



Proceedings from the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Workshop

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1. Summary

The UN Foundation sponsored and hosted a workshop on Sustainable Development and Climate Change on October 24 and 25, 2001 in Paris. The workshop was organised by UCCEE (UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment) and RIVM (National Institute of Public Health and the Environment). Chief climate negotiators, high-level government officials, and senior private sector representatives from China, India, Brazil, Iran (G-77 chairman), South Africa, Argentina, South Korea, and AOSIS participated in the meeting. Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel from UNEP opened the workshop and Melinda Kimble from UNF made closing remarks.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To consider how longer-term development priorities link with climate change concerns
- To identify options for meeting developing countries needs and priorities while contributing to sustainable development both locally and globally.
- To discuss possible longer term action at domestic and international levels by countries to further the sustainable development and climate change discussion

Rationale

Many developing countries are undertaking energy initiatives that limit emissions of greenhouse gases and other climate favouring activities emerge as side-benefits of sound development programmes. A recent example that has been widely noted is China's success in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 15% from 1996-2000, while the GDP expanded by over 35% during the same time period. Price reform, environmental improvement, and energy sector restructuring – all have been undertaken without reference to climate change mitigation or adaptation, but solely on their

benefit to the economy and the local environment. These actions have reduced the growth rates of greenhouse gas emissions. This observation suggests that it may often be possible to build environmental and climate policy around development priorities that are vitally important to developing country decision-makers. It opens the potential that climate change policies may be seen not as a burden to be avoided but rather as a side-benefit of sound and internationally supported development projects and programmes. This meeting proposed a new conceptual framework that places sustainable development before climate change, reversing existing frameworks. The rationale for the meeting is that there are alternative and cleaner paths to achieving sustainable development goals that can also contribute to climate change goals.

Results

Linkages between Sustainable Development and Climate Change

All the developing country participants agreed that there are strong linkages between sustainable development and climate change, and fully endorsed the framework that places sustainable development before climate change. The G-77 chairman said that this rationale is new and useful to provide the decision-makers in developing countries the needed domes-

tic support from their constituencies to pursue climate change policies. The Chinese chief negotiator said that China's aggressive renewable energy and energy efficiency policies are part of the sustainable development plan to improve local environment and increase economic efficiency, and China will continue to do so even without the obligations under the UNFCCC. The key message here is that it is critical to engage and help developing countries on the sustainable development path. The climate change benefits will eventually come as a result.

Recognition of Developing Countries' Efforts

All the participating countries shared their domestic policies and activities in the climate change and sustainable energy area, and future plans regarding climate change and sustainable development. China has done more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than the US, through closing small coal mines and power plants, pursuing aggressive energy conservation, removing subsidies on fossil fuels, prohibiting coal use in large cities, and shifting to alternative energy sources. The Chinese chief negotiator said that they will do more in the future. The Indian and Brazilian governments are also aggressively pursuing energy conservation measures and alternative energy sources. South Africa provided a public-private partnership model of establishing Shell-Eskom joint venture targeted to install 50,000 solar home systems over three years that the President Nelson Mandela launched. Iran, as an OPEC country, is making an effort to replace oil with natural gas. All the developing countries participants found the workshop very useful for such a cross-country exchange of domestic policy experiences in the area of sustainable energy and climate change, and requested that these efforts should be recognised and reflected in international documents.

Inputs to the World Summit in Johannesburg

The COP7 conference immediately after the Paris workshop adopted a Marrakech Ministerial Declaration providing inputs for the World Summit in Johannesburg next September. The Declaration emphasises linkages between sustainable development and climate change, and reaffirms development and pov-

erty eradication as the overriding priorities of developing countries. The IPCC (Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change) will also develop a technical report on the linkages between sustainable development and climate change. The G77 chairman said that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should focus on putting compliance mechanisms and implementation targets in place, which is lacking over the past decade after the Rio Conference. It was agreed at the workshop that sustainable development is the appropriate framework for integrating economic development and environmental protection.

