; (e) Supporting efforts to identify and elaborate compensation mechanisms that would benefit communities who will be adversely affected by climate change.

2002 is a pivotal year for climate change. There is optimism that the Kyoto Protocol will come into force thus bringing the climate process to a new stage. Because the next meeting of the COP (in October 2002) will be held in Delhi, India, issues of major concern to the Global South and to

local and impoverished communities will command attention. This is an opportunity that should not be missed. In India, it is likely that the role of developing countries in responding to climate change and the link between poverty and climate change would occupy center stage. These are issues of crucial importance to local and impoverished communities. Enhancing their participation in this meeting and beyond will go a long way in making the global response to climate change more sustainable and equitable.

## **I. Introduction: The Challenge of Climate Change**

Climate change is a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. It is expected to result in global warming, i.e., increases in global mean temperatures with all its consequences, and comes about because of the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. These gases, resulting from human activities, are principally carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), ground level (tropospheric) ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and aerosol particles.<sup>2</sup> In 2000, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the most authoritative scientific body on climate issues, concluded that “*an increasing body of observations gives a collective picture of a warming world and other changes in the climate system*” and that “*emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols due to human activities continue to alter the atmosphere in ways that are expected to affect the climate system*” (IPCC, 2001). While there are still uncertainties in the science, it is clear that, as IPCC observed earlier, “the balance of evidence suggests a discernibly human influence on climate” (IPCC, 1996).

Most economic activities, in varying degrees, contribute to climate change with energy consumption (the use of fossil fuels) and land use change and forestry activities probably being the largest contributors. Historically, the biggest contributors to climate change are the industrialized countries of the North, with the United States as the biggest emitter. However, over the long term, developing countries will also have to exert efforts to limit their GHG emissions (Baumert and Kete, 2001).

### **Impacts of Climate Change**

Climate change is an ecological peril unlike any the international community has faced. While many human activities have had a negative impact on natural resources and ecological systems, the resulting damage has been usually local or regional in scope and reversible. Changes in the atmosphere are, however, global and - for all practical purposes - “irreversible”. While the threat is long term (a 50-100 year horizon), the expected impacts – on ecosystems, livelihoods, human health, and food security – are enormous. Ironically, while the biggest contributors to global warming due to increases in greenhouse gas emissions are the industrialized countries, the greatest impacts of climate change will be felt first and seriously by the poorest countries of the world and, in those countries of the Global South, the burden will fall disproportionately on local and impoverished communities. These countries and communities depend greatly on climate conditions and natural resources for their daily survival and sustenance and they do not have the resources to adapt to the changes global warming will bring.

Communities relying extensively on natural resources for their food and livelihoods will bear much of this burden especially at an early stage. For example, climate change will aggravate the problems already being faced by communities affected by the related threat of desertification, particularly in the arid and semi arid zones of Africa. Those living in coastal and low-lying areas are also especially vulnerable because of sea level rise. An expected surge in extreme weather events (typhoons, floods, and drought) is expected to result in more catastrophic and damaging

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<sup>2</sup>For an introduction to the science of climate change, see <http://www.unfccc.org/resource/iuckit/index.html> which is an on line resource provided by the Secretariat of the UNFCCC.

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natural resource disasters that would exact the heaviest toll on poor communities. Together with the anticipated increases in global mean temperatures, these disasters are expected to result in public health outbreaks among particularly the poor (malaria, dengue and other vector borne diseases) that otherwise could be avoided.

The impact of climate change on agriculture (Box 1) and on marine and coastal resources (Box 2) illustrates the threat of climate change to developing countries and particularly to local and impoverished communities.

One final word about impacts: While developing countries will undoubtedly face the impacts of climate change first, it should be noted that industrial societies in the North, who initially might be protected by their material wealth and by the technological options that this wealth provides, ultimately, will also be affected by climate change and the problems they bring.

**Box 1 The Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture**

IPCC (1995b) has summarized the potential international effects of climate change over the next several decades. Within developing countries, especially in arid and semi-arid regions where available water is already a limiting resource, the potential impacts of climate change on agriculture are quite large. The potential for disruptions of food production appears real, and closer in time than many might appreciate.

