



PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON THE WORLD BANK

**Inter-Parliamentary Union Meeting on the Occasion
of the United Nations Climate Change Conference**

Summary and Analysis

Copenhagen, Denmark
16 December, 2009

I. ORIENTATION

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Danish Parliament on 16 December jointly organized a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (COP15). The meeting brought together several hundred parliamentarians from over 60 countries. Five themes emerged during the day's program:

- Parliament's role in global-level, binding agreements
- The two sides of climate change (rapid population growth and poor resource management in developing countries and over-consumption/over-use of resources in developed countries)
- The non-negotiability of climate change
- Climate change and global trade
- The increasing need for global governance

In addition, a number of ideas and recommendations emerged regarding what the post-Copenhagen agenda should look like and how parliaments can contribute to its implementation. To conclude the day's sessions, the event rapporteur offered a number of reflections.

This summary and analysis report discusses each of the five themes as well as the ideas and recommendations emerging throughout the day. The report concludes with the IPU rapporteur's reflections and implications for PNoWB.

II. THEMES

a. Parliament's role in global-level, binding agreements

Executive and legislative branches of government have different responsibilities in global-level agreements. The executive branch negotiates on behalf of the government; the legislative branch then translates these negotiations into actions via planning, legislation and budget allocation.

Because of their key role in translating commitments into action, parliaments have the potential to be more powerful than the executive in climate change mitigation. Thus far, parliamentarians have not been recognized as key participants at COP15. Some countries included parliamentarians in their official delegations, but many felt shut out of the important discussions happening in Copenhagen. If parliamentarians are the ones who will author the supporting legislation in their home countries for any agreement reached in Copenhagen, then certainly they should be represented in official delegations.

This opinion was not shared by all. A parliamentarian from Italy pointed out that more important than being present during negotiations was ratifying any emerging agreements in respective home parliaments. Similarly, a Cyprian parliamentarian stated that rather than lamenting the lack of parliamentary representation at the negotiations, parliamentarians must instead focus on being present in the working groups that will be formed after COP15, when the hard work truly begins.

b. The two sides of climate change

World population in 1900 was 1.6 billion. Currently, there are 6.8 billion humans in the world; in 2050, this number will reach 9.1 billion. These figures reflect the enormous resource-management challenges facing humanity, but they do not reflect the two sides of the climate change equation: high consumption and carbon footprint in the developed world, and the destruction of habitat and natural resources largely due to rapid population growth in the developing world. Climate change mitigation agreements and legislation must address both; the numbers show that it will not be

enough to address one side and not the other. If developed countries today stopped all emissions and developing countries continue along their current emissions growth path, global temperatures will increase by 4 degrees Celsius by 2050.

We must not be afraid to discuss un-met need for family planning as a dimension of the response to climate change. Women and married couples desiring smaller families and fewer children should have access to reproductive technologies that allow them to make such a choice.

The felling of forests every year releases more CO₂ into the atmosphere than global annual carbon emissions from planes, trains and cars combined. A representative from Brazil's Amazonas state provided a positive example of using subsidies to curb deforestation. Reducing deforestation and addressing social issues are two of the state's key focuses. Amazonas is the largest in Brazil's Amazon region and is home to the country's best preserved forests, thus the state sees itself as a leader in environmental preservation. Amazonas uses subsidies to improve living standards while also promoting environmental sustainability. In order to discourage the felling of rubber trees for timber, the state subsidizes the price of rubber by one reyes per kilogram, enough to make rubber more valuable than wood to local producers. The subsidies are less costly than enforcing laws prohibiting the felling of trees, which would carry the costs of policing the entire state and running a larger network of jails for offenders.

One of the most widespread sentiments among the participants also reflected a growing global consensus: for the world to do more, first the U.S. (as the world's biggest polluter) has to do something.

c. Non-negotiability of climate change

Both speakers and attendees at the day-long meeting repeatedly referred to the non-negotiability of climate change mitigation. Unlike negotiations between nations, we cannot negotiate with Mother Nature; we must live within the boundaries she has given us. Relatedly, we must accept that actions to combat climate change will come at an economic and financial cost. Several parliamentarians reiterated the urgent need for increased research and development to improve technology and help mitigate some of these costs.

A number of delegates from low-lying and island nations asked why the world is aiming for a two-degree rise in global temperatures (or worse, four) by 2100 when the single-degree rise that we're currently dealing with has caused such havoc. They then called for the world to limit the rise in global temperature to 1.5 C and carbon emissions to 350 parts per million (ppm). The president of the Maldives announced that the island nation intends to become the first carbon-neutral country within 10 years. This will require a significant shift away from the world's pre-set way of thinking when it comes to development. Improving transport does not have to mean increasing oil consumption; increasing the availability of electricity does not have to mean burning more coal.

d. Climate change and global trade

Mr. James Bacchus, a former member of the U.S. Congress and appellate court judge for the World Trade Organization, introduced the topic of the inter-relatedness of discussions on climate change mitigation and global trade. The risks of global trade to climate change are as significant as the risks of climate change to global trade; the relationship between the two is so intimate that they cannot be separated. It is for this reason that we must discuss them jointly (and reach an agreement) in a global forum, or we risk reverting to a series of national discussions that will inevitably result in protectionist measures. We must not use trade as an excuse for delaying what needs to be done to mitigate climate change.

