

EQUITY WATCH

SPECIAL EDITION #1 UNFCCC / CoP8 NEW DELHI OCTOBER 23, 2002

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STATE OF AFFAIRS

Estonia deposited its instrument of ratification to the Kyoto Protocol on October 14, 2002.

Total number of ratifications: 96

Total percentage of emissions: 37.4

Equity Watch glosses: for the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC to become a policy instrument that is legally binding, it must fulfil two conditions:
 (1) At least 55 countries, among those who signed the UNFCCC charter in 1992, must also ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
 (2) Among all countries ratifying the Protocol, there must be a group of countries that taken together account for 55 per cent of all emissions in 1990.
 Note: Condition (1) has been fulfilled. Condition (2) has not, because the big polluters are running away.
 So: the Kyoto Protocol, which everybody said would come into force at least by the second World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002, has still not come into force.

Scene 8 Act Now!

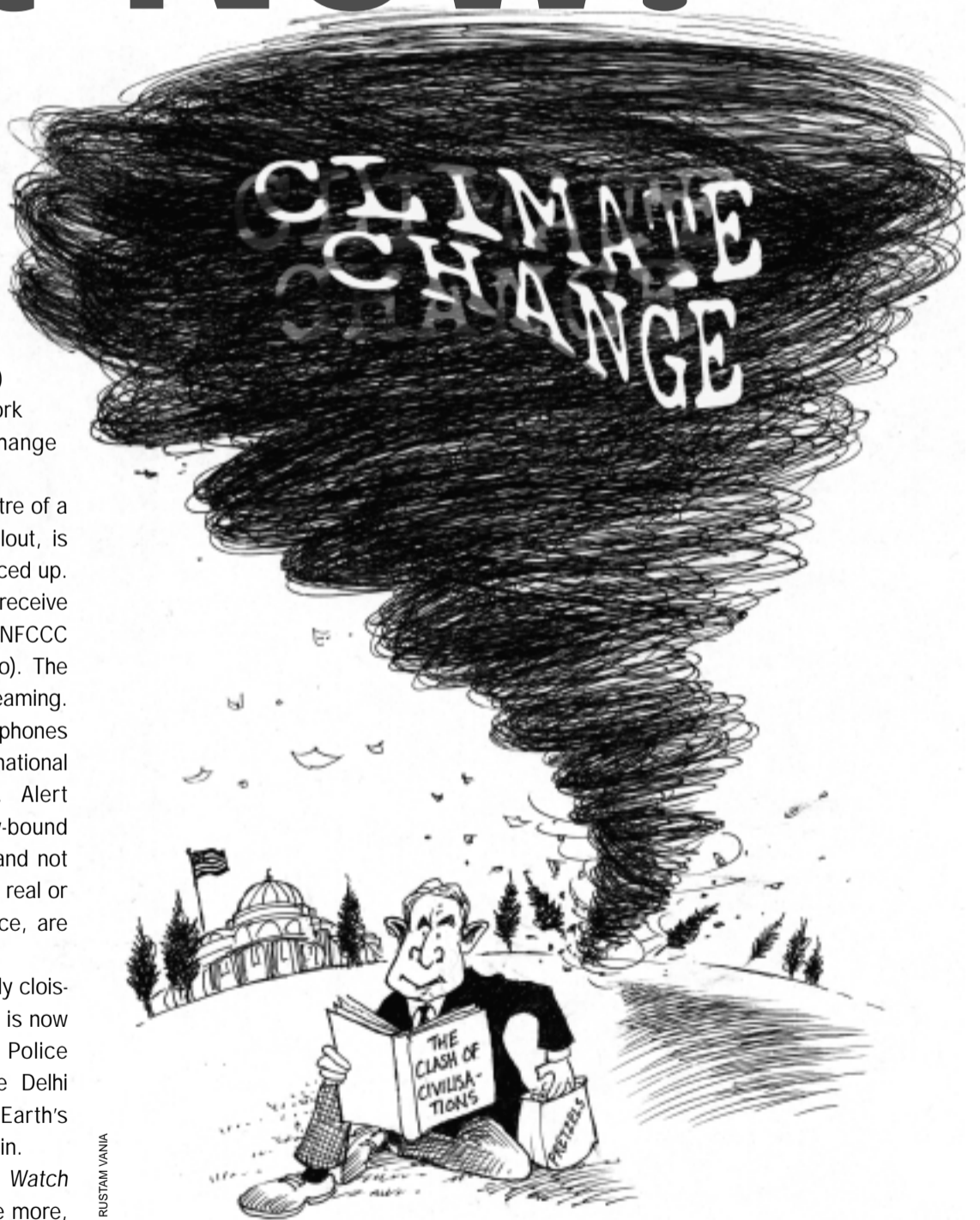
It is October 23, 2002. New Delhi (India's capital city) wakes up not only to a seasonal transition in its weather — it isn't hot, but the weather hangs; earlier it used to be colder, crisper at this time of the year — but also to a moment in history. New Delhi is hosting the 8th Conference of Parties (CoP-8) to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC), starting today.

Vigyan Bhavan, built in the centre of a city that respects only political clout, is the CoP-8 venue. It has been spruced up. Conference halls are ready to receive delegates from 185 nations (UNFCCC member-states, so goes the lingo). The tables, round and square, are gleaming. None of the seats sag. The microphones that amplify individual voices into national stances face the chair-heads. Alert Alsations prodded on by duty-bound officers have smelt under seats and not found bombs placed by terrorists, real or imaginary. CCTV cameras, in place, are ready to whirr.

Indeed, Vigyan Bhavan is doubly cloistered from the rest of the earth. It is now UN territory. Inside, the UN Police patrols; outside, the redoubtable Delhi Police. Everything is secure: Earth's future can now be discussed, again.

As CoP-8 begins, so *Equity Watch* resurrects itself. To observe, once more, exactly what it is that all these delegates do, or don't.

It was in 1992 that the world's nations — responding to alarm calls from scientists about a global phenomenon called climate change, about a world that was warming up un-naturally, about devastating effects related to productive capacities and individual behaviours — signed a



RUSTAM VANIA

charter called the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change, or UNFCCC. In so doing they set themselves upon a fantastic course, a hitherto unimagined responsibility: crafting a global consensus to combat climate change. It was the first time in the history of human civilisation that such a

consensus was required to be fashioned. It was the first time such a call was responded to, in so global a fashion.

In this way was created an institution: the Conference of Parties, which would periodically get together to do the actual sculpting. In the last decade (1992-2002), 7 such conferences were held ▶▶ 8



ALL SAID AND DONE

SUNITA NARAIN



Too important for just governments

We published *Equity Watch* for the first time at the sixth Conference of Parties in The Hague, in November 2000. We wanted a forum that countered the opinions the conference was awash with. So we tried to "give a voice to the voiceless, a ear to the unheard and an eye to the blinded". This time we hope to do the same.

The eighth climate conference (CoP-8) is in our city, Delhi. It's about an issue that concerns all of us deeply. Scientists tell us that climate change will not come only in the form of increased temperatures. It will come without a warning. More droughts, more floods, more heat waves, more cyclones. We will experience these extreme weather events season after season, but nobody will tell you that it is climate change. Don't be lulled. Take the extraordinary heat waves or delayed monsoons in India this year. Or the extraordinary floods in Europe. These are early warnings of more to come.

But what is even more frightening is that something so dramatic is beginning to happen in our world and we are helpless about finding a solution. This is because the solution to climate change is not easy. We know that the heating of the earth's atmosphere is primarily caused by carbon dioxide emissions from the use of fossil fuels, that is burning coal in power stations, using petroleum for running automobiles and doing just about everything that keeps the economy going. Climate change is therefore, less about the environment. More about the world economy as we know it. This is why the leader of the world's largest economy and largest polluter — the US — has said that he rejects the Kyoto Protocol — the agreement to cut emissions in the industrialised world — because it will hurt the US economy and "cost us jobs". We know that the answers will lie in reinventing or reforming the energy economy of the world — moving towards renewable energy systems. But this is a task easier said than done.

Climate change is too important to be left to governments alone. It is about the economy, yes. But it is also about sharing the resources of the world. The Earth's atmosphere can take only that much abuse. Industrialised country emissions are far beyond 'that much'. Call it the natural debt of these countries; they have overdrawn on the Earth's natural capital to feed their industrial growth.

In this scenario, there is no option but to limit and share the total greenhouse gas emissions of the world. But as carbon dioxide emissions are so closely related to economic growth, restricting emissions will also mean limiting economic growth. Therefore, unless we want to accept permanent freeze in economic inequity, we have to find ways of sharing the total greenhouse gas emissions on a fair and equitable basis. We have to find ways of moving towards a non-fossil fuel based economy in the future. Less emissions in the industrialised world so that poor countries get the "ecological space" to grow. Less use of oil and more of solar and wind and biomass technologies.

Unfortunately, governments have not risen to this challenge. Their answers, after years of haggling, are petty and frankly ineffective. Reducing the impacts of climate change will be the biggest cooperative enterprise humans have ever embarked upon. Climate change policy is, therefore, equally about cooperation. Nobody — not even the richest, the mightiest, the biggest, can solve this world puzzle alone. Our governments must be told in no uncertain terms that we expect more from them. They must be told that if they are mean or obstructionist they do not speak for us.

This is why we will bring you editions of *Equity Watch*, reporting from inside the conference venue over the next 10 days. We need you to be informed so that you can raise your voice along with us. Let's drown out the jarring cacophony of the polluters. Do read us. Do contact us. Call us if you can. We need our bias to become yours.

Diplomatese

Or, how not to ruffle feathers

September 30 – October 1, 2002. There takes place in New Delhi a meeting of climate change negotiators. Union minister for environment T R Baalu tables an "informal paper"; country-representatives then respond to it.

Everyone treats the exercise seriously. Diplomats never take anything lightly, especially pages full of pure diplomatese. They also like to paw the textual turf, turning words up, sniffing for signs. Baalu is CoP-8 president-designate. But he is also the environment minister of a developing country, with crucial stakes in climate change talks. To what extent does the paper

lead to other crucial ones. For instance: what have the atmosphere's biggest polluters done about the way in which they spew loads of carbon dioxide into it? The word "implementation" itself is like an umbrella. Other words, notions, indeed politically charged issues — conflicting interpretations of UNFCCC, differing visions of development — shelter under it. For instance, the issues of "compliance", or meeting "commitments". And most crucially, the question of "equity".

In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol laid out that developed countries (primarily responsible for the global warming that tinkers with the climate system)



reflect the official CoP-8 agenda (by now decided in many little meetings like this one)? To what extent does it reflect India's, and developing country, concerns? What kind of a conference blueprint is it?

Let us con the text of the paper for ourselves.

"CoP-8 is well positioned to be a milestone for strengthening UNFCCC implementation, with CoP-7 having settled a number of institutional issues. CoP-8 may develop a framework of action for implementation..."

So the basic issue is going to that of "implementation". The fact that CoP-8 would deal with this issue had already been laid out at the end of CoP-7. So Baalu is merely towing the line here. But when it talks about developing "a framework of action for implementation", all kinds of expectations are raised.

What expectations?

10 years have passed since the UNFCCC came into existence. How true have negotiators been to its spirit? 7 CoPs have been held; many policy directions taken; some policy instruments worked out, such as the ingenious Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Has the negotiation process really done something to slow up climate change?

These questions sound neutral, but

had to limit their emissions to a certain level (5.2 per cent below what they emitted in 1990) by the period 2008-2012. Are they on the way to doing that? Are they complying?

The Protocol also came up with a policy instrument, a mechanism called the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under which the big polluters could set up projects in developing countries that helped to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and so gain credit. Since 1997, it has become clear that CDM is an instrument that merely puts our atmosphere up for trade, and profit.

Look at it this way. You are a developed nation. Under CDM you can line up a developing country, sell it efficient technology, or put money into planting trees, do all it takes to make that country reduce emissions. Aa-ha. You have kept the atmosphere cleaner. Because you have done that, you will get credits, credits you can use to meet your Kyoto Protocol target.

It's neat. You might have to spend US \$100 on each tonne of carbon emission reduced in your country. Why do that, when you can go elsewhere — to poor, developing nations with begging bowls at the ready — and do the same for US \$15-20? Really neat.

