

Une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale pour le développement durable

Taking the Initiative on Global Governance and Sustainable Development

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All Said and Done

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The European Union (EU) has rejected the draft Delhi ministerial declaration for CoP-8. We reject it as well. Not because we are in cahoots, or agree that India and China must take on commitments. We reject it because the declaration is a pusillanimous document full of empty sentences and bureaucratese. Where is the substance? Where is the passion to see a hard and effective climate regime, in the present and for the future?

It is not enough for T. R. Baalu to host a grand cultural event. It is appalling that the word mitigation does not even find a mention in the draft. We must ensure this event sends out a strong statement of intent and commitment. The soft language of buzzwords — ‘sustainable development’, ‘poverty eradication’, ‘international cooperation’ — won’t get us what we want. These are tired phrases. Old fogies thought them up, expressly to mortgage our future for less than a fistful of dollars.

Climate negotiations, I keep saying over and over again, are about the economy and about the environment. We have to demand our space under the sun. We have to table our vision of what the world can achieve in the years to come. This is our opportunity. How can you fritter it away?

I have my own Delhi Declaration

Go and endorse the Kyoto Protocol. Most of the world believes a multilateral process, bound by rules and consensus, is the way ahead. Come on, people. This is the biggest cooperative enterprise human beings have

ever embarked upon. Remember and engage. I ask Russia, Canada, Australia and even the US to be responsible and ratify immediately.

Demand effective action, developing countries. We are most vulnerable. The majority of our populations already live on the margins of survival. Grow up, developing country negotiators. Stop playing the speechless victim.

Demand that the US engage. Forget historical and present emissions. By 2012, it will emit 37 per cent above the Kyoto target. How can we let them get away with this obscenity? All gains will be negated; all our efforts, willing and unwilling, will come to nought. What excuses will we have then?

Let us, by contrast, responsibly engage. This does not mean we take on legally binding commitments to reduce emissions. These negotiations are about sharing limited atmospheric space. We need the ecological and economic space to grow. Remember the agreement is not so much that the rich world merely reduces emissions. It does so that we can increase our share. Call it the right to pollute more equitably, if you will. Otherwise the world will have to accept a freeze on inequality, something completely unacceptable. Tell the EU not to preach. But practice. It is doing too little, too late.

We can, and will do, our bit. In fact we are already doing it. Take emission trajectories. The Kyoto Protocol approach of setting an *ad hoc* reduction emissions target rewards the biggest polluter. Under the protocol, the operative word is 1990 – essentially, it means a rich country reduces emissions by 5 per cent below what it emitted in that year. Innovative climate accountancy, I must say. If we go by this method of calculating a nation's target then I could say: developing countries, increase emissions as fast as possible. Get your baseline high. We can get credits for a high emission reduction target as well! But I don't want to use a bad argument. Why should I, when we aren't doing it this way? We are investing in cleaner and more efficient technologies, within our capacities. Even generously so.

We will, and want to do more. We will use Clean Development Mechanism to invest only in high-end energy efficient technologies and renewable energy (but not nuclear). Not because commitments bind us, but because we know this route will enable us to leapfrog towards a cleaner energy system – we buy more time for the world to reduce emissions. Say clearly that the South does not want to be like the emission-profligate North. But this also does not mean that the South does not want to secure its right to development. Investing in renewable energy will demand more money than cheap CDM dollars. I say: put your money where your mouth is.

The real Delhi declaration is about providing political content to the climate negotiation. Setting a hard agenda to implement the Kyoto Protocol and beyond. This will demand more political sagacity than I have ever seen from our politicians who continue to protect their dinosaur-age oil and automobile industries, or are just plain lazy. Because, even to demand more takes energy.