

Brief Minutes of the Meeting of the round table

on

“Equitable Access to Sustainable Development”, 5th December 2012

I. Background:

The issue of “equity” and “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDRRC)”, is often used synonymously in the context of climate negotiations by a large number of developing countries, while, the synonymous use of these words is contested by industrialized countries, particularly in relation to its application.

While the application of CBDRRC and differential treatment has been contested from the start, the discussions around the Bali Roadmap, brought in the focus on “starting the debate on differentiation” and the Durban Platform in a way has taken the discussion forward.

The perceived division on the issue of differentiation is not just among countries, but is also reflected amongst civil society groups. Further, these perceived differences also sometimes work at cross purposes of achieving our common goal of “sustainable and inclusive growth and development in a climate constrained world”.

With the discussion and negotiations around the Durban Platform getting focused on creating an inclusive treaty, recognizing the fact that an agreement on the application of equity holds the key for a “fair, ambitious and legally binding” climate regime, the purpose of the meeting was to start a dialogue to come up with our common perspective on application of equity, and influence negotiation process.

II. Summary of Discussion:

The key points which came out of the discussion were:

- a) Recognition of the fact that “equity” is an important issue and we need to address it to develop a common understanding and strategy amongst the civil society groups to be able to play a role in influencing climate negotiations and “take the bull by its horn”.
- b) We need to build global solidarity in tackling the climate change and forming the coalition of the willing. There is a need to develop principle that govern the defining of responsibility for every country to commit to action, irrespective of their developing or developed status. However, principles have no meaning without being operationalized
- c) The concern was raised that many of the CSOs in international settings fall into similar patterns as our governments and the issue is how we detach ourselves from our own government’s view, and delink ourselves from UNFCCC process at times.
- d) The group also recognized that there are two dimensions to equity, one is in the context of an international climate regime, while the second dimension, is equity in the context of inclusive, sustainable growth and development in the national context, with a need for an alternative development pathway.

- e) The group strongly came out that “equity” has taken cognizance of the issue of justice for the poor and most vulnerable, particularly women.
- f) In connection to the above, there was a view that “equity” needs to go beyond the principle of CBDRRC and that it becomes trivial in the larger issue of “equity” and sustainable development.
- g) While the other view was not to trivialize “CBDRRC” in the UNFCCC context, as CBDRRC is important to determine the level of ambition of addressing climate change amongst countries.
- h) However, by and large most people felt that there is no “equity without climate ambition and no ambition without equity” and what is urgently required are new ideas, new thinking and analysis on the table, and dialogues to identify ways to define responsibilities for all countries to address climate change.
- i) There is a need to build trust and unity amongst civil society groups and an important step in this is to learn to integrate national challenges with international concerns and not just have a “nationalist attitude”. It was recognized that Climate Action Network is a collective of diverse groups and actors, and we could take advantage of this diversity to come up with a common understanding and a shared vision.
- j) In the above context, there was an articulation that we have to develop a constructive discourse around concrete proposals/options for application of equity if we want the ADP process to result in a universally acceptable outcome that keeps us on path of limiting the increase in temperature to 1.5°C.
- k) This is also crucial to take head on the “climate skeptics”, “corporate influence such as the fossil fuel lobby” and other actors who are interested in continuing with the current development model in a unified and clinical manner.
- l) There was a general consensus that mobilizing grassroots and community groups would help in generating a demand for alternative development models, which not only helps addressing climate change, and can making these groups partners in taking on the “corporate and other interest groups”.
- m) The group also felt the need to develop a common and safe space where all our ideas and perspectives on the issue of equity can be shared, which can go beyond civil society groups and also include policy makers. In this context, it was also recognized that there are a number of initiatives and dialogue on equity taking place, and it would be good for us to join forces, rather than re-invent the wheel.
- n) In this context, it was also felt to look at the issue of “equity” in relation to other international agreements such as WTO, Montreal Protocol, etc., particularly in terms of getting an understanding of its implementation.

III. The Common Elements – Broad convergence of perspectives

As is always the case with a diverse group of people, there are areas where there is convergence of perspectives on issues, while there are also areas where a common understanding needs to be built, particularly in the context of addressing equity at the international level. This section deals with the common elements or areas where there was a broad convergence of views on the issue of equity.

