Post-Kyoto Climate Change Negotiations: The View from the Coalition of One Hundred

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Introduction

The predominant analysis of international climate change negotiations has often framed the debate in terms of a North versus South divide. Arguments based on this analysis explain that during the UNFCC negotiations and through the completion of the Kyoto talks, there has been a clear and fundamental divide between the two distinct groups of countries over how to respond to the challenges of climate change. On one end, were the developed countries who looked at climate change through the prism of mitigation. On the other end were developing countries who looked at the challenges of climate changes from an adaptation perspective, and argued that historical as well as equity issues needed to be taken into account when designing an international agreement on climate change.

As a result of these two predominant views, proposals on how to bring about an effective post-Kyoto agreement tend to present either a Southern view or a Northern view (Kuik, Aerts et al. 2008). However, this type of categorization may not reflect the realities of the post-Kyoto environment. While some argue that the South is a distinct group of countries with a shared interest (Miller 1992; Williams 2005), others have pointed out the extraordinary variation of interests that exist with the South. From groups of countries that are oil producing to Small Island States and sub-Saharan African countries, the South is indeed quite diverse. While recognizing this extraordinary divergence of interests, this paper identifies and presents a proposal for a specific and significant group of countries within the South whose voices are increasingly being marginalized within the international climate change discussions.

In the post-Kyoto discussions, the position of the South is almost always presented by a small number of countries. Many in this small group are experiencing rapid economic growth and belong to the so-called G-20. This group of 20 countries includes China, India, Brazil, and Mexico, who are interested in articulating a common position for themselves, while framing such positions under the umbrella of developing countries interests (Williams 2005). The combined greenhouse gas emissions of these fast developing countries, as a share of global emissions, are rapidly becoming very significant. Indeed, the Bush Administration used the exclusion of these countries from the Annex I countries as the basis for refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. In the post-Kyoto negotiations, this group of countries will most likely agree to take on some specific emission reduction commitments.

The group with which this paper concerns itself is quite different from the likes of China, Brazil, and India. The countries that are at the heart of this paper include Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States. These countries, while diverse and different in many ways, share two main interests and goals within climate change discussions. First and foremost, they share a great sense of vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change and have a low adaptive capacity. They are countries whose economies are fairly small and whose historical as well as current contribution to global carbon emissions is fairly limited. By virtue

of their underdeveloped economies, these countries are not able to take the necessary steps to protect their citizens from the impacts of climate change – impacts that they are already experiencing. Indeed, Small Island States are already loosing precious land to rising sea level while many sub-Saharan African countries are experiencing a decline in their agricultural production (Barrios, Ouattara et al. 2008). Secondly, these countries share a strategic interest in advancing a global burden-sharing framework that is fair and equitable and that does not put undue burden on their long-term development goals.

Against this background, this paper argues that these countries should form a coalition of their own and put forward a proposal that clearly articulates their short-term as well as long term interests. As a shorthand name, the paper refers to this coalition as the "Coalition of One Hundred" based on the fact that the number of developing countries that are most vulnerable to climate change is close to one hundred. The paper identifies three broad areas under which this Coalition can present its proposal, namely a) a per capita carbon emissions based international framework for burden-sharing, b) linking sustainable development and climate change, and c) new funding for enhancing adaptive capacity.

A. Creating a Rule-Based International Framework

A central piece of the Coalition of One Hundred's proposal should be to argue for an international framework or rule by which countries take fair and appropriate action against the adverse effects of climate change. They should also argue that such an international rule should contain a threshold beyond which countries, regardless of what part of the world they are in, should commit to taking some concrete action by either reducing their emissions levels or by enacting relevant climate-friendly policy measures. Whether a country is required to reduce its green house gas emission to reach a specific target, or implements other "softer" policy measures would depend on how far above the threshold the country stands.

Previous multilateral agreements, and notably the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substance, have used clear and simple frameworks that set threshold for taking action. The Montreal Protocol, negotiated in 1987, stipulates that developed countries should substantially decrease and eventually eliminate their consumption of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer, and do so in a relatively short time frame. This stringent requirement on developed countries was based on the fact that it was these same countries that were responsible for the release those harmful chemicals into the atmosphere. In addition, these counties were seen as having the capacity to take immediate action. Developing countries, on the other hand, were given a longer time frame to take action. More specifically, the agreement set a threshold that was based on per capita usage of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer. Any country whose per capita usage of these chemicals was under 0.3 kg per was not required to take any specific action (UNEP 1994). In 1990, the Protocol was amended and the per capita threshold beyond which developing countries would be required to take action was lowered to 0.2 kg. This Protocol, along with its revisions, is therefore a good example of an international agreement that sets a clear framework for sharing the burden of solving a global environmental issue.