A major challenge of climate change for agricultural production involves the capacity of nations to adapt to the changes that might be expected to occur. Farmers around the world are, after all, familiar with the vagaries of the weather, and understand that regardless of long-term trends, that there are wet and dry years to which they must adapt. However, the ability of farmers to adapt varies considerably with respect to their current economic conditions, their access to accurate current information, their access to knowledge about potential future conditions, and their access to knowledge and technology to improve agricultural practices in ways that might enhance future productivity without suffering additional environmental damage.

In the developing world, the changes could be far-reaching, from reductions in overall national productivity at a time when countries can least afford it, to an increasing dependence on imports for meeting the demands of growing populations, to a reduction of control over food production because of increased foreign ownership. One cannot predict with certainty which scenarios might become reality; but it is clear that the changes in the climate system that are projected for the next several decades provide major challenges for continuing to meet basic human needs that exacerbate today's problems.

Source: Janetos, 2000

**Box 2 The Impact of Climate Change on Marine and Coastal Resources**

The IPCC has identified coastal zones and marine ecosystems as highly vulnerable to climatic impacts such as sea level rise and increased intensity of extreme weather events, particularly in coastal nations throughout the Caribbean, the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. Coastal and marine resources are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, specifically increased temperatures, rising sea levels and more intense extreme weather events. Among others, climate change might result in shifting migration patterns for major pelagic fisheries such as the Western Pacific tuna fisheries. Such shifts will have major implications for local fishermen whose livelihoods are based on catch levels in certain waters.

While it remains to be seen exactly how rising temperatures will affect offshore fisheries, it is fairly clear that coral reefs and the inshore fisheries dependent on them are extremely vulnerable to rising temperatures. Increasing sea surface temperatures associated with the recent ENSO have led to mass coral bleaching events worldwide in the last few years. Perhaps few ecosystems are as vulnerable to the projected temperature increase as coral reef systems.

The greatest impacts to coastal and marine resources may result from their vulnerability to the .09 to .88 meter sea level rise projected to result from climate change. Sea level rise quite obviously results in shoreline displacement, through inundation and storm surge, as well as exacerbated coastal erosion. Higher sea levels provide a higher base for waves and floods during storms, and can greatly exacerbate damages to coastal areas and communities as a result. If coral reef accretion cannot keep pace with sea level rise, reefs will be lost potentially further decreasing sediment supply to the shoreline and increasing erosion.

Finally, coastal and marine resources are particularly vulnerable to any increases in extreme weather events such as cyclones. Data is still inconclusive as to whether or not hurricane and cyclone wind speeds will increase under climate change conditions, but the IPCC predicts increased peak and mean precipitation during such extreme events that will result in increased flooding and damage to coastal areas.

These physical and biological impacts all have direct development impacts. Specific impacts include those on food security as a result of declining fisheries and the degradation of coral reefs and other critical marine habitats and on public works infrastructure (transportation systems, protective dams, etc.) that are at risk due to sea level rise and extreme weather events. Likewise, tourism will be severely affected.

Source: Biagini and Virdin (2001)

**II. The Global Response to Climate Change: From the UNFCCC to the Kyoto Protocol**

The principal response of the international community to climate change was the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention was adopted in New York on 9 May 1992, entered into force on 21 March 1994 and as of 24 October 2001, 186 Parties have ratified or acceded to it.<sup>3</sup> Its ultimate objective is "to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. (Article 2)" Box 3 lists some of the basic premises of the Convention.

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<sup>3</sup>A good introduction to the history and politics of the UNFCCC is a guide written by Joyeeta Gupta, "*On behalf of My Delegation, . . .*": *A Survival Guide for Developing Country Climate Negotiators*, Climate Change Knowledge Network (2001)

**Box 3 Basic Premises of the UNFCCC**

- The recognition that "the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries, that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and development needs".
- The acknowledgment "that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions".
- The recognition of "the need for developed countries to take immediate action in a flexible manner on the basis of clear priorities, as a first step towards comprehensive response strategies at the global, national and, where agreed, regional levels that take into account all greenhouse gases, with due consideration of their relative contributions to the enhancement of the greenhouse effect".
- Its concern that "low-lying and other small island countries, countries with low-lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas or areas liable to floods, drought and desertification, and developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change".
- Its noting of "the special difficulties of those countries, especially developing countries, whose economies are particularly dependent on fossil fuel production, use and exportation, as a consequence of action taken on limiting greenhouse gas emissions."
- The recognition "that all countries, especially developing countries, need access to resources required to achieve sustainable social and economic development and that, in order for developing countries to progress towards that goal, their energy consumption will need to grow taking into account the possibilities for achieving greater energy efficiency and for controlling greenhouse gas emissions in general, including through the application of new technologies on terms which make such an application economically and socially beneficial."

