

# Call to Bridge 'Emissions Gap'

*"The longer we wait, the less options we will have, the more it will cost ...and the bigger threat to the world's most vulnerable."*

By Stephen Leahy

Nations this week publicly acknowledged their current pledges to reduce carbon emissions will not result in keeping the global warming to less than two degrees Celsius. To bridge their shortfall, delegates at the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) climate talks propose to address this so-called "emissions gap" at COP 18 in Qatar next year.

Documents under negotiation in Durban, South Africa, acknowledge the science-based emissions reduction target of 25 to 40 percent by 2020. Those reductions and that timeline are what is needed to stay below two degrees Celsius. The draft text says this would be the target to be agreed on at COP 18.

"We need agreement on that science-based target next year at the latest," said Karl Hood, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Caribbean island of Grenada and representing the Alliance of Small Island States.

"And we want those targets to legally come into force before 2017."

Hood told IPS waiting to close the gap until after 2020 is "unacceptable" and a "disaster for small island states" which are already suffering the impacts of climate change.

The world has months to curb emissions from burning fossil fuels before two degrees Celsius of warming will be impossible to stay below. Delay a few years and the extraordinary emission cuts needed could bankrupt the world's economy and reverse development gains in most countries, climate experts warned at the largely deadlocked United Nations climate change conference here.

"We're here to warn policy makers that we are dangerously close to not being able to meet the less than two degrees Celsius

target," said Bill Hare, Director of Climate Analytics, a non-profit climate science advisory group based in Germany.

The current pledges made by countries to cut emissions after the Copenhagen climate talks in 2009 will result in global warming of 3.5 degrees Celsius, said Hare, a climate scientist.

Two years later, those pledges remain essentially unchanged and that means the world's options to stay below two degrees Celsius are narrowing Hare said in press conference during the COP 17 negotiations that conclude Friday.

"To put it bluntly, the longer we wait, the less options we will have, the more it will cost ...and the bigger threat to the world's most vulnerable," he said.

Global emissions of fossil fuels have increased 49 percent since 1990 and reached a record of about 48 gigatonnes (billion tonnes) of CO2 in 2010 and likely 50 gigatonnes (Gt) of CO2 this year, he said. Thanks to the moderating affect of the oceans, the world has warmed only 0.8 degrees Celsius on average. However, many parts of the world are much warmer than that.

The science shows that global emissions need to fall to 44 Gt by 2020 and continue to decline by two percent per year, a rate that our fossil fuel-dependent world will find "extremely challenging" but still doable, he said.

If countries live up to their pledges made in Copenhagen global emissions are likely to rise nine to 11 Gt above the 44 Gt target creating an "emissions gap" that is quite considerable, said Niklas Höhne, Director Energy and Climate Policy of Ecofys, an energy consulting organisation.

The emissions gap can only be bridged with a combination of improving energy efficiency in all sectors, significant increase in



**Rush to a deal ...** negotiators are working to beat the end of COP17 deadline. NGOs hope it will mean a commitment to Kyoto.

**Pictures by: Tinus de Jager**

renewable energy including biomass power and shifting from coal to natural gas. The cost of making this shift is relatively low at 38 dollars a ton of CO2 avoided.

Wait until after 2020 and costs skyrocket. Every dollar not invested today to reduce emissions from the power sector will require an additional investment of 4.3 dollars after 2020 to compensate for all the additional emissions between now and then, said the

International Energy Agency in its "World Energy Outlook 2011" report.

Waiting till 2020 is "a risk we don't want to take," said Höhne.

Delegates here do understand all this, he believes.

"They don't act as if they understand," he said, referring to the lack of progress on a deal to substantially reduce emissions despite 17 years of negotiations.

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# Disculpe, ¿a cuánto tiene el CO2?

Para Ban, se necesita una combinación de recursos públicos y privados para combatir el cambio climático. **Fotografía: Kristin Palitza**



Por Kristin Palitza

**F**ijar un precio a las emisiones de dióxido de carbono (CO2) en todo el mundo es la clave para nutrir el Fondo Verde para el Clima (FVC), que financiará proyectos de adaptación al calentamiento planetario en los países del Sur.

