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Author(s): Navroz K. Dubash

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# Inconvenient Truths Produce Hard Realities: Notes from Bali

NAVROZ K DUBASH

In the compromise road map for future climate change negotiations that was drawn up at Bali, the urgency suggested by science was lost. There are yet positives in that the US remains in the negotiating process and the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” of the developing countries has been maintained. India needs to now ask itself if it should hold on to a defensive national stance on climate or if the time is right to develop and implement creative national policies, and then articulate an international negotiating position around these policies.

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Navroz K Dubash ([ndubash@gmail.com](mailto:ndubash@gmail.com)) is at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

This was the year in which the problem of global climate change emerged near the top of the geopolitical agenda. The UN secretary general BanKi-Moon has said climate change will be his number one priority, as has the German chancellor Angela Merkel. The recent Australian election has been described as the first national election, where a proactive position on climate change was an important factor separating victory from defeat. For the first time, investment ministers and finance ministers held dedicated meetings to focus on climate change. And most recently, the former US vice president Al Gore and Rajendra Pachauri (the latter on behalf of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for their work on the issue.

This was the backdrop to the recently concluded climate change negotiations held at Bali, Indonesia. The negotiations concluded with a consensus document, but only after high drama and a last minute stand-off between the US and most other countries. In some ways, this is business as usual for climate negotiations. Since 1990, when negotiations over a UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began, discussions have been characterised by incremental steps toward addressing the problem, always subject to the multiple constraints of national self-interest. These have included a memorable US statement that the American lifestyle is not for negotiation, Canada's insistence that it needs additional fossil fuels for heating, Saudi Arabia's demand that it should not be unfairly penalised for dependence on oil exports, and India's declarations that its development needs come first. Taken separately, these are all understandable concerns, but collectively it has resulted in an anaemic climate regime.

The scientific assessment of climate change, however, suggests that negotiations as usual will not deliver the desired results. While the dominant impression at Bali was indeed of negotiations as usual, there were also glimmers of an emerging bloc of nations whose negotiating positions are informed by an enlightened long-term self interest – understood as an effective climate convention stimulating urgent action – as much as immediate national considerations. These included the European Union, South Africa, and perhaps even China, but not, as yet, India.

The Bali process kicked off two critical years of negotiations. For these negotiations to result in meaningful outcomes, countries will have to increasingly blend consideration of long-term collective interest related to climate with their immediate national considerations. While India met many of its objectives at Bali, its position was driven far more by national self-interest than by taking climate seriously. In this commentary, I summarise and reflect on the issues before negotiators at Bali before returning to the question of what it all might mean for India.

## 1 The ‘Bali Road Map’

The agenda for Bali was negotiation of a “Bali road map” laying out the ground rules for a two-year negotiation to culminate in a new decision for renewed action, by 2009. In the tortuous world of international environmental negotiations, it is considered entirely reasonable to spend two weeks talking about doing something. And indeed, the legal complexities are considerable. In practice, the negotiators had to decide how to take forward two separate but connected processes, the Framework Convention on Climate Change (agreed to in Rio in 1992) and the Kyoto Protocol (of 1997).<sup>1</sup> Negotiators also had to determine whether and how they should be linked, a decision that had embedded within it all sorts of implications for the likely outcome, as discussed further below. In addition, at stake were the “building blocks” of a Bali road map – mitigation measures, adaptation measures, technology transfer and financing

mechanisms – and the mechanisms and modalities for moving forward on each.

The Bali discussions were, therefore, primarily about process, and only secondarily, about signalling initial stances on substantive positions. But in the international negotiations, process matters a great deal, and can definitively shape outcomes. There were at least three interconnected issues at stake on how to design the “Bali road map”. First, how should the progress of industrialised countries (the so-called Annex I countries) who agreed to commitments at Kyoto be reviewed? An effective process required designing a review that would hold Annex I countries accountable for their Kyoto Protocol commitments, but not provide them an opportunity to revisit the formulation of the commitment itself, as sought by the countries such as the us, Canada and Japan.

