

## **Climate Negotiations and Justice for Vulnerable Populations: Perspectives for COP 17 and Rio+20**

### **REPORT on**

**a Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D) Learning Conference**

**held in collaboration with**

**CCIC Africa-Canada Forum, Asia-Pacific Working Group and**

**Canadian Food Security Policy Group**

**Ottawa, September 26, 2011**

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**Annex A**      Conference Agenda

## 1.0 Introduction

This learning conference sought to deepen civil society understanding of key policy debates in upcoming international negotiations for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 17), to be held in Durban, South Africa, November 28-December 9, 2011, and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 4-6, 2012. The conference focused particularly on the implications for small farmers, indigenous peoples and other marginalized populations. (See Annex A for the conference agenda).

The conference was attended by some 70 people from Canadian and international civil society organizations (CSOs) concerned with international development, environmental issues and agriculture; indigenous peoples' organizations; universities and research organizations; organized labour; and government. At a public forum held in the evening of September 26 (*Farming, Forests and Fuel: Southern Perspectives on Climate Change*), three international speakers shared regional perspectives on peoples' responses to climate change, prospects for the negotiations in Durban, and the potential for North-South cooperation.

## 2.0 Key Issues for Vulnerable Populations

The first panel of the conference provided an overview of climate debates in UNFCCC, Rio+20 and other fora, highlighting key issues for vulnerable populations. Pat Mooney, Executive Director of ETC Group, and Her Excellency Mhahle Mphahlele, High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa, agreed that negotiations at Durban will be difficult and will not produce a legally binding agreement. There is more optimism about Rio+20.

Pat Mooney summarized some **civil society concerns** regarding the trajectory of negotiations. For the UNFCCC, he described how previous COPs at Copenhagen in 2009 and Cancun

in 2010 made little progress and, in the view of many, did progressively more damage.

Civil society is now concerned that governments, desperate for progress, will agree in Durban to decisions that may appear to be minor, but which will lock in an approach that treats forests and agriculture strictly as commodities to be negotiated, as tools or financial instruments.

There are also concerns that an agreement on technology transfer will be made that will determine the technologies to be transferred from North to South, and the intellectual property rules governing them, without evaluation of whether such technologies are beneficial or destructive. "Solutions" such as geoengineering are still being proposed despite the moratorium agreed upon in the 2010 meeting of the Biodiversity Convention.

If these negative outcomes occur in Durban, then Rio will end up trying to make amends for them. There are reasons to be concerned about the emphasis on technology and market-based approaches in the evolving Rio agenda for a "green economy." Still, civil society can be more optimistic about Rio+20, because governments are so badly organized for it. There are therefore opportunities to put forward ideas and suggestions.

For example, there are opportunities to propose alternatives around agriculture, building on the work of Via Campesina and other civil society groups. The draft work of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability recognizes the importance of agriculture and small farmers. There is some recognition that industrialized agriculture is not working and that peasant agriculture has tools and ideas that should be supported. There are also some models of public support, such as the US Department of Agriculture's mass mailings of different types of seeds to farmers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which helped to identify and develop productive strains and methods.

“[Governments] are all caught on this train together, driving first to Durban and then on to Rio. They can’t get off, the train is moving too fast, and they have no idea what they are going to do when they get to the destination. For civil society, this is like a perfect dream. It gives us the opportunity to propose some ideas and suggest what might be done.”

*Pat Mooney*

Mohau Pheko outlined some **perspectives of governments** that will be negotiating in Durban, and of the host country, South Africa. Adaptation is the most important issue in the African context. African delegations are expecting the outcome of Durban to be aligned with their positions. They see the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol as one of the most important areas of work. The issue for them is whether enough can be put on the table to build *towards* a legally binding agreement, not in Durban or at the next COP, but as a priority.

Developing countries are very concerned that their efforts to industrialize and fulfill their development needs will be curtailed if they make any concessions. Under the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability, developed countries should be giving more, but they are not. Many developed countries essentially argue that their politics cannot deliver on what science requires (emission reductions to keep the temperature increase below 2°C). Their overall view of what can be done is for the Cancun decisions to be operationalized, other issues gradually developed and mitigation pledges incrementally improved, without any time frame or process.