A esta conclusión llegó el primer ministro de Noruega, Jens Stoltenberg, quien preside el grupo asesor de alto nivel de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) sobre financiamiento contra el cambio climático.

"Si puedes crear una amplia y más completa financiación del carbono, se podrán atraer más fondos privados", explicó.

Se habla de "financiamiento del carbono" cuando se establece un precio a las emisiones de CO2 u otros gases invernadero, causantes del calentamiento del planeta.

Según Stoltenberg, fijar un valor al dióxido de carbono tendría tres beneficios fundamentales: estimularía a la industria a reducir las liberaciones de gases contaminantes, contribuirá al desarrollo de tecnologías limpias para recortar emisiones y generaría ingresos, que podrían ser utilizados con fines gubernamentales pero también en acciones climáticas.

Ya varios países demostraron que los sistemas de comercio de carbono o los impuestos a las emisiones pueden ayudar a reducir la contaminación, a la vez que promueven el crecimiento económico, dijo Stoltenberg.

"La Unión Europea cuenta con un completo sistema de comercio de carbono y un régimen de emisiones. Australia acaba de crear un impuesto al carbono. China está fijando precios al carbono, y Sudáfrica

también quiere desarrollar un gravamen", indicó.

"Lo bueno de fijar un precio es que logra menos contaminación y más financiamiento", añadió.

En los últimos 10 días de la 17 Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático (COP 17), que se desarrolla hasta este viernes 9 en la oriental ciudad sudafricana de Durban, el tema de cómo obtener recursos para el FVC fue el protagonista.

La crisis global y las medidas nacionales de austeridad han reducido la disposición de los países ricos a comprometerse a llenar los cofres del fondo con dineros públicos.

"Las crisis financiera y de deuda, especialmente en Europa y en Estados Unidos, se han agravado. Por tanto, debemos procurar tanto financiamiento público como de fuentes privadas", subrayó Stoltenberg quien, como co-presidente del grupo asesor, presentó a la ONU un análisis proponiendo medidas para generar financiamiento a largo plazo.

"Nuestra primera conclusión es que constituye un reto, pero es viable movilizar 100.000 millones de dólares al año", dijo.

Stoltenberg aludía un acuerdo alcanzado en la COP 16, celebrada en la sudoriental ciudad mexicana de Cancún el año pasado, según el cual la financiación por vía rápida de 10 millones de dólares anuales entre 2010 y 2013 debía ser incrementada a 100.000 millones anuales para 2020.

"No tiene ningún sentido tener un fondo si no cuentas con dinero para él", señaló.

Por su parte, el secretario general de la ONU, Ban Ki-moon, coincidió en que las

metas de financiamiento de corto y largo plazo solo podrían alcanzarse a través de una combinación de recursos públicos y privados. Esto no significa que los gobiernos pierdan control político sobre los mecanismos de financiamiento del FVC, algo en lo que los países expresaban preocupación.

"Hay una variedad de posibles opciones de financiamiento, como los impuestos al carbono, al transporte, etcétera. Dependerá de cada país decidir qué regulaciones quiere implementar a nivel nacional", indicó Ban.

Sin embargo, no exoneró a los gobiernos del Norte.

"Los países industrializados deben mostrar liderazgo inyectando suficiente capital de inmediato", afirmó. "Es verdad que los gobiernos luchan con crisis, pero el cambio climático no es una opción, es un imperativo. Necesita un compromiso político unívoco y transparente", subrayó.

No habrá avance en la lucha contra el cambio climático sin más financiamiento, dijo por su parte el primer ministro de Etiopía, Meles Zenawi.

"Necesitamos crear una estructura de precios que atraiga al sector privado para invertir en el financiamiento del clima. Fijar precios al carbono enviará una señal al sector privado indicando que la tecnología verde es redituable", opinó Zenawi.

