

# Facing Up To The Climate Crisis

‘ PEOPLE-SPEAK ’  
ON THE  
POLICIES, NEGOTIATING POSITIONS  
AND THE  
STATE’S CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

A COLLECTION OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS,  
POSITIONS, AND DEMANDS FROM THE STATE - BY  
PEOPLE’S GROUPS IN DIVERSE ECO-SYSTEMS

*Compiled by*  
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**South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy (SADED)**

Published by  
**South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy (SADED)** at the  
CSDS  
in partnership and with financial support from  
**Simenpuu Foundation**, Helsinki, Finland

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Designed by *CAPITAL Creations*, New Delhi and  
printed by *Auxilium Printing Services*, New Delhi

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## An Introduction to this Collection

Over the past three-four years, activists associated with the South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy (SADED), along with those in the Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ), had been intensely interacting with a diverse range of community groups, from a variety of States (provinces) in India, covering a wide-spectrum of the emerging climate crisis. Many of these were workshops to analyse and understand the emerging local and global scenario. Some were in the nature of free ranging sharing of experiences and understandings. Several such sessions were accompanied by in-depth presentations by those who have studied and built-up understandings on these issues, also from a range of groups with somewhat varying positions.

The issues ranged from the relationship and consequences of increased floods in eastern India and climate change, to actual changes taking place in the Himalayan eco-systems, to the state of agriculture in the era of an erratic monsoon, to the climate change driven refugees that many of the coastal states are witness to. There were intense discourses on the nature of responses that are visible from the various actors – like the state, the large business interests, the NGOs and funding agencies. The question of the almost insane rushing on a ‘un-stoppable development’ path, towards a looming abyss – in the face of an accentuating crisis, came up time and again.

It was an increasing feeling and understanding by a large number of such communities, that while they are staring at the sharp edge of the climate crisis, their perceptions, experiences and demands have almost no place in the larger discourse on climate ‘change’. Some little facilitation by activists has started the processes of making this understanding clear and also started them on the path of questioning, analyzing, challenging and demanding answers and right action from the powers that be. While tens of millions are suffering from recurring flash floods, increased forest fires, erratically dry monsoons, loss of yield of fruit crops, invasion of weeds and exotic species to their pastures, water stress from

disappearing small glaciers, ..... the 'main-stream' discourse on 'climate change' keeps talking about the impacts that 'WILL' happen! The looming climate crisis for the deprived millions seems to have no place in the primary agenda.

People and communities have started responding to these grave injustices. Their voices are being raised, understanding getting crystalised, demands are being raised with greater clarity. This little compilation attempts to bring together five such 'people's responses', four from India, the other from Europe.

Soumya Dutta  
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25<sup>th</sup> November, 2009  
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**A memorandum to  
Government of India  
on the UNFCCC's  
15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties  
at Copenhagen**

By 'Indiacimatejustice' Forum  
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**The background**

Starting in September 2008, a large number of people's movements, progressive trade unions, people's science groups, forest groups, fish-workers federations, groups working with tribal people, anti-extractive struggles, movement support groups and other progressive civil Society organizations engaged in the larger discourse on climate justice and what should their role be in this global and national scenario. These later came together as the "India Climate Justice" forum, with a present list of about 75 groups from many parts of India, many of them big umbrella organizations in their own domain.

This forum organized a national consultation on climate justice issues in June 2009, and the reach-out / connectivity increased through movement participation. This forum was debating the international negotiations, the position of the Government of India, the fast changing international politics of climate 'change', the increasing strife and hardship being faced by the poor and the marginalized here in India, and the governments totally inappropriate and inadequate action plan on climate change.

Keeping all these in perspective, the India climate justice forum started a collective, shared process of building up a consensus position paper on many of these issues on October 30, 2009 and has finally come up with a memorandum, to be submitted to the Government of India in December 2009, preceding the start of the Copenhagen conference.

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November 2009

Dear Prime Minister Manmohan Singh,

We, the undersigned people's organisations, social movements trade unions and concerned citizens, submit this memorandum to the Government to draw your attention to the several urgent and so far unaddressed concerns about the climate crisis and the Indian Government's response to them, especially in light of the upcoming 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Copenhagen from 7-18 December 2009.

We believe that the economic and political issues of inequality, both within and between nations, grievously impact distribution and consumption and are at the core of the crisis of global warming and of responding meaningfully to it. The crisis is also about a few usurping the rights and access of the vast majority of the disempowered over the commons – air, water, land, minerals and forests. Unsustainable economic development and inequitable growth based on an economy dependent on the use of fossil-fuels and extractive industries — which intensified in the last 60 years — have led to the sharp rise in carbon emissions, way beyond what the Earth can absorb. The global annual carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions have reached about 35 billion tonnes a year from the burning of coal, oil and gas, and from deforestation. This is much more than the net absorption capacity of the Earth, estimated to be 16-17 billion tonnes a year or roughly 2.5 tonnes per person, which is declining due to a gradual warming of the oceans.

Hence, there is an extremely urgent need to make sharp and immediate cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs). We fear that this **urgency** has not been reflected in the ongoing negotiations leading up to Copenhagen, neither in the Indian government's position and policy interventions, nor in the positions of governments worldwide. The urgency stems from the fact that scientific evidence suggests we may already be close to significant tipping points in some of the Earth's major ecosystems. Crossing a tipping point — whereby natural systems deteriorate even without any further human intervention — will make it that much more difficult for us to collectively intervene in halting possibly runaway global warming. We need to make drastic cuts, starting immediately. Anything less or watered down at Copenhagen will have massive consequences for humanity and for other species.

### **INDIA IS IN THE FRONTLINE OF CLIMATE VULNERABILITY**

Climate change has become a serious threat to the poor, particularly in developing countries. Impacts are going to get unavoidably worse, with massive disruption and loss of human life and of other species that invisibly support our ecosystems. In India, widespread and significant impacts have been noticed for at least 10-15 years in many regions. These impacts are adversely affecting the urban working poor, the lives and livelihoods of the Himalayan and other hill people, fishing communities and other coastal and island communities, small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, dalits, women, adivasis, forest dwellers, and other disadvantaged and marginalized communities in different regions. Published scientific evidence and other observations reveal that the following are some of the major impacts that are *already visible*:

- Changing rainfall patterns, reduced rains in July and in winter, shorter south-west monsoon, and intense rains in a short period. This is hurting both small agriculture and water sources and causing unprecedented floods and soil erosion in some places.

- In the mid-level Himalayas, reduced snow at mid- to high altitudes, warmer winters, shifting of fruits and crops to higher levels, spread of mosquitoes and vector-borne disease to new areas, drying up of streams, disappearance of small glaciers and receding of large glaciers.
- The spread and intensification of drought in large parts of India leading to massive forced migration, collapse of agriculture and mass abandoning of livestock.
- In forest areas, the migration of species to higher altitudes, the loss of biodiversity, the greater incidence of pests, increased growth of weeds, greater frequency of forest fires, the decline in stock of certain medicinal plants, and reduced growth of forests and grasslands.
- The drying of water sources that supply drinking water to many places.
- Sea level rise along many coastlines, depletion and migration of fish stocks, and ingress of saline water due to storm surges.

These impacts influence and aggravate a range of other crises with systemic roots, for example the agrarian crisis. Accepted science suggests that the impacts are going to worsen further, and will happen simultaneously, hitting the poor in different regions.

## **THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA'S POSITION**

The Indian Government's stand on climate change needs to reflect this urgency. It should affirm the principles of equity, justice and sustainability as essential for effective global and national policy towards climate change governed through a democratic regulatory mechanism.

Our views on the GOI's stand in key areas in the climate negotiations are as follows:

- a. **Mitigation:** The Government's stand that India's per capita emissions are low and it will "not allow its per capita GHG emissions to exceed the average per capita emissions of the developed countries" (*The Road to Copenhagen*, MEA, GOI,

2009) is nothing but hiding behind the poor and is potentially dangerous because it will worsen the climate crisis in the long run. India's average emissions are relatively low for the time being because of the abysmal poverty of the overwhelming majority of this country; in contrast, the elites in this country have emissions approaching European levels. India needs to adopt and push for equity internally on a per capita emissions basis, the same principle it is arguing for in international negotiations. India's energy policy for the foreseeable future is based on polluting fossil fuels, driven by a model of industrialization directed primarily at elite consumption. This needs to drastically slow down and therefore a complete rethink of our energy policy is essential.