Developing Countries' Needs and Future Action Plans

- The developing country participants emphasised the importance of increasing public awareness in both industrialised and developing countries about the linkages between sustainable development and climate change, among both general public and decision-makers. They expressed interests in hosting follow-up workshops in their countries.
- All developing country representatives raised the issue of sustainable financing. Lack of financing has been a major barrier to clean energy development in developing countries. The Chinese chief negotiator, for example, said that China plans to increase the share of natural gas in the energy mix from 2% to 8% and this requires \$15-20 billion investment over 5 years. It is critical for public funding to bridge and stimulate large investment from the private sector in clean energy sector.
- As mentioned earlier, all developing countries participants also requested the international community to recognise developing countries' efforts to address climate change challenges, which should be reflected in international documents.
- Next steps: UNEP, UCCEE, and an expert group (including Tom Heller, IPCC panel experts, and WRI, etc.) intend to prepare further activities in this area, including regional workshops, identification of developing countries' specific needs, and mobilisation of additional resources from donors such as the EU and US Foundations, and bilateral sources.



Proceedings from the UNF Workshop on Sustainable Development and Climate Change

2. General Introduction to the Workshop Discussions

The workshop was opened by introductory welcome statements, by **Dr. Xiadong Wang** from the United Nations Foundation and **Mrs. Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel** from UNEP, Division of Technology, Industry and Trade. They both emphasised that they hoped that the workshop would be seen as an opportunity for taking an open discussion about how sustainable development and climate change policies can be pursued simultaneously in the common interest of all parts of the world.

Dr. Wang stressed that such combined policies are a major priority to the UNF and a number of energy sector and business development activities are already going on to support sustainable development and climate change. UNF is the largest donor in international sustainable energy and climate change policies among US Foundations and has programmes on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and the Clean Development Mechanism. The goals of

this workshop are starting from these energy initiatives to identify developing countries needs and priorities and to recognise already ongoing efforts in these countries to address climate change. Built on such an assessment it is UNFs aim to propose a new framework: placing sustainable development before climate change, a framework which can be used as a basis for developing long-term action plans in the countries.

Mrs. de Larderel thanked UNF for inviting UNEP to participate in such an effort that is totally in line with UNEPs perspective on climate change policies. It is UNEPs hope that the workshop discussions will be a step forward in the establishment of a sustainable international policy regime, where all parts of the world collaborate about climate change policies in a fair and equitable way. UNEP see the workshop discussions and hopefully further activities in this area as very interesting oppor-

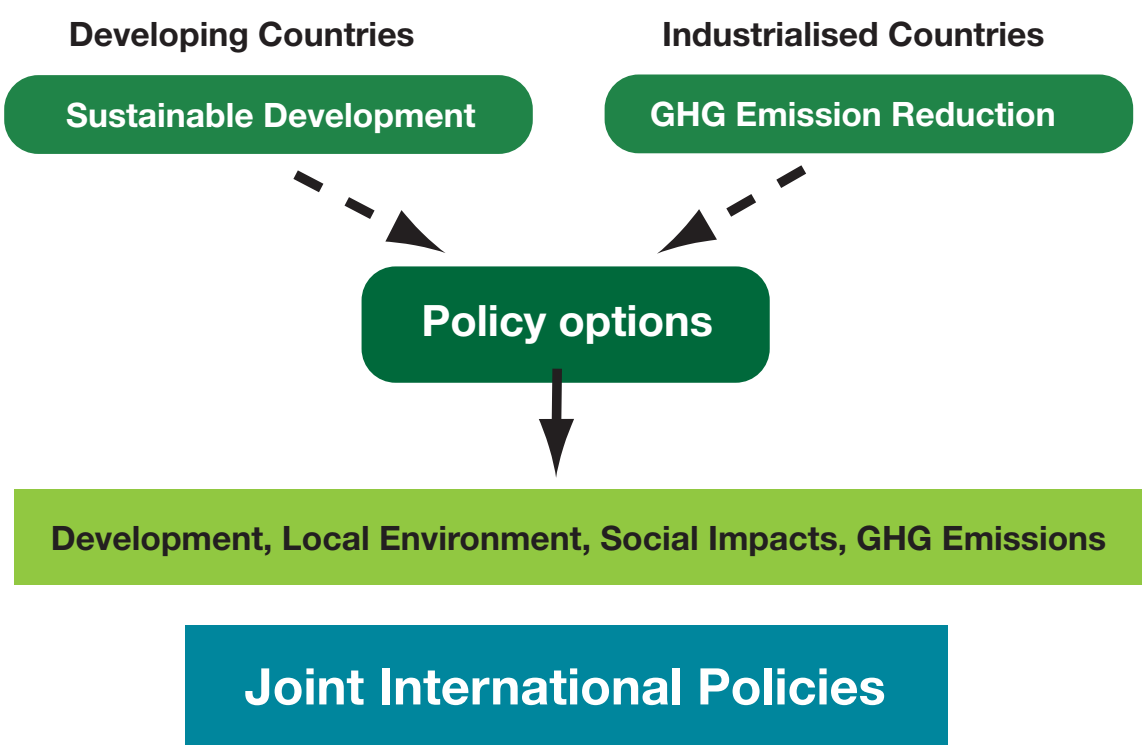
tunities to enhance and enrich the many ongoing energy sector programmes and business activities conducted by UNEP, other UN organisations and UNF. **Mrs. de Larderel** invited the participants to take an open critical discussion about how UNEP could support their efforts to implement sustainable development and climate change policies, and offered that UNEP was ready to give national capacity building a high priority. Support will also be available in various areas including technology information, awareness and public information, educational programmes, and technical support to enabling activities and case studies.