- Equity is an important issue and has the dynamism to ensure progress in arriving at a fair ambitious and legally binding climate region
- Equity is not only an issue at the international climate level but should also be an important issue of discussion at the domestic level for progress in achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth, and gender equality.
- There is an urgent need to forge “unity” amongst civil society groups, and also to bring convergence amongst various initiatives that are already focusing on the issue of equity.
- There was an absolute consensus to come up with a collective and unified strategy to take on “climate skeptics” and “corporate influence”, such as the fossil fuel lobby head on.

IV. Areas where common understanding has to be built in the context at the international level

i. Is carbon space the only way to define equity?

One area where a common understanding has to be built is with regards to operationalization of “equity” in the context of the international treaty under the UNFCCC. One school of thought believes in assigning carbon space based on historical responsibilities. While we also have another school of thought that believes that we would require other possible approaches, a new thinking, new ideas and new strategies that could help bridge the differences. This can be best done through dialogues and sharing of ideas and perspectives not only amongst civil society groups but also with other actors. Many people felt the issue should be addressed from perspective of achieving sustainable development goals and this need provides an opportunity of moving away from a purely carbon space based approach.

V. Approaches / strategies to address equity:

i. International

1. Common and unified approach for overcoming global injustice
2. Finding a basket of solutions which are in line with environment integrity
3. A basket of unified principles and approaches to address the challenge posed by groups that have stake in continuing with the existing development model, e.g., fossil-fuel industry (tying up with existing initiatives)
4. Finding some common “big ideas” amongst CSOs for alternative vision which transcends existing south and north, and perceived south-south divide

ii. Domestic

1. Approaches to mobilize support for alternative development models and reach out to the wider civil society.
2. On this basis, build political pressure on our governments, so that peoples' ambitions and desire for climate actions are reflected in the domestic policies as well as UNFCCC.

VI. Next steps/way forward – suggested time lines

Coordinating the efforts is key to building the trust and influencing both the international level and national level. Some of the immediate next steps that were identified include:

- a) Map out the various other initiatives that are already under-play with regard to “equity”
 - b) Bring together the different initiatives on equity dialogues
 - c) Insert our views and concerns on equity debate in various forums for e.g. BASIC equity groups, EU equity dialogue (Belgium and Swedish country effort on this) etc.
 - d) Coordinate actions with CAN Issue groups to ensure that “equity” is factored in all their work.
 - e) Coordinate with various groups, networks and initiatives such as Climate Justice Network, PACJA, the Basic South Initiative, regional nodes of CAN amongst others, and involve them in the exercise of continuing dialogue on equity.
 - f) Very often, “equity” is perceived as a issue that just divides “North-South”. But the application of the principles of “equity” also has difference between Southern countries. It therefore is required that we also map out the areas of differences between Southern countries on the application of “equity”. The BSi Initiative could be a vehicle for such a mapping exercise.
 - g) Map out the various initiatives that are already in play, that not only identifies our enemies but also takes them on (climate skeptics, fossil fuel industry, and others)
 - h) Coordinate with various ongoing initiatives and actions on fossil-fuel industries for e.g. coal, fossil fuel subsidies etc.
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ANNEX I
PARTICIPANTS LIST

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14	Kelly Rigg	GCCA
15	Nicole Werner	Alliance Sud
16	Marvin Nala	CAN China
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20	Jacob Risberg	Church of Sweden
21	Henriette Imelda	

22	Rixa Schwarz	Germanwatch
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25	Manfred Treber	Germanwatch
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27	Deborah Delgado	Southern Voices
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29	Sandeep Chamling Rai	WWF
30	Mathew Keys	CAN Europe
31	Edward Cameroon	WRI
32	Maeve Mc Lynn	CAN Europe
33	Yamide Dagnet	WRI
34	Steve Sawyer	Global Wind Energy Council
35	Delia Villagrasa	European Climate Foundation
36	Meg Boyle	US Climate Action Network
37	Steve Herz	Sierra Club
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