- b. **Adaptation:** The Government's claim that it is spending "up to 2.5% of GDP on adaptation" is an accounting sleight of hand. The 2009-10 Budget documents reveal that much of the increase in expenditure for the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is being accounted for as Adaptation Funds. On the other hand crucial areas for adaptation such as mangrove conservation, afforestation and the biodiversity conservation programme have seen meagre allocations. Also, the shocking lack of prior information and preparedness regarding several disasters such as the drought in 2009 and the Aila disaster in the Sunderbans indicate that much more needs to be done and with greater urgency. Unavoidable worsening impacts suggest that they need to be anticipated and prepared for in advance.
- c. **Technology:** Any technology transfer negotiated as part of the Copenhagen process should be free of conditionalities and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) restrictions. We need to ensure that we adopt solution-based technologies rather than technology-driven solutions. The belief that large technologies will provide the solution evades the centrality of the need to reduce elite consumption, in India and the world. It brings in large capital and takes solutions out of people's hands. We urge the adoption of decentralized, small and sustainable technologies that are appropriate for people's needs. Many

such technologies and materials already exist and need to be examined and improved upon before we venture into blind import of technology.

- d. **Finance:** We support the stand proposed by the Bolivian government that industrialized countries should pay for their enormous historical emission and adaptation debts to the developing world, including India and the Indian poor. Any financial transfer mechanism and its ultimate use needs to be transparent, decentralized, democratic and decided by the people at all levels – through participation in consultation with national, state and local self-governments. However, we do not believe that adaptation and basic technology implementation in a large developing country such as India is in any way contingent on the prior transfer of financial resources.

**Additionally,**

- We view the Government's formulation and finalization of India's **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** and its eight missions as undemocratic and unilateral. The NAPCC does not question the current non-sustainable, high emissions pattern of economic development. Therefore the Government needs to arrive at a new NAPCC with reference to Parliament, in consultation with state governments, and through the widest possible participation of affected people. This must include differentiated eco-zone planning, district level vulnerability and contingency planning for disasters, industry-based reduction of emissions and people's control mechanisms over the commons.
- Instead of addressing the crisis at its source, the Indian government is pushing for a series of **non-solutions and false solutions** towards mitigating emissions. *Nuclear power* is costly, risky, harms communities in the vicinity of uranium mines and nuclear plants and has significant embodied emissions. *Agrofuels* – which many state governments are promoting through jatropha plantations – take away land from food production, reduces access to the commons used by the poor and consumes enormous quantities of water. The hundreds of *hydropower* dams being planned across the

Himalayan ecosystem, the Northeast region and elsewhere undermines the will of the local communities, and denies decentralized micro energy projects that would be more appropriate. *Genetically Modified Organisms* being proposed for mitigation and adaptation will grossly undermine food security, biodiversity and cause unforeseen consequences along with deepening the control of multinationals over our food chain.

- We oppose both India's position of 'Compensated Conservation' as part of the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (**REDD**) and its support for REDD. REDD and all other variants of carbon forestry encourage and promote the privatization and commodification of forests and their resources. There is the real danger that REDD will aggressively push a forced takeover of forest lands from communities by corporations and the Indian Forest Department. It will limit the access of forest people to their primary source of life and livelihood, who are already facing massive forced displacement in the name of 'development'. REDD goes against the decentralization of forest governance, promotes the much opposed and discredited Joint Forest Management thereby undermining the recently enacted Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.
- Projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (**CDM**) – of which India has about 1,200, both registered and under validation – prevents the physical and verifiable cuts in emissions that are so urgently needed, as does REDD. Carbon offsets perpetuate elite consumption in the misplaced hope that it can be compensated for. CDM in India is dominated by polluting industries that continue to emit toxic fly ash and carbon, pollute rivers and underground aquifers. Corporations with bad environmental track records earn huge money through flimsy, non-verifiable and often false claims of emissions reductions.
- At the Bangkok UNFCCC meeting in September-October 2009, the US introduced a proposed structure for

measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of mitigation actions. It seeks to extend MRV to all countries except the least developed countries (LDCs). The word “commitment” in relation is absent in the US draft. We see this as an important shift in the language of global climate change agreement from binding commitments to that of mitigating “actions”. The Indian government should strongly oppose this watering down of the proposed regulatory mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol for developed economies.

**WE DEMAND:**

1. Given the increasing risk to life and life-support systems in the world, the Copenhagen Conference should declare a **Global Climate Emergency**.
2. A real and verifiable emission cut that is legally binding by the industrialized (Annex 1) countries of at least 50% by 2020, 70% by 2030 and 90% by 2050, over 1990 levels, and not left to voluntary “actions” of the industrialized countries. The cuts should be within national borders, not offset through market and/or other mechanisms such as the CDM, and these cuts should **start immediately**.
3. The post-Kyoto process of collective negotiation needs to be strengthened, deepened and widened on the issue of cuts in greenhouse gases. This is being undermined by the industrialized nations, who are pushing for voluntary and individual national cuts. We demand that the baseline for emission cuts should be kept at the 1990 level as agreed.
4. Large emitters, including China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, should rapidly shift away from their high-consumption and high-emission development trajectories, while promoting internal equity. They need to commit to necessary and binding reduction targets along with sharp cuts by Annex 1 countries. India should take the lead in building a consensus among developing economies to commit to mitigation targets, which should be binding through national legislation. In this context, the Government of India should

reformulate the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 so as to incorporate the mitigation target based on a principle of democratic industrialization that ensures equity and social justice.

5. The Indian government should revise its unsustainable development trajectory of several decades. This phase has witnessed the exploitation of natural resources, the greater displacement of adivasis and other forest dwellers, intensified exploitation and continued pauperization of the urban poor, casualization and contractualization of labour, and the promotion of consumption by and production for elites. Such an anti-poor development trajectory — a trajectory reflected in the toothless Biodiversity Act 2002, the much-diluted EIA Notification, 2006, the industry-oriented National Environment Policy, 2006 and the rampant violations of the CRZ Notification — intrinsically leads to higher carbon emissions. We demand that emissions by elites in India be urgently brought down to 2.5 tonnes per capita a year, which is the maximum the Earth can currently absorb. At the same time we note that the working poor in the country are forced to consume much less than required for their well being. Their consumption levels have to rise for them to have reasonable living standards. We demand an effective framework that promotes the use of public transport alongside binding restrictions on the use of vehicles for private purposes, and one that prevents displacement of the poor in towns and cities.
6. The Indian Government should prepare a comprehensive policy for compensation of those affected by restructuring of the economy for emission cuts and arrive at an acceptable framework for re-employment of displaced workers.
7. Drastic cuts in defence expenditure, which is one of the largest consumers of energy, to promote peace in the region.
8. That the Indian government should redraw its energy strategy, moving towards more sustainable, equitable, employment and livelihood-generating renewable and bio-energy sources and strategies, in a time-bound manner. There needs to be a much more decentralized generation, transmission and use of energy.

For renewable energy to be competitive and go beyond experimentation, there has to be substantial government subsidy. India has vast resources of solar energy, which, if all past subsidies to conventional power and costs of mitigation of ill-effects are taken into account, becomes a cost competitive source of clean and renewable power. We call for an examination of the Electricity Act in all its ramifications.

9. The costs of mitigation and restructuring be paid for through direct investment by the government defined by the paramount principle of the public good.
10. Unproven, anti-poor and potentially disastrous non-solutions, such as nuclear energy, agro-fuels and hydrogen fuel should be immediately halted. A strict principle of “polluter pays” should be implemented for costing and comparing various energy options. The government must cease to be party to any disastrous market-based solutions like carbon trading.
11. We call for a new NAPCC that will be arrived at after a wide consultation of people and be sanctioned by parliament.
12. We oppose any attempt to link climate change commitments to trade barriers and tariffs. The Indian government should desist from and oppose any such moves.
13. That the Government of India support the payment of ecological debt — both for historical emissions and current adaptation — as a legally binding obligation of the industrialized nations to nations and People’s of the Third World. Their ecological debt should include the complete restoration of territories, and recuperation of agriculture and ecosystems. We demand the creation of alternative funding mechanisms and flows that recognize this ecological debt and respect, protect and promote the sovereignty and rights of nations and people. We demand an immediate end to any role for the World Bank and other international financial institutions (IFIs) in climate financing and to the tied use of technology to any debt repayment.
14. Our government must stand united with other developing countries, G77, and more specifically, the most threatened

least developed countries (LDCs) and the small island states (AOSIS). We oppose the reported moves by the Indian government to align with the United States, historically by far the largest greenhouse emitter.

The Indian government must take leadership of the countries of the global South in Copenhagen and beyond, by bringing issues of justice and equity in all their dimensions to the centre stage in climate negotiations. These need to be informed by the principle of ecological sustainability, and need to transcend barriers of generations and species and ensure rights of nations and People's.

