

SHARED VISION

November 2010, Cancún

The “shared vision for long-term cooperative action” in climate change negotiations should not be reduced to defining the limit on temperature increases and the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, but must also incorporate in a balanced and integral manner measures regarding capacity building, production and consumption patterns, and other essential factors such as the acknowledging of the Rights of Mother Earth to establish harmony with nature.

People’s Agreement, April 2010, Cochabamba

Key messages

- The “shared vision” involves the largest distribution of resources in modern history and maintaining the integrity of the Earth’s climate system
- Warming and greenhouse gas concentrations must be limited at levels that keep the world – and especially vulnerable communities – safe
- The remaining atmospheric space must be shared equitably among countries, based on historical responsibilities and capabilities
- Developed countries must radically reduce and remove their emissions, to live within the remaining atmospheric space, while leaving room for developing countries
- Developed countries must agree binding goals for financing and technology to developing countries
- The elements of the shared vision must address the root causes of climate change and, like pieces of a puzzle, fit together to get the job done in practice

At the UN climate talks countries are discussing a “shared vision” for long-term cooperation. Under discussion is:

- An agreed limit on global warming, and associated risks;
- The level of global emission cuts required to achieve this;
- The roles of developed and developing countries;
- The financing and technology to be provided to developing countries; and
- How in practice the shared vision will be achieved and reviewed.

At stake in the shared vision is nothing less than protecting the Earth’s climate and ecosystems, how we share atmospheric commons among rich and poor, and whether all countries can access the means – including finance and technology – to address climate change and live well.

Keeping the world safe

A “shared vision” must achieve the objective of the UN Climate Convention (UNFCCC Article 2) and keep the world safe from climate change.

According to recent climate science, atmospheric concentrations must be reduced below today’s levels “if humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted”.¹

Over 100 developing countries have called for an effort to limit average global warming to “well below 1.5°C” above pre-industrial levels, and to thin

the blanket of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere to “well below 350ppm” (parts per million).

Bolivia, and participants at the World People’s Conference, have called for an effort to limit warming to below 1°C, and atmospheric concentrations to below 300ppm, with a view to returning to pre-industrial levels.

Concentrations must be stabilized in a time frame that allows ecosystems to adapt naturally, ensures food production, and enables sustainable economic development (UNFCCC Article 2).

Emerging science suggests even 1.5°C of average warming is dangerous. It risks over 2°C warming on large land-masses such as Africa, which will warm “roughly 1.5 times the global mean response”.² It may lead to crop losses of over 30% continentally, according to recent studies.³

A global goal of 2°C is increasingly recognized as risking runaway climate change with catastrophic ecological, economic, social and moral implications.

Sharing atmospheric space

To keep warming below safe levels, the world must limit its emissions. The safer the limit on warming (e.g. 1 or 1.5°C), the thinner must be the blanket of gasses (e.g. 300 or 350ppm), and the less that can be emitted – implying a limit on the remaining “atmospheric space” or global “carbon budget”.

How this limited atmospheric space is shared among developed and develo-

¹ Dr. James Hansen et al., Target atmospheric CO₂: Where should humanity aim? Open Atmos. Sci. J. (2008)

² IPCC, Contribution of Working Group 1 to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, p866-867.

³ See, e.g., Schlenker et al., Environmental Research Letters 5 (2010)

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ping countries is a major issue. To ensure they have the space and means to develop, developing countries have called for a long-term goal that is “preceded by a paradigm for equitable access to global atmospheric space”.

Rich countries to cut consumption and pollution

Developed countries must make “equitable and appropriate contributions” (UNFCCC Article 4.2) to achieving the global goal.

They must rapidly and radically cut their climate pollution and restore the atmospheric space occupied by these emissions.

Developed countries must adopt binding commitments far beyond the meagre “pledges” on the table, and close the “accounting loopholes” that would allow them to cheat the system.

The necessary level of mitigation calls not only for technological pro-

gress, but also for an end to over-consumption and unsustainable lifestyles.

Ensuring the means to develop and adapt

Developed countries are obliged to provide financial and technological resources to enable developing countries to fulfil their responsibility for mitigation actions and to address adverse climate impacts.

The shared vision must therefore include binding goals on the other elements of an agreed outcome:

- Compensation for adaptation must be adequate in light of the warming implied by the global goal and in practice;
- Technology must be deployed on a scale sufficient to curb global emissions, limit warming and enable development; and
- Financing must be sufficient to address adverse impacts, and pay the full incremental costs of mitiga-

tion, adaptation and technology transfer.

The shared vision must ensure that all the pieces of the puzzle – a limit on warming, the commitments of developed countries, and financing and technology available to developing countries etc. – are together sufficient to address climate change.

Addressing structural causes

These elements form part of a broader effort to address the structural causes of climate change and protect Mother Earth. A shared vision must ultimately address excessive consumption and production patterns, both in developing and developed countries, intellectual property rights, international trade and financial relations, and other inequities and root causes of climate change. The shared vision must ensure “systems change” not climate change.

Myth busting: What a “shared vision” is NOT

- 2°C is NOT safe. 2°C in fact threatens unprecedented ecological disruption and damage, species extinction, social conflict and violations of human rights. Reverend Desmond Tutu has said “a global goal of about 2 degrees is to condemn Africa to incineration and no modern development”.ⁱ
- A 50% global emission reduction by 2050 will NOT keep warming below 2°C. This inadequate mitigation effort is in fact more than 50% likely to increase warming above 2°C.
- A shared vision is NOT solely a global emission target. Agreeing a global target, without having secured an equitable allocation of atmospheric space, and sufficient finance and technology transfer to adapt and develop, is unacceptably risky for developing countries.
- Developed countries’ mid- and long-term pledges (less than 20% by 2020, and 80% by 2050) are NOT fair or consistent with the science. These targets in fact imply continued high emission in rich countries, an unfair appropriation of atmospheric space, and shifting the burden of emission reductions to developing countries.
- Finance of \$100 billion per year by 2020 is NOT sufficient. This figure from the Copenhagen Accord is patently inadequate and has no grounding in science or economics. All reasonable studies call for financing of much higher levels.

ⁱ Rev. Desmond Tutu, *Letter to Danish Prime Minister*, 15 December 2009

ActionAid	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy	Nord-Sud XXI	Third World Network
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