Equity and ambition: The essentials for the future climate regime beyond 2012

Summary of the 25 September workshop.
Abbreviations

**AWG-KP** Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex 1 Parties under the Kyoto Protocol  
**AWG-LCA** Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention  
**CDM** Clean Development Mechanism  
**COP** Conference of the Parties  
**FPCEU** French Presidency of the Council of the European Union  
**GDR** Greenhouse Development Rights  
**GEF** Global Environment Facility  
**IPCC** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
**MOP** Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol  
**NAPA** National Adaptation Programme of Action  
**ODA** Official Development Assistance  
**UNFCCC** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
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Introduction

How can one foster equity and a high level of ambition within the future climate regime beyond 2012? This was the subject of discussion at the workshop titled «Fighting Climate Change: What Multilateral Regime for Beyond 2012?» organised by Coordination SUD, the Research and Technological Exchange Group (GRET), and Reseau Action Climat – France (RAC-F) on 25 September 2008 in Bobigny (France) with the support of the General Secretariat of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (FPCEU).

Three months before the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP), the purpose of this workshop was to foster dialogue among institutional and non-institutional actors in developed and developing countries on the stakes of the upcoming negotiations. Attention focused more specifically on the issue of financing the fight against climate change, the cornerstone of the future climate regime beyond 2012.

The workshop was attended by more than seventy people from development and relief organizations, environmental NGOs, French development aid, research, and international organisations.

This paper summarises the highpoints of the workshop, including the questions discussed. Faced with the magnitude of the efforts necessary to fight climate change, the participation of all countries is needed. But, choosing which objectives to promote and which instruments to set up is tricky. The chasms between industrialised countries and developing countries must be bridged. In particular, this requires one to:

- define structuring principles on which to share the efforts, taking into account countries’ right to development;

- make considerable progress in identifying sources of additional, sustainable and stable financing; and

- promote concrete «win-win» or «no-regrets» solutions for actions to fight climate change that combine equity and effectiveness.
Given the urgency, raise the level of ambition in the negotiations

1. Follow the Path of Urgency

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global warming of more than 2°C would have unprecedented consequences for ecological balances and the human race. In order to avoid this irreversible threshold, an emergency scenario must be established. According to the scenario in The Right to Development in a Climate Constrained World (Greenhouse Development Rights — GDR), an 80% cut in global emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 levels would be needed to stabilise emissions at 450 ppm. This would imply a necessary reduction of 11 Gt of CO₂ eq worldwide, 5 Gt from industrialised countries, and 2 or 3 Gt from emerging countries (depending on how deforestation related emissions are taken into account). Under this same scenario, a radical change in modes of development would be needed. According to the chart below, the emissions of industrialised countries must drop by 6% per year starting in 2010, until they fall to nearly zero. Even under this scenario, the latitude remaining for developing countries would be extremely limited. The emissions of developing countries would need to reach their maximum level only a few years after those of developed countries – before 2020 – and then fall by 6% per year until 2050. This evolution would need to take place at a time when most citizens in developing countries would still be struggling to rise out of poverty and trying to significantly improve their standard of living. One observation is manifest: beyond a drastic reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions of industrialised countries, support in limiting the emissions of certain developing countries is indispensable.

2. Definition of ambitious objectives

The scientific observations are clear, but policy responses have not measured up. Industrialised countries remain divided as to the targets to attain for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, beyond 2012. For the European Union, one must obey scientists and set ambitious targets to keep global warming below 2°C (a “top-down” approach). For other countries such as Japan, one must set targets according to what is possible to accomplish (a “bottom-up” approach). This last approach is inconceivable in the fight against climate change. The solution must be centred around what must be done, and not around what can be done. The participation of developing countries in emissions reduction efforts is important, in addition to that of industrialised countries. Accordingly, the Bali Action Plan adopted at the end of 2007 represents considerable progress because it includes developing countries in the negotiations to define future commitments and reduction actions for the period beyond 2012. Since the Action Plan was adopted, developing countries have continuously stated during the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) that their commitment was conditional on the level of absolute and binding reductions for industrialised countries. Europe’s adoption of the Climate-Energy Package, which should happen in early December in principle, could be a strong signal to developing countries if the package is sufficiently strong. If Europe presents such a plan in Poznan, other international partners might announce equally ambitious measures, which could then reassure developing countries with the proof of their exemplarity. The results of the election in the United States could have a considerable influence on the course of the negotiations. An announcement by the future president of the United States of a return to multilateralism could also make progress possible with
According to the action plan, developing countries must adopt “nationally appropriate mitigation actions [...] in the context of sustainable development, supported and enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner.”