Carbon Emissions Per Capita

Much like the Montreal Protocol, the Coalition of One Hundred should put forward a burden-sharing system that sets a specific threshold for taking action against climate change. At the core of this proposal should be a rule that contains the concept of per capital carbon emissions. A formula that contains per capita emissions would ensure that a country's emission of greenhouse gases is accurately represented, without prejudice against those countries that have larger populations and low emissions per each of its citizens. In essence, these countries should argue that a system that is based on per capita emissions would bring clarity and fairness to the international negotiations on climate change.

Even before the Kyoto negotiations and certainly since then, different studies have offered various formulas by which countries could share the burdens of climate change related actions (Claussen and McNeilly 1998; Waskow 2000; Ringius, Torvanger et al. 2002; Höhne and Blok 2005). In the post-Kyoto negotiations, the Coalition of One Hundred should be open to alternative and comparable formulas, but should insist that any international framework that sets a threshold should, at the bare minimum, include per capita emissions as a central tenant. Put differently, the goal of this Coalition should be to ensure that the concept of per capita emissions gets onto the international agenda, even if it is modified by some other criterion.

Without a reasonable baseline time period, the concept of per capita emissions can, of course, lead to an outcome that is ultimately unfair. Using the year 2000 as a baseline versus choosing 1950 would translate into widely different results in terms of responsibility. While keeping these limitations in mind, several alternative proposals that the bottom hundred countries should consider include:

a. Per Capita Carbon Emissions Combined with Per Capita GDP

The intention of this framework would be to consider a country's per capita emission along with its ability to take ameliorative actions. By multiplying a country's per capita emission with the ratio of its per capita GDP to the world per capita GDP, this formula determines the extent to which a country has the economic capacity to act. A country with low emissions per person, but with a relatively high income per citizen would have a responsibility to take global action against the adverse impacts of global climate change. One criticism of this formula could be that it penalizes countries that follow less carbon intensive development policies and achieve high levels of income per capita while keeping their carbon emissions low. However, the short-term problem that the world faces today has more to do with countries that have the capacity to act but are failing to take immediate action.

b. Carbon Emission Rights

Researchers at the Stockholm Environment Institute have introduced an effort-sharing framework that determines responsibility and capacity based on how much GHG members of the global population emit, regardless of which country they live in (Baer, Anthanasiou et al. 2007). This framework, which the authors call the Greenhouse Development Rights (GDRs), "combines a measure of responsibility (historic contributions to greenhouse gas pollution, excluding emissions associated with meeting basic necessities) with a measure of capacity (broadly, the ability to pay for mitigation and adap-

tation, without sacrificing necessities)." Much like the framework described above, this one also takes per capita emissions as a core principle, while also combining it with the responsibility and ability of wealthier citizens (and by extension, the countries they live in) to bear a higher share of the costs for adaptation and mitigation.

c. Differentiating Country Obligation Through Standard of Living, Emissions Responsibility, and Opportunity

Another alternative proposal that emphasizes the role of per capita emission in devising a global framework on sharing the climate change burden is a report produced by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change (Claussen and McNeilly 1998). The report argues that an equitable global burden-sharing scheme needs to be based on three elements: standard of living, responsibility for emissions, and opportunity. Standard of living, as measured by a country's per capita GDP, gives a sense of ability to take immediate action. Developed countries, which have a relatively higher standard of living, have reached a level of economic development that they can forgo some level of economic growth in order to avert the serious threats paused by climate change. In the report, a country's responsibility is based on its cumulative carbon emission since 1950, its present level, and its future emission projections. In each these phases, attention is paid to per capital emissions of a country as well as the total carbon emissions level. Through opportunity, the report calculates a country's ability to limit its emissions according to its carbon emissions per unit of GDP. Overall, this framework emphasizes the role of per capita emissions, while combining it with ability and opportunity to act.

