



POSITION PAPER ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations has recently recognized climate change as a fundamental issue regarding human rights. This decision shows once again the importance that the issue has gained at an international level. There is, however, a long way from words to deeds: official speeches are one thing and the proposed solutions to environmental catastrophes are another.

The above was evident in December of 2007 in Bali, during the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol (PK). It is clear that the most polluting countries are not interested in fulfilling the agreements reached in international meetings on climate, and now intend to design new agreements for the post-2012 scenario, when the first period of the Kyoto Protocol expires (post-Kyoto). The intention is to create mechanisms that are mere palliatives. Talks of adaptation to climate change help polluters to avoid reducing real emissions and will allow new climate deals. The countries with obligations to reduce their emissions that cause the greenhouse effect have done too little, and are taking wrong steps while appearing to be doing something positive.

Kyoto protocol has failed, ignores hydrocarbons deliberately as part of the origin of the problem and proposes false and perverse solutions. Carbon trade and a range of other false solutions as genetic modified organisms, carbon sinks, ocean fertilisation, carbon storage, agrofuels, among others, are formulas that leave aside the oil industry, the number one sector responsible for global warming. These mechanisms aim to transfer the responsibilities and the impacts to the South, creating new threats for the peoples such as conversion of indigenous territories into plantations, land grabbing and displacements of population; these mechanisms provide a cover for forests given to be private businesses, privatisation of protected areas and natural forests, occupation of peasant and agricultural lands, areas and the deprivation of the local communities of their rights and livelihoods. All these mean a subsidy to the polluter/business and a stimulus to energy guzzling countries in the North, to maintain their production and consumption models.

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGES

As environmental catastrophes are a reality, adaptation to climate change – one of the four topics in the negotiations (the remaining being mitigation, technology transfer, and financing and investment) – should be adopted by all countries. In the case of the most vulnerable nations, that is, countries of the South, this is a must.

For this reason, Bali saw the establishment of the Adaptation Fund with the

Global Environmental Facility (GEF) providing secretariat services and the World Bank serving as a trustee. The Adaptation Fund is composed of 16 rotating members.

For most of the South the question of adaptation is a crucial one as the survival of thousands of peoples and communities depend on it. The demand of developing countries is to have funds and institutions specialized in applying the plans and projects that will allow them to face environmental catastrophes; and to have infrastructure, be it technological or for the security of the public. In fact, the adaptation plans must be included in the development plans of the more vulnerable countries already affected.

At an international level, the Nairobi Work Program on Adaptation is one of the UN initiatives to prepare the technical materials on the issue and it is now a requirement to develop national, regional and local programs.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF ADAPTATION?

According to UN studies, the following yearly funds would be necessary:

- Agriculture, forestry and aquaculture: \$14 billion
- Water: \$11 billion
- Human health: \$5 billion
- Coastal areas: \$11 billion
- Infrastructure: \$8-130 billion

WHO SHOULD PAY FOR THE COSTS OF ADAPTATION?

There are already adaptation funds, totalling more than \$300 million under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. The funds particularly target developing nations.

The Least Developed Countries Fund. This fund has assisted LDCs carry out the National Adaptation Programs of Action. It receives voluntary contributions from developed countries.

The Special Climate Change Fund for developing nations.

The Strategic Priority on Adaptation. It has \$50 million assigned by GEF to support pilot projects; and funds from bilateral cooperation agencies totalling more than \$100 million.

The Adaptation Fund was created for concrete adaptation activities. It is financed from two percent of the share of the proceeds from clean development mechanism (CDM) projects in force after the Kyoto Protocol, and from private donors, for which the EU proposed in Bali that the World Bank and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) be responsible. With the Adaptation Fund ratified in Bali, those who cause environmental catastrophes will force the South to apply more disastrous CMD projects to justify the adaptation funds.

Industrialized countries should pay for the developing nations' adaptation to climate change. It is so established by the UNFCCC (Arts. 4.3 and 4.4) and by

the recognition of the existence of an ecological debt to the South. The costs of adaptation are currently calculated at between \$50-100 billion yearly.

