

Climate Agreement in December A Miracle in Paris?

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THE upcoming Paris Conference in December 2015, formally known as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is an important milestone on the road to collective action on global warming. However, as we move closer to the inauguration date, there are two key indicators that need to be closely monitored to assess the probability of success of this gathering: the promised reduction of carbon emissions (INDC) and the commitment of funds from developed countries to mitigate the effects of global warming. Without substantial progress in these two areas, there is some skepticism whether the Paris Conference might face the same fate as the Copenhagen Conference in 2009.

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions or INDCs are commitments made by each country to cut back its emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). In 2013, Conference of the Parties (COP) invited all countries to communicate to the UNFCCC secretariat their INDCs by the first quarter of 2015 "in a manner that facilitates the clarity, transparency and understanding of the INDC." INDCs are the primary means for governments to communicate internationally the steps they will take to address climate change in their own countries. Some countries may also disclose how they'll adapt to climate change impacts, and what support they need from, or will provide to, other countries to adopt low-carbon pathways and to build climate resilience. While some progress has been achieved, to date only three out of the six world's major emitters (China, US, EU, India, Russia and Japan) have already published their INDCs. And in total, these countries account for less than 50% of global emissions. It was felt that an early submission is essential for a timely evaluation of the total contributions ahead of the Paris conclave, also known as COP21. It is expected that by October most countries will submit their INDCs, but some estimate that only less than 100 countries would have announced theirs before the conference. It is hoped that these pledged cutbacks in pollutants would add up to a target needed to contain global warming to 2°C. But, as



the French president Francois Hollande told delegates in Paris in late May that might be hoping for a "miracle".

There are many unresolved issues relating to INDCs and these may prove to be contentious during the Conference. First of all, while the UNFCCC secretariat invited all countries to submit their plans, only developed countries are doing so in earnest. And there is a good reason for that. The developed countries are primarily responsible for creating the current state of affairs, and given their level of economic development and available technologies, they are in a better situation to cut back their GHG emissions. Secondly, it is not unlikely that most developing countries are in a "wait and see" mode, and will show their hands once it is known how much

cutbacks are coming from developed countries, and the availability of funds for climate projects, technology transfer and capacity building. One important reason why some countries, particularly countries such as Bangladesh, might have been slow is the lack of clear guidelines and metrics to start this bottom-up process. It is a fair to speculate that some countries will offer an ambiguous or unambitious INDC for tactical reasons: they might want to see the pledges from other countries and respond to calls from the Paris Conference to enhance their "offers".

Financing of the efforts to mitigate the climate-change effects and provide resources to the affected countries is an important element of the next international agreement. Progress on commitment of resources to fund climate projects has

been, as expected, sluggish. At the Copenhagen Conference in 2009, nations agreed to establish the Climate Change Fund (CCF) which would provide a mechanism for the developed countries and the private sector to provide financial support for the developing countries to "mitigate and adapt". A target of \$100 billion per year was set, to be raised by 2020, but until now contributions for this fund has been disappointing. As of May 2015, only \$10.2 billion has been committed. Since commitment to the climate fund is voluntary, there is widespread skepticism on this account and there is a nagging uncertainty whether developing countries would sign any Protocol in Paris without a concerted effort by developed countries to provide adequate support for climate mitigation and adaptation actions. There is already some pushback from the developed countries.

According to World Research Institute (WRI), a think tank in the USA, there will be shortfall in funding climate projects and GCF. According to WRI, "realizing the goal of spending \$100 billion per year by 2020 to address climate change requires investments from leading economies, development banks and the private sector, according to new projections. Wealthy nations alone cannot foot the bill".

Four other issues are also likely to bedevil climate change negotiations going forward. The first is the question: which projects should be eligible for finance from GCF? Second, how is the problem of "carbon leakage" going to be addressed? There is widespread fear that some countries might be able to meet their INDCs by exporting carbon-intensive productive facilities to developing countries. Third, what is the legal status of any agreement reached in Paris? And finally, what are the chances that any agreed target of carbon reduction will be implemented on schedule? World renowned economist, Jean Tirole, winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Economics, has already voiced his concern that without a good economic framework, all declared INDCs are fated to end up only as "intended".

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The writer is an economist.

We need an appropriate manpower export strategy

The government must also take immediate measures to finalise the proposed Comprehensive Migration Policy and the Overseas Employment Act to protect the rights of migrant workers.

MD. HARUNUR RASHID

REMITTANCE is the second highest export earning sector of Bangladesh after the apparel sector. This represents an increase of \$1.8 billion compared to last year. It is heartening to note that the fiscal year has closed posting \$15.31 billion worth of remittance, the highest ever in Bangladesh's history. Manpower export sector is now faced with a number of challenges to sustain future growth of the sector. A research informatics show that from a peak of 9.8 lakh in FY 2008 to 6.9 lakh in FY12, the number of migrants dropped to 4.1-4.2 lakh in FY 14-15.

As is known, Bangladesh has traditionally been an exporter of workers in the semi-skilled and less-skilled categories. This is also reflected in the lower average per capita remittance sent by Bangladeshi workers when compared to other countries. Population is increasing day by day but the job sector is not expanding to provide for the unemployed people and because of a lack of skill, they are not able to take part in national income. But if we are able to ensure training, the unskilled people will become the wealth of the country and will be able to export manpower abroad and earn remittance.

The average share of less-skilled workers rose from 52.4 percent during 2001-2005 to about 59.8 percent during 2006-2010. The proportion of less-skilled workers alone in 2011 was

about 54.4 percent, while the rest comprised of semi-skilled, skilled and professional workers. It is noteworthy that the proportion of skilled workers increased significantly in 2011 (40.3 percent) when compared to 2010 (23.2 percent). However, low per capita remittance earning still demands a further move towards skilled and professional categories. On the other hand, growth in the less-skilled category is partially explained by the growing demand for workers in the agriculture sector both in the Middle East and non-Middle Eastern countries (including Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt and Brunei).