There has also been no progress on new forms of international finance for renewable energy and energy efficiency, just “regurgitated overseas development aid.” The future of the Kyoto Protocol is in danger. Negotiators have failed to advance on a global carbon market. There has been a delay in introducing more market-based mechanisms to promote mitigation action that

could enhance the cost-effectiveness of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

COP 16 agreed to create a Green Climate Fund (GCF) but did not agree on its financing; this has become a priority for South Africa in COP 17. With respect to a second commitment period for emission reductions, Europe and some “Umbrella Group” members are willing to carry the bulk of the commitments but want to see some commitments from the US. Not much is expected to happen on this in Durban. Canada’s approach of alignment with the US, insisting on no second commitment period for Kyoto and a single binding agreement for all, is not seen as realistic or credible. There is a challenge for Canadian civil society to take up and intensify actions on climate justice in Canada.

Both speakers agreed that civil society has the opportunity to propose alternatives and “turn the tables.” While opportunities may be greater at Rio, it is still important to use every chance at Durban to expose the different positions, highlight alternatives, inform (using stories and lived experiences), and push for action. However, the speakers differed on whether progress on carbon trading would be desirable.

**Discussion:** An African civil society representative related how civil society is concerned about the commodification of agriculture in a continent in which most people involved in agriculture are peasant farmers. The High Commissioner noted that South Africa recognizes the importance of the issues of food security, food sovereignty, and land use, and has some concerns about agriculture being “of-flooded” onto climate change negotiations from the stalled negotiations of the WTO.

It was noted that at a recent meeting in Bamako, African civil society endorsed the position that global temperature increases must be kept to below 1.5°C. The position of the African Union and South Africa is 2°C.

On the issue of carbon trading, the High Commissioner emphasized the opportunity for civil society to bring alternatives to the table. There

“Many countries – the island states, the African continent – cannot wait for Rio. We have to put something on the table that can lead us to Rio.”

*Her Excellency Mohau Pheko*

will be a very active civil society space at Durban, being organized by South African social movements and grassroots groups. It is important not to disengage from the process, but to actively engage with “inside” as well as “outside” strategies. In the lead-up to Durban, Canadian CSOs should provide their policy views to high commissioners and ambassadors of various countries.

### 3.0 Financing Climate Change Mitigation: The Case of Forests

This panel looked at proposals for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by reducing deforestation and degradation, and by encouraging forest conservation. Key debates include how to finance these efforts, the potential role of REDD+ in achieving climate goals, and outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Speakers noted that deforestation and forest degradation are responsible for 17-20 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, second only to the energy sector. In countries such as Brazil and Indonesia, they are the main source of national GHG emissions. Globally, over 70 million people live in and/or depend on forests for their livelihoods.

Jessica Boyle of the International Institute for Sustainable Development reviewed the **potential of REDD+**. Activities such as agriculture and harvesting of forest products play a role as drivers of deforestation and degradation. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. “REDD+” goes beyond deforestation

and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. Many developed and developing countries see REDD+ as a positive way to contribute to global mitigation efforts. It has not yet been implemented; “readiness activities” are being undertaken in nearly 50 countries.

Over US\$4 billion in international financing commitments have been made to date to REDD+, and over 22 climate funds are involved in financing it.

Concerns have been expressed about the scale and governance of REDD+, safeguards and benefits sharing, technical issues including measurement, reporting and verification, and financing (concerns about the sustainability of commitments from developed countries, and different views on whether the approach should be market-based, fund-based or a hybrid of the two).

Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron of the People’s Movement on Climate Change outlined **South-ern civil society concerns** about REDD+. A climate justice view is that the Kyoto Protocol has been compromised by market-based mechanisms. The Protocol recognizes the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capacity, but provides an escape route via carbon trading and offsets. Under REDD+, credits from reduced emissions would be quantified, and that positive quantity would become a credit that could be sold in an international carbon market (market-based approach). Alternatively, the credit could be handed to an international fund set up to provide financial compensation to participating countries that preserve their forests (fund-based approach).

A fundamental flaw of REDD is that it treats forests as carbon sinks, but they are much more than that. An issue is how to develop accurate estimates of carbon storage in order to place value on the carbon-bearing potential of a forested area. But lives and biodiversity cannot be quantified. The literature on payment

“It’s not just business as usual for carbon emitters when they talk about REDD, but it’s actually more business than usual for them.”

*Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron*

for ecosystem services illustrates the difficulty of measuring and assessing values.

Who should be paid for a specific forested area: governments, indigenous peoples? How will accountability be maintained: if payments are made but the forest still is depleted, what then? How to ensure that carbon payments lead to actual and sustained forest protection?

REDD+ is very problematic with respect to indigenous peoples. Many countries do not recognize indigenous peoples or the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). There are many violations of the right to free, prior and informed consent, and of rights to self-determination, land tenure and customary laws. REDD+ unjustly targets indigenous peoples and forest dwellers as the drivers of deforestation, when traditional practices have preserved forests and biodiversity. Market-based carbon trading and offsets are incompatible with indigenous knowledge and value systems.