Dr. John M. Christensen from UCCEE expressed his hope that the workshop would provide a forum for creating a positive, informal and open dialogue on the synergies between sustainable development and climate change. **Dr. Christensen** furthermore emphasised that the synergies between sustainable development and climate change have the potential for reconciling any possible differences in the policy priorities of stakeholders from respectively developing and industrialised

countries. For example, international financiers must be expected to mainly prioritise projects that have a low financial cost per unit of GHG emission reduction, while national stakeholders or governments are expected to prioritise national benefits of the activity in the form of e.g. market development, employment, social development, and local environmental improvements. Following that, it will be relevant to measure multiple financial, economic, social, and environmental impacts of mitigation policies and then supply this information to a broader dialogue and negotiation between national stakeholders and international financiers in order to develop a portfolio of policy options that balance sustainable development and climate change policy priorities. Figure 3 below illustrates this process.

Dr. Christensen ended by saying that the workshop provided an excellent opportunity to ask for inputs regarding what a development driven climate change approach could look like and suggestions for all sort of follow up activities to the development first approach were welcomed.

Figure 1. Sustainable development and climate change mitigation policies – potential perspectives and synergies



2.1 Conceptual Background for Linking Sustainable Development Issues and Climate Change Policies

Professor Tom Heller, Stanford University USA presented a paper on the idea of introducing sustainable development as a first priority for climate change policies. Climate change has been universally recognised as a global problem. While historically the preponderance of greenhouse gas emissions has been in the developed countries, emissions will increase rapidly with expected and needed economic growth in developing countries. Both the Framework Convention on Climate Change and independent scientific analysis have reiterated that strong and inclusive global cooperation will be needed to realise the deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that are necessary over the longer term to control climate change. Yet, in the years since the constitution of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, North-South co-operation on climate change has not developed adequately. Worse, the discussion on how to address climate change in the longer term has become polarised. A principal reason for this lack of progress is that climate change is not a politically important focus of economic or development policy and is only recently being considered among national environmental policy objectives. Climate change remains marginal to the pressing issues of poverty, natural resource management, food security, energy needs and access, or urban transport or land use that capture the attention of leading actors.

Current co-operation efforts and analyses of climate change policy have been driven uniquely by concerns about climate change

programmes. Price reform, agricultural soil protection, sustainable forestry, energy sector restructuring - all undertaken without any reference to climate change - can mitigate environmental risks while they enhance economic and political development.

The challenge for integrated development and environmental policies is the practical question of how best to choose and stay on the paths that minimise the local and global environmental costs of relieving poverty, providing adequate food, getting electricity to households and industry, providing employment and transportation facilities consistent with the needs of developing country people. To reframe global environmental policies as deriving from development priorities does not make climate change easier to solve. Rather, it suggests that global collaboration on climate change should be approached on multiple levels through local and national development programmes, as well as through multilateral efforts to establish co-operation mechanisms within an equitable and efficient global climate change regime.

This approach suggests that a less polarised way of meeting the challenges of sustainable development and climate change is to build environmental and climate policy upon development priorities that are vitally important to decision-makers. It focuses on the potential that contributions by developing countries to the management of the risks of climate change should be seen not as a burden of legal commitments to be avoided, but as a side-benefit of sound and internationally supported development. Instead of starting with the problem of how to generate political attention to climate change risk issues among key policy decision

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