"La tecnología del futuro es verde. Hay una carrera. El que llega tarde quedará rezagado", añadió.

No obstante, expertos económicos dudan que los países industrializados tengan un verdadero interés en proveer fondos para la adaptación en el Sur.

"No necesitamos más informes, necesi-

tamos voluntad política", dijo el economista Nicholas Stern, consejero del gobierno de Gran Bretaña.

Cuando más rápido actúen los políticos, más barato les costará, coincidió el presidente de México, Felipe Calderón, presionando para que el FVC comience a funcionar antes de que termine la reunión en Durban.

"Una economía baja en carbono no sale barato. Costará cientos de millones de dólares al año, dependiendo de cuán rápido actuemos. Lo más pronto actuemos, menos nos costará", indicó.

Caio Koch-Weser, vicepresidente del Deutsche Bank, uno de los grupos bancarios más grandes del mundo, expresó su preocupación sobre el lento progreso para la creación del FVC. La industria está dispuesta a invertir en una economía verde, aseguró.

"Denos un precio para el carbono, denos una política confiable y el sector privado hará la mayor parte del trabajo. Ya hemos visto una gran vibración de parte de la comunidad empresarial en interacción con los gobiernos", dijo. "Por supuesto, todavía no a la escala y velocidad que necesitamos".

Koch-Weser además señaló que la actual crisis económica mundial presentaba una oportunidad para que los gobiernos y negocios se transformaran y encontraran nuevos motores de crecimiento.

Para poder recolectar 100.000 millones de dólares al año para 2020, con el fin de financiar la adaptación al cambio climático, "necesitamos nuevas asociaciones público-privadas que proveen marcos transparentes, seguros y de larga vida", dijo Koch-Weser.



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# “Looking for a Climate Champion”



**Roar for the climate** ... Members of the global TckTckTck campaign joined 2000 Durban students in creating the world's largest human lion on South Beach. Their goal was to urge leaders at COP 17 to have the courage to create a breakthrough agreement that will ensure a safe future for young Africans and people all over the world. The stars of the event were the more than 2000 students from Durban schools (Addington Primary, Hartley Primary, Wembley Primary, Vumukhule Primary, Embonini Primary, Tholisu Primary, Sawela Primary). TckTckTck Board Chairman and Greenpeace chief Kumi Naidoo attended and made a short speech, while international aerial artist John Quigley photographed the lion from a helicopter above Addington Beach. **Picture by: Shayne Robinson, Greenpeace, SpectralQ**

By Stephen Leahy

Civil society said negotiations are going backwards with no nation willing to step up and lead the way forward here at the United Nations climate change conference.

“No-one is a champion here. Who will step forward and call the other countries’ bluffs?” asked Tove Ryding of Greenpeace International.

Without that champion stepping forward in the next two and half days, “the world is heading to four degrees Celsius of warming while countries are playing a game of poker,” said Ryding.

“We are going backwards here. The EU put out a new mandate today that suggest a 10 year delay for increasing emissions reductions,” said Bobby Peek of Friends of the Earth South Africa.

“Corporate power is in charge here. Governments must act for the benefit of their people,” said Peek.

“There is still time to break the deadlock but need clear commitments from the members,” said Srinivas Krishnaswamy of the Climate Action Network – South Asia.

Big decisions at previous meetings were often made in the final hours, he noted.

China has made an “unprecedented” proposal to agree to binding commitments but the US and European Union are pretending this is nothing new, said Samantha Smith of WWF International.

China, as well other large developing nations, are waiting for the US and other developed countries to fulfill their promises made in the Bali (2008) and Copenhagen (2009) climate talks, Smith said.

But even those aren't good enough to ensure less than two degrees of warming. Greater emissions cuts are needed from the developed that current pledges. “The climate can't wait for that in 2020 as the US suggests.”

## End Climate Change Dictatorship

By Busani Bafana

The global financial crunch is not a reason to avoid climate-friendly investments that will help Africa's agriculture grow says former UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan.

