

# Rising temperatures.

## CLIMATE PLANS NOT HOPEFUL



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**Dhurjati Mukherjee**

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Just after the Paris talks and agreement, there is need to seriously delve into the question of managing climate change through various options including exhaustive exploration and discovery of business processes and options for greenhouse gas abatement through research and development. It goes without saying that adoption of the right strategy for mitigating long-term climate change risks have been outlined by countries like China or India. If special efforts are not taken to implement the agreement on climate change concluded in Paris, the impact on agriculture and food security, human health, water resources, coastal areas would be disastrous, affecting a large segment of Asia's population.

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Various studies have indicated that average temperatures are destined to rise between 3 to 3.5 degree Celsius by the year 2100, which would obviously be disastrous, specially for tropical countries. Experts believe that the climate action plans submitted by more than 150 countries are not enough to prevent temperatures from rising beyond 2 degree Celsius.

A UN report titled "Aggregate Effect of National Climate Action Plans", released on October 30, pointed out the inadequacies of climate action plans, saying it may spur global temperatures by around 2.7 degree Celsius by 2100 which would obviously have grave consequences all around the world. *The Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDCs) have the capacity of limiting the forecast temperature rise to around 2.7 degree Celsius by 2100, by no means enough but a lower than the estimated four, five or more degrees of warming projected by many prior to the INDCs.*

#### **Experts agree**

Most experts believe that examining the climate plans of different countries and specially of the top five polluters, the temperature rise may exceed 3 degree Celsius – with 60 per cent probability – as revealed

by Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. Another US based non-profit unit, Climate Interactive has even predicted that temperature rise will be 3.5 degree Celsius. Scientists had earlier concluded that a 2 degree Celsius rise would entail sea level rise up to four feet due to polar icecaps melting, increasing extreme events such as typhoons, changes in rainfall patterns etc. and this is expected to be more severe now.

According to a study by Stanford University and University of California, released last month, India is among the countries likely to be adversely affected as existing income disparities would widen between the rich and poor nations in a warming world. A single degree rise in average temperature could reduce the country's *per capita* growth by one per cent.

The Centre for Science & Environment (CSE), after studying the US climate action plan and the Human Development Index (HDI) data to understand lifestyles in rich nations found that these are disastrous for the world climate. The study "Captain America" lays bare that the world's most powerful economy is doing very little to combat climate change.

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Referring to this plan, CSE found the *USINDC is neither ambitious nor equitable* and it puts the world at *deadly risk* given the impacts of changing climate. One may mention here that the INDC of the US promises to reduce emissions by 26-28 per cent below 2005 levels by 2025. But even then the *per capita* emissions of India in 2025 would be around 3 to 3.5 tonnes that is one-fourth of the US even with the former having such huge population.

#### **What does the West do?**

Studies have also revealed that richer countries or blocs like the US, European Union, are promising cuts which are much below their accumulated shares of emissions. In fact, developing countries such as India, China are committing to much more in comparison. The BRIC countries and other groupings of the Third World did put pressure on the western polluters at the conference in Paris.

Tackling the problem thus poses a big challenge in the coming years. With the five top polluters – the US, Europe, Russia, China and Japan – being responsible for around 70 per cent, the bonus would be on these countries to take the initiative in curbing emissions. However, there are grave doubts

about what they would actually be able to achieve, considering their lavish lifestyles and way of living.

As regards the commitment of the western countries towards the Third World since the Kyoto Protocol though technology transfer was agreed there has been little progress on that front. Environmental-friendly technologies have not been transferred much to countries such as India so as to enable them to shift from renewable resources and check pollution growth. Moreover very little financial resources have been made available by the rich nations, resulting in the poorer countries not being able to do much in checking greenhouse gases.

Meanwhile, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a multilateral fund to help poor and developing countries fight climate change has been stuck as the nature of contributions and the beneficiaries have yet to be settled.

#### **Effects on food security**

As per the UN report, the world will just have nearly 250 giga tonne (Gt) of carbon dioxide for development work beyond 2030. This is certain to hit poor and developing countries of Asia and Africa the most as these would not be in a position to peak their emission by 2030.

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With a steady rise in living standards of the people of the Third World in addition to the rapid increase in population growth, there would be increased demand for food. The Third World countries would have to adopt the right technologies to ensure that due to the effects of climate change, food production is not hampered. One may mention here the need to aggressively promote dry-land farming, soil conservation methodologies, watershed management as also and other agricultural technologies to the farming community so that food production is not hampered.

In fact, there is need to formulate programmes and strategies for effective promotion and implementation in this direction. Sooner, the better.

**Dhurjati Mukherjee**

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