

Climate Change and Sustainable Development from the Prospective of Developing Countries and (ii) Role of Local Government in response to the UNFCCC

Dear colleagues, as you know climate change is one of our greatest challenges, posing profound socioeconomic and environmental impacts especially for developing countries. The IPCC's findings in their 5th Assessment Report leave no doubt, declaring that the evidence of climate change is "unequivocal" with emission trends and indicators all moving in the wrong direction. In fact, greenhouse gas emissions are rising faster than ever; between years 2000 – 2010 they grew an average of 2.2% per year now stand at nearly 50 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. The most significant contributors to these emission levels remain fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes. Together, they accounted for about 78% of total GHG emission increase from 1970 to 2010.

Even some of the gains in reducing greenhouse gas emissions have been lost. The carbon content of energy production, which had been in decline, has reversed itself over the past 10 years. And, the combined emission levels of just 10 countries dwarfs the emission levels of the rest of the world combined. This is a trend that has persisted for a long time.

Why should these trends alarm us? Well, in the words of the IPCC in their 5th Assessment Report, it is "*extremely likely*" that these emissions are the dominant cause of observed global warming since the mid-20th century. With global warming has come increased frequency and intensity of drought in the Mediterranean and West Africa, as well as other weather extremes, such as heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones, and wildfires in many parts of the world. These changes are impacting us through the alteration of ecosystems, disruption of food production and water supply, damage to infrastructure and settlements, and increased human morbidity and mortality rates.

Without additional efforts to reduce GHG emissions beyond those in place today, the growth in greenhouse gas emissions is expected to persist well into the future. Driven by socioeconomic growth, global mean surface temperature could likely increase between 3.7 to 4.8°C compared to pre-industrial levels by the end of this century.

These changes will have serious consequences. The IPCC concluded recently that “Future increase in precipitation extremes related to the monsoon is very likely in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.” They also concluded that there could be delays in the West African rainy season while rainfall will intensify over northern parts of South Asia, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Such climatic changes could pose serious livelihood risks to millions of people in developing countries, such as:

- Death, injury, or disrupted livelihoods in low-lying coastal zones and small islands due to storm surges, coastal flooding and sea-level rise.
- Risk of severe ill-health and disrupted livelihood for large urban populations.
- Break down in critical services due to more frequent extreme weather events
- Rising food insecurity among rural dwellers due to lower local crop yields and access to food due to disruptions in international food trade
- Loss of terrestrial and inland water ecosystems and marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity and the essential services such ecosystems provide.
- Risk of mortality and morbidity during periods of extreme heat

Developing countries are much more vulnerable to these risks because of their reliance on agriculture, their lower tolerance to coastal and water resource changes, and lower financial, technical, and institutional capacity to adapt.

Developing countries are very concerned about climate change because these risks threaten to derail plans for economic growth, development, job creation and poverty eradication. Effective adaptation to the looming impacts of climate change is therefore foremost on their policy agenda for confronting the climate change challenge. This is not to say that mitigation of greenhouse gases is unimportant. Rather, climate change is already happening and so the need to adapt is acutely perceived as a current urgency. Ideally, sustainable development pathways should address both adaptation and mitigation imperatives. The importance of sustainable development comes from the Article 2 of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change which states: "Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner." This notion is also expressed in Article 3.4 which states: "The Parties have a right to, and should, promote sustainable development." Also last month in New York at the UN Climate Summit world leaders acknowledged that climate action should be undertaken within the context of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and promote sustainable development

Achieving both adaptation and mitigation goals are central to sustainable development. The Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development outlined the importance of linking climate change and sustainable development in both directions when it declared: mitigation measures should be "integrated with national development programs, taking into account that economic development is essential for adopting measures to address climate change" and "National sustainable development strategies should integrate more fully climate change [adaptation] objectives in key areas such as water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity." All these sectors are of great importance and no country has developed without addressing the cross-cutting issues of agriculture, water and energy. Of

course, current climate impacts are making it very difficult for many developing countries to pursue sustainable development because more resources are being required just to keep up with the status quo.

