



DEW Point Newsletter

Issue 13 – December 2008

As we move towards the end of this very strange year of 2008, with the world economies turned upside down, we are reminded by our guest contributor, Maria Arce Moreira, that the threat from climate change has not receded. Ms Moreira rightly argues that complacency is not an option and that the time has come for a radical re-think on approaches to sustainable development. Our Director, Richard Carter, takes up this theme and looks to visionaries in the developing world to take the stage, challenge the precarious economic model of the west, and propose their own models for public well-being and sustainable development.

Whilst there may have been some disappointment at the apparent lack of progress during the United Nations Climate Conference in Poznan that ended on 12th December, it is noted that talks did take place despite the economic downturn and agreement was made to work up a draft text for next December's Copenhagen agreement by June 2009. In addition to some newly-made bold promises on emission reductions, we look forward to seeing the much needed radical and creative vision in development of the Copenhagen protocol.

And finally, of course, we wish our readers all the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

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Climate change or development?

By Maria Arce Moreira, Practical Action

Hardly a day goes by without a reference to climate change. In the western world it seems that we are highly sensitised to the considerable size and importance of this challenge and many of the messages around climate change and solutions proposed have become very popular.

However underneath this superficial layer of climate change awareness there are complex questions that remain unresolved, and which require a different approach and difficult choices from all actors involved. There is



indeed a sense of urgency to act and often reference is given to the unbearable costs of inaction. Development professionals are clearly aware of the fact that decades of work fighting poverty and inequality in the world could be threatened because of climate change. From being regarded as a purely environmental matter, climate change is now recognised and treated as a development issue, mainstreamed in both government and civil society agendas alike. Yet in this context the attention given to leveraging highly needed financial resources as well as finding technological fixes tends to mean that the root causes of climate change are overlooked.

Furthermore, little consideration is given to the critical question of where the main responsibility to transform the unsustainable development system we are operating within lays.

Unsustainable consumption and production patterns are mentioned on the sidelines of the climate change debate when instead we should be reflecting seriously on the transformation that our lifestyles need to undergo to tackle the problem in the long term. Unfortunately long-term thinking is not something politicians are attracted to and the preferred option is often shorter term fixes. After years of struggle to come up with global covenants on a range of key environmental and social issues, efforts to ensure their full implementation and impact have not been strengthened accordingly- a neglect which has serious consequences for efforts to combat climate change.

The mantra of development focused purely on economic growth is not longer an option. The current financial, food and energy crises should motivate us to look for the true meaning of sustainable development in a changing world. For civil society organisations, this is both an opportunity and a challenge at a time of diminishing political attention for development and global social and environmental justice issues in general. The challenges posed by climate change could provide key opportunities for radical changes to existing production and consumption patterns to be made and for a new and different type of engagement with our partners in developing countries.

Picture by Rajesh KC: Kumal Khakurel, 78, from Nepal, lost 2/3 of his land to a landslide caused by the floods of 2006. He explains that the monsoon no longer follows a regular pattern and that rains have become erratic.

The Director's word

By Richard Carter, DEW Point Resource Centre Director

In our lead article this month Maria Arce Moreira argues that it is only a radical transformation of unsustainable lifestyles (at the level of nations, as well as individuals) which can deliver both relief from the worst impacts of climate change, and development among the disadvantaged. Elsewhere even the almost sacrosanct Millennium Development Goals have been criticised for failing to comprehensively tackle the root causes of poverty. Is development simply about making "them" like "us"? If so, maybe the global recession can provide some much-needed food for thought. "We" in the west are not as safe as we had assumed in our conspicuous consumption, economic growth and near-full employment. If one good thing were to come out of the present experience of economic down-turn, it would be the realisation that few things can go on growing forever, and that unbridled growth has landed the west, and the rest of the world, in our current mess.



What we need more than ever are leaders and thinkers in the developing world who can analyse the economic and climate crisis created by the west, and steer their own countries down more sustainable paths. No longer wishing to emulate the west, but desiring to find sustainable trajectories to well-being for all their people. Idealism? Maybe, but without ideals and dreams, no meaningful progress is possible. The challenge for those of us who carry on our work in the developing world is to find ways to support emerging leaders and thinkers who truly have the well-being of their nations at heart, and to enable their voices to be heard.

DEW Point news

Selection of documents recently added to the website

UNDP climate change country profiles. A series of 52 profiles, along with maps and data sets, was developed in order to provide much needed information on climate in developing countries. The 52 countries studied are in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Central America. [More...](#)

Climate change and displacement is the subject of the latest issue of the Forced Migration Review, which is published by the Refugee Studies Centre of the Oxford Department of International Development. "Thirty-eight articles by UN, academic, international and local actors explore the extent of the potential displacement crisis, community adaptation and coping strategies, and the search for solutions." [More...](#)

Climate Wrongs and Human Rights - Putting people at the heart of climate-change policy. In this paper Oxfam examines how climate change is set to undermine the human rights of many and makes suggestions for a human rights-centred approach to climate change policy-making. [More...](#)

Sanitation: a human rights imperative. The timely release of this report by WaterAid, UN-HABITAT, COHRE and SDC (on the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) calls for the recognition of sanitation as a human right. [More...](#)

WHYMAP maps and tools. WHYMAP is the Worldwide Hydrogeological Mapping and Assessment Programme and its purpose is to collect and present information on groundwater. The WHYMAP website makes maps and other tools available to all. [More...](#)

Selection of recent helpdesk enquiries

- ◆ DEW Point carried out for DFID a 'stock take' of the training and learning courses and materials that are available on climate change. The information gathered helped to illustrate what general climate change training is available and what is available for specific issues such as adaptation, low carbon and negotiations.
- ◆ DEW Point has been sourcing consultants to provide support to the AfDB's African Water Facility through the design and drafting of a DFID Project Memorandum.
- ◆ DEW Point carried out some work on rural electrification and renewable energy in low income countries.
- ◆ DEW Point peer reviewed a paper on hand drilled wells. The paper will be published at a later date.

Other news

Full coverage of the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan, including key documents, speeches, press releases, videos and pictures can be found on the following websites:

- ◆ The COP14 website >>
- ◆ The UNFCCC website >>
- ◆ The IISD website >>

Also in the news:

- ◆ Issue 39.4 of the Institute for Development Studies' Bulletin focuses on Poverty in changing climate and proposes 17 articles on the subject. >>
- ◆ Find out about a competition for the development of affordable rainwater storage equipment. >>
- ◆ Meet Super Toilet, the hero of a new cartoon by WaterAid America. >>

Conferences and events in 2009

- ◆ "Water & Land" Capacity Development Workshop, 22-24 January 09 in Cairo. >> [Info](#)
- ◆ Climate change: global risks, challenges and decisions, 10-12 March 09 in Copenhagen. >> [Info](#)
- ◆ 5th World Water Forum, 16-22 March 09 in Istanbul. >> [Info](#)
- ◆ 34th WEDC International Conference, 18-22 May 09 in Addis Ababa. >> [Info](#)
- ◆ World Water Week 2009, 16-22 August 09 in Stockholm. >> [Info](#)
- ◆ United Nations Climate Change Conference – Copenhagen 2009, 30 November to 11 December 09 in

Denmark. >> [Info](#)

If you have any relevant news, conferences or training events that you would like to publicise in our newsletter then please do get in touch. You can email us the details at helpdesk@dewpoint.org.uk, or submit website content via your member homepage on the DEW Point website.

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Questions or comments? E-mail us at helpdesk@dewpoint.org.uk.

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