Second, what should be done about the us, which accounts for about 20 per cent of global emissions, but has failed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol? China suggested a separate working group for non-ratifying Annex I parties, as a way to devise a negotiating process that keeps the door open for the us, in anticipation of a future more cooperative government following the 2008 election. Al Gore, to applause from the delegates, explicitly blamed his country for obstructing progress, and called for just such an approach that negotiated around the us. In the formal negotiations, the us proposed an integrated future negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol with the Convention, which would have rendered past Kyoto obligations redundant.

### Developing Countries

Third, should developing countries take on any commitments, and how should they be articulated? The convention explicitly stated that developed and developing countries have “common but differentiated responsibilities”, implying that the former have a larger obligation to address climate change. Under the Kyoto Protocol, developing countries took on only reporting and no quantitative obligations. However, the us has been particularly vociferous that developing country “major emitters”, notably China and India, take on commitments, and has pointed to the absence of such commitments as

an unacceptable flaw in the Kyoto Protocol. Prior to Bali, the prospect of developing country commitments was discussed through an informal “dialogue” process. At Bali, India supported continuation of the dialogue, presumably as a negotiating ploy, while most other countries, including other large developing countries, sought a formalisation of negotiations through a working group under the convention. The danger, however, was that the us, Canada and Japan would use this opening to press for a single process that erased the clear distinction drawn between industrialised and developing country commitments in the Kyoto Protocol. Indeed, the us recalcitrance at Bali was widely seen as a ploy to put off any significant decisions until a “major economies meeting” planned for early 2008, at which precisely such a blurring across developed and developing countries would be attempted using the category of “major emitters”.

Ultimately, the negotiators agreed to a formal process rather than an informal dialogue, but critically kept separate the post-Bali negotiations and Annex I commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. This kept the us within the process, while also retaining the critical framework of “common but differentiated responsibilities” across developed and developing countries. However, achieving this outcome required give and take on several other components of the final agreement.

### 2 Science and Scenarios

It is important to keep in mind that the Bali meeting took place in the context of a global political groundswell on climate change in 2007, which in turn was driven by a scientific exclamation mark: “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level”.<sup>2</sup> This language by the studied and careful Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (ipcc) in its Fourth Assessment report signals the most emphatic statement yet about climate change.

This language is also significant in the context of the convention, which has as its ultimate objective preventing “dangerous anthropogenic interference” with the

climate system. While there is no simple answer to establishing the threshold level of dangerous interference, by looking at “key vulnerabilities” and how they react to different temperature ranges, the ipcc provides an entry point to this question. Because many of the ipcc’s key vulnerabilities are triggered at around 2° Celsius, this figure has become a benchmark figure in climate talks for “dangerous anthropogenic interference”.<sup>3</sup> The ipcc notes that in order to restrict global average temperature rise to 2.0-2.4° c would require limiting concentrations of greenhouse gases to 445-490 ppm (compared to 375 ppm in 2005 and about 280 ppm in pre-industrial times). This, in turn, would require that global emissions of greenhouse gases peak and turn towards a downward trajectory in the next 10-15 years, and be reduced by 50-85 per cent by 2050 compared to the level they were at in 2000. The fact that global emissions have grown by 70 per cent between 1970 and 2004 places in context the magnitude of the challenge presented to climate negotiators at Bali by the ipcc report.

The ipcc also highlighted the possible adverse impacts of climate change. These impacts include decreased availability of freshwater across Asia and increased water stress, massive flooding in coastal zones, endemic morbidity and mortality from water due to diarrhoeal disease caused by changes in the hydrological cycle, changing distribution of disease vectors, impacts on food availability and health, and risk of up to 30 per cent species extinction. Most unnerving, climate change could lead to impacts that are “abrupt and irreversible” such as melting of ice sheets, and changes in ocean currents.<sup>4</sup> For a developing nation such as India, already grappling with resource scarcities, and with millions of people deeply vulnerable to shocks, the ipcc warnings are dire.

### 3 National Trajectories

The ipcc’s expression of scientific consensus – and there is little serious doubt that there is a consensus on the science – boiled down to a battle over numbers at Bali. The eu, long-standing champion of an effective convention, argued strenuously for articulation of an emissions goal coming out of Bali consistent with the

IPCC. Specifically, the early drafts of the decision stated that "... global emissions of greenhouse gases need to peak in the next 10 to 15 years and be reduced to very low levels, well below half of levels in 2000 by 2050". Without explicitly including this global goal, the Europeans argued, the Bali road map would lack urgency and effectiveness.

The political problem with including a global goal is that the national implications of that goal vary widely depending on how responsibility for meeting that goal is allocated. The convention calls for "common but differentiated responsibilities" among the industrialised and developing countries on the basis that the industrialised world is responsible for about 80 per cent of total cumulative emissions (which is what matters for climate impact).<sup>5</sup> India has long held a principled position that the atmosphere (or more correctly its greenhouse gas absorbing capacity) is a global commons and should be allocated on a per capita basis.<sup>6</sup> The US argues that, irrespective of historical emissions, all major current emitters should be required to take on some commitments, and has particularly singled out lack of commitments by China and India as the reason for its failure to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

### European Proposal

Recognising that efforts to slice up the global ecological pie have a long and convoluted history, the EU also sought to reassure developing countries by inserting an explicit statement that the industrialised countries would have to take the lead by making steep early cuts of 25-40 per cent from their 1990 levels of emissions by 2020. Developing countries, including India, were willing to countenance the global goal only if it was paired with this early reduction target for the industrialised world. Predictably, the US sought to remove both the global goal and the Annex I target for 2020 arguing that it needlessly prejudged issues to be dealt with in negotiations. Some developing countries, such as Malaysia, also argued, that even if the industrialised world took the lead and met 70-80 per cent of the global 2050 reduction target, developing countries would still end up with substantially lower per capita emissions than industrialised

countries in 2050 due to their much lower starting point.<sup>7</sup>

### Hard Reality

However, a closer look at the proposed global target suggests a hard reality that lies beneath this continued squabbling over dividing up the global pie. Assume, for example, that industrialised countries take on ambitious 90 per cent reductions from their 1990 levels by 2050, and start their reductions immediately. Under this scenario, in order to stay within the proposed Bali global cap of 50 per cent reductions from 2000 levels by 2050, non-Annex I countries (roughly speaking the developing world) would only be able to increase emissions for about 12 years before it had to start on a downward trajectory.<sup>8</sup> In other words, under even highly optimistic assumptions about industrialised country action, developing countries as a group have only until 2020 to turn their economies in a less carbon intensive direction, in order to have any chance of staying within the 2° C warming threshold.<sup>9</sup>

The point is reinforced by another scenario. Assume that the developing world took on no climate commitments and continued with a business as usual trajectory. Under these circumstances, by 2030 emissions in the developing world alone would equal the total level of emissions allowable worldwide in order to meet the 50 per cent reduction target (from 1990 levels) by 2050.<sup>10</sup> Of course, these examples put all non-Annex I countries in the same category, and in practice, the post-Bali negotiations may witness efforts to draw distinctions between different developing countries.<sup>11</sup>

The result suggests two hard realities that both industrialised and developing countries need to grapple with. Given historical emission patterns, fairness dictates that industrialised countries reduce their emissions enormously, by 80-90 per cent at minimum, in order to leave ecological space for developing countries.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the science and current projections dictate that developing countries too need to urgently shift to less carbon-intensive growth trajectories. Unfortunately, in the final compromise text, the urgency suggested by the science was lost. The IPCC-linked global target for 2050 was removed from the text, and relegated

to a footnote reference, and the short-term target of steep reductions by industrialised countries by 2020 was removed entirely. While the deletion is the understandable outcome of negotiation realpolitik, the Bali road map is substantially weakened by this outcome.

### 4 Climate Mitigation

The battle over global targets was a backdrop to the more concrete issue to be debated over the next two years: the articulation of mitigation commitments for both industrialised and developing countries. Although negotiations over specific mitigation targets were explicitly not on the table at Bali, as discussed above, they were never far from the minds of negotiators.

The need for strong mitigation measures is punctuated by an increase in global emissions by 24 per cent between 1990, when climate negotiations began, and 2004, as reported by the IPCC. Industrialised countries have also struggled to meet their Kyoto Protocol target of 5 per cent collective reduction from 1990 levels by the period 2008-12. Some countries such as Canada have increased their emissions by 26 per cent over 1990 levels by 2004, as compared to their share of the Kyoto target, a 3.3 per cent reduction.<sup>13</sup> Overall, the Annex I countries are likely only to meet their collective target because the former Soviet bloc countries, or "economies in transition," had a collective economic meltdown in the 1990s, leading to huge decreases in emission levels on the order of 35 per cent.

There are recent signs of progress in the form of new legislation in several industrialised countries, although most efforts fall short of what is required from industrialised countries in order to meet the global target. The UK recently became the first country to pass new climate legislation that will reduce emissions between 26 and 32 per cent, leading to 60 per cent cuts by 2050.<sup>14</sup> Germany adopted a climate package to reduce emissions by 40 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020.<sup>15</sup> Even in the US, draft climate legislation emerged from a Senate Committee, marking the greatest progress yet toward legal commitments in the US, mandating 18-25 per cent reductions below 2005 levels by 2020.<sup>16</sup> Although well short of other countries, this

effort nonetheless signals some degree of movement in the us, although notably not by the Bush administration.

Against this background, developed countries agreed to "Measurable, reportable and verifiable nationally appropriate mitigation commitments or actions, including quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives, by all developed country parties, while ensuring the comparability of efforts among them, taking into account differences in their national circumstances."<sup>17</sup> There are several important code phrases in this text. For example, "comparability of efforts" is a hook to ensure that the us does not get off too lightly. "Taking into account national circumstances" is a phrase that Canada, us and Japan insist on, and reflects, for example, Canada's insistence that their emission needs are greater due to a cold climate.

### Shift in Position

Perhaps the single most contentious issue was whether and how developing countries would articulate any commitments. Several large developing countries, including China, South Africa and Mexico, expressed their willingness to commit to greenhouse gas reduction policies at home, that would also promote sustainable development, and even, perhaps, to targets for particular critical sectors. This was a major shift from previous negotiations, and seemed to reflect a growing consensus around so-called "sustainable development policies and measures" (SD-PAMS) as an appropriate articulation of developing country commitments. The question was whether this articulation would be sufficiently strong to persuade the us, in particular, to stay within the negotiation process. At one point, the us sought to emphasise its view that it considered SD-PAMS inadequate by noting that these were not negotiations on a sustainable development convention!

The final text stated consideration of "Nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing country Parties in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner". Note that developing countries are required to consider "actions" as compared to

"quantified emission limitations and reduction objectives" (QELROS) for industrialised countries. Moreover, the linkage between developing country actions and both sustainable development and financing represents a positive for developing countries. Notably, the phrase "measurable, reportable and verifiable" as used here could be read as applying equally to technology and financing support as to developing country mitigation actions. This language was won through an intervention by India that shifted the phrase "measurable, reportable and verifiable" from the beginning of the sentence, which would have unambiguously tied it only to developing country actions, to the end of the sentence, thereby creating ambiguity about whether it applies to actions or to financing or to both. At the last minute the us agreed to proceed with a Bali road map using this language for developing country actions.

The impact of this developing country commitment depends heavily on the frameworks developed in the next two years to measure and verify national actions. However, with this statement, developing countries have agreed in principle to include climate considerations as a part of their national policymaking, consistent with their sustainable development objectives. Within the climate process, this approach has come to be known as "Sustainable Development Policies and Measures" (SD-PAMS).

### Distribution Maintained

At the same time, developing countries maintained the distinction between how commitments are articulated for industrialised versus developing countries – the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" that is the bedrock of the Framework Convention. This point was critical for the Indian negotiating position. For much of the negotiation, the us, along with Canada and Japan, sought to create a category of "major emitters" which would have erased the clear distinction between industrialised and developing countries and their respective commitments enshrined in the convention. That this distinction was maintained and yet a road map was agreed to represents one of the major positives emerging from Bali. Yet, it is hard to shake a sense that the urgency

of the situation signalled by the science failed to completely pervade the final Bali text on mitigation commitments.