Source: Preamble, UNFCCC

The Framework Convention disappointed many environmentalists and states because it did not provide for mandatory reductions on greenhouse gas emissions. Viewed however from the perspective of an ongoing process, the FCCC was an important first step in formulating an international response to the greenhouse challenge. It has been described as a "process treaty" and an essential further step in a process of implementing a common global strategy for addressing climate change - creating a solid and comprehensive foundation for further national measures and policies (La Vina, 1997). It was designed to attract the widest possible participation of industrialized and developing states taking into account their respective responsibilities and capabilities.

A key achievement of the UNFCCC process was the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change at Kyoto, Japan on 10 December 1997. Concluding in its first meeting in 1995 at Berlin, Germany that the obligations of developed countries were inadequate in responding to climate change, the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) initiated the negotiating process which culminated with this protocol. The protocol imposes quantified emission limitation reduction targets (an aggregate reduction of around 5% from 1990 levels) within specified commitment periods (the first period from 2008-2012) on Annex I Parties (most OECD countries and economies in transition of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe). It contains provisions intended to advance the implementation of UNFCCC obligations shared by all Parties, including commitments by developing countries. It established the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

through which developing countries, consistent with sustainable development, could participate more actively in the mitigation of climate change. The Kyoto Protocol as of 24 October 2001 has been ratified by forty Parties but is not yet in force.

Since its adoption, governments have been negotiating the details of the Kyoto Protocol to enable its ratification by key players. The negotiations have been protracted and difficult involving complex technical and political issues. In the meantime, in early 2001, the Bush Administration decided to abandon the negotiating process on the supposed ground that it was too costly for the US economy and unfair because it excluded developing countries. Nevertheless, the negotiations continued and, after three years, were completed in Marrakech, Morocco. Consequently, there is high expectation that the Kyoto Protocol will come into force perhaps by September 2002 when the World Summit on Sustainable Development is convened in Johannesburg.

### **The Politics of Climate: A Snap Shot**

In the early days of the climate process, it was customary to characterize the issue of climate change as a North/South question. Over the years, however, it has become clear that this is a simplistic understanding of a complex political process. For varying reasons, industrialized countries have responded politically in different ways with responses ranging from ardent calls for the North to take the lead in cutting emissions to equivocation in the face of lingering scientific and economic uncertainties. Developing countries have also not responded politically in the same way to climate change. While there is unanimity among the countries of the Global South that technology and new and additional financial resources must be transferred to them if they are to respond effectively to climate change, there is a debate among developing countries on the extent to which they also should take action and participate in the global effort to mitigate climate change.

Among industrialized countries, the European Union (EU) and the economies in transition of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (without Russia and the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, they collectively call themselves CG-11, or the consultative group of 11 countries) have consistently taken the lead to intensify efforts by the North to take the lead to combating climate change. Under pressure from environmental constituencies at home, these countries were the driving force that led industrialized countries to adopt quantified emission limitation targets during the Kyoto Protocol process. They continue to take the lead in protecting the “environmental integrity” of the Kyoto Protocol, i.e., preventing its dilution through accounting and other loopholes. Allied with the European countries is a small group of countries (Switzerland, Mexico and South Korea) who are informally called the “Environmental Integrity Group.”

The other industrialized countries have grouped together under an informal coalition known as the Umbrella Group. This group includes the United States, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Norway. A closer look, however, of this group reveals a diversity of positions on climate change. While the United States have decided to abandon the Kyoto Protocol process, other members of the Umbrella Group remain engaged in the effort to make this agreement work. In particular, Norway and New Zealand have increasingly aligned with the EU and the CG-11 on many substantive issues in the negotiations while Russia and Japan, as discussed in the next section, have been trying to extract as many concessions as possible to enable them to ratify the

Kyoto Protocol. In the Umbrella Group, perhaps because of the influence of its coal industry, Australia is the most sympathetic to the United States position.