The European Union would, consequently, have a preponderant role to play to initiate discussions with the new American administration as soon as the election results are known. No time must be lost given the short timeframe in which to reach a new global agreement on climate change by the end of 2009.

Among other things, developing countries’ expectations of industrialised countries include progress on the question of indicators to assess industrialised countries’ fulfilment of their obligations in regard to financing, technology transfer, and (institutional and human) capacity building for mitigation and adaptation in compliance with the Bali Action Plan. France, which holds the Presidency of the European Union until 31 December 2008, wishes therefore to launch an initiative on the exact measurement of greenhouse gas emissions.

Keeping global warming below 2°C implies making considerable efforts to reduce emissions while simultaneously increasing the means devoted to adaptation for the poorest countries and populations. According to the report by the Convention Secretariat on investments and financial flows (2007), in the global fight against climate change, some 200 billion dollars will be needed by 2030 to keep greenhouse gas emissions at today’s levels. Therefore, given the magnitude of efforts needed to fight climate change, the negotiators must resolve one central issue: What climate regime should be established to limit world emissions rapidly while taking into account the needs of the developing world?

The GDR framework contains a burden-sharing proposal for climate change based on the right to development. This approach consists of setting national obligations in function of a development threshold, that is to say the standard of living below which countries and individuals are not required to share the cost of climate transition. Above this threshold, individuals (in both developed and developing countries) must contribute to climate efforts. This threshold is set at 20 dollars per day per inhabitant in order to reflect a standard of living that goes beyond basic needs. The GDR framework is based on two indicators:

- the degree of responsibility for climate change (cumulated emissions since 1990); and
- the country’s capacity to act without sacrificing essential needs (below the development threshold).

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3. Identify new sources of sustainable, stable financing proportionate to needs

1. Define structuring principles for financing

Financing is the cornerstone of the future system to fight climate change. Developing countries have numerous expectations on this issue. Indeed, the Convention Secretariat report on financing and investment needs showed that the financial resources that would need to be mobilised to fight climate change in developing countries (“non-Annex 1” countries) can be estimated at approximately 77 billion dollars, or 0.86% of world investment and 0.29% of world GDP in 2030. This sum would make it possible to cut world emissions by nearly 70%.

While these amounts are relatively low compared to GDP and total projected investment, they are approximately 100 billion dollars more than the amounts of official development assistance (ODA) promised by industrialised countries for 40 years but as yet never delivered in full. ODA can be useful, especially for Least Developed Countries, as the Convention Secretary’s report states. However, given the small amounts of ODA and its downward trend, new resources must be identified. Furthermore, innovative financing is not a new question. It is a general issue in development. A pilot experiment was, what is more, set up to finance the fight against AIDS (taxing airline tickets).

In the case of climate change, it is important to apply simple principles to the definition of innovative financing:

- set the financing contribution according to the principle of equity as defined by the GDR framework (responsibility and capacity to act);
no multiplication of specific financing distribution mechanisms as doing so could make access to financing more complex; and

ensure the stability and sustainability of resources through mandatory contributions.

2. Transform major principles into operational proposals

Since the Bali Conference, several proposals on new sources of financing have been made. The following table summarises the main proposals.

