

Looking beyond International Negotiations; National and sub national Policies in South Asia

COP 18 side event, 1st December 2012

Organized by CECOEDCON, BJVJ, SADED, Beyond Copenhagen and PAIRVI

The side event was organized to emphasize that in view of the fact that international negotiations are not moving further fast enough to provide guidance or finance to the developing country parties, and in these circumstances, it is absolutely imperative that National, sub-national and regional processes against climate change be expedited. South Asia is extremely vulnerable to climate change due to a number of reasons, and faces similar threats on a different scale. Common concerns include Himalayan ecosystems, huge coastline in countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and dependence of unduly large populations on climate sensitive sectors particularly rain fed agriculture. Therefore, it is also important that civil society organizations forge solidarity demanding action also at the national level and SAARC level.

The side event was chaired by Mr. Kailash Vijayvargiya, Hon'ble Minister Industries, IT and S&T, Govt of Madhya Pradesh. The speakers included Soumya Dutta and Ajay Jha, Rezaul Abdul Karim Choudhury (Equity BD, Bangladesh), Dipesh Chapagain (CEN, Nepal), and Tauqeer Ali (LEAD, Pakistan).

Mr. Reza said that though Bangladesh has made National Action Plan on Climate change in 2008, the progress on many front is lacking due to dependence on external financial support. However, it is also a concern that the climate finance Bangladesh has received is not being appropriated in a transparent manner. He added that the Action Plan on climate change has been developed in isolation and has no connection with five year plan. He also added that only Ministry of Environment and Forests is concerned with implementation of the plan and underscored the importance of coordination between various Ministries and Supra authorities. While he urged the developed countries to provide more financial support for vulnerable countries and take responsibility for climate refugees, he also added that national policies and plans will have to move fast with or without foreign aid to prevent more people becoming climate victims. He also emphasized the role of SAARC, and urged to participants to continue mounting pressure on SAARC for improving National Plans and regional cooperation on climate change.

Mr. Dipesh Chapgain (CEN, Nepal) said that Climate Change Policy in Nepal was approved in 2011, which aims at Improving livelihood by mitigating impacts, adapting with, and adopting low carbon development path. It also seeks to mobilize 80% of the resources from the communities itself. It has five time bound and two long term targets. Besides, NAPA of Nepal also provides useful insight in climate policy of Nepal. It has identified 6 focus areas including forest and Bio diversity , agri and food sec, climate induced disaster, public health, water resources and energy, and urban settlement and infrastructure. 9 combined profile projects have been proposed with an estimated implementation cost of \$ 350 million. However, due to resource constraints, only two of them have been rolled. GLOF Monitoring and DRR has received a support of around \$6.3 million from LDCF, and EBA has received support of around \$ 4 million from Germany. He added that Nepal has also developed a framework for Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA), which seeks to generate local resources and responses for climate change adaptation, which is being piloted in 10 districts with the DFID support. He concluded by saying that though the NAPA and Climate Change Policy is approved, Nepal is struggling for its implementation due to the lack of resources.

Mr. Tauqeer Ali (LEAD, Pakistan) said that Pakistan is hugely vulnerable to climate change impacts with costs of adaptation to the tune of 5% of the GDP. He added that floods in 2010 and 2011 alone cost \$ 15 billion. He referred to a study citing that Pakistan needs at least 6-14 billion every year in adaptation costs. He added that beginning with setting up of a task force, Pakistan finalized its climate change policy in May 2011. The climate change identifies nine major climate related threats for Pakistan namely, intense floods and droughts, intense water flows from Indus River systems, siltation of major dams, reduced agriculture productivity, decrease in forest cover, intrusion of saline water in Indus delta, rise in sea level, scarcity of water resources and increased migration due to climate change induced reasons. However, the policy fails to translate these challenges by formulating time bound targets and plans. The implementation of these plans has devolved on states, and therefore, there is considerable delay in the finalization and implementation. He emphasized that there is little emphasis on agriculture and food security concerns, lack of institutional arrangement and inter ministerial convergence in the policies, which needs to be looked into, besides engagement of people and civil society organizations.

Mr. Soumya Dutta (BJVJ, India) spoke on the National Action Plan on Climate Change of India. He said that though the plan was declared in 2008, there is not much progress on the plan, as it was declared mainly under international pressure, rather than genuine realization for bringing change in the development paradigm. The Plan lays down 8 focus areas namely, solar energy, energy efficiency, water, green India (forests), sustainable habitat, sustainable Himalayan Eco system, sustainable agriculture, and strategic knowledge, however, it is highly mitigation focused, and un-ambitious. Besides, he said that despite three years having gone by, there is no any evaluation of how these missions have progressed or performed. He underlined, that there were no public consultations while developing NAPCC, which makes the entire process vitiated. He added that there has been very little progress in any of the missions except solar, energy efficiency, forests and water. He concluded by saying that India has no manifested intention to promote renewable in any significant manner as it depends much on dirty coal and nuclear for energy, and proposed thermal power and nuclear power plants dot the entire landscape of India, displacing millions of people, acquiring rich biodiverse and highly productive lands, and threatening livelihoods. He added that energy policy of India was least concerned about equity, and despite the fact that installed energy generation capacity and consumption both has increased more than twice since 1990s, poor people have failed to get access to energy and electricity.

Ajay Jha (PAIRVI) spoke about the State Action Plans being developed by different states in India to support the national action plan. He said that both the process as well as the content of these plans are highly questionable, as they remained far removed from the actual conditions and possible solutions, and also because they completely failed to take opinion of people, CSOs, Farmers, affected populations into the plan. He explained that State Plans have been essentially remained a consultant led exercise, with least involvement and ownership of the state, and minimal interaction with people. He emphasized that states are using this opportunity to hugely expand their energy sector (more than 40-50 times). The focus is on energy, industry, transport, urban development rather than sectors like water, agriculture, and biodiversity. He added that none of the states have explored convergence of programmes and existing resources and are mainly looking towards huge funding from the central govt to be able to implement the plans. He concluded that though it is welcome effort by South Asian countries to have a National Action Plans on Climate Change, However, a lot of effort is required to democratize these plans and make them really effective, meaningful and inclusive, and a lot of effort is also required at regional forum to influence collective leadership of urgency of having national plans.

Mr. Kailash Vijayvargiya, in his chair's remarks, said the COP 18 is extremely important as it has to decide how we share the responsibilities as Kyoto Protocol expires this year. It is important to have an agreement that considers equity and common but differentiated responsibility, and requires developed

countries to reduce their emission, and supports developing and least developed countries in their struggle to move towards green economy and adapt to improved resilience, he added. Talking about his states action plan on climate change he said that the Madhya Pradesh is the first state, where the SAPCC has been made in completely participatory manner and in a bottom up approach, consulting with all stakeholders including experts, academicians, NGOs, farmers, women and affected populations, and where the leadership has been provided by the Chief Minister himself and he also participated in one of the networking meetings. The state's SAPCC is also unique in the sense that it has accorded maximum priority to the agriculture and food security, livestock and animal husbandry with half of the proposed budget for the Plan going to agriculture and allied sectors, he emphasized. As the minister for industries, he underlined, that the state is having a look at our Industrial Policy and introducing energy efficiency standards to make the industries share the burden of reducing pollution. He concluded by saying that South Asia countries can provide leadership to climate change stabilization efforts in the region.

The discussion was followed by lively exchange of ideas, comments, questions and answers.

Concluded