Climate inequality and injustice surface again in the area of adaptation. While some rich countries are already planning and executing an infinite number of multimillion-dollar projects, others are suffering devastating floods, drought, epidemics and forced displacement (more than 25 million people could be consider as climate refugees). For example, a UNDP report points out that the multilateral aid for adaptation is only \$26 million, which represents only what the UK employs weekly to prevent floods. This is what Desmond Tutu, the South African bishop, called the “apartheid” of adaptation.

The principle of common, but differentiated responsibilities established by the Climate Change Convention should also be accompanied by a fair approach regarding adaptation, including the commitment to technology transfer and North-to-South fund transfer – with the South having the decision-making powers with regards to which technologies to use, and when, how, and under what priorities. The same principle should mean the recognition of the illegal and illegitimate historical appropriation of the atmosphere and the responsibility for the damages caused by global warming.

Paying for the adaptation costs is a way to compensate for the ecological debt with the South. We also demand that the damages be repaired and that the affected communities be indemnified.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE ADAPTATION PLANS?

Rich countries are the primary beneficiaries because of the thinking that it is enough to assign funds for the adaptation of the South instead of reducing their emissions.

Another big gainers are the oil companies because their interests will not be affected and they are assigning funds for adaptation as a way to clean up their image and guilt.

The construction companies that develop infrastructures.

The big agricultural industries, which provide the world's food aid and will benefit from further impoverishment of affected countries as their food production continues to be reduced. (In Africa an agricultural production reduction of 50% by 2020 and 90% by 2100; in Asia, 30% by 2050 and 30% in Latin America by 2080)

Biotechnology companies that want technology transfer to include genetically modified organisms to supposedly fight drought, diseases, etc.

The pharmaceutical industry, because Southern countries' public health systems will need to buy millions of vaccines and drugs for prevention and control diseases; those States that have signed free trade agreements will have access problems to cheap medicines because of strict laws on property rights

The companies which want to control water sources



The big conservation transnational organisations, which want to manage protected forests and other ecosystems that help lessen climate change impacts.

The insurance companies.

The financial sector, which will consider loans to people who will have to protect and reinforce their houses, to farmers who will be forced to take them to protect their harvests.

The military and security industry, which will create favourable scenarios to intervene and protect strategic areas.

Consulting firms specialized in risk-management.

The international banking system.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE ADAPTATION PLANS?

Those interested in applying these plans propose a series of guides and activities. Among them are:

- Technology transfers and development (GMO, plantations, etc)
- The creation of environments and ecosystems adapted for this transfer and the development of pilot plans.
- The search and implementation of incentives for the private enterprise
- The acquisition and protection of intellectual property rights through “low in carbon emissions” technology licenses and infrastructure. That is another way of saying *environmental disasters as a new source of monopolistic benefits*.
- More free trade as the claim is that it is necessary to eliminate or reduce barriers for environmental goods and services whose function is to mitigate and facilitate the adaptation and to develop a carbon-efficient market based on the international commerce regime. Those countries that have signed free trade or association agreements will have bigger problems because they are tied to the trap into which they have been forced.
- Opening of new financial windows for the flow of capital coming from multilateral banking. This translates into more foreign debt.

THE WORLD BANK BACK AT THE SCENE

The World Bank (WB) is one of the biggest public financiers of the fossil-fuel industry and one of the biggest intermediaries in the carbon market. Since 1992 to 2004, the World Bank has assigned \$11 billion for more than 120 fossil-fuel projects (projects that represent 20% of all emissions per year). In the carbon market, the WB currently controls about \$2 billion with a 13% profit on each transaction. It will now become the manager of more than \$50 billion needed by developing nations to adapt to climate change.

The World Bank, however, has its own plans. It insists that a substantial part of the adaptation costs will have to be covered not only with Official Development Assistance (ODA), but also with direct credit or direct foreign investment. In other words, more foreign debt, more conditions, probably more deals for transnational



companies. This will also mean more social and environmental impacts, and more social and ecological debt from the North to the South.

