



**W**e all know today that the threat of climate change is real and urgent. We also know that combating this threat will require deep and drastic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. The question in Poznan is, how will we re-commit the industrialized world to serious reduction of its emissions. We need action, hard and fast, not just excuses and small change. Poznan must also determine if the world is serious about climate change. We know that the poor are feeling the pain of a changing climate—with increased variations in rainfall, intensities of tropical cyclones and ways which makes them even more vulnerable and less able to cope with daily survival. We also know that the emerging economies (at whom fingers are pointed for their growth and emissions) have already agreed at Bali to take on national actions for mitigation. They know it is in their interest not to first pollute and then clean up. But they also know they need funds and technology to invest in a low-carbon economy. They can leapfrog. But it will cost. This is the hub of the matter.

Therefore, the question at Poznan is clear: will the rich world, responsible for the stock of emissions already in the common atmosphere, find the resources to pay the victims of its economic excesses? Will the same world find the resources to pay for the much-needed transition to low-carbon economies? As we say, the issues are clear. But the answers are lost in prevarication and pretence.

We know today that international negotiations on climate change, to put it politely, stink. The mood is downright mean, belligerent and selfish. But it is not because of the unwillingness of the poor or the emerging rich that the negotiations on climate are deadlocked. But because the rich, industrialized world has still not learnt the first lesson of climate change—to share the atmospheric space so that growth can be shared equally.

### **SHARED VISION**

We cannot share a vision of the way the world will combat climate change, unless we are prepared to share the common atmospheric resources of the world. Equity is a pre-requisite for an effective climate agreement. The fact is that without cooperation, this global agreement will not work. It is for this reason that the world must accept the concept of equal per capita emission entitlements so that the rich reduce and the poor do not go beyond their climate quota.

The shared vision, then, is about accepting the fact that climate change is related to economic growth. And in spite of years of protracted negotiations and targets set under the Kyoto Protocol, no country has been able to delink its growth from the growth of emissions. No country has shown how to build a low-carbon economy, *as yet*.

The facts are clear. Between 1990 and 2006, carbon dioxide emissions of the industrialized rich countries (Annex I, without the Economies in Transition) have increased by 14.5 per cent. This is unacceptable. Our shared vision must then reject the intransigence of the rich to reduce their emissions. It must force these countries to take hard and binding interim targets for emission reduction.

Accepting a long-term target (2050) based on a shifting baseline year, is a self-goal that the world cannot afford. *There is no bailout package here that will work.*

### **MITIGATION**

Climate change is about sharing growth between nations and people. It is about creating ecological space. And clearly, this has not happened till date. Forget historical emissions. Between 1980 and 2005, the total emissions of just one country—the us—were almost double that of China and more than seven times that of India. In per capita terms, the injustice is even more unacceptable, indeed immoral. We have seen no real change. *No change that we can believe in.*

This is when the world must know that climate change is about cooperation. The fact is, climate change teaches us more than anything else that the world is one; if the rich world pumped in excessive quantities of carbon dioxide yesterday, the emerging rich world will do so today. But cooperation is not possible without equity and fairness. Climate justice is a pre-requisite for an effective climate agreement.

It is here that Poznan must agree to cut to the chase. And not waste more time in finding every way to circumvent the principles of our agreement—the rich must reduce so that the poor can grow. It must not spend time now finding ways to differentiate between countries of the South—the advanced, the not-so-advanced and the least advanced etc. This will push our countries who are willing partners in this fight against climate change, against the wall. Slow down the pace of negotiations and delay action. *This climate salami must stop.*<sup>^</sup>

The developed world wants countries to take on 'sectoral' emission cuts, which it also says should be continuously negotiated so that more sectors can be included and become the legally binding commitments of the South. A devious, dastardly and deceitful ploy. Not acceptable. And a waste of (precious) time.

This is when the developing world has already agreed to take national actions to mitigate emissions. They are not running away from their global responsibilities. They know that they must find low-carbon growth strategies without compromising on their right to develop.

They also know that this can be done. Countries like India and China provide the world the opportunity to 'avoid' additional emissions. The reason is that we are still in the process of building our energy, transport or industrial infrastructure. We can make investments in leapfrog technologies so that we can 'avoid' pollution. In other words, we can build our cities on public transport; our energy security on local and distributed systems—from biofuels to renewables; our industries using the most energy-, and so, pollution-efficient technologies.

We know it is not in our interest to first pollute and then clean up; or be inefficient and then worry about saving energy. But we also know that high-end technologies needed for energy efficiency and transition to low-carbon futures are costly. It is not as if China and India are bent on first investing in dirty and fuel-inefficient technologies. We invest in these, as the now-rich

world has done: first add to emissions; make money; then invest in efficiency. We can change this pathway. But the world must give real change. *Change we can believe in.*

### THE AGENDA FOR POZNAN

- To set deep and drastic emission reduction targets for the developed world. We suggest 30-40 per cent reduction over 1990 levels by 2020.
- To agree on national mitigation actions by developing countries—what will these be and what will they cost in terms of finance and technology transfer. These actions must be paid, not through a convoluted, cheap and corrupt mechanism like CDM, but through a rights-based mechanism. We either set up a global trading system based on equal per capita entitlements. Or agree on a carbon tax (one which hurts) on the developed world, so that the fund can pay for national actions to mitigate emissions, including avoiding emissions from deforestation.
- To agree on the fund for adaptation, based not on charity, but the right to development of the poor and the victims of climate change. It would be pathetic if the same world which has spent trillions to bail out its banks and industry, cannot find ways to compensate the victims of its excesses.

### NEWER DEAL FOR THE NEWER WORLD

The world we know faces numerous challenges—from global economic recession to insecurity. Today our governments want to spend public money to bail out the global economy. This crisis is an opportunity to reinvent. The public money can be used not only to stimulate the economy, but also to help redesign an affordable and sustainable economy. In other words, we need a carefully constructed spending plan—on new energy technologies to new mobility systems and urban infrastructure—to create equitable and sustainable economies.

But for this, we need leaders who will not let us down. We need leaders who will take the challenge of climate change and turn it into the world's biggest cooperative effort.

And for this, we must let them know loud and clear:

**We don't need corporate welfare. We need welfare for the people and the planet. ■**