REDD+ rewards traditional players in deforestation, and moves responsibility for mitigation from North to South. Southern civil society fears REDD+ projects will contribute to land grabs and land use conversion, as the definition of “forests” includes industrial monoculture plantations. There are fears of violent evictions of indigenous people and forest dwellers, human rights violations and militarization. There are also concerns about increased speculation in financial markets, and a deep distrust of market solutions for a problem created by market failures. The view is that a fundamental restructuring of production and consumption systems is needed.

Estebancio Castro of the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests noted that the IAITPTF includes 169

indigenous communities, which have varying views on REDD+. Some would be happy to implement REDD+ projects, while others are strongly against it, so it is challenging to develop common positions.

**Indigenous peoples** initially thought REDD+ would be positive but are finding it is more difficult than expected. It is very challenging to be fully informed about REDD+ and its potential consequences. Moreover, indigenous peoples feel they are being unfairly blamed for deforestation and degradation. The contributions to deforestation and degradation from mining, highways, and dams being built with Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) funding are not acknowledged.

The UNFCCC discussions are too market-based. The problems and benefits of shifting cultivation should be considered in a human rights context. In areas such as Latin America, lack of recognition of the legal land tenure of indigenous peoples is a major issue. If parties in the UNFCCC cannot discuss or find ways to accommodate the UNDRIP, indigenous peoples cannot feel safe negotiating their lands or their forests. The UNDRIP must be recognized and implemented, from the design stage of REDD+, and there must be recognition of traditional knowledge, how it will be used and how indigenous peoples will benefit.

It is not clear who will gain from the potential financial benefits of REDD+. What value is given to traditional knowledge? It is very difficult for communities to know what is fair payment. There is a significant opportunity cost for indigenous peoples to not use the land on which they depend. Negotiations are highly unbalanced and indigenous peoples are relegated to observer status. They have not yet been sufficiently engaged by the negotiating parties.

**Discussion:** Concerns were raised about the commodification of nature. The importance of providing counter-proposals, not just disagreeing with REDD+, was noted.

“For us [indigenous peoples], the forest is many things. It is our supermarket, our pharmacy, our house. It is everything... They are telling us ‘we can pay you \$10 for 1 hectare’. Is it good enough for my people?”

*Estebancio Castro*

It was noted that there is not yet an agreed definition of REDD+ or of forests, even at the negotiations. There are uncertainties around carbon measurement and disagreements about data. Estimates of financial flows from REDD+ linked GHG reductions are disputed.

There was some agreement that a positive step at Durban or Rio would be to make progress on financing mechanisms. How REDD will be financed is not clear, and there is a need for long-term funding guarantees. The People’s Movement would like to see concrete terms of reference for a GCF that would focus on providing adaptation funding. Climate justice advocates would also like to see a regular seat on the board of the GCF for a civil society representative from a developing country (not a corporate representative).

The People’s Movement is pushing for a firewall between climate change financing and Official Development Assistance, because climate financing must address the question of historical responsibility. The role of the private sector will need to be addressed, possibly through innovative financing mechanisms such as a tax on financial transactions, or taxes on bunker and aviation fuels.

While safeguards have been formally recognized by the Cancun agreement and in REDD+, this does not mean they are being effectively addressed. There appeared to be some agreement that existing instruments should be used where possible. There is duplication of safeguards, and doubts about the political will to implement them.

#### 4.0 Agriculture and Climate Change

Doreen Stabinsky of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy reviewed **how agriculture is treated in the UNFCCC negotiations**. It is considered primarily from a mitigation perspective (item 1(b)(iv) of the Bali Action Plan, on cooperative sectoral approaches). The world is facing an enormous adaptation challenge in agriculture but there is no entry point for discussions. In terms of mitigation, the main source of emissions is in the North but the main potential for mitigation is in the South, where agriculture offers the potential to take carbon out of the atmosphere. The South is put in the role of doing the mitigation that the North is unwilling or unable to do.

The adaptation challenge is enormous: we will be moving outside our historical experience of temperature, outside farmers’ experience, outside plants’ historical experience. Growing season length declines as temperature increases reduce soil moisture.

But the current focus is on market solutions and mitigation, including a World Bank-driven agenda to mobilize funds for agriculture through carbon markets. There is great interest in the mitigation potential of Africa’s agricultural soils, and in commodifying its carbon to sell as offsets. The Bank promotes this as a “triple win” of increased productivity, increased resilience, and mitigation of emissions. Many solutions are agro-ecological in character, but the focus is not on the ecological rationale, or on adaptation, but on the fact that carbon may be counted. The focus on mitigation has been beneficial to the Bank.