The comparable for semi-skilled (from 12.5 percent to 13.1 percent), skilled (30.5 percent to 27 percent), and professional workers (4.7 percent to 0.2 percent) suggest that relatively lower number of skilled workers and professionals have gone overseas from Bangladesh in recent times. From the demand side, this has been particularly due to the slowdown of the building and construction sectors in the traditional markets, particularly in the Middle East.

According to the World Bank, international migrant stock in Bangladesh was last measured at 0.73 percent in 2010. Remittances earned from overseas Bangladeshi migrants have traditionally played an important role from the perspective of replenishing the foreign exchange reserves of Bangladesh. Remittances played a significant role in

the economy. The positive impact of remittances on consumption and poverty alleviation is also supported by extensive literature.

On the other hand, remittances generate large multiplier effects as these are more likely to be spent on domestically produced goods, according to the World Bank. Besides, the welfare impact of international migration, both in terms of reducing pressure on the domestic labour market and injection of foreign currency into the domestic economy is well-established.

Latest data show that since independence more than 7.7 million people had left Bangladesh for jobs abroad till 2009 through formal channels. Available data suggests that a total of 182,558 female workers went overseas during 1991 to 2011 period, accounting for a paltry 2.6 percent of the total overseas migration during the last 21 years.

Demographic momentum of the OECD countries, characterised particularly by the growth in ageing population resulting in increased demand for caring services and shortage of workers in the healthcare sector, is likely to create significant job opportunities for developing countries, particularly in such areas as physicians, nursing, medical technicians and caring services, according to the OECD. This reinforces the need to create more skilled and professional migrants.

On the other hand, we need to strengthen collaboration not only with

the labour exporting countries, but also with the recipient countries. Besides, the government has ratified the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in April 2011. Technical and strategic support from these organisations could also be sought to facilitate such negotiations. Bangladesh must also play a proactive role in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a view to ensuring a least developed country (LDC)-friendly outcome to augment services export to the global market.

Taking advantage of new market opportunities is essential, the importance of the Saudi proposal for hosting workers of certain categories can hardly be over-emphasised in the context of the continuing deceleration of manpower export to the country from Bangladesh over the recent past. Besides, such Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as Saudi Arab and Qatar are likely to be in high demand for workers in the construction sector in the coming year because of the football World Cup will be held in the Qatar in 2022.

On the other hand government to government (G to G) initiative with Malaysia, Dubai, and Singapore offer an important window of opportunity to revive the growth in overseas migration. While the demand of these countries are for less and semi-skilled workers, opportunities for skilled and pro-

fessional migrants are expected to be quite high in the OECD countries. Hence, time-bound and strategic policy initiatives will need to be taken to garner maximum benefits from these emerging market opportunities. In view of the potential impact of Saudisation, the need for market diversification has become even more urgent.

At the same time, the government must also take immediate measures to finalise the proposed Comprehensive Migration Policy and the Overseas Employment Act to protect the rights of migrant workers. And ensure strict compliance with the provisions on the part of the recruiting agencies. The present regime should try to sign more agreements with the recruiting countries.

Finally, proper initiatives have to be taken by the concerned authority to sustain current labour markets and explore new markets. It is necessary to create a skilled manpower. Recruitment process should be transparent and fair. We should ensure the welfare of expatriates. We have to ensure that migrant workers abide by the rules and regulations and observe and honour the customs and culture of the host country. Meanwhile, we need to solve the trafficking problem in close cooperation with the regional countries to protect our goodwill.

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QUOTABLE Quote

"Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one."
Bruce Lee

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Tea party guest
- 6 Tower site
- 11 Candidate of the '90s
- 12 Kitchen come-on
- 13 Unbearable pain
- 14 TV's Philbin
- 15 Movies
- 17 Capp and Capone
- 18 Weed whacker
- 19 Smallest Great Lake
- 22 Purpose
- 23 Deceived
- 24 Deep sleeps
- 25 "Under Siege" star
- 27 Surprised sounds
- 30 Fashionable
- 31 Carpet feature
- 32 Janitor's tool
- 33 "No Exit" writer
- 35 La Scala songs
- 38 "Behold!"
- 39 Gagger group
- 40 Playwright Rice
- 41 Carrie's dad
- 42 Appears

DOWN

- 1 Cochise, for one
- 2 Army group
- 3 Freed of wrinkles
- 4 Traffic marker
- 5 Word origin
- 6 Hotel feature
- 7 Common verb
- 8 "Key Largo" star
- 9 Designer Pucci
- 10 Ranch rope
- 16 Zoo residents
- 20 Some diviners read them
- 21 TV spots
- 24 Manx, for one
- 25 Was a noisy sleeper
- 26 Spotted
- 27 Punctual
- 28 Apollo Theater setting
- 29 Javelins
- 30 Pol's concern
- 34 Part to play
- 36 "Do - say!"
- 37 Take in

Yesterday's answer

L	A	P	E	L	S	A	S	S	Y
A	T	O	N	E	A	R	E	N	A
P	E	S	T	S	L	O	C	A	L
T	E	S	T	U	R	G	E		
S	C	A	R	E	A	S	E		
I	L	L	P	A	L	E	T	T	E
P	A	S	T	A	E	S	S	A	Y
S	W	E	R	V	E	S	E	K	E
R	E	V	E	L	F	R	E	D	
J	O	V	E	K	I	E	V		
E	V	I	T	A	S	L	I	C	I
D	E	C	O	R	L	I	C	I	P
I	N	E	P	T	E	X	E	C	S

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott