

# Paying for a crime not committed



THE OVERTON WINDOW  
ERESH OMAR JAMAL

ON the eve of concluding his two day trip to Bangladesh earlier this month, the World Bank (WB) President Jim Yong Kim pledged to grant

Indonesia and India (both 4 percent). Given its almost non-existent carbon footprint in comparison with other countries, is it fair that Bangladesh, despite being one of the worst affected countries of a problem largely created by the more industrialised countries, will now have to borrow money bearing interest from the WB to deal with that problem? How is it that the WB expects some of the poorest people in the world to pay for a problem created by the richest?

major allegations by foreign donors. According to reports that came out in April this year, Bangladesh was on the verge of losing USD 50 million of climate funds "because of tension between the World Bank and donors, and lack of government commitment". Because the fund had not been successful in its intent or purpose, according to an evaluation by UK Aid — a major donor — donors had decided to pull the plug on the Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund (BCCRF) set up six years ago using funds from foreign donors.

United Kingdom had also stopped the disbursement of a large portion of a USD 190 million grant it had pledged earlier which, according to TIB was because of the Bangladesh government's "overspending of the money" on ineffective climate adaptation projects and perceived "corruption in the implementation process".

it had pledged. Without considering Bangladesh's capabilities to deal with such issues, it is unfair for developed countries to criticise its performance till date, particularly when they themselves have failed to deliver on their pledges and commitments.

Bangladesh a total loan of USD 3 billion. Out of the total amount, USD 2 billion was committed for climate-related projects. At a press conference held to announce its loan commitment, the WB President said, "Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, and we must do all we can to support the [Bangladesh] government".

In reaction to the pledge, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) advised the government not to accept the loan. TIB Executive Director Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said that it would be unwise to take the loan bearing interest and that the country, being one of the worst affected in the world, should rather seek compensation from the WB.

First, in considering the validity of his comments, it is important to remember that much of the responsibility for increased greenhouse gas emissions till date lie with developed countries even according to their own representatives. Bangladesh, according to data, emitted only 190 million metric tons (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2012, while it was estimated that the United States, between 1990 and 2011, was responsible for 16 percent of all greenhouse gas emission worldwide.

China (15 percent) and the European Union (12 percent) were the next biggest emitters, followed by Russia (6 percent), Brazil (5 percent),

Under these circumstances, the TIB's advice to the Bangladesh government is



ILLUSTRATION: EMILY GIGLIO

totally justified. Bangladesh has the moral high ground to seek compensation rather than borrow money on which it would have to make hefty interest payments. The more developed countries also have a responsibility, if they are truly looking to deal with the problem of greenhouse gas emissions from a moral standpoint, to stick to their pledge of providing compensation to the worst affected countries for their large carbon footprints over the years.

Bangladesh, however, faces criticism when it comes to funding climate change programmes. Lack of accountability and transparency leading to funds being misused have been

According to reports, "the resilience fund will be officially closed out by December 2016 although its functions may be allowed to continue till June the next year". The remaining money amounting to almost USD 50 million will then be returned to its original donors.

Moreover, because of the alleged misuse of funds by the Bangladeshi government, Bangladesh had earlier been denied access to the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund and Special Climate Change Fund. As a result, the government had to take USD 40 million from the Green Climate Fund through a German international bank, paying service charges. The

and corruption in the selection of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to carry out work on the ground" (Watchdog finds malpractice in Bangladesh climate finance, Transparency International Bangladesh). The report then goes on to detail significant corruption in the fund allocation and implementation processes.

Another justified criticism has been the failure of the government to involve people belonging to the affected areas in the climate-related projects. When dishing out such criticism, however, it is important to consider that the developed countries too had failed to transfer some of the technological aids

Still, the government needs to minimise the corruption and mismanagement that is taking place in Bangladesh in regards to dealing with climate funds so that developed countries and international organisations can no longer use such excuses to deny Bangladesh of its rightful compensation, as they have previously done. With the 22nd session of Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to be held in Morocco on November 7-18, 2016, the government should immediately seek to redress these issues.

If the government can successfully address its own issues, it can, and should make a strong case at the conference to the rest of the world for greater compensations from developed countries and other international donors, rather than loans to deal with issues for which, Bangladesh, in all honesty, is least responsible, if at all. With that in mind, the government should indeed, as advised by TIB, reject the WB's loan offer and, instead, start working on a comprehensive strategy to appeal to the international stakeholders to provide Bangladesh with funds and technologies that it needs to deal with climate-related issues. It is the government's moral obligation not to fail in that regard, as it is the international stakeholders' (especially the countries that are most responsible for large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions over the years) to help the government and the people of Bangladesh to fight the consequences of climate change.

The writer is a member of the Editorial team, The Daily Star.

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## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# Putting democracy above the bottom line



KELLE LOUAILLIER

THIS month, we will have a chance to chart a course toward a stronger, safer global society, where power belongs to the many, not to the few, and where those who

Both the FCTC and the UNFCCC allow for governments to rein in global corporations' unchecked power, which is a root cause of many other problems, from economic inequality to social injustice and broken democratic systems. Global corporations are enormous, and their influence affects almost every aspect of our lives. To

derail climate-change policy. Global corporations have disproportionate power because they can operate across national borders, which means that no single local or national government can effectively regulate them. The crucial function of international frameworks such as the FCTC and UNFCCC is to provide concrete tools for govern-

2009 — just six years after the World Health Organisation adopted the FCTC and 15 months after Colombia ratified it — the Colombian government enacted one of the strongest tobacco-control laws in the world.

Likewise, governments worldwide are adopting measures that are proven to reduce smoking rates and save lives, including graphic health warnings, marketing restrictions, and laws requiring tobacco products to be sold in unbranded packaging.

But the FCTC's work is not done, and governments are now pushing for legal liability to be a part of national-level corporate-accountability frameworks. If they are successful in negotiations at the FCTC conference this month, governments will have the tools they need to make Big Tobacco pay for the damage it has done. Such an outcome would mean that governments could recoup hundreds of billions of dollars in tobacco-related health-care costs and force the release of internal industry documents.

The FCTC is effective because it includes a hard-won provision that explicitly prohibits corporations from influencing policymaking. At the UNFCCC conference next week, some governments will hold up the FCTC as a strong precedent to argue that the fossil-fuel industry must be excluded from ongoing climate negotiations, owing to its conflicts of interest with sound climate policy.

Industries responsible for climate change must not be entrusted to solve it. Only by removing them from the

equation can we implement truly groundbreaking measures — such as renewable-energy systems owned and operated by communities — that put people and our planet's survival above the industry's bottom line.

For as long as we've had public regulatory institutions, corporate interests have sought to co-opt them. Big Tobacco, Big Oil, Big Food, and Big Pharma have tried to bully, buy, and bribe their way into our public international spaces, all with the same goal in mind: to fend off regulation that would disrupt business as usual. Costs to human life or the planet rarely enter into their calculus.

Democracy advocates in civil society and government have managed to push back against global corporations, but much of their progress hangs in the balance this month. Will attendees at the FCTC and UNFCCC conferences defend democratic principles, or will they defer to big business?

The United Kingdom's "Brexit" referendum notwithstanding, there is no denying that we live in a truly global world. When the causes of our biggest problems are global, our solutions must be as well, which requires that we first address the fundamental issue of corporate interference. The possibilities of what can be achieved by bringing international law to bear are too promising to ignore.

The writer is President of Corporate Accountability International.  
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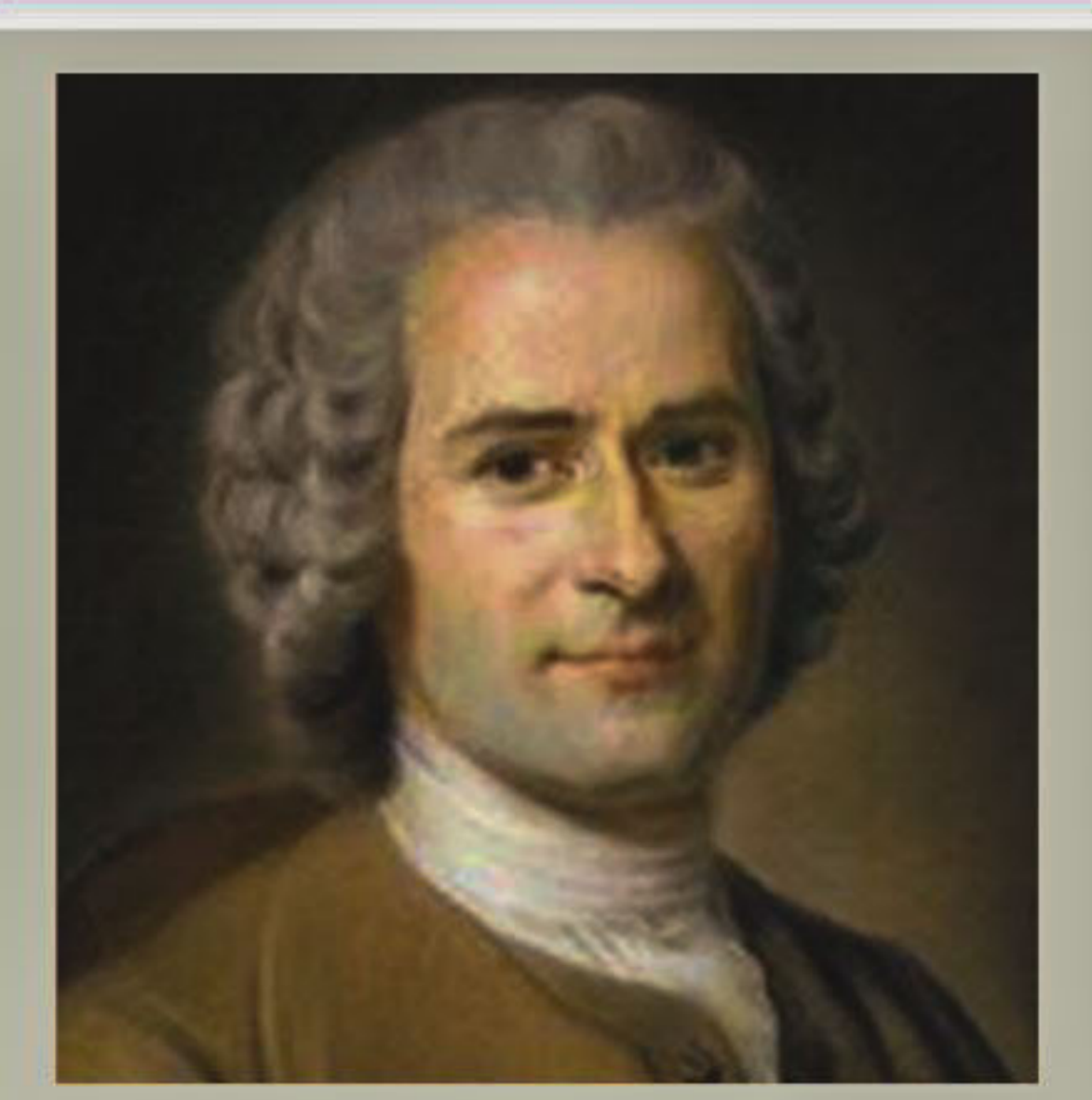


An aerial shot shows tens of thousands of Filipinos form a human no-smoking sign at the Bicol University football field in Legazpi city, Albay province, south of Manila, June 28, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

understand the reach of their power, one must look no further than the billions of dollars they spend on elections; their lobbying to gut worker and environmental protections in trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership; and fossil-fuel corporations' relentless drive to

ments to set national policies on issues ranging from public health to climate change and global inequality. For example, Colombia was a stronghold for the tobacco corporation Philip Morris International two decades ago, and comprehensive tobacco-control legislation in that country was long unthinkable. But in

## QUOTABLE Quote



JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU  
The Social Contract

...in respect of riches, no citizen shall ever be wealthy enough to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 Blast of wind
  - 5 Aids in crime
  - 10 Opposed
  - 11 Hooded snakes
  - 13 Sirius or Polaris
  - 14 Brittle metal
  - 15 Kept adding
  - 17 Vining plant
  - 18 "The Pink Panther" star
  - 19 Road goo
  - 20 Conclude
  - 21 Fast food choice
  - 22 Disgusting
  - 25 Squad car sound
  - 26 Camera part
  - 27 That fellow
  - 28 Poorly
  - 29 Chooses
  - 33 Go out, as a fire
  - 34 Fox hunt cry
  - 35 Steered clear of
  - 37 Beige
  - 38 Bring back to life
  - 39 Spill over
- 40 Rocker Bob
- 41 Uses a needle
- DOWN
- 1 Shocked sounds
  - 2 Loosen, as laces
  - 3 Barn section
  - 4 Indefatigable
  - 5 Harmony
  - 6 Benefits
  - 7 Diminish
  - 8 Treasonous person
  - 9 Recover a wreck
  - 12 "Sophie's Choice" author
  - 16 Bears' lairs
  - 21 Always relevant
  - 22 Quiet plane
  - 23 Experiences anew
  - 24 Taking a sabbatical
  - 25 Window part
  - 27 Forward fall
  - 29 Actor Buscemi
  - 30 Recurrent course
  - 31 Toss
  - 32 Diner bowlfuls
  - 36 Use a spade

10-17

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## YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

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## BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO BEAT YOU, BEETLE?

INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS

INSANITY IS ALSO NOT KNOWING WHEN I SHOULD SHUT UP

GREG+ MORT WALKER

## BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

BUMPI!

HEY! WATCH IT!

YOU WATCH IT!

WHAT A WEIRD-LOOKING KID!