Countries of the Global South negotiate as a collective bloc through the Group of 77 and China (G77). In issues where these countries are completely united, the G77 is a powerful voice and they are able to get their perspective listened to. However, in the climate process, solidarity among developing countries is not assured. Frequently, the oil producing countries (members of OPEC mostly) are at odds with the small island states (grouped together under AOSIS or the Alliance of Small Island States which is committed to accelerating action on climate change because of the immediacy of the threat to them) on how hard to push industrialized countries to reduce their energy related emissions. Because of the pressure on big developing countries (China, India, and Brazil) to make commitments similar to those taken by industrialized countries, they are understandably wary about having the process move so fast in a way that would compromise their development goals. This caution is not shared by other countries from Central and South America as well most African countries who see the climate process as principally an opportunity to receive environmental payments for putting into place energy and forestry projects that would assist industrialized countries in meeting their legal commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. Developing countries from Southeast Asia (particularly Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia) probably fall in between the big developing countries and the latter countries: they are wary about taking on new commitments but they see potential in participating in the efforts to respond to climate change because of the potential payments they could also receive.

A positive development resulting from the withdrawal of the United States from the Kyoto Process is that the big developing countries no longer feel compelled to take a defensive stance in the negotiations. For many years, the negotiating positions of these countries were greatly influenced by a need to parry efforts by the United States to have them take similar commitments (targets and timetables for emission reductions or limitations) as industrialized countries. Without the United States, the big developing countries have become more receptive to the idea that their participation in the global effort would result in favorable outcomes for them.

Given the complexity of these politics, it is remarkable that the process has moved forward to the stage where it and without any vote taken so far in any major political decision. The big question, however, is what to do with the United States, the biggest emitter, historically and at present, of greenhouse gases. By abandoning the negotiating process but without offering an alternative to the Kyoto Protocol, the United States has endangered the progress that has been achieved. It remains to be seen what can be done to bring the United States back to the negotiating table but strategies to do this is clearly needed over the near term.

This would be difficult because the issues that the United States have raised against the Kyoto Protocol are not particularly persuasive. For example, it is not true that the protocol is unfair because it excludes developing countries. The UNFCCC has always been clear about “common but differentiated responsibilities”: Under this principle, industrialized countries have to take the lead in combating climate change because of their historical responsibility and because of the financial and technical resources that are available to them. Moreover, it is not true that developing countries are excluded from taking action (they have obligations under the Convention and they could participate in the global effort through the CDM) or that they have not been taking action. Indeed, many developing countries, including China and India, have taken substantial

actions to reduce emissions growth by, among others, increasing use of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies (Baumert and Kete, 2001).

### **Implementing the Kyoto Protocol: An Overview of the Issues**

When the COP met in Marrakech from 29 October – 10 November 2001, its major goal was to agree on a set of rules that would enable countries to ratify and subsequently implement the Kyoto Protocol. Specifically, governments needed to adopt a set of decisions on four key areas: (a) making available financial resources and technology to developing countries (including for adaptation to climate change); (b) the operation of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms (Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation, and Emissions Trading); (c) how land use and land use change and forestry activities should be treated; and (d) the adoption of a compliance regime. Decisions on these issues were expected to pave the way for the Kyoto Protocol to take effect as it would give key industrialized countries the necessary “comfort” to proceed with ratification. In particular, meeting the concerns of Japan and Russia were paramount since these countries (without the United States) are absolutely essential to get the necessary ratifications for entry into force.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier in 2001, after the United States announced its intention to abandon the Kyoto Protocol negotiating process, the COP met in Bonn, Germany with the aim of arriving at a political agreement on the issues that prevented countries from ratifying the Protocol. The Bonn meeting, called COP 6 and a half (because it was a continuation of the ill fated COP 6 in the Hague, held in November 2000, which resulted in a deadlock between the Parties), was a pivotal moment for the Convention. Without a political agreement, the Kyoto Protocol will have to be abandoned and countries would have to start all over again. But if an agreement was reached, the United States would be isolated and the rest of the world could proceed in trying to make the Kyoto Protocol work.

After many days of intensive negotiations in Bonn, ministers of environment succeeded in finding a solution to the political issues that remained on the table and adopted a decision that incorporated this political agreement.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, negotiators completed their work on the outstanding technical issues and full agreement on the details of the Kyoto Protocol was achieved in Marrakech.<sup>6</sup> By paving the way for the Kyoto Protocol to take effect, the Marrakech meeting can be judged to be a success. While the concessions given to some countries have reduced its effectiveness, the Kyoto Protocol remains, for now, the only viable way of moving forward.