At this stage, it is difficult to declare whether these various proposals would be relevant and effective. The proposals are still relatively general. They proclaim their main principles. Their operational nature, including the type of governance to set up, remains to be shown. Nevertheless, a comparative reading of these proposals and the basic principles identified previously allows one to identify their limitations and/or advantages:

- Equity: Mexico’s proposal seems most balanced in this regard. Both Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries contribute based on various criteria, including equity. The Swiss proposal is also interesting. However, in practice, taxation can have strong social impact, particularly in developing countries (raising the cost of transportation and energy).

- Stability and sustainability of financing: All of the proposals identify ways to eliminate the voluntary nature of contributions.

- Justification of distribution mechanisms: On this point, the proposals go into little detail. Switzerland envisages a temporary use of the adaptation fund. For its part, Mexico proposes a new fund.

In Poznan, the Parties to the Convention will have one year left in which to agree on an innovative financing instrument and on the institutional structure that will accompany this instrument. These proposals must be explored in function of their capacity to bring together developing countries and guarantee the measurable, verifiable and reportable nature of the identified financing. As a matter of practicality, greater involvement by ministers of finance in these discussions is needed to facilitate progress in the negotiations. They must also give their negotiators a clear mandate, jointly with the ministers of ecology.
Promote the establishment of no-regrets strategies in developing countries

1. Promote ambitious and equitable mitigation actions in developing countries

Developing countries’ and especially emerging countries’ participation in emissions reduction efforts implies exploiting the synergies between the fight against climate change and development as well as possible. The issue of energy lies at the juncture between these two objectives. Lowering energy intensity and improving energy efficiency are “no-regrets” solutions whose relevance and effectiveness have been proven in the field. They must be given more visibility in the negotiations.

1.1 Learn lessons from concrete experience

Energy supply and use is the crux of the problem when it comes to mitigation in both industrialised and developing countries. Nevertheless, the challenges differ when it comes to the distribution of emissions by gas and by sector (less CO2 and more methane, the share of emissions from agriculture and deforestation) and the small amount of financial resources for mitigation. Experience in the field shows that mitigation actions in developing countries are only equitable and effective if they take into account the following aspects:

- The action benefits the poorest: For instance, promoting solar cell systems in the field of energy is a false good solution. Not only does it have little impact on reducing emissions, but above all it privileges the small better-off classes. Mitigation actions on wood used for heating would be much more effective and equitable from the standpoint of development and climate change. In the case of deforestation, developing rural timber markets would make more effective and equitable in ensuring sustainable forest management.

- The action relies on an integrated approach: In the case of construction, investments can be heavy and costly in the long term. The key to success for projects is therefore based on financing the entire production chain (architecture, materials, practices, regulation).

- The action takes into account the institutional dimension of mitigation: Transportation is a sector that emits a particularly large amount of emissions in developing countries. Some projects envisage building subways to lower vehicle-related emissions. Yet, this type of project is very expensive, difficult to implement, and can have negative social impacts linked to changes in the topography of the city (as in Santiago, Chile). In some cases, the most equitable and effective action would be the institutional reorganisation of existing public transit (as in Curitiba, Brazil).

1.2 The actions to determine in the negotiations

Experience in the field has shown that no-regrets strategies are possible, ambitious and equitable as long as certain aspects are taken into consideration. They must be showcased more in the negotiations on mitigation actions, in particular those related to changes to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and sectoral approaches.

The Clean Development Mechanism

The CDM is the main existing tool for collaboration between industrialised and developing countries. In principle, it is supposed to allow inexpensive greenhouse gas emission reductions in the host country while fostering the country’s sustainable development. However, there is no longer any doubt today about the need to reform this mechanism. The CDM concerns only a few large emerging countries and focuses primarily on eliminating two gases, N2O and HFC23. As a result, its contribution to the sustainable development of the host countries is limited. The CDM must be improved in order to meet high environmental and social expectations and ensure that the reductions in emissions...
are truly additional reductions. With an aim to reforming the CDM, much more ambitious project eligibility criteria must be established. These criteria must at least be equivalent to Gold Standard’s criteria. The Gold Standard label is currently acknowledged by 44 NGOs around the world. According to its criteria, projects must use renewable energies or energy efficiency technologies. They must go beyond ‘business as usual’ scenarios and truly contribute to the sustainable development of the host countries. Furthermore, two mandatory stakeholder consultations must be held so that the local populations concerned most by the project participate fully in it.