“Global leaders are struggling with continuing financial turmoil, rising unemployment and increasing social tension,” Annan said at a panel discussion on climate-smart agriculture on the sidelines of COP 17 in Durban, South Africa.

Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) involves conservation agriculture: this would include crop rotation, agro forestry, better weather forecasting and integrated crop-livestock management. CSA is aimed at environmentally friendly increases in food production, thereby reducing carbon emissions from agriculture. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated emissions from farming to be at 14% of the world total in 2007.

Annan says world leaders cannot ignore the crises food production is facing through climate change. The former UN chief wants the developed world to own up the \$100 billion they pledged in Copenhagen for the Green Climate Fund in 2020.

“The financial crisis has shown the gravity of waiting for disaster to strike before taking action.”

According to the Action on Climate Smart Agriculture policy brief, compiled

by the African Union and South Africa's Ministry of Agriculture, food security, poverty and climate change should be seen as one entity in the fight against climate change.

South Africa's Minister of Agriculture, Tina Joemat-Pettersson, says transformation of African agriculture is key. Joemat-Pettersson, however, wants the equivalent of a political revolution to deal with climate change.

“We need alternative ideas to overthrow what is holding the continent and the globe at ransom,” said Joemat-Pettersson. “We must end this dictatorship of climate change. We want to make sure that we all have an action plan for CSA. We have done the talking and now is the time for us to pick up our axe, to pick up our spade and roll up our sleeves and do the work.”

The World Bank, which is working with African Union to reach target set in Maputo in 2003 of 10 percent of national budgets spent on agriculture, agreed that climate-smart farming needs greater attention to transform African agriculture.

Finally, adding to the climate-smart agriculture discussions, the Africa Union Commission Chairperson, Jean Ping, wants water management high on Africa's climate change agenda. “Let us not neglect water, water is an important resource ... we can eradicate famine with the management of water.”

# High stakes, low chance of success for vulnerable states



Amidst despair and poverty, women in some remote villages of Bangladesh are raising money and lending it to each other through a unique microfinance programme launched by a local non-government organisation.

Picture by: Naimul Haq

By Joshua Kyalimpa

Entire societies will be lost forever if we delay reaching a climate change agreement in Durban, warns Rezaul Karim Chowdhury of the Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust (COAST).

"Let us not be witness to that unfortunate happening. Extreme events beyond everybody's expectation are now observed more and more frequently and we know the consequence of that," Chowdhury said.

Governments of low-lying island states such as the Maldives, the Bahamas, or the Pacific nation of Kiribati say their very physical existence is threatened by sea level rise of one metre - anticipated to take place by 2100.

Chowdhury's home country, Bangladesh, is also caught in the crosshairs of global warming - rising temperatures and sea levels, changing weather patterns increasing catastrophic flooding from both swollen rivers and storm surges from intensifying monsoons will hit this low-lying, agriculture-dependent country full in the face.

A map produced by the United Nations Environment Programme shows that an area of this South Asian state that is home to 15 million people will be entirely submerged by a one-metre rise in sea levels. Long before then, increasing numbers of floods will erode riverbanks, and destroy homes, farms, roads and other infrastructure while taking longer to recede, hampering agriculture. Lingering floodwater will test public health systems wrestling with waterborne diseases.

The fears of Bangladesh and other low-lying states are an urgent reminder as the 18th Conference of Parties remains unlikely to agree on even a minimal programme of emissions reductions by developed countries - historically the worst polluters - or financial assistance for vulnerable developing nations.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon poured cold water on the talks yesterday [Dec. 6] when he told delegates that a global, legally-binding deal on climate change could well be

off the agenda for now. He blamed grave economic troubles in many countries for overshadowing the talks, which are now in their second week but little tangible progress before they conclude on Dec. 10.

South African Bishop Geoff Davies head of the Anglican Church compared rich countries' behaviour in Durban to apartheid, saying wealthy nations were trying to keep power and wealth for themselves. "Decision makers need to put the needs of people and the planet before profits."