*Copies to:*

Minister of Environment and Forests Mr Jairam Ramesh  
Members of Parliament

**ENDORSED BY:**

1. New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI)
2. National Forum for Forest People & Forest Workers (NFFPFW)
3. Delhi Platform
4. Delhi Forum
5. Bharat Jan Vigyan Jatha (BJVJ)
6. Focus on the Global South
7. Nadi Ghati Morcha
8. South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy (SADED)
9. Prof Anil Sadgopal
10. Dr P C Jha
11. Science For Society, Bihar, India
12. National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)

Many other endorsements are coming in and being entered.

## **Himalayan People's Conclave On Climate Justice**

**Kalibari, Shimla, 30th October, 2009**

**On the occasion of Chief Ministers Conclave on  
Glaciers, Climate Change and Livelihoods  
Shimla, 30th October, 2009**

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### **The Background**

On the 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> of October, more than 250 people from the three western & central Himalayan States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir, came together to present testimonials on the already serious impacts of the erratically changing climate, on their lives and livelihoods. The sharing of experiences gave rise to the understanding that these are not localized impacts, because of something 'wrong' they did, but are very wide-spread and therefore must have a larger than local cause. As the discussions with us – the facilitators went deeper, people started to realize the enormity of the problems and also the externality of their plight. The injustice of it all gave rise to anger and passions, and the groups decided to confront and challenge the Governments on these issues.

The Himalayan State's "Chief Ministers Conclave on Glaciers, Climate Change & Livelihoods" was scheduled eight days later, and the people's River valley movements, anti-big dam struggles, anti-cement plant (in the sensitive Himalayas) movements, forest people's movements etc decided – there and then – to organize a

People's Conclave on Climate Justice on the same morning, and openly challenge their Governments to answer their questions and to change their disastrous 'development' course, before it is too late.

Accordingly, on the 30<sup>th</sup> morning, people's movements & struggles from these three Himalayan states, plus support groups from Delhi and elsewhere, gathered in the Kali temple in Shimla – the capital city of the state of Himachal Pradesh, for the people's conclave. They worked on the draft prepared, finalized a collective version, and went to the CM's conclave. Other senior activists, a few of whom were invited to the high-profile CMs conclave (attended also by the Indian Environment Minister – Jairam Ramesh), raised these issues forcefully inside that posh venue, and walked out in protest against the governments anti-people policies and actions, and its total apathy for the climate victims.

This two part Shimla Declaration on climate justice came out of this People's Conclave.

## **THE SHIMLA DECLARATION Part-1**

### **Himalayan People's Conclave on Climate Justice**

**Kalibari, Shimla, 30th October, 2009**

We the constituents of the nation-wide Climate Justice movements in India, on behalf of the billion-strong deprived, under-consuming people of India, demand from our democratically elected government, the following principles to be followed in the international climate negotiations in Barcelona and Copenhagen (and beyond, as it now seems likely)

India must stand firmly for any position that calls for legally binding emission cuts by the historical large polluting countries, as per Kyoto Protocol. We note with great alarm the recent attempts of many large developed countries to jettison the Kyoto Protocol after 2012, and enter into a regime of 'voluntary', 'national legislation-driven', 'bi-lateral agreement based' emission cuts. We also regret the reported moves by India's Environment Ministry to align with the historically by-far-the-largest Green House Polluter – the United States of America.

- 1) Our Government, in the true spirit of being the trustee of 1.14 billion Indian people, must stand united with other developing countries, G77, and more specifically, the most threatened people & nations – the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island States (AOSIS). Again, we are greatly concerned by reported moves from some quarters of our government to stand apart from the time tested G77 grouping in the hope of any 'reward' of a 'global high seat' – dangled by the rich countries, who are the Climate Culprits.

- 2) We must support the Bolivian proposal of full climate /ecological debt payment as a legally binding obligation by the historical polluters to the historical under-consuming countries, among which is ours. This Debt must include, as proposed, both the historical emission debt, because the rich nations have forcibly occupied our emission /development space, and the adaptation debt as the poor nations are bearing & will have to bear a larger share of the climate impacts, without having the wherewithal to cope with these new crises.
- 3) The Indian Government must bring into its climate negotiating position the enormous amounts of strife & hardship already faced by its poor, and amend its position from that articulated & demanded by its ruling elite;
- 4) Any market driven false solution(s), like CDMs, Offsets, REDD etc, are shown to be causing more damage than good, particularly for the disadvantaged in India & elsewhere, and the government. must firm-up its negotiating position in rejecting these market measures as climate solutions.
- 5) We must firmly insist on Mitigation First, demanding quick & large cuts in GHG emissions from the developed countries with legal recourse for failure to do so, and proper empowered monitoring mechanisms.
- 6) Based on the latest science, the Indian State must revise downward its own calculations of maximum. Possible atmospheric carbon, and demand suitably larger cuts from the high-emitters—historic & present. The consistent & long-standing demand of 40% GHG emission cuts by the high-polluting Annex 1 countries, from their 1990 emission levels, should not only be strengthened, but improved upon, if we are to save the earth's life support systems as we know these. The longer term goal of 80% emission cuts by annex 1 countries must also be strongly pursued – supported by emission capping & reducing trajectories by large developing countries like India, China, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa etc.
- 7) We must firmly move away from the false hopes of destructive technology driven energy 'solutions', like so-called clean coal,

nuclear (fission), large-scale bio-fuel plantations etc -- with the understanding that these only disempowers and pauperize the already marginalized people in our countries.

- 8) We regret the statement by our Prime Minister that our per capita emissions will never exceed the per capita emissions of developed countries. In the land of Mahatma Gandhi, we cannot appreciate & support our Prime Minister condoning standards to commit crimes – we will do it too, but not more so than the climate criminals! India must take true moral leadership in the struggle for climate justice & equity and declare that --

- “we will provide all our citizens with energy and life-sustaining support for all their needs for dignified lives, BUT we will never exceed the per capita emission, which is our fair share from the global common atmosphere and is dictated by Mother Earth herself, by the capacity of its carbon (and other) cycle(s) to handle safely, without threatening the earth itself, while ensuring that all other living beings on this earth – human & otherwise – get their fair share too”.

The Indian Government, in keeping with the ideals of this great country, must take moral and dynamic leadership in order to bring focus to the questions of Justice and Equity in all their dimensions, transcending barriers of nations, generations and species – into the centre-stage of Climate Negotiations.

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**Himalaya Niti Abhiyaan (Himalaya Policy Campaign) and other People’s Movements from the Western Himalayan States of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand.**

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## **THE SHIMLA DECLARATION Part-2**

### **Himalayan People's Conclave on Climate Justice.**

**Kalibari, Shimla, 30th October, 2009**

E-mail: [himniti@gmail.com](mailto:himniti@gmail.com)

#### **OPEN LETTER TO THE CHIEF MINISTERS OF HIMALAYAN STATES & GOI**

Climate change has emerged as one of the most hotly debated and significant issues of the current times. While this phenomenon effects temperature and rainfall patterns across the world, some areas are being impacted more severely than others. Himalaya, which provides life-sustaining 'eco-system services' to a large part of south-Asia, is one such region. While the impacts of climate change on the Himalayan ecosystems like accelerated glacial melt and distorted rainfall patterns have been studied in depth, preparation to tackle these impacts, both at the national and state levels are seem to lack vision and are generally based upon the same paradigm of unsustainable development that has brought this world to the current state of crisis.

While the Chief Ministers of Himalayan states meet in Shimla to adopt a common strategy to combat climate change, their developmental policies are contradicting the very reason that has brought them together - that issues within the unique and the critically important Himalayan ecosystems need unique solutions. Whereas the Himalayan Chief Ministers are likely to demand enhanced financial allocation for their states on account of preserving green cover, their policies on the ground are critically contributing to undermining the green cover. We would like to bring the following facts to your notice:

- Large-scale hydropower has been promoted across the Himalayas in a manner most insensitive to local livelihoods and natural resources. Throughout the Himalayas, thousands of large and small hydroelectricity projects are either planned, operational or under execution. While the reservoir type projects contribute to climate change through deforestation and methane emission, the run of the river projects result in raising ambient temperatures (and loss of moisture-in-the-air needed by plants), due to drying up of river beds for long stretches, at times up to 40 Kms. whereas Mega Hydro Projects are claiming CDM in HP.
- Scaling-up of so-called run of the river projects, with consequent dams and large & long tunnels running under whole villages, forests and pastures, are causing destruction of homes, habitats and life support systems, draining off precious ground water and increased risks of earthquake damages.
- The effects of climate change, in the shape of reduced availability of stream / river flow, is going to deny essential water for irrigation, when mini hydal plants on these same streams rivers get Government. backing in preference to People's 'rights' to this water, leading to more violent conflicts in the coming years.
- The government is promoting extractive and climate impacting industry like cement, mining and industrial scale manufacture in big way. In Himachal alone, three cement industries are already operational and one more shall soon start production. Besides these, at least four major cement mining and processing plants are in various stages of establishment, which according to reports by government departments are going to adversely impact local water supply and rich agriculture. One of these mines and plants at Shikridhar is unbelievably proposed to be situated between two high Himalayan mountain ranges, the Dhauladhars and Pir Panjal. The thousand of tonnes of coal to be burnt in these plants, the thousands of trucks that would ply to transport the raw material and the cement, resulting in large amounts of air-warming aerosols and dark

particle deposition on glaciers, as well as the associated deforestation would further accelerate glacial melt.