Pursuing per capita emission as a burden-sharing framework for an international agreement on climate change would be beneficial to the Coalition and to the post-Kyoto negotiations in general. One of the main reasons that progress on climate change negotiations has been slow has much to do with the apparent lack of agreement on how countries should share the costs of mitigation and adaptation. But as the scientific understanding of climate change becomes clearer and the potential impacts on human life look ever more catastrophic, the international community is realizing that it has to act fast. Inaction is no longer an option. In such an environment, if the Coalition of One Hundred is successful in putting the concept of per capita emission on the international agenda, it will not only make the Coalition a major player in the international discussions, but it will also bring real impetus to the stalling climate change talks. Among other benefits, a per capita based framework would bring predictability and equity into the negotiations.

• *Predictability*

Under the Kytoto Protocol, developed countries (Annext I) as a group agreed to reduce their emissions by an average of 5 percent below their 1990 levels during the commitment period of 2008-2012 (UNFCCC 1998). The rules of distributing responsibilities among these countries were, however, not based on any clear criterion or principle. In essence, the Kyoto negotiations distributed emission reduction responsibilities on the basis of an ad hoc process that ended up requiring some countries to cut their emission while others were allowed to increase their emissions. For instance, Spain was required to cut its emissions by 8 percent. Australia, on the other hand, was allowed to increase its emissions by 8 percent. Indeed, it was mainly because of the unprincipled and unpredictable nature of the burden-sharing framework under the Protocol that made many developing

countries remained on the sidelines during the negotiations. Many of these countries were deeply wary of engaging in discussions that could end up putting unexpected burdens on their capacity to develop. A system that gives countries a clear indication of the conditions under which they would be required to take specific actions would, therefore, make it more likely to bring about an agreement with a broader support.

• *Equity*

Multilateral agreements are more likely to be successful when participating parties perceive them as adequately fair and equitable. In the context of climate change, equity implies that the costs of climate change mitigation and adaptation should be shared proportionally. Countries whose economic activities have caused the current problem should have a moral responsibility to not only take on a higher proportion of mitigating the effects, but also should assist poor countries with adaptation costs. Proposing a framework that allocates responsibility on the basis of per capita emission would therefore be more likely to garner a broader agreement among negotiating parties.

Implementing the Framework

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to define the exact threshold that will trigger requirement to take action, it is important to discuss the manner in which this framework would operate. At a basic level, the proposed framework would create two different tracks of action for those countries that are below the threshold and for those that are above it. Countries whose emissions are above the agreed upon threshold will have legally binding emissions limitations targets. In addition, they would be required to help those below the threshold with adaptation efforts by setting aside funds. The idea would be to put due burden on those countries who have the responsibility and the capacity to take immediate action.

Countries whose emissions are below the threshold will implement specific policy measures that are aimed at dealing with climate change, but these policies would not be mandatory. As long as these countries are below the threshold, climate change would most likely not be their overriding national policy. But they will be encouraged to pursue national policy measures that would also bring about climate-friendly benefits.

The aim would also be to create incentives for these countries to take the necessary actions against a global environmental problem that does not respect boundaries, regardless of the source of the problem. The incentives for these countries would take two forms: a market-based scheme or providing direct financial assistance. In a market-based scheme, countries whose emissions are below the threshold would be allowed to sell their unused credits at an international carbon market. Countries who also take policy measures that reduce emissions will receive credit and will be able to sell those credits. Alternatively, these countries could choose not to sell those credits and instead opt to receive direct financial assistance that will go towards their adaptation strategies and policies.

B. Integrate Climate Change and Sustainable Development

One of the major reasons that most developing countries were on the sidelines during Kyoto negotiations was a fear that engaging in climate change talks in any meaningful manner would hinder prospects of their economic development (Najam, Huq et al. 2003). Indeed, some countries viewed the talks as a veiled attempt by the developed countries to slow down the economic development that some in the developing world were experiencing. Others, while realizing the ecological interdependence inherent in climate change and the potential negative impact it has on all aspects of human life, insisted that the causes of the current problem should not be ignored. They demanded that any international mechanism on climate change should take into account the fact that developed countries are mainly responsible for the unsustainable level of greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere.