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<sup>4</sup>Article 25 (1) of the Kyoto Protocol provides that the protocol shall enter into force after at least 55 Parties to the Convention, “incorporating Parties included in Annex 1 which accounted in total for at least 55% of the total carbon dioxide emissions for 1990 of the Parties included in Annex 1”, have ratified it. Essentially this means, without the United States, most developed countries must ratify the Protocol and particularly Japan and Russia because they account for a significant percentage of the carbon dioxide emissions for 1990.

<sup>5</sup>For an account of the Bonn negotiations, see the website of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (30 July 2001), [www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/asc/enb12176e.txt](http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/asc/enb12176e.txt).

<sup>6</sup>For an account of the Marrakech Negotiations, see the website of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (12 November 2001), [www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/asc/enb12189e.txt](http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/asc/enb12189e.txt). See also La Vina, Special Bulletin to EDAG (December 7, 2001).

## **Financial Resources and Technology Transfer**

Providing the necessary resources so that developing countries can actively participate in global efforts to reduce or limit greenhouse gas emissions and begin adapting to the adverse effects of climate change has been the most important issue for most developing countries in the climate negotiations. Finally, in Marrakech, some progress was made with the establishment of various funds for developing countries: (a) Special Climate Fund for mitigation and adaptation; (b) a Least Developed Country Fund for the poorest countries; and (c) An Adaptation Fund financed from the proceeds of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms. European and other developed countries (except Japan and the United States) made political pledges, specifying contributions to these funds. Decisions on capacity building and technology transfer were also adopted as part of the package.

## **The Kyoto Mechanisms**

Agreeing on the rules of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms has been one of the most difficult issues in the negotiations. These mechanisms – the Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation and Emissions Trading – are all intended to provide developed countries flexibility in their efforts to reach their Kyoto emission limitation/reduction targets. Collectively, developed countries had agreed in Kyoto to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 5% but countries like the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia and Russia had said that they could not make these targets (by 2008-2012, the first commitment period of the protocol) unless these mechanisms were fully operational. The challenge has been how to make sure their operation does not affect the environmental integrity of the protocol by allowing countries to effectively reduce their targets or to transfer their legal obligations to other parties. In Marrakech, there was full agreement on the rules for these mechanisms.

## **Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry**

How land use and land use change and forestry (LULUCF) are to be considered has always been a contentious issue in the climate process. LULUCF activities (such as deforestation) result in greenhouse gas emissions but they also enhance and promote the conservation of carbon sinks (reforestation and afforestation). Lack of precision in the existing methodologies have made it difficult to ascertain the extent to which countries can report such changes in carbon stocks and thus making it difficult to report with accuracy the extent LULUCF is a source of emissions. Even more difficult to determine is measuring and verifying the extent those LULUCF activities enhance and protect carbon sinks.

In Marrakech, political agreement was reached on including, albeit with some limitations, LULUCF activities in the Kyoto Protocol. Developed countries could get credit for human induced LULUCF activities (since 1990) in their own countries while LULUCF activities in developing countries could be included in the CDM but limited only to reforestation and afforestation. Many stakeholders have raised concerns about these decisions. Some say that this effectively reduces the Kyoto target. Others are concerned that an incentive for timber plantations in developing countries, with all its environmental and social consequences, has been created.

## **Compliance Regime under the Kyoto Protocol**

The most difficult issue that negotiators had to deal with in the meeting was agreeing on a compliance regime for the Kyoto Protocol. The European countries and developing countries wanted to have legally binding consequences when developed countries fail to meet their Kyoto targets. Japan, Russia, Canada and Australia argued strongly for a more flexible system. In the end, as a result of hard bargaining by the latter countries, the compliance regime adopted contained many weaknesses that would have to be addressed in the future.

### **III. Participation in the Climate Negotiations: What is at Stake for Local and Impoverished Communities?**

Almost from its inception, there has been a high level of participation by civil society organizations as well as by industry in global climate processes. Environmental organizations through out the world, for example, have followed the climate negotiations as early as 1990 when the UNFCCC was still being negotiated. Working through the Climate Action Network, which has affiliates in almost all regions of the world (including in the Global South), environmental groups had played an effective role in pressuring governments to adopt the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. Environmental organizations have also been strong allies of the Global South in the issues important to the latter, particularly technology transfer and financial resources issues. They had also been constructive in providing many new ideas to the process, particularly those dealing with environmental integrity, transparency and public participation.

Industry has also been an effective participant in the climate process. Working through their respective coalitions or trade associations, the influence of the private sector in the negotiations is discernible. On one hand, lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry, working principally through such groups as the Global Climate Coalition, have tirelessly worked, with mixed success, to ensure that decisions inimical to their industry were not adopted. On the other end of the spectrum, sustainable energy companies as well as industries that could potentially be affected by climate change such as the insurance business have been supportive of efforts to accelerate action on climate change.

Local governments have also been active in the climate process. Working through the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), they have consistently given statements during COP meetings and have actively lobbied their national governments to take action on climate change. ICLEI is building a worldwide movement of local governments whose cumulative local action seeks to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental and sustainable development conditions. The purpose of their campaigns, including on climate, is to generate the policy commitment of participating municipal councils to address regional and global environmental challenges at the local level and build local government capacity by providing technical assistance and training. Their Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) is a performance-oriented campaign that offers a framework for local governments to develop a strategic agenda to reduce global warming and air pollution emissions, with the benefit of improving community livability. Five hundred local governments participate in this Campaign, representing 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and the numbers are growing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>More information on this campaign is available at the ICLEI website - <http://www.iclei.org/co2/index.htm>.

In the Marrakech meeting, women successfully obtained a decision improving their participation in the convention processes. Among others, the COP recognized that there was a need to improve the gender balance of officers in the bodies established under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. It urged the Parties to the convention to take the measures necessary to enable women to participate fully in all levels of decision making relevant to climate change.

Other stakeholder groups who have been actively participating in the climate processes include religious organizations (e.g. World Council of Churches), youth organizations and parliamentarians. These stakeholders have consistently mobilized their constituencies during COP meetings and their representatives have delivered statements during COP plenary sessions.

While civil society and industry participation in the climate process has generally been extensive, the same cannot be said, unfortunately, for local and impoverished communities. Except for labor organizations (mostly from the North), most economically disadvantaged groups have not been active in the climate negotiations. Indigenous peoples' organizations did begin participating in 2000 motivated by concerns related to land use change and forestry but other important stakeholder groups do not have a voice, as yet, in the process. Because they are going to be the most affected by climate change as well as by some of the measures that are being and will be taken to combat it, the participation of local and impoverished communities in the climate negotiations needs to be expanded and made more effective if the outcomes of these processes are to be consistent with environmental sustainability and social justice. Among these communities, special attention needs to be given to farmers and to fisherfolk and other coastal communities because of the impacts on climate change on their livelihoods, physical health and food security. Forest communities, including indigenous peoples, are also critical since decisions being made in the climate process could have profound implications on them.

Enhancing participation by local communities is particularly urgent with the establishment of the new climate funds and with the implementation of the Kyoto mechanisms (especially the CDM). If implemented properly, these funds (Special Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund and Least Developed Country Fund) and the CDM could become vehicles for sustainable development, including in local communities. Community based energy, agriculture and forestry approaches could find new sources of funding through these funds and mechanism. Coastal communities could be assisted in designing and implementing appropriate adaptation programs. Through the CDM, communities could receive well deserved payments for environmental services they provide such as the conservation and enhancement of carbon sinks

Projects supported by these funds and mechanisms could also have negative consequences. For example, as noted earlier, the rules of CDM could create an incentive for indiscriminate establishment of timber plantations with disastrous environmental and social consequences. If designed and implemented improperly, non-transparently and without the participation of local communities, CDM projects could become a major source of conflict in many developing countries.

In conclusion, as the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol moves into a more detailed and operational mode, they will soon have very direct impacts on local and impoverished communities. There is an urgent need, therefore, to make sure that local stakeholders understand

and can respond to these impacts and participate actively in their further design and implementation.

### **Enhancing Local Participation: A Strategy for Intervention**

Enhancing participation of local and impoverished communities can only happen if the communities themselves realize what is at stake for them in the climate processes. An effective strategy includes the following elements: (a) Supporting information and education campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of local stakeholders on the threats climate change pose to their communities; (b) Promoting participation of representatives of these communities in UNFCCC processes through capacity building; (c) Promoting Coalition building at the national and global levels with constituencies who share the concerns of local communities; (d) Supporting local programs on adaptation to climate change and related threats such as loss of biodiversity and desertification; (e) Supporting efforts to identify and elaborate compensation mechanisms that would benefit communities who will be adversely affected by climate change.