The CDM, like the other two flexibility mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol, focuses on carbon. Its effectiveness will depend in large part on the price of CO2 and its stability. Given the magnitude of the necessary changes in terms of de-carbonising development, the price of carbon will probably not be sufficient and stable enough to reverse the situation. In this context, the carbon market must be supervised and coupled with ambitious national public policies that take social considerations into particular account. In industrialised countries, it must not replace substantial domestic reductions. Currently, the CDM’s main weakness is its focus on projects, which does not allow it to tackle entire sectors of economic activity as a whole. For this reason, in the framework of the new agreement, it is important to move beyond the project-based approach stage and more fully develop policy-or programme-based approaches.

SECTORAL APPROACHES: “SECTORAL NO-LOSE TARGETS”

Sectoral approaches are a new theme in the negotiations. They cover different things in different countries. Clarification is needed to reveal good approaches. Three types of approaches can be seen:

1. **Worldwide Sectoral Approaches**: These approaches refer to either technological cooperation (partnerships to set sector standards) or policy cooperation (for example, setting up a CO2 quota trading system for sea transport-related emissions).

2. **The Sectoral Approach for Developing Countries**: Put forth by some industrialised countries, this approach is seen as a way to ensure greater participation by emerging countries in the carbon market through sectoral reduction targets. It could be a first step towards national commitments.

This last approach is sharply debated in the long-term cooperative action under the convention (AWG-LCA) negotiations between developing and industrialised countries. For developing countries, especially emerging countries, this approach is not acceptable given historic responsibilities. In practical terms, it also requires countries to have the institutional capacity to roll out the policies (for instance, enforcing cement industry standards in China’s provinces). Yet, in many cases, these capacities are often too weak to ensure that the principal parties involved fulfil their sectoral commitments. Among other things, technical feasibility must be examined.

Despite these limitations, this approach seems consistent with the principle of equity as defined in the GDR framework. It takes into account countries’ responsibility in terms of cumulated emissions and countries’ ability to respond to climate change. The support of industrialised countries would be needed to implement this approach. It could be financed by either public funds (taxing the income from quota auctions) or the carbon market. In regards to the second possibility, setting sectoral no-lose targets is a way for countries to remunerate themselves on the carbon market if they exceed their reduction targets.

Setting up a programme-based CDM is another alternative. This relates to discussions on changes to the flexibility mechanisms for the period beyond 2012 (second commitment period for industrialised countries).
2. Identify concrete action priorities for adaptation

The question of adaptation is taking on an increasingly important place in international discussions. It is acknowledged as a major stake for developing countries, especially the least developed countries such as African countries and certain Andean countries, which are very vulnerable. Developing countries consider that the costs of adaptation must be financed by wealthy countries as the latter have an ecological debt that they must repay. In the field of development policy and projects, adaptation initiatives are multiplying. However, when it comes time for concrete action, many stumble over the question of action priorities (both thematic and geographic), which shows the difficulty of separating adaptation from development. The basic concepts need to be re-examined, specifically the definition of adaptation.

2.1 Re-examining a basic concept: how to define adaptation?

This question has not been decided in the framework of the Adaptation Fund. This mechanism to finance adaptation has several singularities in relation to the source of the revenue (a tax on the CDM), its governance (a majority of developing countries), and financing access modalities (direct access for recipient countries). Officially in place since December 2007, it must now resolve two key questions:

- How can “carbon” credits be monetised?

- What type of project should it finance, and what eligibility rules should it have?

The upcoming discussions on these questions in the framework of the Adaptation Fund illustrate the magnitude of the stakes behind the negotiations on the “adaptation” pillar of the future agreement.