### 5 Deforestation and Degradation

Bali marked an important landmark in a long-running discussion over a sub-set of mitigation efforts, reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD). The IPCC recently concluded that this category of emissions accounts for 20 per cent of global emissions, making attention to reduced deforestation particularly important as part of a mitigation package. While there are several other mechanisms within the convention process to address forests, they do an inadequate job of providing incentives to preserve standing forest in developing countries. For example, under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), only project-based activities limited to afforestation and reforestation are allowed. These projects are subject to both measurement problems and "leakage" – the risk that reduced deforestation in one place simply emerges elsewhere as greater deforestation.

The discussions in Bali centred on creating a national level mechanism whereby countries would receive incentives to preserve standing forests. A national approach, it was felt, would limit the problem of leakage and limit transaction costs of project by project approaches.

While there was broad agreement on this issue, the approach was stalled for a number of days due to an Indian proposal to broaden the ambit to include conservation efforts and sustainable forest management within the REDD discussion. The Indian delegates argued that prior efforts to restrict deforestation and encourage sustainable management should also be recognised and financially rewarded. Those opposed to this extension suggested there was a distinction between such activities, which belonged under CDM, and an appropriate focus on deforestation through the REDD mechanism. Ultimately, the final text blurs the issue, by urging countries to "explore a range of actions ... with a view to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and thus enhancing forest carbon stocks due to sustainable management of forests."<sup>18</sup>

The second item for the Bali road map, measures for adaptation, was relatively uncontroversial. In one sense, this is reassuring, but in another, it is worrying. Delegates have already acknowledged that human society is highly unlikely to completely dodge climate impacts, and needs to start preparing for them.

At Bali, delegates converged quite rapidly on establishment of an "Adaptation Fund" to assist developing country parties that are "particularly vulnerable" to climate change to help meet the costs of adaptation.<sup>19</sup> The Adaptation Fund would be financed through a share of the proceeds generated through the CDM (the means through which certified emission reductions can be generated through projects in developing countries). The main issues in the Adaptation Fund discussion revolved around its governance. The negotiators agreed to a relatively balanced governance board comprising different regions, Annex I and non-Annex I parties, and particularly, vulnerable nations. The Global Environment Facility was invited to be the interim secretariat and the World Bank the interim trustee.

## 6 From Rhetoric to Action?

Harmony was notably absent in discussion of the third substantive element of the road map – technology transfer. Indeed, this area marked the first major conflagration of the event during the opening days of the negotiation. At issue was whether discussion of technology transfer should be limited to the "Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technical Advice" where it had long been housed or whether it should also be discussed under the second body, the "Subsidiary Body on Implementation" (SBI). The G-77 and China argued that despite commitments to promote technology transfer, little action had occurred, and since it was an implementation issue, it should also be taken up by the SBI. A bitter battle followed, in which the US and Canada sought to remove technology transfer from SBI and the G-77 and China accused these countries of bad faith, and seeking to retract on a decision already made.

Although seemingly arcane, this argument signals a united intention by developing countries to demand heightened

attention to technology transfer, and indeed, to elevate commitments in this area to the levels equivalent to mitigation commitments. Commitments on technology transfer are poised, therefore, to become an important bargaining issue in the next two years.

In its initial position, the G-77 and China sought, among other things, creation of a "new and additional multilateral technology cooperation fund," the purchase of licences to support the transfer of low carbon technologies (a point particularly emphasised by India), and performance indicators against which to measure compliance of the technology transfer commitments of the developed world. Negotiations on this issue were among the stormiest of the meeting. The final text decides that funding is required for a range of technology transfer issues without calling for a new fund, includes licences of low-carbon technologies as among the items that require funding without committing to do so, and commits to developing indicators for developed country progress.

Notably, the final text of the "Bali Road Map" links developing country actions to technology and financing support, and also includes the phrase "measurable, reportable and verifiable" in a manner that could be interpreted as applying to technology and financing.

Technology transfer is poised, therefore, to become a key issue in the coming two years. The extent to which real progress is made depends in large part on how well prepared developing country negotiators are with concrete examples of technologies, concrete mechanisms through which transfer would occur, and specific suggestions for measurement of developed country progress in meeting technology transfer commitments.

## 7 What Does Bali Mean for India?

In India, climate change continues to be a relatively low profile issue for at least three reasons. First, for poor Indians and those who claim to represent their welfare, climate change, which operates on a decadal time scale, is crowded out by pressing short-term development issues of adequate livelihood, nutrition, and health. Second, for rich Indians, getting a

piece of an economy growing at 9 per cent is the immediate priority; since the richer you are, the better you can manage disruptions such as those caused by climate change, economic growth should continue to be the highest priority. Third, it is largely true to say it is a problem caused by the industrialised countries, and it is only reasonable they be asked to clean it up. These perspectives, presumably inform the current and long-standing Indian position on climate change negotiation, insist that the west act first; demand that the global ecological pie be divided equally; refuse to constrain our growth and development in any manner; and only offer to take domestic measures if the west pays for them.

In Bali, a number of Indian concerns consistent with this negotiating stance were successfully safeguarded. Most important, challenges to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility were successfully staved off. In addition, the importance of technology transfer was raised to a new high, possible new and additional sources of money were opened through the adaptation fund and continued discussion of financial assistance for mitigation, and the door was held open to payment for conservation under the REDD mechanism. These are important achievements given that the negotiations operate in a world of realpolitik where the US remains the single biggest obstacle to global progress on climate change.

## Narrow Conception

This doggedly defensive stance may indeed have been necessary and strategic in the early years of climate negotiations. However, at Bali, driven by the science, the willingness of a growing number of countries to tie their national interests to an effective climate regime was striking. In this context, the Indian position signalled the continuation of a policy of safeguarding a narrow conception of national interest over a broader conception of the national interest that takes climate change seriously and promotes global collective action. That a long-promised Indian national action plan on climate change was not finalised prior to Bali contributed to a perception that the Indian government had adopted a defensive posture in the absence of creative new ideas and a political

mandate to pursue them. Closer to home, there is only patchy evidence that climate is taken seriously in the national policy discussions around the issues like electricity generation, transportation planning and other energy-intensive sectors.

Coming out of Bali, there are at least three reasons why India should consider re-orienting its stance on climate change toward a more creative and proactive position. First, by entirely prioritising national development efforts over serious global action to address climate change, we fail to take the threat of climate impacts sufficiently seriously. While it is true that India faces pressing development problems, a hard look at the science suggests climate change could considerably exacerbate many of them, including the quality of our natural resource base, particularly water, food security and health challenges. Concern for poor Indians should be one of the main reasons we support effective global action, not the reverse.

Second, there may be compelling national reasons other than climate mitigation to support domestic measures that also lead to a lower carbon economy. "No regrets" policies such as supporting energy efficiency, enhancing public transport, and encouraging green buildings are likely to have both economic and environmental pay-offs, and may well also have positive poverty impacts, particularly through the route of reducing local environmental and health problems. Lower dependence on fossil fuels could also contribute to greater energy security, an important consideration in a climate of high fuel prices. Finally, operating within a national economy adept at dealing with a low carbon regulatory regime will almost certainly bring competitive advantages when operating in global markets where carbon is explicitly or implicitly priced. Imagine, for example, an Indian services hub aimed at process and technology advising to companies seeking to reduce their carbon footprint.

For rich Indians seeking to preserve and enhance 9 per cent growth, these should be sufficiently compelling reasons for taking measures that also have the effect of mitigating climate change. While there have been efforts to link these issues to climate, they have so far been

compilations of existing measures on the policy anvil rather than creative thinking about how to transition to a low carbon economy.

Third, the long-standing concern that India would be arm-twisted into quantitative emission reduction targets appears to have been pushed back in Bali in favour of developing country commitments articulated as SD-PAMS at Bali. While it would be naïve to imagine the pressure for quantitative limits will go away, it may be a sound negotiating strategy to consolidate the gains won at Bali by forcefully backing the SD-PAMS approach. If national climate mitigation options prove to be favourable for other national objectives, as argued above, it would no longer make sense to continue arguing for industrialised country action as a precondition for action in India. Instead, it would make sense to aggressively implement SD-PAMS nationally and embrace the concept internationally, in order to further isolate industrialised country laggards, notably the US, and deprive them of their current hiding place – behind India and China.