While climate change poses a moderate threat to current sustainable development in general, we have seen cases of damages even after adaptation. An effective climate change strategy will require the integration of development, equity and sustainability which is closely calibrated to the unique local requirements of effective adaptation.

A new approach is needed to address water, agriculture and energy, sectors that are so integral to climate change adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. At its heart, this will involve a nexus approach that can effectively capture important co-benefits of local sustainable development in developing countries such as better air quality, improvements in public health, and efficiency gains from optimizing economies of scale. Instead of seeing only impacts and constraints, we can begin to view climate change as an opportunity for developing an integrated approach for water, energy and agriculture within the context of sustainable development. Indeed, the realities of climate change are forcing us to look for complementarities.

A new approach will also involve retaining a “**development first**” mentality. Concrete actions are needed to promote a strong and inclusive accelerated transition towards a more sustainable future and cooperation at global, regional and local levels. The starting point is to establish realistic development priorities that jointly achieve development and poverty eradication objectives and can transform threats into opportunities.

There are many development initiatives that are both climate resilient and development-friendly. Such options can be explored at various levels and can be scaled up and coupled with international initiatives to enhance their impacts. Of course there are many challenges facing developing countries to attain sustainable development including policy,

technical, financial, socio-economic, informational, regulatory and institutional. Some of these can be addressed at the national level; others through South-South and/or international cooperation.

There are a large number of technologies that are currently available to simultaneously reduce GHG emissions and promote sustainable development. There is high potential for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and transportation and irrigation technologies especially in Africa. The context for investments and new business partnerships has never been better.

Now, let me talk a little about the Role of Local Governments in Response to the Climate Convention. A recent International Energy Agency analysis estimates that cities account for 73% of world energy use and about half of the world's population. As the world becomes more and more urbanized, the way cities develop and how they address energy-related emissions will be key to the success of any international climate action.

Local Governments are especially important actors in efforts to address climate change because they possess both the critical jurisdictional powers needed to foster climate resiliency and the ability to efficiently respond to the immediate needs of citizens. For example, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (or ICLEI) supports strong roles of Local Governments in tackling climate change throughout the post-Kyoto text, specifically in the preamble and shared vision statement of the future agreement.

Indeed, by 2030, two-thirds of humanity will live in urban areas, where the overwhelming majority of all energy will be consumed. In addition, all cities, especially fast-growing urban areas in developing countries are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Thus, local and subnational governments have a critical role to play in global efforts to reduce GHGs and adapt to climate change.

It's important to note that neither the UNFCCC nor the Kyoto Protocol includes any reference to any role for cities and local governments in confronting climate change. Nevertheless, urban groups and associations are organically springing up to take up the challenge. One such network consists of local governments and their associations from across the globe represent communities worldwide in the "Local Government Climate Roadmap" which was launched in 2007 in Bali in response to the Bali Action Plan of national governments. The Local Government Climate Roadmap reached a milestone achievement in 2010 with the adoption of the Cancun Agreements (Dec.1/CP16) in which paragraph 7 recognizes local and subnational governments as governmental stakeholders in the UNFCCC process. The Local Government Delegation in Cancun was extremely active throughout the international negotiations by organizing numerous interventions in the plenary, contacting group sessions and by arranging a number of well prepared bilateral meetings with several national delegations.

In November 2010, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiative (ICLEI) Local Governments Sustainability demonstrated a high level of commitment to climate action when they gathered at the World Mayors Summit on Climate 2010 in Mexico City on 21 November 2010. Signed by more than 140 cities representing more than 170 million citizens, the Summit resulted with the adoption of the Mexico City Pact and carbon Cities Climate Registry as the global reporting mechanism for measurable, reportable, verifiable local climate action.

Other innovative global mechanisms by local government networks include the Global Cities Covenant on Climate Change, Durban Adaptation Charter, and Global Protocol for Community Scale GHG Emissions (GPC). The launch of Covenant of Mayors in Europe in 2008, the low carbon city pilot programs in China in 2010, as well as city or state level emissions trading schemes, like in Tokyo, California, Quebec,

and China can be considered as leading examples of innovative partnerships and initiatives.