- The government is also promoting power guzzling industry like steel processing etc. in the industrial belts. This creates an additional burden on the state to provide them power during the winter months when the Himalayan states are already short of power. Power cuts have now become frequent in the industrial zones; as a solution to which the industry, through tacit backing of the government, is pushing the case for establishment of many captive thermal power plants.
- Many such air-polluting industries set up within the last decade or so have already increased the air-pollution (both SPM & RSPM) in many of our towns to dangerous levels – sometimes close to levels found in heavily congested industrial cities of the plains. This is corroborated by recorded data of CPCB itself, and is resulting in increased health impacts on the local population – particularly children and the aged, with increased warming in this sensitive areas and increased glacial melting.
- The continuation of purely commercial approach to forestry at the cost of people's livelihood concerns has resulted in increased incidences of forest fires and failed plantations, including compensatory afforestation. Forest fires contribute to climate change by release of greenhouse gases and increase in haze. This year Himalayan states have witnessed thousands of incidents of forest fires which have affected more than 50,000 hectares of forests this summer, causing a loss to livelihoods and aggravating increasing temperatures.
- The unscientific manner of construction of roads with its associated muck dumping issues has caused much misery to the intended beneficiaries and many scenic hills have been scarred permanently. The reckless and poor quality of road construction is also contributing to indiscriminate mining of local streams and hills for stone, lowering the water table and ruining water supply schemes.
- All this industrial development especially that for hydro projects and roads has resulted in massive diversion of

precious forest wealth in the Himalayan states. Himachal alone has already diverted 8173 hectares of forest land and has obtained in principle approval for diverting another 1278 hectares with over six lakh standing trees in cases cleared under the Forest Conservation Act. These are only the official estimate and are besides the area and tree cover that is illegally damaged or destroyed by the projects. The Renuka dam, which proposes to cater to Delhi's unquenchable thirst for water, would destroy more than fourteen lakh trees standing over more than a thousand hectares of dense forest.

- The monitoring of the industrial projects for environmental and forest related violations are inadequate and ineffective. In Himachal alone there have been cases of hydroelectric projects being fined crores of rupees for forest destruction and still carrying on construction unhindered. Many rich forests and irrigation channels have been rendered worthless due to reckless muck dumping by the hydroelectric industry, which often also compromises the viability of similar projects downstream. Many industries are dumping toxic waste in the land and the water bodies of the industrial zones resulting in the frequent death of river fish.
- This unsustainable approach of development resulted ecological disaster, de-forestation, flash floods, erosion, displacement, loss of agriculture land, loss of common property resources and livelihoods. Rise in local temperature, chemical and other pollution, scarcity of ground and river water and depletion of forest has caused huge loss of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. Due to above reason there is shift in aggriclimatic zone, many plant spices are shifting to higher altitude such as apple, which is main economic and livelihood base for many of the local communities in Himachal Pradesh, J&K and Uttarakhand.
- While the Chief Ministers of the Himalayan states might desire additional allocation of finances for preserving green cover, their governments cannot escape the responsibility for promoting the very factors that contribute to the destruction of green cover or aggravation of climate change. The proposals

for establishment of industrial projects cannot see the light of the day without the support of the state governments. Sadly, employment generation for the state's population, the primary basis for inviting and subsidizing the growth of industry in the industrial hubs, is a fraction of that which is projected.

- A major portion of the increased allocation being demanded by the Himalayan governments could end up in payment of interest on outstanding loans and employees' salaries instead of contributing towards saving green cover.

The current rate of exploitation of the Himalayan resources is unsustainable as the exploitation levels have reached a saturation point. Climate change will also minimize the projected generation potentials of the operational or proposed hydroelectric projects. If so much is wrong and at risk within the current development paradigm, then why this mad scramble into a tunnel with no light at the other end? Should we not wait to take realistic stock of the situation and only then intelligently decide the future course of action? Should we look for alternatives only after everything has been lost? Should we expect outsiders to give us the alternatives or do we have the capacity to discover them ourselves? Here are a few suggested strategies generated by the people of the three states J&K, HP and Uttarakhand:

- ∅ There is an urgent need of studying in detail the cumulative impact of the current industrial development and climate change on the local ecosystems, the People's traditional livelihoods, their health and local climatic conditions. The future long term adaptation strategy should be determined through public consultation only after the results of such studies are obtained. Any plan for market or commercial interest lead ventures that are likely to compound the problems in these highly fragile and vulnerable young mountains should be avoided and ecological equity and justice for all sections of society should be ensured.
- ∅ Till such studies are completed and future strategy finalized, there should be a complete moratorium on new industrial projects known to cause adverse impacts. The employment in the industrial sector can be enhanced during this period by

ensuring strict adherence to local employment related clauses in the MoUs.

- ∅ Alternative multiple decentralized sources of power like 'Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS)' and Concentrated Solar Thermal (CST), small geothermal, wind and solar systems for both heating and electricity need to be explored with both financial and technological push. Geothermal energy in fact is one of the few renewable energy sources that can provide continuous base load power for centuries with minimal visual and other environmental impacts. Latest innovations in CST technology have brought solar power to prices directly competitive with conventional sources of power.
- ∅ Local solutions to generate extra energy like draught energy, human energy, biogas and efficient wood stoves should be promoted in a big way. Biogas not only reduces methane emission from bio-waste but also promotes sequestration of carbon by improving land productivity.
- ∅ The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) of the Government of India, has been formulated without any such public consultation(s), and its eight mission documents are being prepared with the same disregard for the observations, experiences and knowledge of the people and communities who are at the forefront of climate change impacts and adaptation and in whose name and cause these documents are being prepared. This process of total disregard of public experience and knowledge, and total dependence on so-called the 'expertise' of 'scientists' and bureaucracy, must immediately be reversed, and wide spread public consultations started in right earnest.
- ∅ All efforts must be made to promote community control and management of natural and new forests through user group level institutions that are based on democracy and social-economic equity. This would not only enhance the available livelihoods base to adapt to climate change but also contribute by creating viable carbon sinks.

- ∅ Mainstream livelihoods development by using appropriate technology for job generation should be based upon the local natural resources such as diverse farming, livelihoods based forestry, horticulture, fruit and vegetable processing, rural tourism, handicraft, animal husbandry, aquaculture, mushroom growing, bee keeping etc. Monocultures and commercial species that do not support local livelihoods are vulnerable to catching fire and exist extensively in the sub-tropical regions should be converted into mixed livelihood supporting forests through People's institutions.
- ∅ Rural housing construction technology that uses local renewable raw materials as much as possible and also reduces fire and earthquake hazard should be promoted.
- ∅ Equal opportunities for quality environmental education across all areas and all sections of society must be ensured by the State, leading towards productive stewardship of natural resources inculcating qualitative vocational and people oriented technological expertise for existing livelihoods based resource management.
- ∅ Alternate to current transportation system is needed. Appropriate eco-friendly technology for road constructions must be followed. Development of rope ways for connecting hilltops and strengthening of public transport system are imperative.
- ∅ The mountain people have traditionally lived a low energy, low consumption, low -waste lifestyles. It is very important to learn from these, and emulate this in a larger scale in view of the necessity of reducing the global emission of GHGs. It is imperative that local communities be involved in decision making of all plans / programmes / projects through democratic and transparent institutions, with the right to informed choice.
- ∅ False solution such as CDM for Mega/Micro Hydro Projects and Carbon Credit for green cover which had been initiated by Himachal Government be immediately stopped.