The more important issue is how to create more resilient agricultural systems. Practices such as mulching and use of compost increase the health and water-holding capacity of soils. The right practices also sequester carbon. Should/can we rely on the market to fund their adoption? Are these practices the entirety of the adaptation agenda?

An adaptation-focused agenda would involve substantial, stable, predictable, new and additional funding for adaptation; direct support for agro-ecological practices that increase system resilience; and international cooperation on breeding, water harvesting, meteorological capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer. Adaptation cannot rely on top-down knowledge and technology transfer. It requires farmer-to-farmer networking, sharing of traditional and indigenous knowledge, sharing of information, seeds and techniques.

At the negotiations, discussion under a mitigation framing will focus on technical aspects of monitoring, reporting and verification of carbon sequestration. The challenge for civil society is how to make adaptation more central to the negotiations.

Assétou Founé Samaké, of the Institut Africain pour l'Alimentation et le Développement Durable in Mali, also emphasized the need to recognize the efficiencies of peasant agriculture that is adapted to local environments. Peasant farmers are already adapting to climate change, and there needs to be more focus on helping them to **improve resilience**. Civil society needs to push for small-scale approaches to be respected in the search for solutions, and for African as well as Western knowledge to be valued. What is needed is more emphasis on food sovereignty, understanding that agriculture is multi-functional (including providing ecosystem services). Peasant knowledge is not the only source of knowledge but it needs to be part of the solution.

Intensive, industrial agriculture is one of the fundamental causes of climate change. Carbon markets and REDD will not address the real issues. There needs to be more emphasis on the importance of diversity and heterogeneity in agriculture.

There is a need to improve education, to get away from reductionist and simplistic views. Increasing links between educational institutions and peasant farmers will help academics understand the realities on the ground: there

“The carbon dioxide problem is a problem of fossil carbon... To think that soils or trees are going to get us out of that problem – it's orders of magnitude away from what we can accomplish with these natural sinks.”

*Doreen Stabinsky*

needs to be convergence of these different types of knowledge. Science can be used to demonstrate how peasant agricultural processes improve resilience. There are alternatives available, and civil society needs to compile and publicize these, mobilize in order to be heard in the negotiations. Farmers, including women farmers, need to be mobilized because their voices are not at the table, and need to be.

**Discussion:** There was considerable discussion of whether agro-ecological approaches will be sufficient if action is not taken to slow climate change and average temperatures increase from 3.5-6.7°C as predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

A 1.5-2°C increase will mean that food cannot be produced in much of Africa. There was discussion of how some of the best work is being done by people working in that reality. Genetic resources from much warmer climates can be applied. Humanity needs to pull out all the stops for thinking and creativity.

There was discussion of the ability of current institutions – governments, universities – to respond to the challenge. It was reiterated that there is a need for new forms of knowledge development and dissemination. Food sovereignty challenges in the North and South are different, so solutions will be different. It is important to look to local solutions. Developed countries need to address the role of synthetic fertilizer production and consumption in contributing to climate change.

## 5.0 Mobilization and Policy Openings

Steven Guilbeault of Equiterre began by describing the citizen action on the tar sands that had taken place earlier in the day at Parliament Hill. He noted that Canadian civil society groups were turning to **civil disobedience** in frustration that considerable research and advocacy on climate change have been ignored by the federal government.

He then made a number of points about the UNFCCC negotiations. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility is being ignored by many developed countries, including Canada. According to Environment Canada, we will not even achieve the modest goal fixed at Copenhagen. It is possible there may be an accord starting in 2014-15, but it would require another decade or so to be ratified and come into effect. In the meantime, science is showing we have less time than we thought: climate change is more rapid and extensive than predicted at the time of negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol. There is a huge gap between what the international scientific community is demanding and where we are politically. It is very hard to see how this can be rectified at Durban and Rio, although there are still possibilities for some progress.

On the positive side, more and more Canadians understand that climate change is the most important environmental issue, although they generally do not think it is a problem that affects Canada. Civil society needs to work in Canada with those who are prepared to act, at the municipal and provincial levels, and improve public understanding of how we are all affected. If the UNFCCC negotiations are unsuccessful, there are still many things that we can and should do.

According to Roger Rashi of Alternatives, another ray of light is that **social movements** around the world are starting to mobilize around the issue of climate change. This was evident at the 2010 World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Brazilian social

"We need to continue paying attention to the international negotiations, because the last thing we need is a very bad deal that would lock in very bad things on a number of different fronts, and that would give the public and governments the appearance that 'it has been dealt with'."