The World Bank proposes these ways to finance the adaptation in the South:

	(in billions USD)
- ODA and financing in favourable conditions	4-8
- Direct foreign investment	2-3
- National investment	3-30
- Total cost of adaptation per year	9-41

The World Bank has proposed the creation of the Climate Change Investment Funds, which consists of three specific funds to invest in climate change solutions:

The Clean Technology Fund with \$5-10 billion

The Adaptation Fund (Pilot Fund for Climate Change) with \$500 million along with the Strategic Climate Fund

A possible fund for investment in forests and climate change

For many organizations these funds, which will be put together with private donations, will be in conflict with the Adaptation Fund created by the UN in Bali. Neither is the UN fund a guarantee to the benefit of the most needy. All of these funds try to profit from the misery and afflictions of the poor and are used to create new markets and generate profits from the climate crisis.

It should be noted that the Regional Banks as the Inter-American Development Bank already require the inclusion of development plans, or, in the projects they finance, the inclusion of a fund to cover climate risks. Thus, the developing countries that acquire credit with them would be covering any contingency or risk in the projects they invest.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The GEF also has about 280 million USD for climate change adaptation. Many of these projects are executed through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

The Strategic Priority for Adaptation Trust

The Special Climate Change Fund

The Least Developed Countries Fund

The GEF is in charge of looking for more funds from companies and multilateral and bilateral institutions.

WHAT TYPE OF ADAPTATION DO WE REQUIRE IN THE SOUTH?

The Kyoto Protocol plans regarding financing for adaptation, and also the technology transfer strategy, work to reproduce dependency and North-to-South



domination models, and this must be denounced. A viable alternative is to promote and support local adaptation initiatives, like communities employing sustainable agriculture, fishermen and indigenous peoples who preserve forests as natural barriers.

Keeping and saving traditional knowledge is basic. For thousand of years the peoples of the South have adjusted to weather changes. River communities have adapted to periodic flooding and they have solved different hydraulic problems and known the appropriate engineering to obtain water. Semi-nomadic populations from the jungles migrated according to the season's flooding and peoples living in the Arctic easily recognize where the ice is safe to tread. Millions of farmers know how to handle the seeds when there is a frost or a drought; nomadic shepherds migrate to oases in seasons without rain. This and more knowledge should be cared for and respected because these are not isolated cases. They are rather part of an accumulation of knowledge, which is the basis for the natural adaptation of peoples to the changes in nature.

Now that the climate change is violently occurring, this knowledge is indispensable because it helps us face the challenges.

Any adaptation plan should consider the local people, their needs, their own capacity and local knowledge, the respect for the collective rights and the will of the indigenous peoples and farmers before the implementation of the proposals. Adaptation programs should also confront hunger in the South, and that means ways to recover food sovereignty.

In Bali the indigenous peoples presented their questions about the mitigation and adaptation schemes because they are based on market mechanisms and because they may devastate their lands and native territories, thus causing graver violations of their rights. It is a priority to assess which are the real vulnerabilities, the right use of technology and the correct information and traditional practices in plan designing and the direct intervention of local and national governments.

WE CONDEMN THE IMPOSED ADAPTATION PLANS

The hypocritical adaptation "aid" must be denounced and rejected by all peoples. It constitutes a new way of domination and control of our resources and economies.

We demand that rich countries whose consumption of fossil fuels thus generating environmental disasters should pay for the adaptation plans. Adaptation must be carried out through funds managed at local levels and with sovereign control, without conditions. The causes of the problems are global, the impacts are local and the actions to reverse the trend must be from local. Peoples must decide which are their priorities.



The governments and countries from the North want to save themselves a great deal of money while the governments of the South ask only for alms. Alms in technology transfer, alms in adaptation plans, but alms that become shackles for the peoples of the South. This cannot be allowed to continue.

HOW TO FUNDAMENTALLY CONFRONT CLIMATE CHANGE?

- With conservation of tropical forests
- Respecting local communities and indigenous people rights over their lands.
- Protecting traditional and organic agriculture.
- Supporting local resistance to oil activities and appropriate proposals such as keeping hydrocarbons underground.
- Attacking the capitalist production and consumption based in fossil fuels.
- Creating conditions so that the countries of the South that depend on fossil fuels are able to stop extracting it, and move towards energy sovereignty.
- Recognising the existence of an historical, social and ecological debt due to oil activities and climate change that the industrialised North owes to the Southern peoples.
- Recognising nature rights to ensure humanity and life survival

**To the recognition of the Carbon Debt and the Climate Change!
For Climate Justice, Now!**

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