CDM is controversial. For developing countries, it means re-thinking ►► 7

Terminator!

Climate change impacts India. Predicted horror story

Agriculture

India could suffer a decline of 9 million tonnes in cereal production. In north-west India, though higher yields are projected for rice and wheat if carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere increase, a 3°C and 2°C rise in temperature (for wheat and rice respectively) nearly cancels out this positive effect. Production will go down if water shortage is taken into account.

Similarly, models suggest that soybean production in the country will go up by 50 per cent if atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations double. But if rainfall decreases significantly and temperature increases, production could go down by 6 per cent. This will severely affect a state like Madhya

Pradesh, which produces 72 per cent of soybean grown in India, and has 77 per cent of its area devoted to soybean farming.

Pest populations will increase, negatively affecting agriculture.

Health

A warmer and wetter India will see a rise in heat-related and infectious diseases. More people will die due to heat waves. Cyclones and floods will also cause rise in illnesses, diseases, injuries and loss of life.

Rise in minimum winter temperature will result in mosquitoes, carrying malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever and several types of encephalitis to hitherto cooler climates and higher altitudes. Warmer climates also speeds up the life cycle of mosquitoes and make adult mosquitoes bite more often. Prey-predator relationships like that of frogs and mosquitoes may break down, leading to an increase in vector numbers.

Waterborne diseases including cholera and diarrhoeal diseases will increase as rainfall patterns change, restricting human access to water supplies and sanitation. Global warming will increase the incidence of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases in arid and semi-arid parts of India.

Water resources

Rainfall may decline by 5 to 25 per cent in Indian winters, causing droughts during dry summer months. The onset of the summer monsoon over central India could vary in future.

If rainfall decreases, water availability will decrease across the country. Water pollution will worsen — an increase in temperature will lead to increased eutrophication in wetlands and freshwater supplies.

Himalayan glaciers, which keep major Indian rivers perennial, are shrinking. This is why the Bhakra Dam overflowed in summer this year, despite very little rainfall. The Pindari glacier is retreating at a rate of 13 metres a year while the Gangotri glacier is receding at an annual rate of 30 metres. Glacial melting at this rate increases the risk of flash floods.

Biodiversity

As temperatures rise, species which

cannot adapt will go extinct, while others will migrate to new locations under changing climatic conditions.

The Rann of Kutch in India supports large Greater Flamingo colonies. With sea level rise, these salt marshes and mudflats will submerge, decreasing their habitat, and that of lesser floricans. About 2000 Indian wild asses in the Rann of Kutch could lose their only habitat.

One tenth of the world's known species of higher altitude plants and animals occur in the Himalayas. With global warming, species will shift to higher elevations. For species already at their maximum altitude, extinction seems a distinct possibility.

Severe coral bleaching will occur all along the Indian coast as a result of seawater warming. Global warming is already contributing to the decline of mangrove forests.

Coastal areas

Many large Indian cities are situated on the coast, flood plains and river deltas. A one-metre sea level rise will displace approximately 7.1 million people in India and about 5764 square kilometres (km) of land area will be lost, along with 4200 km of roads.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the coral atolls of the Lakshadweep archipelago are most vulnerable. West Bengal and Maharashtra face real danger, as also the Lakshadweep group of islands where the entire population is at risk. Most of the area likely to be lost in West Bengal includes the Sunderban mangrove swamps, already variously degraded, and reserved forests.

Coastal erosion will increase substantially. Coastal fishing communities will be affected.

SRINAGAR

An entire season, called *sonth*, has disappeared in Kashmir.

"During my childhood, the Srinagar valley used to be snow-bound and the courtyards had almost seven feet of snow till May, not to speak of the mountains buried under 35 feet of snow. Now it becomes warm in February."

— SAIFUDDIN SOZ,
former Minister for Environment
and Forests.

"When I was young and strong, I needed two layers of sweaters and a jacket on top of my kurta, below which were two vests. It was impossible for me to row my boat without two pairs of gloves and socks."

— ABDUL SALAAM BHAT,
owns a houseboat on Dal Lake,
who now rows his boat dressed in
a single jacket.

SIKKIM

"Barely 5-6 years ago, I used to wear a suit and tie to office even in summer. Not now. It's too hot."

— PK SHRESTA,
Chief Conservator of Forests,
Sikkim.

"(The disappearance of butterflies) has been disastrous for cardamom and orange plantations, which are declining rapidly".

— BIMAL RASAILY,
horticulture inspector, Sikkim.
Sikkim produces 60 per cent of
India's cardamom, which is a major
source of revenue for the state.

DARJEELING

A guide map on the Mall records that the highest temperature in Darjeeling is 14.89°C. In 2000, temperatures shot up to 28°C.

"When I migrated from Nepal in 1926, the thick forests of Darjeeling were covered with snow for more than three months. Now it just gets blown by the winds like bits of paper."

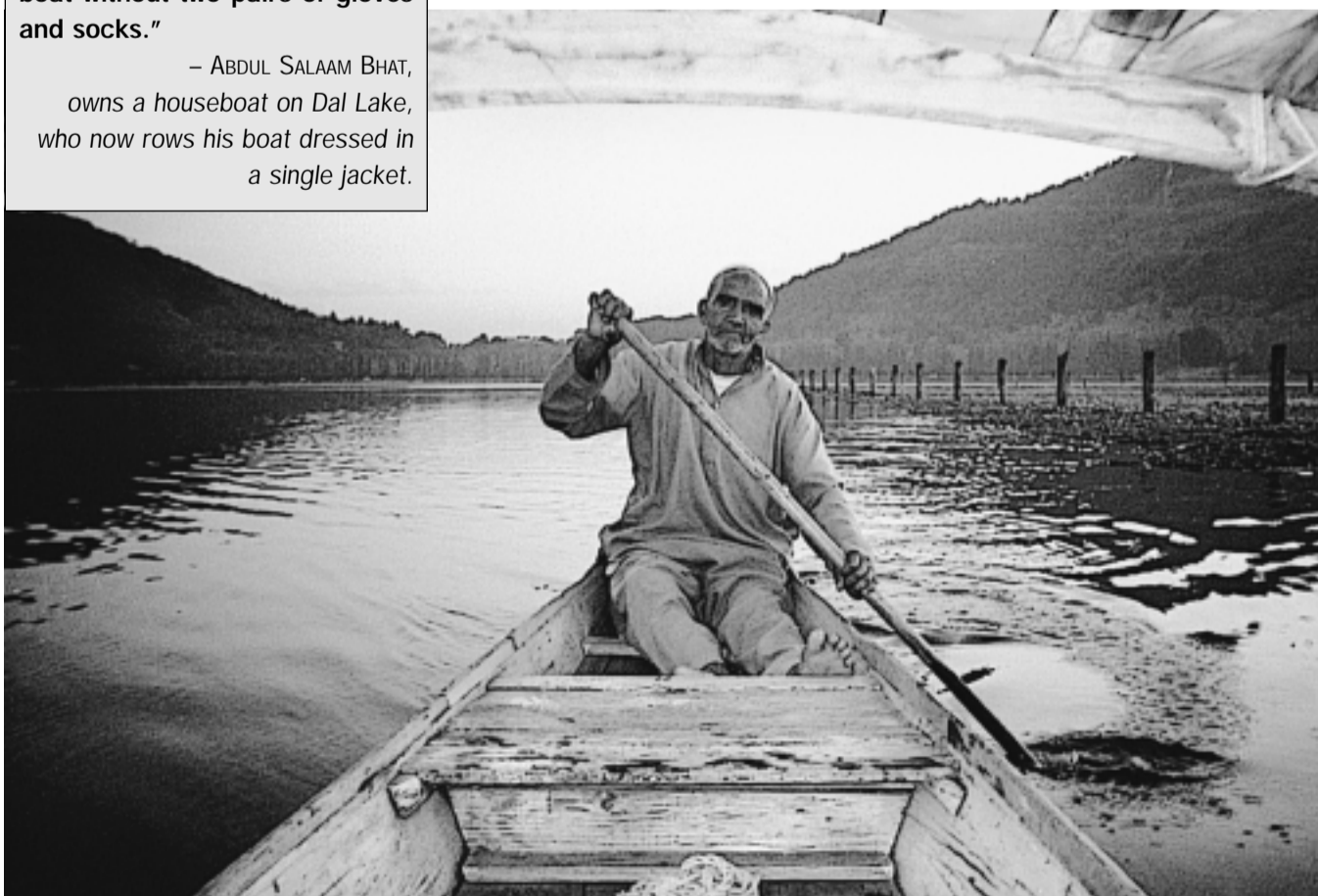
— PHUL BAHADUR,
97, resident of Darjeeling.

"Anthurium, a plant comfortable below 1,220 metres, is now thriving around our school, which is at about 2,285 metres."

— UMESH DWIVEDI,
Botany teacher, St. Paul's School

"Pine is the indigenous tree of this region. Its growth is no longer luxuriant. Evergreen and deciduous trees of subtropical climate are flourishing."

— MICHEAL DUTTA



HOW THE CLIMATE CHANGED

1992: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The convention recognises that industrialised countries are more responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, historically and currently.

It asks industrialised countries to voluntarily stabilise their emissions to 1990 levels by 2000. They should take the lead in cutting down emissions.

1995: First Conference of Parties (CoP-1) to UNFCCC, held in Berlin. It adopted the Berlin Mandate, which called for a protocol with a schedule for reductions to be adopted in 1997. There would be no new commitments for developing countries.

1996: Little progress on agreeing to new targets at the second conference of parties (CoP-2) in Geneva. The US called for a realistic, verifiable and achievable target without indicating any base year. It then added that the proposed target should be met through emissions trading and project-based trading that had to include developing countries. The declaration, resulting from the process initiated at CoP-1, was directed towards an agreement on legally binding objectives.

1997: The ingenious Kyoto Protocol was signed at the historic third conference of parties (CoP-3) in Japan. The protocol asked industrialised countries to cut emissions, even as the US held up negotiations till the last moment to force "meaningful participation" by key developing countries.

Under the protocol, Japan agreed to reduce emissions to six per cent below 1990 levels, the US agreed to seven per cent, and the EU agreed on an eight per cent reduction by 2008-2012. On an average, the protocol demands a cut of 5.2 per cent below 1990 levels in the period 2008-2012.

Several provisions found their way into the protocol to help industrialised countries meet their commitment cheaply. For instance, instead of focusing only on cutting fossil fuel use, three so-called flexibility mechanisms were introduced.

- Emissions trading: each industrialised country can trade in their entitlements to emit.
- Joint Implementation (JI): an industrialised country can invest in a project that reduces emissions in another industrialised country and claim credit for reductions.
- Clean Development Mechanism: same as JI, but funded projects are in developing countries. An even cheaper option to reduce emissions, since the cost of setting up a project in a poor developing country is cheaper.

Moreover, industrialised countries were also allowed the use of forests and trees (they absorb carbon dioxide) and claim that they have reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

1998: At the fourth conference of parties (CoP-4), the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was formulated. The plan set end-2000 as the deadline to lay out rules and guidelines to implement the protocol. It focused on evolving detailed steps for flexibility mechanisms to take off, compliance with commitments under the protocol and development and transfer of cleaner technologies to developing countries.

1999: The Kyoto agenda shuffled along at the fifth conference of parties (CoP-5) as countries continued discussions on various elements under BAPA. A few were optimistic that the protocol could come into effect by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

2000: The talks at the sixth conference of parties (CoP-6) failed, as the EU refused to give in to the US. The EU wanted industrialised countries to reduce emissions through domestic action by cutting fossil fuel use. But the US wanted concessions in the form of using forests and emissions trading without restrictions.

March 2001: The US rejected the Kyoto Protocol.

July 2001: A resumed session of CoP-6 was called. The already weak protocol was weakened further as the EU made compromises to get industrialised countries like Japan, Canada and Australia on board.

The final agreement was weak on compliance with no clarity on its legally binding nature. Heavy compromises were made on the use of forests and certain land use and land use change activities like afforestation and forest management, to meet Kyoto targets. No quantitative ceiling on the use of mechanisms was accepted. The final agreement did not provide any assurance that developing countries will get any funds from the North for adapting to climate change.

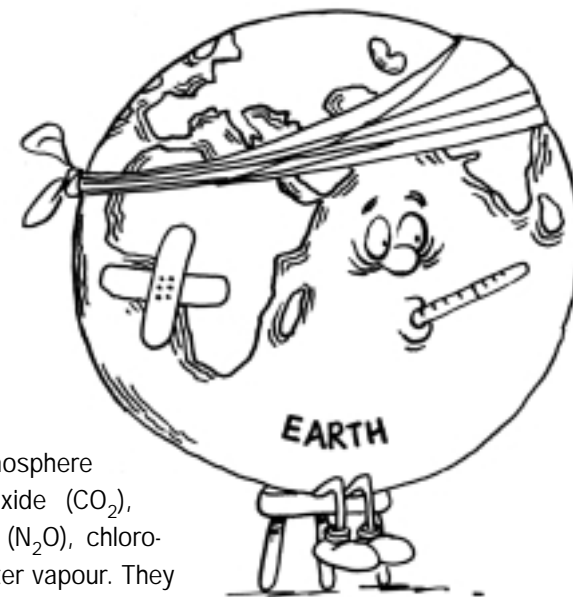
2001: Differences emerged on a few issues decided at CoP-6bis at the seventh conference of parties (CoP-7). But at the end, protracted negotiations on how to implement the Kyoto Protocol were closed. The result was a much diluted agreement which had no more than symbolic significance. Perhaps, for the first time, the rest of the world united against the US to reach an agreement on the protocol. This paved the way for the ratification of the protocol.

Earth has a fever

There naturally exist in the atmosphere gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), chloro-fluorocarbons (CFCs), and water vapour. They are called greenhouse gases. That's because they act like a blanket spread over the earth's surface, helping to keep it warm.

The temperatures experienced near the earth's surface, and therefore its climate, depend upon a balance. Waves of radiant energy hit the earth's surface, one-third of which is reflected while the rest is absorbed by the atmosphere, ocean, land, and biota (forests, wetlands). As reflected waves of radiant energy travel through the atmosphere, they are 'caught' by the greenhouse gases and re-reflected back.

If there had been no greenhouse gases, the earth's surface temperature would have been 33°C lower. Earth would have been uninhabitable.

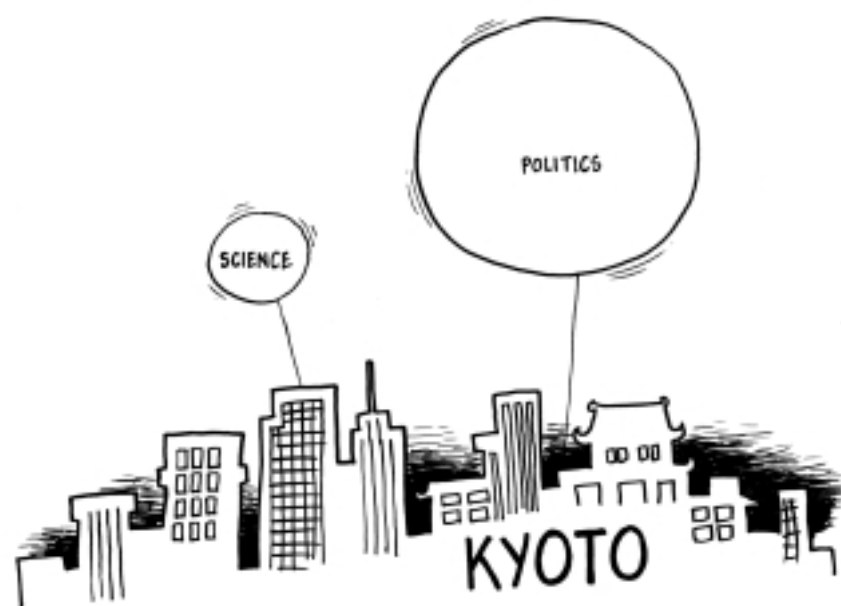


Scientists get Alarmed

But now human activities are changing this balance. Since the industrial revolution, as research has found, the concentrations of these gases in the atmosphere — especially carbon dioxide — have been increasing. This is called the enhanced greenhouse effect. The blanket has become thicker, to the point that today, the global climate system is getting stressed out.

The global climate system consists of complex flows of energy and chemical reactions within and between atmosphere, land, ocean and biota. As one element (the radiant energy balance) goes out of gear, so the flows get affected. The climate system begins to change.

Such is the complexity of the climate system's physical processes that no amount of mathematical modelling can match it with certainty. What's certain, however, is that the enhanced greenhouse effect is making the world warmer. What's equally certain is that weather patterns have over the last decade become unpredictable. What's horribly coming to the fore is that, the world over and especially in tropical countries, human populations are beginning to suffer. From unpredictable storms and cyclones. From floods and droughts. More hotter days. A rise in diseases such as malaria and dengue. Water and food shortages. And distress migrations.



Politicians feel the heat

It was in mid-late 1980s that scientists from all over the world began to raise the alarm about global warming, and climate change. The world's nations began to notice. The United Nations began to create institutions to look into the reality of this global phenomenon. By 1990, it was clear that something had to be done. Here was a global environmental problem. It required a solution that involved — and had the approval of — the whole world. A legally-binding international treaty on the world's climate.

Negotiations begin

The purpose of these negotiations was to review and restrict all those human activities that could transform the climate.

In an unequal world

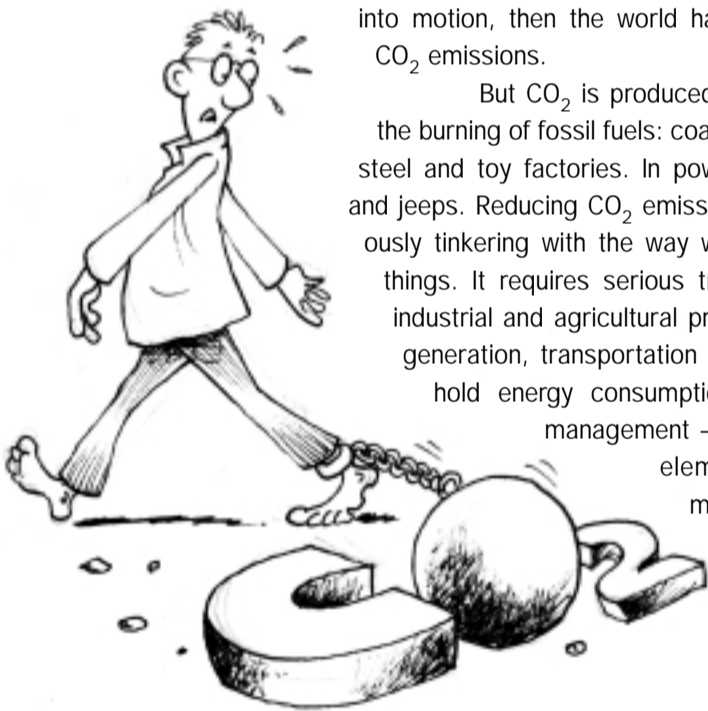


Carbon die-oxide

Primarily, it is carbon dioxide (CO₂) that heats up the Earth's atmosphere and so causes climate change. Therefore, if action has to be taken before atmospheric

processes that endanger human civilisation set into motion, then the world has to reduce its CO₂ emissions.

But CO₂ is produced largely through the burning of fossil fuels: coal, oil, and gas. In steel and toy factories. In power plants. Cars and jeeps. Reducing CO₂ emissions means seriously tinkering with the way we now produce things. It requires serious transformation in industrial and agricultural production, power generation, transportation systems, household energy consumption, even forest management — literally all the elements of the modern economy.



Is completely political

First, there are the developed nations of the world: the North, the G-8. They owe their current prosperity to years of fossil fuel burning. Slowly polluting the atmosphere to fever pitch. Even now, they are high-emission nations.

Then, there are the developing nations of the world: the South, the G-77 and China. Just got on to a growth path. Or, just getting on or trying to get on. Even now, they are low-emission nations.

Both groups of nations face the fact that limiting emissions means limiting growth. And that the climate change problem has to be resolved.

Tug-of-war

Industrialised nations: not so vulnerable to climate change; unwilling to water down their lifestyle; resistant to taking on the expenses of shifting to a low-carbon economy; ready to exploit a world order where the gears of power move at the bidding of those who possess the moolah.

Industrialising nations: extremely vulnerable to climate change; unwilling to freeze their growth; resistant to taking rich nations' emission-reducing burden; suspicious of a world order that imposes rules, structural adjustment, and even more poverty.

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– **India Today**

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What's hot at CoP-8

1. Adequacy of commitments
(Second review of the adequacy of Article 4.2(a) and (b))

Article 4.2 (a) of the UNFCCC

Each of these (developed country) parties shall adopt national policies and take corresponding measures on the mitigation of climate change, by limiting its anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and protecting and enhancing its greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs...

Article 4.2 (b) of the UNFCCC

In order to promote progress to this end, each of these Parties shall communicate, within six months of entry into force of the Convention for it and periodically thereafter, and with accordance with Article 12, detailed information on its policies and measures referred to in subparagraph (a) above.... This information will be reviewed by the Conference of Parties, and its first session and periodically thereafter, in accordance with Article 7.

Any agenda item not agreed upon at one CoP session is automatically placed on the provisional agenda for the next. Thus the second review of the adequacy of Article 4.2(a) and (b) is included as an item on the provisional agenda for CoP-8.

The basic controversy is whether inadequacy implies failure of the industrialised countries to fulfill their commitments or should be interpreted as opening up a discussion on commitments for developing countries.

2. Clean Development Mechanism

In the last round of talks on climate change (November, 2001) an Executive Board (EB) was set up to decide the rules for CDM projects. The EB has met five times since then. The sixth meeting of the EB will be held on October 23-24, 2002 at the Sheraton Hotel in New Delhi. At this meeting, the Board will accredit "Operational Entities" to validate proposed CDM projects, check that the project reduces emissions additional to what could have been achieved by the developing country itself and monitor the operation of the project. It will also discuss how to simplify procedures to encourage small-scale projects.

CDM will come up for discussion at CoP-8, where definitions and rules for projects to qualify as CDM projects are to be developed. Rules for including afforestation and reforestation activities in the CDM for the first com-

mitment period have to be finalised for adoption at CoP-9.

CDM and sinks

Sinks are land, forests and oceans which absorb carbon dioxide and act as reservoirs. At CoP-7 in Marrakech, it was decided that industrialised countries could use credits from sink projects to meet up to 1 per cent of their reduction targets.

The use of sinks projects under CDM remains controversial. Greenhouse gases may be re-released if a sink is damaged (for example if a forest burns down). This leads to uncertainties regarding the permanence of the project. It is also difficult to certify the "additionality" of a forestry project — i.e. would it have occurred anyway, irrespective of CDM. Similarly, a forest project could displace the local population of the area and increase

emissions in the area to which they shift their activities — a problem defined as a 'leakage'.

Strong rules for permanence, additionality, leakage, assessing the impact on the local population, and measures to reduce uncertainty need to be applied. Otherwise CDM would just end up being a cheap way for industrialised countries to meet their targets without making any changes domestically.

3. Adaptation

Some climatic changes are already inevitable — even if the Kyoto Protocol is fully implemented, in fact, even if the world stops using fossil fuel tomorrow. Developing countries will bear the brunt of these impacts. Therefore, these countries would like a discussion on how the industrialised countries will help them adapt better to these changes.

At CoP-6 in Bonn in 2001, three funds were set up: the Special Climate Fund (finance measures for adaptation, technology transfers and economic diversification), the Adaptation Fund (apart from taking two per cent off the proceeds from CDM projects, industrialised countries are merely invited to contribute towards this fund) and the

Least Developed Countries Fund. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) operates all three. The Adaptation Fund literally amounts to taxing the poor to help the poor — taking away a share of their profits from CDM to help them cope with a problem that is largely the creation of industrialised countries.

Fact is, developing countries have received very little technology or finance from the rich countries to help them better adapt. Many of them, including India, therefore want the focus to shift from climate change mitigation issues to effectively addressing adaptation.

4. Canada's proposal to get credits for cleaner energy exports

Canadian ratification is crucial for the Kyoto Protocol to come into effect. Seizing the advantage, Canada has come up with a ludicrous proposal. Canada claims it should get credit because it exports "cleaner" gaseous fuels and hydroelectricity to the US (the US, therefore, uses less coal and that helps the atmosphere). If this proposal is allowed, it will gift Canada an additional emission allowance of 70 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (70 MtCO₂e/year). This would enable Canada's emissions to rise by another 11.4 per cent relative to its 1990 baseline, resulting in a net increase of 14.6 per cent above 1990, instead of the required 6 per cent reduction. It would also set a precedent for countries to demand credits for all kinds of exports, such as more fuel-efficient cars.



"The US always wins"

Excerpts of an interview with Michael Zammit Cutajar, former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"I would say that unless and until the Kyoto Protocol enters into force, until that happens it is no use talking at all about developing countries commitments. Indeed, if I were a developing country negotiator, I would wait to see serious steps taken by industrialised countries towards meeting commitment."

"One of the questions I would have is why did Clinton go and agree to the Kyoto Protocol when he knew that the US senate wouldn't ratify? The problem with the US is this that you are never quite sure if we have a valid interlocutor, somebody who can deliver on a deal. And that is true not just of the environmental treaties. Added to which is the general reluctance of the US to sign up to an international treaty. The list of treaties it hasn't signed is very long. Its pattern of behaviour is to negotiate a treaty, and then not ratify it, but act in accordance with it on the side."

"I am a soccer fan. Some people who once coined a phrase to describe international football said that two men chase a ball and Germany always wins. Now I can describe the international climate change negotiations as 180 countries chasing a ball and the US always wins. Typically, the US always wins vis-à-vis the EU and

Japan. To put it very clearly, vis-à-vis the EU. They tend to stick up on different positions and then the EU has to concede because otherwise they lose US. This is again not just climate but in general."

"I remember at the time of the convention negotiations, it was my first exposure to this and one of the clear guidelines of the then Chairman of the negotiations was that we must have a deal with the US in. If we have a much better deal with the US out, what's the point? So the US does always win. Maybe with some pushing and pulling, not always being concessional, trying to get the US strategically, that is the way out until you have some countervailing force in the world that can bring the US on board. That is the long-term strategy."

"The Kyoto protocol is made in the USA. It may be rejected but it is made in the USA."



»2 Diplomatese

growth strategy for someone else's sake. For developed nations, it's manna from heaven. So: is a country committed to CDM really committed to cleaning up the atmosphere? Is this the way to meet "commitments"?

At CoP-8, therefore, "implementation" could be a thorny issue. But diplomatese makes sure we don't know how India is going to negotiate this issue. Will CoP-8 really be a milestone? For whom? Pro-CDMites, or anti-CDMites?

To move on

The paper raises another issue. An interesting one, but redundant if not handled well. "Central in the global response to climate change are the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to food and water, and human health". These are "implementation" problems, the paper suggests. "North-South cooperation is key, including in the development and dissemination of innovative technologies for UNFCCC implementation".

In responding to the paper, the US was quick to point out that poverty as an issue was distinct from climate change issues. CoP-8 needn't talk about it. In saying so, it was using an old trick. In the climate change negotiation process, developing countries have often raised this issue. Invariably, they have been out-manoeuvred. So the question now becomes: at CoP-8, will India and other developing nations be able to push home this point?

One reason why developing nations get out-manoeuvred is that the moment they raise this issue, they also bring out the begging bowl. They begin to demand money, and technology transfer. Their own attitude to the issue is a reductive one, for poverty is not an economic issue, it is an ecological one. Over the years, this attitude has rendered climate change-poverty links redundant.

Will CoP-8 witness a change in attitude? Can the issue be earnestly treated as an equity problem?

Adaptation, an equity issue

Two "key issues" are "adaptation" and "vulnerability". True. Many small island nations, and very poor countries, are already beginning to face the brunt of

climate change. Developing countries, being the biggest polluters, are required to compensate these nations. But in negotiations, these issues are dealt with in terms of technology-transfer and funding under CDM. The developed country strategy here is clear: let's take the cheap way out. At CoP-8, they will play this very hand. Will developing countries be able to resist, as they have managed to so far? Will CoP-8 see them caving in? Again, the informal paper's diplomatese provides no clue. If mum on this, CoP-8 could be a disaster for developing countries.

Countries respond

Just as the paper provides clues to CoP-8 discussions, so the responses show how they stand on issues.

Many developing countries, while responding to the paper, agreed with the "India approach". China, crucially, called it a "good basis" for discussions at CoP-8. Small island states, and countries such as Zimbabwe, reiterated their stance on adaptation. Oil-rich countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia didn't want energy issues to be discussed, thus indicating they were uncomfortable with the theme of the second round-table session.

Indeed, countries such as Australia and Canada were even more uncomfortable. Canada and Japan wanted discussions to be limited to the "post-Kyoto world", clearly indicating that the Protocol would be the basis to their approach to implementation. Canada wanted the word "implementation" itself to be deleted.

A number of countries — Denmark, Germany, the UK, Italy, and Canada and Japan — suggested "implementation" include the question of future commitments. As of now, developing countries are not required to come up with any commitment on emission limits. They will have to, in the future. Given this scenario, the intervention is incendiary. Clearly meant to divert attention away from developed country responsibilities, it could derail the kind of framework of action for implementation that India and other developing countries want.

Look, therefore, for a lot of sparks to fly at CoP-8. And diplomatese.



WISHLIST

ISSUES EW THINKS ARE CENTRAL TO COP-8

#1: US participation

The most powerful country on earth, it is also the biggest polluter of earth's atmosphere. And it is yet to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

The CoP process is a multilateral one. Yet the US, when it so chooses, feels free to walk in and out of it (as it did at CoP-6 bis). On the one hand, the US calls itself the defender of global democracy. On the other, it has consistently undermined the CoP process. On the one hand, it shrilly asks countries such as India and China to make commitments. On the other, it has come up with an energy bill that is extremely coal and oil intensive. Not prepared to take any domestic action on reducing emissions, it sulks when other countries refuse to compromise on their growth. While the rest of the world is on a diplomatic mission to get the Kyoto Protocol ratified, President George Bush writes letters to his senators telling them why he is not interested in it.

CoP-8 must find a way to remind the US to be the democratic country it says it is. Everybody must sit down and talk. On an equal basis.

#2: Commitments

Since 1998, developed countries have been avoiding a proper, open discussion on what is termed "adequacy of

commitments". A review of these commitments is an item in the official CoP-8 agenda. Equity Watch asks the president-designate to make possible this review and ensure developed countries don't duck under the table.

#3: Equity

Unfortunately, the post-Kyoto world is one in which the atmosphere has become a commodity. The world is abuzz with talk of trading in emissions. What is the principle on which trading should occur?

For us, the best principle is equity. Emissions must be traded on a per capita basis. In the future, developing countries are going to have to make commitments on cutting emissions. The idea is that the world converges on an emission level that doesn't give the atmosphere a fever. But how are these commitments to be decided? Only equity will ensure this happens in a way that doesn't compromise our growth.

We ask developing country delegates to avoid being yoked into someone else's polluted project. Keep your eyes, ears, and future open.

#4: Adaptation

Some countries are dirtying the atmosphere. Others are suffering its effects. Polluters must pay. Compensate these countries. This is a UNFCCC demand, even more valid in a post-Kyoto world.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER
CARNIVAL
OCTOBER 25

COME TO THE CLIMATE CARNIVAL.
CARBON CAKES. CARBON CLASS. CARBON CARTOONS.
EVERYBODY HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES.
THE AMPHITHEATRE, INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, 5 PM.



Drawn into debate

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was drawn into the global debate on climate change in response to a report by a US group blaming developing countries for nearly half the problem. In 1992, CSE published a report, *Global Warming in an Unequal World*, accusing the US group of environmental colonialism.

Global Warming in an Unequal World argued that developing countries like India and China cannot be held equally responsible for global warming — the accumulation of carbon dioxide and methane, two of the important gases contributing to the problem, was mainly the result of the gargantuan consumption of the developed countries, particularly the US. The CSE report contested the suggestion that all greenhouse gas emissions were comparable, and differentiated between the 'survival emissions' related to activities like paddy cultivation and cattle rearing and 'luxury

emissions' related to activities like automobile usage.

Global Warming in an Unequal World influenced the position of the Indian government and also the other developing countries. Developing countries pushed the industrialised countries to take responsibility for their emissions. They were not able to get a clear acceptance of the polluter pays principle as the basis of the climate change treaty that ensued, but only a weaker principle of "common but differentiated responsibility". This was an acceptance that while all countries had a responsibility to deal with climate change, this would be a "differentiated" responsibility, and industrialised countries would take action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions first.

Since then, CSE has avidly argued for per capita entitlements to form the basis of any lasting cooperation between rich and poor countries to dealing with climate change.



EQUITYWATCH
invites contributions on issues of
specific interest to developing countries.

Send your contribution to cse@cseindia.org,
marked "Contribution for *Equity Watch*" or hand it over
at the CSE office at Core 6A, India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110 003.

»1 Act Now!

where nations strove to chisel a way out of global warming, and climate change.

Forget the chisel. It is an instrument used delicately. Actually, nations took up the hammer and began hitting each other on the head. Climate change, from being a global ecological phenomenon, became a politically negotiated process. It became a Cost-Benefit Analysis process. CoP1 to CoP 7 has seen much hammering, and then sawing. What sawing.

As CoP-8 begins, *Equity Watch* must resurrect itself. To not only observe, but also warn.

Since 1997, when the UNFCCC's Protocol to combat climate change was peremptorily rushed through at CoP-3 held in Kyoto, Japan, developing nations have found themselves at the receiving end of concentrated First World quick-fixes to climate change. Ecologically effective principles have given way to utilitarian economic mechanisms that threaten the growth trajectory of Third World nations. Colonialism has steadily become a reality. Developed nations have entreated, thrown tantrums, and threatened. All this to find any which way to off-load internal costs (cutting

down on CO₂ emissions, which means reformulating national energy-use, which means changing consumption patterns and behaviour), to avoid historical responsibility, and to meet carbon emission reduction targets in as cheap, and villainous, a fashion as possible.

CoP-3 to CoP-7 is the story of a strange transformation of (broad) ecological responsibility into (narrow) economic efficiency and exchange. It is the story of heavily polluting nations imposing desperate diktats (related to their compliance problems) on to lesser-polluting countries that suddenly find themselves to be the object of blame and bribery, suddenly staring at an externally-determined, structurally-adjusted, benighted future. Much sawing has happened. The world is quite cut up, today.

As CoP-8 begins, *Equity Watch* begins. To observe and warn. And so to inform and guide. Produce knowledge that can help intervene. We have no tinpot-dictatorial ambitions, like George Bush has. We aren't toxic, or Texan. We watch because we merely wish to remind: Foul ought to become fair. It will, it has to. Equity will rule. But only if developing nations get in the ring.

WHO RULES?

What can you do if someone decides to set up a power plant or a polluting factory in your neighbourhood?

Precious little. The Indian political system still does not give enough power to local communities to decide use of the environment.

Then again, what does Bangladesh do if dams in India affect their river systems?

People who actually use certain resources don't seem to have any control over them. These then, raise the vital issue of governance, vis-a-vis the environment.

There is need for monitoring on both the transnational level and the local community levels. Pollution doesn't follow our map, you see!

It is in this regard, that a much was expected of the RIO summit. Unfortunately, even there, one witnessed a demonstration of might is right. But that's wrong! In Europe

one is seeing a movement in the right direction. While the European Community oversees at the transnational level, local committees, like our panchayats, have been rested with very strong rights to control, even veto if need be, projects that are environmentally questionable.

It is a global democracy with decentralised powers that we're really looking for.

Most importantly, governments should not just act as police and say 'no' to projects; but, they should also show the way to do equitable, sustainable, environmentally sound things — by building institutions, developing procedures and enacting laws to manage environmental issues — by developing what is called the true developers perspective.

Down To Earth
SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PEOPLE