It was against this backdrop that developing countries successfully argued for the "common but differentiated responsibilities" principle. To developing countries, this principle in effect meant that while no country can escape the fate of a world fundamentally altered by climate change, and while all nations have a responsibility to be good stewards of the earth, those responsible for the current problem should take the lead in finding solutions. In practical terms, developing countries argued that industrialized countries should make deep cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions; since it is the development path they followed that is at the heart of the debate on who should act first. By extension, developing countries maintained that it would be unfair to ask them to forgo their ability to develop when no such limits were put on the developed countries during their industrialization phase.

Implicit in this debate was the assumption that sustainable development and climate change policy are mutually exclusive. From the view of the developed countries, developing countries' insistence on "sustainable development" simply meant that those countries were not serious about confronting the challenges of climate change. Conversely, developing countries looked at climate change policy, and especially those policies dealing with mitigation issues, as being in contradiction with their priority policies on such pressing issues as poverty reduction, healthcare, education, and the like.

New Proposal

However, the reality is that the two issues are clearly and fundamentally linked. Whether it is mitigation or adaptation (the two main discourses within which the debate is framed), climate change touches on an array of development policies that range from agriculture and water availability to land use and urban development (Van Asselt, Gupta et al. 2005). Indeed, climate change already affects, and will most likely have even greater impact on the ability of poor countries to develop. According to the World Bank, "hundreds of millions of people in the developing world are likely to be displaced by [sea level rise] within this century, and accompanying economic and ecological damage will be severe for many" (Dasgupta, Laplante et al. 2007). Impacts on agricultural output, which tends to be the most vulnerable sector in most poor countries, is expected to be extensive with some countries facing reduction in yield of as much as 50 percent by 2020 (IPCC 2007).

The development pathway that nations follow has, and will continue to have, significant impact on climate change. In essence, climate change is simply a symptom of a certain type of development trajectory, i.e. the carbon-intensive economic development that today's industrialized nations followed when they were developing. As the 4th report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

shows, the severity of climate change and the ability of countries to adapt to it, will depend largely on the scenario of greenhouse gas emissions the world follows (IPCC 2007). The report warns that unless drastic greenhouse gas emission cuts are made, global average temperatures would rise by at least 2C by 2050, which could result in significant damages on human life (especially in developing countries). Despite these warning, a recent repot by the Global Carbon Project found that emissions are accelerating and are close to the highest scenarios considered by the IPCC (GCP 2008). Alternative development pathways that shift away from the current development, will therefore not only determine future emissions but will also have impact on the ability of countries to adapt.

Despite the fundamental interconnectedness of climate change and sustainable development, negotiators have treated them as two separate subjects (Huq, Reid et al. 2006). Indeed, some have argued that sustainable development has been increasingly marginalized within the international climate talks (Najam, Huq et al. 2003; Najam, Rahman et al. 2003; Najam 2004). At the same time, scholars have more recently started to study the links between sustainable development and climate change (Van Asselt, Gupta et al. 2005; Huq, Reid et al. 2006; Grist 2008).

The Coalition of One Hundred countries, who have much to lose from a delinked climate change and sustainable development policy, should put forward a proposal that clearly links the two. This proposal should have at least two main elements.

a) Mainstreaming Climate Change into Sustainable Development

Even if developed countries are able to cut their greenhouse gas emissions in a relatively short period of time, some adverse impacts of climate change are unavoidable. Indeed, many developing countries such as the Small Island States and sub-Saharan African countries are already suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change. In order to deal with the immediate and eventually unavoidable consequences of climate change, focusing on and devoting resources to adaption will be necessary. As the IPCC has identified, adaptation is an "adjustment in natural or human system in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities" (IPCC 2007). As more research is done on adaptation, the consensus appears to be that enhancing the ability of vulnerable communities and countries to respond to current and future climate variability and change should be an essential aspect of international negotiations (Jerneck and Olsson 2008; Mackay 2008).