To better identify concrete actions to finance, a re-examination of the definition of adaptation is needed. There are four possible definitions of adaptation in function of the following two parameters:

- Consideration of the variability of climate change, or consideration of only climate change (including extreme future fluctuations), and

- Justification of intervention because of climate change or other expected benefits (existence of “climate” and “development” co-benefits).

The strictest definition of adaptation would amount to financing only actions to fight long-term climate change, without any non-climate justification. The broadest definition would, on the contrary, take into account current climate variability and favour actions that have co-benefits for the climate and for development. From an economic standpoint, this definition seems most appropriate. Given that most climate change impacts will take place over the long term, it is more relevant and effective to emphasise “no-lose” strategies (with co-benefits) that also have positive effects in the shorter term when it comes to lowering climate vulnerability. In this case, the additionality criteria used today for GEF financing eligibility is no longer meaningful because it risks leading to anti-selection. More generally speaking, it is technically difficult to use, given the difficulty of precisely measuring the impacts of climate change.

ADAPTATION COSTS

Assessments of adaptation needs vary according to the source (from tens of billions according to the Convention Secretariat to a few million according to NAPAs). Whatever methodology is used, it is accepted that adaptation costs emerge at different levels:

- Climate change requires new investment (e.g. irrigation);

- Taking climate change into account in infrastructures raises the investment cost (e.g. raising dikes);

- Climate change shortens the lifespan of investments sensitive to climate fluctuations (e.g. housing);

- The uncertainty of climate change requires one to anticipate different impact scenarios when designing investments (e.g. hydraulic infrastructure adaptation); and

- Economic activities are no longer profitable because of worsening climate conditions (e.g. farming).
2.2 Priority sectors and countries

Among the no-regrets strategies, one must define sectoral and geographic action priorities given the large number of projects that could then be financed. Investments made today in the water sector, land occupation planning, or even in costal protection are development actions that simultaneously make it possible to lower populations’ climate vulnerability as long as climate change is taken into consideration when designing these infrastructures. In sectoral terms, emphasis should be placed more specifically on sectors in which investments have a long lifespan. Water management (including drinking water and sanitation) and natural disaster prevention are two sectors in which investments yield large benefits for development (improving public health, for instance) and the fight against climate change, in particular if they are made in urban areas. Geographically, priority should be given to the Least Developed Countries that are the most vulnerable and to implementing their national adaptation programmes of action. Within these countries, specific actions and financing should be envisaged to favour local communities’ adaptation to climate change. Accordingly, some existing financial envelops such as the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) small-scale programmes should be increased considerably.

3. Improve public policies by systematically integrating climate change

Even though it is difficult to obtain a precise estimate of needs in order to fight climate change, everyone agrees on a scale of magnitude for the financing and investments to mobilise: approximately 200 billion. This figure represents only one percent of total new investment. This represents only a small share of the actions to undertake. It is necessary to work on the remaining 99% and what currently exists. The carbon market has a role to play but it must be supervised by public authorities more able to promote the question of equity. The aim is to set up national incentives to re-focus investments on less “carbonised” development more resilient in the face of climate change. The fight against climate change must be tackled in an integrated manner that takes into account all dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental. This requires one to set up public policies that take into account changes in the climate. This is a move towards greater mutual consistency. Just as the fight against poverty and inequalities must irrigate all public policies, climate change must henceforth be taken into account in all sectoral policies in terms of, for instance, infrastructures, research, and changing populations’ practices (e.g. in farming).
Conclusion

Humanity is facing a serious economic crisis that requires it to question modes of representation, consumption and governance, share knowledge, means and responsibility, and compare experiences and information.

Financing the fight against climate change – for both emission reductions and adaptation – will be a major challenge beyond 2012, notably for developing countries. Today, a double observation can be made: official development assistance is low overall, and the clean development mechanism does not work well enough for the poorest countries. The carbon market can be relevant and effective for specific actions but it cannot replace public action to guarantee compliance with certain principles, including equity.