Following the achievements related to local governments in Mexico, the journey continued to COP17 in Durban, South Africa in 2011, where LGs lead by example by showing the results of the carbon Cities Climate Registry and the hundreds of signatories of the Mexico City Pact. For this reason, all local and subnational governments were encouraged to show their climate actions to the international community by signing the Mexico City Pact and registering their actions through the carbon Cities Climate Registry. The Conference agreed on a new global climate regime that is aimed to be adopted by 2015 and enter into force in 2020. Workstream-2 of ADP process focuses on raising the level of ambition in the pre-2020 period, giving an opportunity for stronger engagement of local and subnational governments.

The World Mayors Summit on Climate Change in Nantes, France on 27-28 September 2013 launched the renewed Local Government Climate Roadmap for the period 2013-2015. The creation of a “Friends of Cities” Group among national governments at the UNFCCC, ensuring concrete outcomes for engagement of local and subnational governments in global climate regime through partnerships and action plans, strengthening the institutional framework of local governments and municipal authorities constituency are integral parts of this renewed global climate advocacy. It also included a process for a local action plan in Warsaw 2013 to conclude in Paris 2015, providing specific windows for sustainable urban development in global climate finance mechanisms, and ensuring the vertical integration of local climate action at the national level.

In the context of a universal climate agreement in Paris in 2015, countries have decided to initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their national contributions. In Warsaw (COP19/CMP9), countries have

decided to advance the engagement of local governments in the global climate regime. The decisions included the following:

(1) facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practices between cities and subnational authorities in identifying and implementing opportunities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and

(2) Convening a specific forum as part of the UN Bonn Climate Conference in June 2014.

Leading global cities network such as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability welcomes this outcome and aims to further contribute through its various programs on climate action, including the Resilient Cities congress series, the global platform for urban resilience and climate change adaptation hosted every year in Bonn, Germany. An important workshop on urbanization was conducted, and for the first time ever, ministers and mayors conducted a dialogue on climate change. ICLEI was a key driver of local government engagement in the Warsaw process which gave unprecedented focus on local and subnational the inaugural “21 November Cities Day in which there was an exchange of views between ICLEI Mayors and the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and many Ministers and mayors from around the world.

According to the November 2013 report of the carbonn Cities Climate Registry (cCCR), 414 cities have reported over 4,000 climate actions which are either completed or in progress until 2020. About 63% of the reduction commitments are above 1% reduction per year, exceeding the value of even the most ambitious national governments under the Kyoto Protocol.

While these are indeed groundbreaking figures, Mayors asserted the need for multilevel climate action and support in order to fully harness the power of local action. This call was reiterated in many of the

interactive platforms that ICLEI organized throughout the COP19/CMP9. Apart from its traditional UNFCCC official side event, ICLEI hosted specific events with Government of Indonesia, with GLOBE International at the EU Pavilion and with the State of California at the US Center. ICLEI further collaborated, amongst others, with World Climate Summit, Sustainable Innovation Forum and City of Warsaw for city-related events. In New York at the UN Climate Summit on 23rd September 2014 a new Global Mayors Compact, representing well over 2,000 cities pledged new commitments on climate action supported by new funding from public and private sources — 228 cities have voluntary targets and strategies for greenhouse gas reductions that could avoid up to 2.1 gigatons of greenhouse gas emissions per year

Through these platforms, local and subnational governments have proven to become important catalyzers for scaling up local efforts to global levels, and well responding to the UNFCCC.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, let me thank the Government and people of Korea. Deserving special thanks are The Governor of Gyung-sangbuk-do Province, The Honorable Mr. Gwan-yong Kim, The President of Korea Energy Economics Institute, Dr. Yanghoon Son, The Executive Secretary of the World Green Energy Forum, Dr. Hyuk-soo Kwon, and the organizing committee for their excellent preparations in this beautiful city of Gyeongju and to all of you participating in this important conference

Thank you

Ismail Elgizouli

14th -October 2014