Mainstreaming climate change into sustainable development will mean that countries should integrate climate policy into their national development and adaptation policies. It means viewing climate change as fundamentally a development challenge. At the local level, this implies increasing the adaptive capacity of those most at risk. According to the IPCC report, poor communities with low adaptive capacity are most at risk when it comes to the immediate effects of climate change. A successful agreement would therefore have to link local adaptive capacity building projects with civil society development activities, projects of multilateral institutions (such as the World Bank), and the private sector. At a national level, it implies putting in place policies that are aimed at protecting the most vulnerable sectors. In most developing countries, the major sectors at risk include agriculture, coastal zone management, and water management. A post-Kyoto agreement should ensure that developing countries do not see climate change discussions as a means to hinder their economic development. In essence, it should emphasize that dealing with climate change and pursuing sustainable development are two sides of the same coin.

b) Land-use and Climate Change

From the outset, it is important to note that international negotiations on land use, land-use change, and forestry have become increasing complex (Fry 2007). As the intersection between climate change and land-use becomes more understood, it is becoming even more obvious that land-use has tremendous implications for climate change. For instance, consider the fact that tropical forests contain more than 40 percent of the world's terrestrial carbon. How this forest is used, or misused, will have direct impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, as the population in many developing countries continues to grow and more pressure is put on fragile ecosystems, deforestation and other land-use activities are already contributing to more than 20 percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions.

Despite the magnitude of impact that land-use has on emissions, the international community has not been able to devise a clear mechanism that permits reduced emissions from land use to function as a means to achieve emissions targets or receive credits. Recent talks in Bali have made some progress in this area by recommending that efforts to reduce emissions from land-use should be "strengthened and supported." However, the Bali Action Plan addressed this issue only within the context of voluntary actions. In other words, no country is obliged to recognize the avoided emissions that a country may accrue from a sound land-use management. The Coalition of One Hundred should push for an agreement that sets out a legally binding mechanism through which land-use management issues are brought into an international agreement.

C. New Funding for Adaptation

While estimates vary, it is well understood that climate change mitigation and adaptation will have a considerable cost. According to a report by the UNFCC, it will cost more than $200 billion annually for greenhouse gas emissions to return to current levels by 2030. This same report concluded that between $28-67 billion would be needed annually in order to enhance the adaptive capacity of vulnerable states (UNFCCC 2007). Most countries within the Coalition of One Hundred have little financial resources to dedicate to adaptation programs.

The UNFCC has to date created three funding mechanisms for climate change: Adaptation Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, and Least Developed Countries FUND. But one major problem with these funds is that they remain voluntary. It is also not clear if these funds are new and separate from the existing Official Development Assistance funds.

Against this background, possible sources of new funds that the Coalition could propose include:

- Expanding the CDM market, which by extension would increase the tax revenues from such projects.

- Introducing new tax on all "dirty projects." The myriad not-so-climate-friendly projects that institutions such as the World Bank undertake would be taxed. As a means to encourage clean projects, the tax put on dirty projects would be higher than those on CDM projects.

- New and additional financial commitment by those countries whose emissions are well above the internationally set threshold.

Conclusion

In a post-Kyoto environment, analysis of global climate change negotiations cannot sufficiently be understood by the traditional divide between the North and South. As the economies of some major countries within the South become bigger and grow faster, their contribution to current global greenhouse gas emissions is becoming more significant. With increasing greenhouse gas emissions and the accompanying duty to take mitigation measures, the interests and strategies of these countries is increasingly becoming misaligned with that of the majority of other developing countries. A product of these misaligned interests is that the voice of most developing countries, which this paper refers to as the Coalition of One Hundred, has been marginalized. This paper has argued that the Coalition should put forward a proposal that speaks to their specific interests.

At the heart of this proposal should be three broad elements. First, any post-Kyoto agreement should have a clear framework through which burdens will be shared. A cornerstone of this framework should be the concept of per capita emissions as a way of allocating responsibility. If this group of a hundred countries strongly pushes for the inclusion of per capita emissions as a foundation, it will be difficult for the negotiators to ignore the voice of more than half of the world's nations.

Second, the agreement should identify the linkages between sustainable development and climate change. Too often, climate change and sustainable development have been viewed as two opposing issues with developing countries fearing that climate change would hinder their development goals and developed countries being suspicious of discussions on sustainable development. The proposal of the Coalition should seek to strengthen the linkages between these two subjects. Finally, the proposal makes the argument that new financial commitment adaptation will be necessary to help vulnerable countries deal with the unavoidable challenges of climate change.

Virtually all countries, developing or developed, understand that the risks of climate change are too real, and that failure to act soon will substantially worsen the future impacts of global warming such as increased storms, rising sea ßlevels and agricultural failure. As world leaders prepare to meet in Copenhagen to tackle the challenges of climate change, they would be well advised to listen to the voices and concerns of more than a hundred countries – countries for whom the impacts of climate change are already too real.

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