

## **Assisting Climate Leaders in Vulnerable Developing Countries A Civil Society Initiative - May 2009**

Climate change threatens the lives and development prospects of billions of people around the world. No region or country is immune to its impacts but some are especially vulnerable. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the particular risks to polar regions, small islands, Africa, and mega-deltas in Asia and Africa. Under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its 1997 Kyoto Protocol, negotiations are now underway on a post-2012 agreement, “taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, especially the least developed countries and small island developing states, and further taking into account the needs of countries in Africa affected by drought, desertification and floods” (Bali Action Plan, December 2007). These negotiations are due to conclude in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Vulnerable developing countries have long played a leading role in shaping the international response to climate change. From 1991-97, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) rallied other vulnerable countries to press for a strong international framework and put forward the first draft protocol that formed a foundation for the Kyoto negotiations. Today AOSIS remains a leading voice for a fair, ambitious and effective Copenhagen agreement which accelerates the global transition to a low carbon, climate resilient world. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are also playing an active role and have joined AOSIS in calling for global emissions to peak by 2015 so as to limit global warming below 1.5°C. Along with other vulnerable developing countries in Africa, these groups represent around 100 countries, a billion people, 15% of the world’s population but only 3% of global emissions.

Despite the strong efforts of these countries there is a significant risk that the Copenhagen negotiations could fail to deliver the ambitious agreement needed to secure a safer climate. Whilst some progress has been made, the failure of industrialised countries fully to implement their previous commitments combined with the rapidly growing emissions of developing countries, means that even with the most stringent emission reductions, global warming of at least 0.6-0.8°C is now inevitable and will result in a large number of adverse impacts in vulnerable countries. On current trends, unless global emissions are reduced, we could see warming of as much as 6.0°C by the end of the century, causing disastrous losses in food production and biodiversity, extreme drought and severe water shortages, and ultimately leading to the destruction of huge coastal areas, cities and ecosystems, island nations and world heritage sites.

To avoid such catastrophic scenarios we need to transform the political and economic dynamics in the major emitting countries. The US and other developed countries will need to make deep cuts in their emissions, support the efforts of vulnerable developing countries to adapt to climate change that cannot be avoided, and support the emergence of low carbon economies worldwide. AOSIS, the LDCs and other vulnerable countries have a pivotal role to play in galvanising

this global effort. Their survival depends on it and they have the moral authority to call for stronger action. It is essential that their voice is heard strongly not only within the climate negotiations but also by influential actors not directly engaged in the negotiations such as the media, politicians and civil society organisations.

Vulnerable developing countries are already showing strong leadership, for example, through voluntary efforts to become carbon neutral societies. But while these efforts are increasingly acknowledged and appreciated by climate experts they remain largely invisible to political leaders and the general public in the US, Europe and other major emitting countries. Moreover the sheer complexity of the climate negotiations, straddling a large number of international and regional fora, presents a huge challenge for countries with limited capacity. Together with our developing country partners, we have identified the need for additional support to help vulnerable countries:

- **Define and promote a clear vision for success at Copenhagen: undertake research on new approaches and** utilize work already carried out into a shared political platform and negotiating strategy that would rally progressive groupings at Copenhagen;
- **Defend their interests within the UNFCCC and other related negotiations:** Developing robust evidence based policies and negotiating positions on all the major issues and tracking the positions of other countries;
- **Transform the political conditions in major emitting countries:** Raising awareness of the issues facing vulnerable countries in Washington DC and other key capitals through public and private diplomacy.

### **Objectives and activities**

This initiative involves four non-governmental organisations with a shared interest in supporting the efforts of vulnerable developing countries to secure a fair, ambitious and effective Copenhagen agreement. We have been working on these issues for many years in both developed and developing countries and bring together expertise across a range of fields, from science to law to development to diplomacy. Our activities over the coming months will depend on the needs and priorities of our partners, but we plan to offer support in three main areas:

- **Analytical support to negotiators from vulnerable developing countries:** Including policy relevant research, technical briefings and workshops on specific issues such as scientific trends, technology transfer, and reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD);
- **Political briefings for diplomats and other representatives:** Including updates on the progress of climate and energy legislation in the US and other key developments;

- **Communications advice:** Including insights on framing the climate action message for different audiences and making effective use of the media and other public platforms.

## Who we are

**IDS has been contracted by the International Institute for Environment and Development to help coordinate this work.** IIED is a London-based international research and policy think-tank with an extensive track record in providing capacity building for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) both with civil society (see: [www.clacc.net](http://www.clacc.net)) as well as with governments and climate change negotiators (see: [www.eurocapacity.org](http://www.eurocapacity.org)). The latter has included holding two-day capacity building workshops for climate change negotiators from the LDCs ahead of recent UNFCCC conferences. For more information see [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org) or contact: Dr. Saleemul Huq, Senior Fellow, Climate Change Group, [saleemul.huq@iied.org](mailto:saleemul.huq@iied.org)

**Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development:** FIELD is a London-based group of public international lawyers committed to supporting vulnerable groups and communities. Its work is part research, part capacity building and part the work of a conventional law firm. FIELD has a long track record in the climate change negotiations. Its lawyers provided early support to the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and continue to advise developing country governments, international campaigning organisations and indigenous peoples. For more information see [http://www.field.org.uk/files/FIELD\\_brochure\\_web.pdf](http://www.field.org.uk/files/FIELD_brochure_web.pdf) or contact: Linda Siegele, FIELD Staff Lawyer, [Linda.Siegele@field.org.uk](mailto:Linda.Siegele@field.org.uk)

**Climate Analytics:** Climate Analytics is a non-profit organisation based in Potsdam, Germany established to synthesize climate science for international climate negotiations. It provides scientific, policy and analytical support to negotiators from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and LDCs, as well as helping to build their in-house capacity. This includes a major project (“PREVENT”) implemented jointly with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) e.V and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Environment under its international climate protection initiative. For more information see [www.climateanalytics.org](http://www.climateanalytics.org) or contact: Dr (h.c.) Bill Hare, Project Director, PREVENT, [Bill.Hare@climateanalytics.org](mailto:Bill.Hare@climateanalytics.org)

**E3G (Third Generation Environmentalism):** E3G is an independent not-for-profit organisation that works in the public interest to accelerate the global transition to sustainable development. E3G staff have a strong record on climate change and energy policy, both inside and outside government, with a particular focus on Europe, the US and China. Recent E3G research has focused in particular on the technology aspects of the international climate negotiations. For more information see [www.e3g.org](http://www.e3g.org), or contact Matthew Findlay, Programme Leader, [matthew.findlay@e3g.org](mailto:matthew.findlay@e3g.org)