There is a reason why local and impoverished communities have not been active in the climate process. Climate change is a long-term threat and as such it pales in comparison to the many issues that communities have to grapple with in their daily lives. It is difficult to be concerned about hunger, disease, floods and drought 50-100 years from now if one is already dealing with them today. What is needed is to undertake cost-effective information and education campaigns which succeed in linking the present problems faced by communities to the anticipated impacts of climate change. Essentially, they will be facing many of the same threats but exponentially intensified in a way that is difficult to imagine today. The challenge to those who would undertake such information and education campaigns is to bridge this gap by connecting the future to the present.

Capacity building is an important component for an effective intervention strategy by local and impoverished communities. In particular, building and learning skills so representatives of communities can act strategically and effectively in the UNFCCC processes are imperative. For example, an effective way of participation is by pressuring governments to pay attention to specific local concerns through the establishment of special processes within the Convention. An example of this is what indigenous peoples tried to achieve during the Marrakech meeting. While they did not succeed in getting the COP to establish a special working group on their issues, for a group that has just started to get involved in the process, it is clear that it is only a matter of time before the COP would have to do this and to pay more attention to their concerns.

The most cost effective way of facilitating capacity building for local and impoverished communities is by promoting coalition building at the national and global levels between communities and constituencies who share their concerns. In particular, alliances with environmental organizations that have a lot of experience in the negotiations could be very potent. At the national level, collaboration with local governments might be an effective vehicle for enhancing participation by local communities. As noted above, many local governments are implementing climate-related projects all over the world and it might be cost effective to link up with these efforts. This is especially true for dealing with the challenge of adaptation.

The Framework Convention on Climate Change is not only about mitigating the causes of climate change. A cornerstone of the Convention is its objective to help human societies adapt to climate change. At its core, adaptation requires integrated long term planning and good natural resources governance and management. For long term adaptation programs to work, they need to be designed to deal not only with the anticipated problems but also with those that societies and communities are already facing in the present. This is not difficult to do for climate change because the anticipated impacts, as noted above, are similar to many of the problems already being faced now. A good strategy for adaptation by local communities should probably be anchored on sustainable natural resources management. The strategy would be aimed not only at adaptation for climate change but also to the related environmental threats of biodiversity loss and desertification (where the problem exists).

An example of how this could work is a project by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), *Climate Change, Adaptation and Vulnerable Communities*, which is intended to provide guidance on how targeted natural resource management measures can reduce vulnerability of communities to the growing threat of climate-related disasters. Such measures can provide a ‘triple dividend’ – decreased climate-related disaster vulnerability, reduced demand for international humanitarian assistance in response and recovery, and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. The project will inform policies on climate change, biodiversity and poverty alleviation, and recommend action at the local and international level (IUCN, 2001).

Finally, enhancing local participation would be greatly assisted if communities were able to see the climate processes as providing the potential for them to obtain compensation for their having to bear the adverse effects of climate change. This is a contentious political and legal issue and is probably not achievable in the short term. However, efforts to identify and elaborate compensation mechanisms should begin now and should be supported. Indeed, discussions on this issue have begun in the UNFCCC processes. Because communities have a big stake in these negotiations on compensation, it is imperative that they participate in the process.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

2002 is a pivotal year for climate change. There is optimism that the Kyoto Protocol will come into force thus bringing the climate process to a new stage. Because the next meeting of the COP (in October 2002) will be held in Delhi, India, issues of major concern to the Global South and to local and impoverished communities will command attention. This is an opportunity that should not be missed. A significant aspect of the Marrakech meeting was that by holding it in Africa, the region that is expected to suffer the most from both climate change and the related environmental threat of desertification, many issues important to developing countries, especially the least developed ones, such as adverse impacts of climate change, adaptation and financial resources were given attention. In India, it is likely that the role of developing countries in responding to climate change and the link between poverty and climate change would occupy center stage. These are issues of crucial importance to local and impoverished communities. Enhancing their participation in this meeting and beyond will go a long way in making the global response to climate change more sustainable and equitable.

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