- ∅ Reparation for ecological disaster, depletion of forest cover, displacement loss of livelihoods, loss of common property resources which has been forcefully snatched for development from communities be paid to local communities.
- ∅ Himalaya must be declared as Global Heritage sight and also be declared as Eco-Sensitive Zone.

All the above measures shall not only contribute towards creating harmony between humans and nature but also, in the long run, result in increased local livelihoods creation and mitigation of the ill effects of climate change and natural catastrophes. We expect serious thought be given to our suggestions and objections, and reiterate that the focus be the sustainable future of Himalayan eco-systems and the People's dependent upon them. This must be considered as the prioritized primary concern by the decision makers. We assure you of our full cooperation, should a decision on these lines be made.

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**Himalaya Niti Abhiyaan (Himalaya Policy Campaign) and  
other People's Movements from the Western Himalayan States  
of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand.**

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# **Peoples Declaration on Climate Change 2009**

**National Consultation on Climate Change  
With Policy Makers and Public Actors  
India International Centre, New Delhi  
23rd November 2009**

## **The Background**

Several CSOs were engaged in bringing out the real impacts of the climate crisis on various Indian communities in different eco-systems, and documentating the scale of already evident strife and hardships. These were done by various methods, including the presentation of ground level testimonials in open public hearings.

These were also followed up by intensive dialogues with both the scientific community in India, as well as political leaders from different parties – both in the ruling dispensation and in the opposition. These helped build-up the ground for a larger consultation in Delhi – with sections of both the intellectual and the political leadership, as well as a sampling of diplomatic staff from embassies in Delhi. This large consultative meeting was held in Delhi on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2009. On behalf of the CSOs, people's science movements, NGOs, academics and activists present – this declaration was proposed and accepted with suggested modifications, with a set of demand to the Indian Government for taking a pro-active and pro-poor position in both its internal policies and international negotiations.

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We, the members of people's organisations, NGOs and other civil society organisations, in a National Consultation with Members of Parliament, Leaders of political parties, representatives from Embassies, High Commissions and Bilateral Funding agencies, meeting in Delhi on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of November 2009,

***Gravely concerned*** that climate change poses the most serious threat to the survival of the vulnerable people along with people with similar organic dependence on nature's cycles and resources including farmers, fisher-folk, pastorals, labourers, artisans, women, children etc, in many countries and, that it accentuates the sufferings from other crises that have arisen out of the upper class consumption in a large scale, and at the cost of basic goods for the poor;

***Believe*** this is not only a crisis of CO<sub>2</sub> emission, but the economic and political issues of inequality, both within and between nations, impacting distribution and consumption are at the core of the crisis of global warming and climate change; and that the crisis is basically about a few usurping the rights and access of the vast majority of the disempowered over the commons – air, water, land, minerals and forests;

***Consider*** that the unsustainable economic development and inequitable and unlimited growth based on an economy dependent on the use of fossil-fuels and extractive industries, which intensified in the last 60 years, have led to the sharp rise in carbon emissions, way beyond what the Earth can absorb

***Greatly disturbed*** that despite the mitigation commitments made by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, especially those of the developed countries, global emissions continue to increase, leading to rapidly accelerating impacts, accompanied by costs and burdens that are beyond the ability of many, especially the vulnerable countries, to control;

**Realize** that the window of time to act and rectify through concerted and collective actions, do not extend beyond a couple of decades at the outer limit.

**Assert** that there is an extremely urgent need to make sharp, binding and immediate cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) – primarily by the historical large polluters (Annex 1 countries), but also – in a phased manner – by emerging large polluters nationally, like China, India, Brazil, South Africa etc, while providing more energy and resources to their poor;

**Profoundly disappointed** by the lack of urgency reflected in the ongoing negotiations leading up to Copenhagen, neither in the Indian government’s position and policy interventions (primarily in the shape of the National Action Plan on Climate Change), nor in the positions of governments worldwide.

**Now therefore**, we, on behalf of the billion-strong deprived and under-consuming people of India, call upon our democratically elected government, to undertake the following principles in the international climate change negotiations in COP15, Copenhagen (and beyond, as it now seem likely):

1. We reaffirm the principles enshrined in the Rio Declaration and the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, in particular, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities having regard to national circumstances, and, the precautionary principle.
2. India must stand firmly for any position that calls for legally binding emission cuts by the historically large polluting (Annex.1) countries, as is done in the Kyoto Protocol. We note with great alarm, the recent attempts of many large developed countries – to bypass any legally binding international treaty and enter into a regime of ‘voluntary’, ‘national legislation-driven’, ‘bi-lateral agreement based’ emission cuts.
3. Our Government must stand united with other developing countries, G77, and more specifically, the most threatened

people and nations – the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island States (AOSIS).

4. COP 15 negotiations are likely to develop a framework to sustain global efforts to contain climate change beyond 2012. It is likely to have a timeline for longer period say 2050. Therefore our government along with other developing countries must ensure that agriculture gets due importance in climate change negotiations. Agriculture feeds world and supports livelihood of more than one-third of world's population.
5. We must support the proposal of full climate/ecological debt payment – as a legally binding obligation – by the Annex 1 countries, to the historically under-consuming countries, like ours and the other poor nations. This Debt must include, as proposed – both the historical emission debt, because the rich nations have forcibly occupied our emission/development space, and the adaptation debt as the poor nations and communities are bearing and will have to bear a larger share of the climate impacts, without having the wherewithal to cope with these new crises;
6. The Indian Government must bring into its climate negotiating position, the enormous amounts of strife and hardship already faced by its poor, and amend its position from that articulated and demanded by its ruling elite;
7. Any market driven false solution(s), like CDMs, Offsets, REDD etc, are shown to be causing more damage than good, particularly for the disadvantaged in India and elsewhere, and the govt. must firm-up its negotiating position in rejecting these market measures as climate solutions

# DRAFT ONE OF THE KLIMAFORUM-09 DECLARATION

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For this declaration there will be a sign-on process for organizations to discuss and support in several steps. The first step has been many months of preparations in theme groups and the formulation of this first draft by an editing committee with half of the people from the South and half from the North. Anyone is free to comment this first draft. The editing committee will then make a new draft to be presented some days before the start of the Klimaforum09 in Copenhagen on the 7th of December, the same day as COP15 starts. This second draft will then be discussed at several occasions during the Klimaforum09 until 10th of December. Sign-ons can be submitted before the declaration will be handed over to the Un Conferences as planned 15th of December.

You can send your comments to <[mathilde@klimaforum09.org](mailto:mathilde@klimaforum09.org)>

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# System change not climate change

## A People's Declaration from Klimaforum09

### 1. Preamble

There is a solution to climate change. What people and the planet need is a just and sustainable transition of our societies to a form that will deliver a more fertile planet and more fulfilling lives to future generations.

We, participating people and organisations at the Klimaforum09 in Copenhagen, call upon every concerned person, social movement, cultural, political, economic or other forms of organization to contribute to this necessary transition. It will not be an easy task. The climate challenge is indivisibly linked to other critical ecological problems as well as to complex social issues. There are no real solutions unless both social justice and ecological awareness are taken into account. It is essential to recognize that both of these issues are loaded with conflicts: On the one hand a conflict between the rich and the poor, which is only emphasized by the environmental debt, which the former owes to the latter. On the other hand a conflict exists between false solutions, like nuclear power, bio-fuels, CCS and carbon trading, and a truly sustainable transition based on renewable resources.

We welcome alliances across the divide between different movements, representing all kinds of age, gender, ethnicity, beliefs and trades as well as like-minded municipal and national governments. We want to take the future in our own hands by building a strong and popular movement of men, women, youth, workers, peasants, fisher folk, indigenous People's, urban, and rural social groups which is able to act on all levels of society to deal with environmental degradation and climate change.

As outlined in the political platform of Klimaforum09, we demand and will contribute to sustainable solutions that

1. prioritise energy saving,
2. promote the use of safe, clean, renewable energy,

3. reduce greenhouse gas emissions and as such do not promote or cement the use of fossil fuels,
4. are built on agricultural methods that fix carbon in the soil and reduce the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides by sustainable farming and People's food sovereignty and not market-based solutions for mitigation and adaptation of agriculture to climate change,
5. secure sustainable use of as well as equitable and just access to resources of the earth, including huge financial and technological transfers from North to South, based on the repayment of climate and environmental debts and subject to democratic control.
6. radically reduce wasteful consumption, first and foremost in the North, but also by Southern elites,
7. bring social change in the control of the means of production that promote a sustainable transition,
8. enforce indigenous land rights and promotes People's sovereignty over energy, forests, land and water.

We declare:

This is how we see the climate challenge.

This is the direction in which we will move.

This is the road to sustainable transition.

## **2. People are rising to the threat of climate change**

All over the world the effects of climate change is becoming more and more evident. Together with growing social inequalities and many other severe impacts on our common environment, it is already now severely threatening the lives of millions of people as well as their local communities. However people are not prepared just to accept this fact as their fate and therefore we are also witnessing a fast growing popular movement of climate activism, that is resolved to defend livelihoods and stand up against those forces and causes, that have led us on to this deadly route of environmental destruction.

In Asia, Africa, Oceania and South and Central America popular movements are rising to confront the exploitation of their land by foreign interests and to regain control over their own resources. A good case in point is Bolivia, where an alliance of workers, peasants and indigenous people for many years have struggled for their rights to land, water and natural resources. With the victory of the popular movement and the instalment of a new government the people of Bolivia now have the opportunity to regain control over their own land and natural resources to the benefit of both the environment and the people.

Generally it seems that the unity of social and environmental movements have been most successful in the south, while the situation in the north is still very much characterized by a fragmentation of interests and agendas. However within the last couple of years the dire prospects of climate change appear to have opened the eyes of more and more people, also in the North. As a result a new type of activism has revitalized the environmental movements, leading to a wide variety of protests and actions against mining, big dams, deforestation, coal fired plants, the air traffic or the erection of new motor roads. There is also a growing awareness about the need to change the present economic growth paradigm in a very fundamental way and among various movements concrete experiments with alternative ways of life are proliferating. At the same time it is becoming evident to still larger groups of the public, that the present mainstream policies to combat climate change are basically hypocritical and untrustworthy. The so called strategy of 'Green growth' or 'Sustainable growth' has turned out to be an excuse for pursuing the same basic model of economic development, that is the root cause of environmental destruction and climate crisis. More and more people all over the world have come to the conclusion that the present holders of global power are unwilling and unable to face and deal with the threats of climate change and environmental degradation.

### **3. The challenge, as we see it:**

The CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere is all ready so high, that the climate system is brought out of balance. The global

temperatures have increased twice as fast in the last 50 years as over the last century and will rise even faster in the coming decades. This adds to a multitude of other serious ecological imbalances, the impact of which threatens the lives and livelihoods of the people of the world, and most acutely of the impoverished poor.

The imbalance of the climate system leads to greater and more frequent extremes of heat and rainfall patterns, tropical cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons, extreme flooding and droughts, reduced biodiversity, landslides and avalanches, rising sea levels brings shortage of drinking water, shorter growing seasons, lower yields, lost or deteriorated agricultural land, decreased agricultural production, extinction of marine ecosystems, diminished fish stocks, resulting in famine, illness, death, disruption of communities and extinction of indigenous forms of life.

A good case in point is the recent situation in East Africa. Beginning around the turn of the century the region has witnessed a serious period of drought, lasting for almost 5 years. This led to a massive loss of livestock and created a serious food crisis for more than eight million people. Having only just recovered from this drought, the region is now witnessing an entirely opposite extreme, namely the onset of El Nino Rains, which has triggered widespread flooding that has destroyed homes, harvest, roads etc. Huge numbers of people have been displaced over night and there have been many casualties. Environmentally the Climate Change is as real as daily light to many small-scale farmers. The rainy cycle is delayed, unpredictable and has shortened in time length. The agricultural land is in a state of infertility due to heavy erosion facing a deep degradation; the traditional way of farming has been forgotten by the modern farmers adding more difficulties towards the replenishing of the soil.

Adding to the effects of climate change, intensive and industrial systems of agriculture, expanding at the expense of sustainable small-scale agriculture, create severe erosion, polluted aquifers and seriously diminished biodiversity. This agro-export model turns the green land into absolute deserts. Millions of hectares of monoculture of soybeans and biotech cotton,

sugarcane, trees, palm oil and other raw materials are produced to meet global demand for animal feed, fibre, energy, cellulose, wood, and to a lesser extent, food. Overfishing by modern industrial fishing boats threaten the stocks of fish in all oceans, thereby destroying the economic foundation of many local and sustainable fishing communities.

Modern industrial forestry diminishes the biodiversity of important ecosystems, destroying the life and livelihoods of many indigenous people. Industrial mining is poisoning the environment, especially in the south. The waste generated by excessive consumption especially in the north is sent back to the south, where it poisons the environment once more.

#### **4. The causes, as we see them:**

The immediate and primary cause of man-made climate change is an unprecedented emission of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere originating from ever-mounting burning of fossil fuels for industry, commerce, transport as well as military purposes to mention a few, but prevalent origins. Secondly deforestation, forest degradation, expanding areas of agriculture for cash crops for export, increased meat-production and other types of unsustainable use of natural resources are important drivers of climate change.

#### ***Uneven control and ownership over resources***

It is however important to recognize that these immediate causes are the results of an unsustainable global economic system built on the unequal access to and control over the planet's limited resources and the benefits that accrue from their use. This system is premised on the appropriation of local, national and planetary commons by local and global elites. What has been praised as great strides in technology, production and human progress has in fact to a large extent precipitated global ecological and development disasters. On the one hand a privileged global elite engages in reckless profit-driven production and grossly excessive consumption. On the other hand, a very large proportion of humanity is mired in poverty with merely survival and subsistence consumption, or even less. The world's largest transnational

corporations (TNCs) based mainly in the Northern countries, but with expanding operations in the South, have long been at the forefront of these excesses. Indeed the powerful industrialized nations of today were built on the severe exploitation of the human and natural resources of the global South.

The competition among global corporations and rich nations for resources and greater market shares have in present times led to a neo-colonial subjugation of Southern People's, denying them rightful ownership and control of their resources. This has transformed the economies away from diversified and self-reliant systems. The race for corporate profits and growth-guided economic decisions has resulted in overproduction and over-consumption for a minority, which has put unprecedented strains on the planet's resources and absorptive capacity for waste. Alongside the increased burning of fossil fuels and destruction of terrestrial and aquatic resources from mineral extraction, export manufacturing, industrial agriculture, and global transportation, this process is marked by the aggressive privatization and commoditisation of public resources, the dislocation of local communities and livelihoods, unequal trade relations, and the massive appropriation of social and natural wealth by elites in the North as well as parts of the South.

#### ***Prevailing economic and political paradigm and norms***

At the core of this present development model is the pursuit of growth and profit promoting exploitation, structural poverty, environmental degradation and global warming. This development model is however not only a question of 'Economics' in the narrow sense of this term. The prevailing economic paradigm is strongly related to the prevailing political paradigm, which again is founded on prevailing cultural norms and values with deep roots in the history of especially the West. Intertwined with patterns of patriarchy and paternalism this model has been exported to the rest of the world.

What is at stake is a system of thought, which is based on an image of the human being as 'Economic man'. He is a subject without ties, a rational, utilitarian individualist, oriented towards maximising his own interests and increasing his own wealth. He is

a subject immersed in an environment, which is seen as a world of mere objects, from which he is thoroughly detached and alienated. This rational economic man is the master of nature, yet, he has no feeling for and therefore do not know, what nature is really about.

It is this very mentality, so deeply rooted especially in western thought, which has provided us with many of the great technological revolutions, on which much of our present wealth is grounded. However, it is this very same pattern of thought, which has also led us into the present unprecedented ecological crisis. If we really want to address this crisis, we need to find a way out of this intrinsic conflict between the technological mastering of nature and the respect for the integrity of mother Earth. This requires a thorough rethinking of the whole paradigm of development, which is so dominant today.

In this endeavour we may find much inspiration from indigenous People's, who have a far more holistic vision of man's relation to nature, involving, amongst other things, a cyclical understanding of time and space. A good case in point is the cultural heritage of the Mesoamerican region. Here the ancestral legacy made of Maya, Pipil, Lenca and other indigenous People's has provided the new generation of environmentalist with a new world view, which has been an important source of inspiration.

Current political negotiations are not intended to change anything in respect to the actual standard of living of the western societies and the economic system. The climate problems are getting worse day by day and if there is not going to be a radical and urgent change in our behaviour, it will not be possible to mitigate its effects of climate change.

## **5. A sustainable transition**

What is needed is a fundamental change of direction, a true transition towards a sustainable relation between People's and nature, which is unthinkable without a similar transition of the social relations between people. Not a new Green deal or a new Green growth strategy which is to continue on basically the same unsustainable track as before.

### ***A shift of paradigm***

We cannot hope for a sustainable transition unless we manage to convince the broad majority of people, that it entails the promise of a more fulfilling and a more secure life—not for the rich, perhaps, but indeed for the many.

There are ample evidences that the present global growth-economy not only destroys our environment and natural resources but also creates extreme poverty especially for people, who are depending on these resources for their communities, homes, jobs and basic needs. At the same time in the poor as well as in the richer part of the world, the prevailing growth paradigm is undermining the fabric of public institutions, the coherence of whole societies and even the democratic participation of people and popular movements.

The present paradigm is not only undermining our communities and social institutions, but is also invalidating more and more people on the personal level. Man is not an individual ‘ego’, as the prevailing neo-liberal ideology wants us to believe. However the systematic weakening of communities, social institutions and democratic movements has the effect of isolating people from each other, thereby promoting hostility between various segments of society. The promotion of the individual consumer as the main ideal in the present development model is the promotion of a restless and distressed person. Instead we should encourage individuals to become real human beings by adopting the attitude of ‘One among Many’, and thereby become engaged in their local community and the environment on which it depends.

### ***The concept of sustainable transition***

All these social, political, economic and ecological issues are closely interrelated. A coherent strategy must therefore address them all, which indeed is the central idea behind the concept of sustainable transition.

The cornerstone of this concept is the restoration of the local community rather than the global market as the basic social, political and economic unit. Social cohesion, democratic

participation, economic accountability and ecological responsibility can only be accomplished by taking power back from the global to the national and local level. This is the basic lesson that we have learnt from decades of market driven globalisation. This is the crucial political premise without which a true sustainable transition is unthinkable. Such a community-based approach will however need a stronger regional, international and global cooperative arrangement to manage common and shared resources and to solve conflicts in their use.

It is within the framework of a local political setting, that it is most likely to engage people in the difficult tasks of restructuring the whole system of production and consumption in a sustainable way. The perspective of this ecological restructuring is to achieve an economy that operates within the conditions and boundaries set by the local environment. The transition to organic farming and renewable energy are important steps in this direction, but a true sustainable transition must involve all the other sectors of the economy as well: industry, construction, transportation, public infrastructure, consumption etc.

Such a transition of the entire economy implies a dramatic reduction in the use of natural resources, especially non-renewable fossil energy resources. On the other hand such an ecological economy will need many more skilled workers and crafted hands, than the energy- and resource intensive economy of today. An economy based on primarily local resources, must use these resources in an intelligent and efficient way, implying among other things high quality and long lives of durable goods and a high focus on repair and reuse. All this will require many more caring hands, than is the case today.

***A summary of our concrete visions:***

- \* Sustainable farming, forestry and fishery: diversified and ecologically sound agricultural food production that relies principally on local knowledge, appropriate technology and ecologically sustainable techniques that bind CO<sub>2</sub>, gather water and return more energy to the soil, than was taken out. Immediate global ban on deforestation and the parallel

initiation of an ambitious global tree-planting program based on native and diverse species in partnership with indigenous People's and forest dependent communities. Similarly a ban on industrialized fishing and an immediate return to local and sustainable fishing practices. Sustainable and local peasant production is, in fact, cooling the earth. Peasant agriculture allows carbon sequestration in soil and requires less fossil fuel-driven machinery and chemical inputs.

- \* Self-sufficiency: prioritization of self-sufficiency by diversifying industrial production, creating rural employment and meeting the demands of domestic industries and households and local consumption over international trade and export markets and thus increasing public welfare and sustaining livelihoods while minimizing energy, resource use and waste in the process
- \* Renewable energy and energy savings: increase in energy saving and reliance on a blend of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, mini-hydro, wave and the development of off-the-grid electricity distribution to secure energy supply to communities
- \* Public transportation systems such as light and high-speed rail-systems and bicycles away from resource-inefficient private motor vehicles thus decongesting the roads, improving health and reducing waste and carbon emission in the process.
- \* Reduction of physical inputs to the production, by progressively minimizing inputs of energy and raw materials, and at the same time expanding repair, reuse and recycling of waste products back into production cycle. While reducing physical inputs this transformation of production will at the same time involve many more skilled hands.
- \* Collective control and broader social objectives: egalitarian and cooperative land tenure and land use systems, that ensure the collective control and ecologically sound use of land, water, forest and marine resources by farmers, fishing and local communities. The reorganization of society's productive units around more public, cooperative and community-based

forms of ownership and management, in order to meet social needs and achieving other broader social objectives such as employment, health, education, food security, and ecological sustainability.

- \* Planning and management of enterprises and production sectors, that are based locally and act in the service of the community and the environment, thereby ensuring that production responds to social needs rather than create new, artificial and unsustainable wants; ensure that production proceeds within ecologically sustainable limits and other social standards.
- \* Public control of finance: All this requires an end to financial speculation and the neo-liberal doctrine of 'free' markets. We need instead a politically controlled direction of financial resources into investments in renewable energy, energy-efficient public transport, insulation of houses and an ecological transformation of agriculture, forestry, fishery and industry.
- \* Public education and cultural institutions that reclaim people's aspirations lost to consumerism, and instil ideals that value community, solidarity, individual and cultural diversity and respect for nature. This implies also a reorientation of public research and development to meet the needs of people and the environment, rather than the present focus on commercially profitable and proprietary technologies. All research and development should be an open and collaborative endeavour in the common interest of mankind, and patents on new ideas should be prohibited.
- \* Greater balance and equity in economic and political relations between nations through the equitable reallocation of global resources, the compensation of past economic disparities between nations and the reversal of all northward flows of Southern wealth through unfair trade, debt and investment transactions.
- \* Popular movement alliances for a constructive program to achieve sustainable transition of industry, land and water use

built upon social changes in the control of the means of production promoting economic democracy.

## **6. Roads to transition**

Present power holders will not promote the type of sustainable transition outlined above. The drivers of such a transition will have to be social and environmental movements, who work at the local, national and transnational levels in an alliance with like minded political, economical and cultural organizations.

Despite the fact that the present power structures strongly favours unsustainable patterns of production and consumption it nevertheless is possible to embark on the road of sustainable transition even within the existing political and economical setting, while at the same time pressing for urgent reforms of the present system. And in fact, this is what many people are already doing all around the world. People are not only protesting against the present regime but are also on many levels actively engaged in trying to realize more sustainable ways of organising their lives and communities.

Many people are involved in the practical creation of more sustainable industry, agriculture, forestry, fishery as well as renewable energy sector. These initiatives within the production system have furthermore created alliances with other sectors of society, trade unions, retail shops, consumers, city dwellers, teachers, researchers etc., all of whom are striving towards a greener way of life.

In the further process forward we must build on these existing initiatives, embracing them all in forging a strong alliance towards a sustainable transition on the global scale. In doing this, we however also need to address the existing political and economical institutions of power.

Incessantly we must push for fundamental reforms of the system reforms that not only address the climate and broader environmental issue as separate issues, but on the contrary integrates environmental considerations in all political areas, such as agriculture, transport, industry, trade etc.

In this context we of course also need to address the specific UN negotiations on Climate Change, which is culminating in these days in Copenhagen. The lessons from previous rounds of negotiations are not very promising. Despite the high-profiled schemes for concerted action launched first in the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change of Rio de Janeiro and later in the 1998 Kyoto-protocol, results are meagre, to say the least. The problem has not fundamentally been solved, indeed it has worsened as the principles, targets and the timeliness of both the Convention and the Protocol have made no headway. The reason for this rests on the fact, that the COP-process has not yet acknowledged the real roots of climate change:

Globalisation and a profit-driven economy devoted to never ending growth at the expense of genuine development. This fact also holds for the negotiations at the present Climate Summit in Copenhagen, why the probable outcome seems very inadequate.

Nevertheless we must make our voices heard and put forward our demands also in this context. These can be stated clearly and plainly:

- We demand a clear strategy for dismantling the fossil fuel era within the next 30 years.
- We demand this strategy to be accompanied by an equally clear strategy for compensating the poor especially in the south for the climate and broader environmental debt created by the rich especially in the north.
- We express strong opposition against market-oriented and technology-centred false solutions put forward by many corporations, northern governments, and international financial institutions, especially the undue influence of corporate interests in the crafting domestic regulations related to energy. So-called technological 'fixes' such as nuclear energy, biofuels, carboncapture and storage, biochar, genetically 'climate-readied' crops, geo-engineering, etc. only produce new types of environmental threats, without really solving the climate problem. The premise of emission trading is the granting of tradable property rights over the atmosphere, which

is a common planetary resource essential for the survival of all beings. So far the system has not proven its merits, and by allowing rich countries to offset their reduction obligations, it has maintained the unjust and unsustainable system of the past.