According to Bacchus, the best thing the world's leaders can do for both trade and climate change is to conclude a global agreement among WTO countries. If this is not done now, we could be on a crash course of climate versus trade. This will result in a flurry of domestic legislation which may not be consistent with global responsibilities and agreements. This could also result in illegal subsidies due to a skewed cap and trade system.

e. The increasing need for good global governance

Two of the greatest challenges facing any elected official (from parliamentarians to presidents) are the ability to look at the broader picture (beyond electorate borders) and the longer term (beyond term mandates and re-election campaigns). These constraints are very much affecting climate negotiations and beg the question: how can we get national politicians to work in favor of good global governance?

Without democracy and good governance, we cannot hope to address climate change. Good governance means espousing a new kind of politics, one with civil society participation at the centre. Development to this point has been about increasing GDP and GNP. Now the priority must shift to resilient livelihoods, protecting the ecosystem and preventing loss of life. Developing countries will need to take a new look at the kinds of companies they let in. Logging, mining, resource extraction: should these industries be at the centre of our economies? It's not just about math, it's about social justice.

III. IDEAS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations emerged during the course of the day's program and discussions:

- A portion of the funds that developed countries give towards climate change should go to increasing the capacity of parliaments in the developing world to write climate change mitigation legislation, monitor its effective implementation and use the results to further inform environmental legislation.
- The possibility of a "debt for climate" deal could allow developing countries to exchange a portion of their debt for environmental preservation programs.
- Parliaments should ask their governments to report to them annually on the basis of ten globally standardized climate indicators (IPU could facilitate the development of these standard indicators).
- Parliamentarians should bring the issue of climate change to their constituencies with the same passion that they campaign. IPU could take the lead on suggesting a framework for ways that parliamentarians can sensitize their constituencies to climate change.
- IPU could champion for and facilitate all countries to have a climate change strategy and accompanying policies based on local conditions (currently, many do not). In addition, IPU should capture the success stories mentioned at today's sessions and disseminate them to all members.

III. RAPPORTEUR'S REFLECTIONS

The parliamentarians present at the day-long session made it clear that they are prepared to do more than what was being negotiated by their respective governments. All participants favored a legally binding agreement with hard targets and there were many strong messages regarding the need for good global governance and capacity building.

Sharing knowledge and best practices has a vital role to play in the follow up to COP15. IPU should facilitate this learning exchange. In addition, IPU's role should be increased so that parliamentarians do not find themselves in "no man's land" at future negotiations. The organization should have the authority to address future climate-change conventions and should begin advocating immediately for increased parliamentary involvement at COP16 in Mexico next year.

IV. IMPLICATIONS for PNoWB

PNoWB during COP 15 joined GLOBE International, AWEPA and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in calling for a binding climate change mitigation agreement to be reached at the conference. In addition, the network in the joint statement reiterated the key role that parliamentarians have to play in the formulation, implementation and oversight of any climate agreement.

Official negotiating teams and delegations failed to meet the world's high expectations at COP15. This failure presents an opportunity for parliamentarians to play a larger role in climate change mitigation by acting at a time when governments and key world players have been unable to make great strides. There is no need to wait until COP16 next year in Mexico, parliamentarians can take up this key role now.

PNoWB will facilitate the increased participation and leadership of parliamentarians in the climate change mitigation process through its mission and principles. Supporting parliamentarians to exchange knowledge and share good practices is already one of PNoWB's five guiding principles. PNoWB encourages information exchange among law makers on issues including good governance, budgetary oversight of development funds and civil society participation in the legislative process. The network also reinforces cooperation between policy makers, the academic community, civil society and non-governmental organizations. PNoWB provides its members with a platform for coordinated parliamentary advocacy on development-cooperation issues such as the full implementation of best practice standards.

Unlike GLOBE International -- which has a specific focus on climate and energy security, land-use change, ecosystems and economic and population growth -- PNoWB does not focus on environmental issues. Moving forward, PNoWB can partner with GLOBE and IPU to collect best practices in environmental legislation and disseminate these learnings across the membership of all three groups.

In addition, PNoWB in the coming months will continue to facilitate and encourage direct dialogue between parliamentarians and the World Bank. As the World Bank is looking to play a key role in funding climate change mitigation, increasing the dialogue between parliamentarians and the Bank will be one way to empower law makers to play an increased role in climate change mitigation well before COP16.

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