### Continued Defensive Position?

Collectively, these three arguments reverse the presumptions on which the current Indian position is founded. Clearly, more work is needed to explore the robustness of the arguments, and particularly the contention that national policy objectives such as local environmental impact, energy security and competitiveness in a low-carbon world are coterminous with climate mitigation measures. However, with an intensive two-year negotiation on the cards, this is a useful moment to develop heightened national attention to climate change. Are we well served by a continued defensive national stance, which has certainly brought gains in past negotiations, or is the time right to develop and implement creative national policies, and then articulate an international negotiating position around aggressively projecting these policies? So far, India has sought to occupy the moral high ground on climate change. But in a warming world, simply occupying the moral high ground will provide us little defence against climate devastation.

### NOTES

- Under the Kyoto Protocol, industrialised countries had agreed to undertake cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions (averaging 5.6 per cent over all industrialised countries).
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fourth Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers, available at [www.ipcc.int](http://www.ipcc.int).
- Notably, the IPCC refuses to specify a temperature range, arguing that doing so would require applying a value judgment, and sticking instead to discussion of key vulnerabilities at different temperature ranges.
- IPCC, Fourth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers.
- With regard to current annual emissions, the ratio is 50 per cent each for industrialised and developing countries.
- By this metric, India with per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of just over 1 tonne/capita has a great deal of headroom while the US with about 20 tonnes/capita has to undertake deep cuts.
- This point was also made by the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, in his comments on the UNDP Human Development Report 2007, which advocates industrialised countries undertaking 80 per cent of the required reductions by 2050, leaving 20 per cent for developing countries to meet.
- Based on a personal communication with Sivan Kartha (December 18, 2007) and Paul Baer (December 19, 2007) with reference to Figures 2, 13 and 14 in Paul Baer, Tom Athanasiou and Sivan Kartha, *The Right to Development in a Climate Constrained World: The Greenhouse Development Rights Framework*. Berlin: Heinrich Boll Stiftung, EcoEquity and the Stockholm Environment Institute, 2007, [www.ecoequity.org/docs/TheGDRsFramework.pdf](http://www.ecoequity.org/docs/TheGDRsFramework.pdf)
- Any such exercise requires making several simplifying assumptions, all of which are contestable. However, varying the assumptions likely move the date by which developing countries need to start limiting their emissions by a few years one way or another, leaving the larger point intact.
- See Baer et al (2007), Figure 2.
- There is some indication of this thinking in the Indian camp. At a government of India "side-event," the Indian camp explored dividing up non-Annex I countries into two groups, based on whether their per capita emissions were greater or less than 3 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per capita. China was on the higher side of this line, and India on the lower side.
- Nicholas Stern, lead author of the high profile Stern Report on climate change sponsored by the UK, made a similar point in a speech at Bali, noting that 80 per cent cuts is a minimum requirement for industrialised countries and that accomplishing this goal would be "no cause for celebration".
- See the draft decision of CMP3 on 'Demonstration of Progress in Achieving Commitments under the Kyoto Protocol by Parties Included in Annex I to the Convention' available at [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int).
- 'Climate Bill's 60 Per Cent Emission Cut'. Available at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_news/politics/7080580.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_news/politics/7080580.stm) 2007/11/06
- 'Germany Sends a Strong Signal', *Eco*, December 6, 2007. Available at [www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco](http://www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco)
- 'US Heads toward Climate Legislation', *Eco*, December 7, 2007. Available at [www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco](http://www.climateactionnetwork.org/eco)
- See draft decision of CMP3 on 'Bali Action Plan' available at [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int).
- See draft decision of CMP3 on 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries: Approaches to Stimulate Action' available at [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int).
- See draft decision of CMP3 on 'Adaptation Fund' available at [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int).

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Chennai - 600 083,  
Tamil Nadu.  
Ph: 24747538, 24895263