*Steven Guilbeault*

movements are planning to convene a People's Summit at the time of Rio+20. In Quebec, Alternatives is seeking to mobilize activists from various movements (social, labour, student, environment etc.) to go to Rio *en masse* and participate in the People's Summit. Climate change is not just an environmental issue, it is a social issue.

Mr. Rashi's view was that social change will take place mainly through public mobilization. Civil society must link local and global issues, and use both "inside" and "outside" strategies. We may not see much progress through the negotiations, but can through the mobilization of social movements: that is the way forward.

**Discussion:** There was discussion of civil disobedience vs. trying to have a dialogue with government, and general agreement that both are needed. There are still possibilities to make progress through advocacy and dialogue; there are MPs interested in hearing about policy work, and it is important to keep communicating to the public. Some governments (e.g. Bolivia) are taking interesting positions, and some perceive movement within the Group of 77, so there may be potential for conjunctural alliances and strategies with some governments, in addition to public mobilizations. Civil society needs to track the negotiations in order to help prevent bad deals from being made.

There was discussion of the extent to which disagreements among civil society are diluting efforts. Can we mobilize effectively despite serious differences in views? Issues around the role of markets and the private sector are particularly contentious.

There was discussion of how to ensure that vulnerable populations are mobilized and have their voices heard. Social movements in host countries have particular responsibility for mobilizing people at and around events, to see that local struggles and issues are brought out.

The role of the private sector was discussed. Mr. Guilbeault suggested that civil society needs to make the issue of climate change as morally reprehensible as slavery. Everything that can be done to bring public attention to the issues and to improve public understanding is helpful in building pressure on corporations, and on governments that essentially negotiate on their behalf. Some see value in working with companies that are trying to improve practices and promote renewable energy, while others are opposed. Civil society capacity on trade and corporate accountability issues is being weakened. This work is not thought of as climate change work but the central questions around production models are the same.

There was a call to participants to take back the conference discussions to their own organizations, and to seek ways to collaborate more effectively. It was noted that the C4D coalition provides a venue for this, and one suggestion was that financial contributions to the coalition were a way that organizations could take action.

## ANNEX A: CONFERENCE AGENDA

### Climate Negotiations and Justice for Vulnerable Populations: Perspectives for COP 17 and Rio+20

#### 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome and Objectives

- Carol Thiessen, Public Policy Advisor, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

#### 9:30-10:30 Setting the Scene

This panel will provide an overview of the trajectory of climate debates through UNFCCC, Rio+20 and other fora, highlighting key issues for vulnerable populations.

- Pat Mooney, Executive Director, ETC Group
- Mohau Pheko, Her Excellency High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa
- Moderator: Carla Sbert, Manager of Conservation Programs and Legal Issues, Nature Canada

#### 10:30-11:00 Break

#### 11:00-12:30 Financing Climate Change Mitigation: the Case of Forests

This panel will look at proposals for cutting greenhouse gas emissions through reducing deforestation and degradation, and forest conservation. Key debates are how to finance these efforts, the role REDD+ may have in achieving climate goals, and outcomes for vulnerable populations.

- Jessica Boyle, Project Officer Climate Change and Energy, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Maria Theresa Nera-Lauron, Coordinator, People's Movement on Climate Change, Philippines
- Estebancio Castro, Executive-Secretary, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Tropical Forests
- Moderator: Julia Sanchez, President-CEO, CCIC

#### 12:30-1:30 Lunch and networking

#### 1:30-3:00 Agriculture and Climate Change

This panel will examine the debates on how agriculture can help mitigate climate change, while also adapting to increased climate risks and improving food security. Key questions include how agriculture is being addressed in current negotiations and the implications for smallholder farmers. What path would best achieve the co-benefits of mitigation and adaptation?

- Doreen Stabinsky, Senior Advisor Trade and Governance, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
- Assétou Founé Samaké, Director, Institut Africain pour l'Alimentation et le Développement Durable (IAD), Mali (by videoconferencing)
- Moderator: Susan Walsh, USC

#### 3:00-3:30 Break

#### 3:30-4:30 Now What? Mobilization and Policy openings in the lead-up to Durban, Rio+20 and beyond

The panel will provide a scan on hopes for Durban, Rio +20 and beyond, highlighting possible policy openings and possibilities for Canadian CSO action.

- Steven Guilbeault, Cofounder and Deputy Executive Coordinator, Equiterre
- Roger Rashi, Climate Justice Campaign Coordinator, Alternatives
- Moderator: Gauri Sreenivasan, Policy Coordinator, CCIC

#### 7:00-9:00 Public Forum: Farming, Forests and Fuel – Southern Perspectives on Climate Change