

# From Kyoto to Copenhagen

Since 1997 we are witnessing conferences and meetings on climate change, but no effective measures have yet been taken to address climate change impacts. Industrialized countries should ensure helping developing countries with technologies and financial assistance to reduce carbon emissions and adopt environmentally friendly projects:

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It is amazing to note the world leaders as yet did not realize fully that widespread degradation of environment and its effects on our planet is devastating, as can be seen from Rio conference, known as the Earth Summit, to Kyoto protocol. The industrialized countries made commitments in Rio Conference to extend financial support for sustainable development projects in the developing countries. Unfortunately, such commitments have not yet been translated into action by way of providing financial or technical assistance to the developing countries. It seems that world leaders did not carry the message of Rio

conference home for implementation. People in industrialized countries consume ten times more commercial energy than people in developing countries and they account for 71 percent of the World's carbon monoxide and 68 percent of industrial waste. Environment is polluted by the industrial waste and carbon monoxide of the North, while poverty of the South, on the other hand, poses a serious threat to the environment. Land degradation, desertification, deforestation, effect of urbanization, over population, endangered species are indeed contributing to environmental degradation. Industrialized countries along with rising developing countries like China, India and Brazil are contributing to

current problems of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. According to one report, the United States, the European Union, China and India account for 63 percent of global carbon emissions between 2000 to 2050. US energy Information administration points out that China accounts for about 29 percent of total global emissions by 2030. China, meanwhile, announced that she would cut carbon emissions per unit of its gross domestic

product by between 40 and 45 percent by 2020, but it would not be subject to international verification. That remains a big question about China's sincerity in this context.

India, another emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>, announced to cut emission by 20 to 25 percent until 2020. The United States proposes to cut carbon emissions by 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050 while the European

Union has agreed to reduce about 20 percent below 1990 levels during the same period. Given the recession, though it is far from certain that Congress would give green signal to pass legislation to implement those cuts. It would mean imposing considerable costs on consumers and businesses in the United States.

Now let us talk about Kyoto protocol which was signed on 11 December, 1997 and United States under the leadership of George W. Bush walked out of it. This protocol plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale. Industrialized countries are committed to stabilization or reduction of 5 percent in their emissions for the period from 2008 to 2012. However, developing countries are under no obligation, but were told to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions under clean development mechanism programme (article 12).

Recent reports from a British university reveal that climate change theory is manipulated by scientists to exaggerate global warming. That has caused skepticism in many parts of the world, including the United States. According to Washington Times, UN top climate official, Yvo de Boer admitted that had damaged the image of global warming

research, but he said evidence of a warming Earth is solid. While defending UN efforts, he said rigorous review process by some 2,500 scientists involved in climate-change research is solid and thorough. This is about the most credible piece of science. On the second day of the summit, UN declares 2009 could rank among top five warmest years and display of globe balloon in the conference reflects rising sea temperature.

Unprecedented enthusiasm has been marked in attending the UN sponsored conference in Copenhagen and President of the largest industrial country, Barack Obama, likely to be present at the fag end of the conference among more than 100 world leaders, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangladesh and some other countries, including Maldives and New York City are certainly to be affected by rising sea levels earlier than projected.

Copenhagen conference would replace Kyoto protocol which expires in 2012. The conference is likely to define the coverage period for the targets in the next protocol, define the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction commitments by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



## Copenhagen is not Kyoto

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A few days ago, a key group of ten senators sent a letter to President Obama presenting their advice to him as he prepares to travel to Copenhagen. Their advice is a very different message than the one note negative message of warning that the Clinton-Gore Administration received from the Senate (95-0) prior to Kyoto: don't sign something that doesn't include developing country commitments with the same compliance timeframe as developed countries.

The ten senators who signed the letter instead said, yes, seek agreement on emission reduction goals; promote

technology exports and energy security; help vulnerable nations to adapt; provide incentives for developing nations to act; and put in place a verifiable agreement. Yes, there are warnings to protect energy intensive industries from feared trade impacts, and calls for protection of intellectual property, and guidance to seek the most cost-effective actions. But this is a very different message, coming from ten senators who represent arguably the middle road among their peers.

As President Obama heads to Copenhagen he has guidance, yes, but also support for reaching an agreement. It will be difficult, given the expectations of developing nations for much

deeper cuts than the Congress seems willing to support -- at least so far -- but there is also momentum from new and growing important voices outside Congress.

Over the past few months, there has been a growing call for action on climate change coming from a diverse set of leaders in the United States; business leaders, security leaders, and faith leaders. Over 250 business leaders urged action by the Senate in person in early October. Last week business leaders from a wide range of industries lauded Obama's participation in Copenhagen, whether driven by their business interests or merely their own sense of what is needed, and what is the right thing to do.

Increasingly, security leaders have raised their urgent concerns about climate change and America's reliance on foreign sources of oil -- from former Senator John Warner (former Secretary of the Navy), to former Vice Admiral Dennis McGinn, to former General Chuck Wald. The CIA's National Intelligence Council reported that global warming threatens U.S. energy supplies and may damage military bases, increase food and water shortages, and stress the economy.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair said early this year, the Intelligence Community judges global climate change will have important and extensive implications for U.S. national

security interests over the next 20 years.

And faith leaders have increasingly spoken out about the moral imperative for action. In addition, a moral call to action is powerful. Earlier this month faith leaders from nine of the world's major religions came together to announce their own commitments to reduce their impact on global warming, and to collaborate in doing so, setting an example for the world's governments.

In the United States, the Christian Coalition has spoken out about their concerns:

'The time is right for Christian Coalition supporters and allies to step forward to promote environmental and

energy independence initiatives. Taking responsibility to care for God's creation and protecting the future of our children and grandchildren is a core family value.'

Now that the negotiations have started, President Obama's own commitment and diverse support from key communities -- in the United States and globally -- are a promising advancement. It appears that although there are some loud voices fighting against progress on climate change, a wave of larger numbers, motivated by diverse reasons, are overtaking them.

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As the world leaders converge at the United Nations Climate Change Summit, Copenhagen to propel a global consensus to fight global warming, carbon emission reduction and overall environment threatening practices, we at KDS align our solidarity to make the world a better place for today and tomorrow.

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