In Poznan, an agreement must be reached on the principles that will structure the negotiations until Copenhagen:

- **Enhance the advantages of international coordination:** A cooperative multilateral approach with ambitious targets and key burden-sharing principles would be less costly and more equitable than separate national approaches.

- **Foster complementarity between financial instruments:** The existing financing – official development assistance, the Convention’s financial mechanism, the carbon market – must be optimised with an aim to effectiveness. It would be best to control, within the Convention, the multiplication of non-UN initiatives leading to a fragmentation and dilution of the few existing public financial resources.

- **Ensure the coherency of national public policies by facilitating the inclusion of climate change in sectoral policies.**

- Involve all stakeholders in defining instruments to fight climate change: The transmission of information between civil society, experts and governments in both developed and developing countries is crucial to establishing tools that suit the needs of everyone. Development and environmental NGOs in particular a vital contribution to make to reflections on the subject because of their knowledge of the field. They have a role to play in guiding diplomats.
Annex

Seminar

Fight against climate change: what multilateral regime beyond 2012?

9.0 A.M.
Opening words
by Brice Lalonde, French Ambassador for climate change

9.30-10.30 A.M.
«What key principles for a challenging post-2012 regime on climate change?»
Moderation: Mike Matthijs, Secretary of the Cercle of Cooperation of Luxembourgian NGOs, and Chair of the Policy Forum of Concord

Climate change: existing needs in financing and investment
Anne Chetaille, GRET

The « Greenhouse development rights » initiative – Rights as criteria for allocation of emissions quotas and repartition of efforts
Paul Baer, EcoEquity

10.30-11.00 A.M. Coffee-break

11.00 A.M.-1.00 P.M.
«What sources of financing to fight against climate change?»
Moderation: Henri Rouillé D’Orfeuil, President of Coordination Sud

Innovative Financing Mechanisms: proposals on the table
Benoît Faraco, Nicolas Hulot Fondation

Role of carbon markets to finance mitigation in developing countries
Jan Burck, German Watch

Financing climate change mitigation and adaptation: key challenges for Overseas Development Aid
Humberto Campodónico Sánchez, ALOP (Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción).

1.00-2.30 P.M. Lunch

2.30-3.30 P.M.
«Adaptation: how to spend the money raised?»
Moderation: Patrice Burger, Director of CARI

State of play of discussions within the Adaptation Funds and proposals
Julien Rencki, Member of the Adaptation fund, Representative of the French government

Sectoral-based approach to adaptation
Stéphane Hallegatte, CIRED

Adaptation: what concrete activities to be supported? – Proposal from NGOs – Isabelle Niang, ENDA

3.30-4.30 P.M.
«Mitigation: what fair and challenging actions?»
Moderation: Sandrine Mathy, President of CAN-France

Sectoral approaches in developing countries
Damien Demailly, WWF France

What nationally appropriate mitigation actions in developing countries in a post-2012 regime? Synthesis of options
Edgar Blaustein, Global Chance

4.30-5.00 P.M. Coffee-break

5.00-05.45 P.M.
«Synthesis and closing words»

What perspectives for Poznan and Copenhagen? Bénédicte Hermelin, Director of GRET, Marek Vvalučik, Fors

Closing words by Josiane Bernard, Vice-président of the Conseil Général of Seine-Saint-Denis

05.45-06.30 P.M. Cocktail
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Coordination SUD • (“SUD” for “Solidarité Urgence Développement” or “Solidarity, Relief, Development”) is the national platform of French international solidarity NGOs. Founded in 1994, it brings together six NGO coalitions (CLONG-Volontariat, CNAJEP, Coordination d’Agen, CRID, FORIM, Groupe Initiatives) and more than 130 French international solidarity NGOs. Together with their partners from countries of the South, these NGOs carry out humanitarian relief, development assistance, environmental protection and promotion of human rights of vulnerable and marginalised people, as well as international solidarity education and advocacy.