- We propose instead a political commitment to reintegrate our economies into the realm of our natural ecosystems, which are always local by nature. It is only within such a framework that it is possible to re-power our local communities, re-vitalize democratic participation and re-install a truly sustainable relation between man and nature.
- Any solution, seeking to restore the balance between human society and nature as well as just relations among people, requires a profound reorganization of our societies towards meeting basic social goals with an awareness of planetary limits.
- For this reason unjust, unsustainable and unaccountable global economic and financial institutions like the WTO, the World Bank, transnational corporations etc. should be disempowered in favour of local and national sovereignty over resources and productive assets.
- We finally offer our full and active support and involvement in promoting a sustainable transition of our societies along the lines put forward in this Declaration.

#### **7. A global movement for sustainable transition**

Irrespective of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change there is a strong need to build a global movement of movements dedicated to the long term task of promoting a sustainable transition of our societies.

Contrary to the prevailing power structures this movement must grow from the bottom and up which means that it must be founded locally and be of importance to the daily life of people. Such a movement entails at the same time the creation of a new mindset and of a new type of social activism. This movement must be capable not only of reacting to unsustainable practices, but also

by example show how a new locally based and sustainable economy can indeed function.

A movement of this sort cannot be based on environmental NGO's of the classical type. What is needed is instead a broad alliance of environmental movements, social movements, trade unions, farmers, teachers etc. that can work together in the everyday political struggle on the local as well as the national and international level.

At Klimaforum09 many contacts of this kind have already been formed and we are all committed to build on the results achieved at this event in the further development of a global movement of movements that includes all spheres of society on all levels. It is our hope that this Declaration will inspire the further development of such a movement by spelling out the direction in which to move.

# SOLIDARITY CONVENTION DECLARATION FOR NIYAMGIRI STRUGGLE

## The Background

The by-now well known people's resistance struggle at Niyamgiri in Kalahandi district of the State of Orissa in India's eastern flank, **is not only a struggle** by the Dongria & Majhi Kondh tribal people for retaining control over their common resources – lands, water, rivers, forests – and through it, their lives, livelihoods, and cultural identities, **but is also a rejection of the high-consumption, nature-exploiting, inequitable and unjust economic-growth-at-all-costs paradigm of 'development'**. The original resident tribal people here in the vast and densely forested 'Niyamgiri ('Lord of Rules' hills) are not only resisting the invasion of a large and ruthless mining multinational in the form of Vedanta Resources / Sterling, but are also asserting that there is a beautiful alternative way of life and organising human society, which is based on respecting nature, establishing an organic link with our nurturing environment, and finding meaning in human bonds with each other and with nature.

Leading the invasion of this densely forested and full-of-clean-streams and biodiversity rich mountain chain, is a MNC/TNC – one of the largest mining corporate entities in the world (which has also been black-listed by the Norwegian government for large scale violations of human rights and all environmental norms), and the product they aim to mine-process-refine, is the most energy intensive, most emission causing non-exotic material used by humanity – Aluminium. The production of this metal causes the largest amount of greenhouse gas emissions

per kilogram of material produced – nearly 32 Kilogram of CO<sub>2</sub>, if we take into account the entire production chain starting from mining, over double of what is emitted to produce even a Kilogram of steel, in itself a highly energy-intensive material! It is perhaps no coincidence, that Aluminium is also one of the key materials for the War Industry, as well as the hugely GHG-emitting automobile industry, and is also increasingly replacing other, more environment friendly structural / building materials in urban landscapes, thus binding the urban consuming class in its interest chain.

The Government of India and the Government of Orissa, who profess by the climate crisis and their ‘genuine’ intentions to prepare the nation to face this crisis, are ruthlessly persecuting the peacefully resisting tribal community, putting all oppressive state machinery at the disposal of the corporate invader – even killing peaceful protest-marchers recently at Narayanpatna. It also cuts no ice with the mandarins in the corridors of power, that a large mountain area with very dense old-growth forests, is not only a huge carbon sink – acting to mitigate the CO<sub>2</sub> emission danger – but the astounding biodiversity found in Niyamgiri forests is also an insurance policy for future. The large number of perennial streams that give sparkling clean water up-stream of the already established polluting alumina refinery, are also a risk mitigation resource for farmers in this era of increasingly erratic monsoon due to changing climate.

## Solidarity Declaration

On 5 October 2009, more than 3000 Kandh adivasis, among others, gathered in Muniguda town, blocking the highway for several hours. They reiterated with slogans what they have been asserting for more than five years by now: **we will not let Niyamgiri – our lifeline and sacred mountain – be mined, come what may!**

For five years, the people's resistance to Vedanta's refinery at Lanjigarh, and to the proposed mining of bauxite from Niyamgiri hills, has been building up. They have militantly resisted the destruction of their forests, the fragmentation of their community, the decimation of their culture and religious beliefs, the loss of their livelihoods. From organizing village-level meetings to oppose the project to staging road blockades to prevent company vehicles from entering the area, people have used a range of strategies. They have even refused the manual wage-labour jobs on offer. On 17 January this year, 7000 protestors marched to the gates of Vedanta's refinery in Lanjigarh. On 27 January, over 10,000 men, women and children formed a 17-kilometre-long human chain around the Niyamgiri Mountain, holding placards that said: ***Niyamgiri is Dongria land! Vedanta cannot come here without our permission. We say NO!***

As always, this resistance has been countered by repression by company goons, police, and the state administration. An adivasi activist, Sukru Majhi, was killed by company goons in 2005. One teenaged girl was abducted and kept in captivity for several hours to terrorize the people in 2008. Company goons roam the area, with weapons, trying to instil fear in the locals. 'Development', as always, is being rammed down people's throats.

The entire story of Vedanta's operations in Niyamgiri and Lanjigarh has been one of violating the law, ecology and people's lives. In 2004, the company claimed that the refinery would not involve the diversion of forest land. A committee appointed by the Supreme Court later said this was a lie. In September 2005, this committee recommended that environmental clearance for the Lanjigarh refinery be revoked and mining at Niyamgiri be banned,

as it would amount to ‘sacrilege’. Also in 2005, the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the Government of India (MoEF) ordered refinery work to stop but revoked the order five days later, following pressure from the company and the state government. In November 2007, as also in January 2009, the Orissa Pollution Control Board noted that Vedanta’s refinery operations had contaminated the Vamsadhara River and the groundwater of neighbouring villages. These violations – and the widespread resistance – prompted the Norwegian government to withdraw funds from Vedanta. So did the Scottish investment group Martin Currie, in August 2008.

And yet the Supreme Court, in its “wisdom”, has permitted mining on Niyamgiri, revealing, yet again, which class it stands with!! So did the MoEF, in April 2009. And the elites of this country have applauded it all. The Chief Minister of Orissa, the cabinet and most MLAs, who, despite the struggles all over the state – in Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Kshipur, Kalinganagar and elsewhere – have been at the beck and call of the Mittals, the Jindals, Anil Agarwals, the POSCOs and their ilk.

### **What does the Niyamgiri Struggle Represent for Us?**

Those who struggle against Vedanta in Niyamgiri aren’t alone. Resistance against Vedanta is being waged in MP, in Chhattisgarh, in Goa, in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere. Mining and other anti-displacement struggles are erupting all over the country, as people seek to regain control over their common resources – lands, water, rivers, forests – and through it, their lives, livelihoods, and cultural identities.

These struggles aren’t theirs alone, they touch all our lives. For, they raise crucial questions for us all: how could the voices of those resisting be repressed? Is this what democracy means? Is this development of a nation or destruction of the natives? What kind of ‘development’ do we want? Is ‘development’ meant for the people or for profits to a few?

Friends, people’s resistance is building up precisely because those who face the threat of displacement by these projects realize

that they benefit neither from the few and temporary jobs they provide (if at all), nor from the products and services these industries create. They are, and have always been, victims of 'development'. If our democracy has to become more meaningful and development more just, it has to start from the fact that people have a right over the commons, and that development trajectories have to meet their basic needs first.

**It is time for all of us to come together and collectively challenge the notion of 'development' that is destroying the very essence of People's lives, livelihoods, cultures, and our ecosystems. Let us join hands in solidarity with the struggle in Niyamgiri in Orissa and strengthen the resolve to protect people's rights over their land, forests, mountains, water and, above all, their right to choice.**

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***Organized by:***

Lok Raj Sangathan, Kashipur Solidarity Group, AIPWA, CPI(ML)–Liberation, PSU, People's Political Front, MKSS, NAPM, NFFPFW, Delhi Platform, Kalpavriksh, AISF, AISA, Other Media, Delhi Forum, Kriti, PUCL, Intercultural Resources, and other groups and individuals

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