***"Extreme events beyond everybody's expectation are now observed more and more frequently and we know the consequence of that."***

The parties remain sharply divided. Coastal states, small island nations and the Africa group are pushing for a second commitment by developed countries to reduce emissions to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The U.S. and Canada say any new commitment should be delayed until after 2020.

These two governments are also rejecting a legally-binding global agreement. Japan at one point threatened to pull out altogether.

The European Union has taken up a position somewhere in the middle, proposing a second commitment period to start somewhere around 2015. The EU also says this is on condition that other polluters - such as fast-growing China - are brought on board.

"We have committed under Kyoto and we have actually over achieved in the first commitment period," said Connie Hedegaard, the European Commissioner for Climate Action. "But Europe only accounts for 11 percent of global

emissions and that is why we are saying two things. We are ready to agree a second commitment period even though the family of countries who are ready to do so is shrinking; however we need reassurance that if we lay down a bridge to the future, then others will follow."

The Congolese chair of the Africa Group, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, says it's hard to understand why the developed countries are behaving as they are.

"They says they want rules on climate change, but they don't like the Kyoto Protocol. It's hard to comprehend. If you want the mango, then you have to like the mango tree also," he said. "If you want the carbon markets to continue, you must have robust transparent rules to continue - you have to keep the mango tree (binding emissions reduction agreements)."

He said the Africa Group is looking to the rich countries which have enjoyed a certain level of development at the cost of everyone's atmosphere to now show leadership on climate change.

"They have shown us economic leadership, they have shown us political leadership and sometimes even military leadership, so let's see them show us climate leadership."

The pessimism expressed by Secretary General Ban and COAST's Chowdhury hangs over the conference venue, but some - like Paul Mafabi, a negotiator from Uganda - say it was already foregone conclusion that a deal would not be struck because of the economic crisis gripping the biggest offenders.

It's perhaps worth remembering that small island and developing states are threatened not just by economic crisis, but by devastating and permanent disaster. And the real baseline demand of small island and developing states - measures to limit climate change to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and avoid devastating changes in these vulnerable states - is not even on the table.

# COMMUNITY media

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COP 17 / CMP 7 CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE DURBAN 2011

## Who really speaks for farmers?

By TerraViva Reporters

**G**lobal warming poses a threat to the livelihoods of millions of people who work the land; it is a critical issue for Africa's climate change agenda. Campaigners agree that changing weather patterns and higher temperatures could spell disaster, but they are arguing for two contrasting responses here at the U.N. climate conference in Durban.

Speakers at a Dec. 3 event titled Agriculture and Rural Development Day called for agriculture to be recognised with a formal work programme in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, to attract attention and funding for what is termed "climate smart" agriculture.

The key themes discussed included strengthening farmers' ability to cope with climate shocks, while reducing greenhouse emissions from agriculture and sustainably increasing productivity to meet growing global demand.

The event was attended by numerous researchers and academics, the World Food Programme and U.N. rural agency the International Fund for Agricultural Development, donors like the World Bank and the Rockefeller Foundation and organisations such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

### Rural Prosperity

Meeting future demand for food and securing rural prosperity, they argued, requires improving access to markets and agricultural research, the expanded use of inorganic fertiliser to build soil fertility, and credits for agricultural practices that would trap carbon in soil and biomass.

Farmers were represented too, by people such as Stephen Muchiri, of the East African Federation of Farmers. "We want a fixed programme on agriculture. That will open up other possibilities," he said.

Two days later, land and agrarian reform activists struck a very different tone as they marched

in support of "food sovereignty". This group, led by the global smallholder farmer group La Via Campesina, also recognises the need to reduce emissions and design adaptations to contain the threat posed to agriculture by climate change, but argues that the most vulnerable farmers (and the world's supply of food) also face a threat from the way the economy and land ownership are set up around the world.

### Climate Shocks

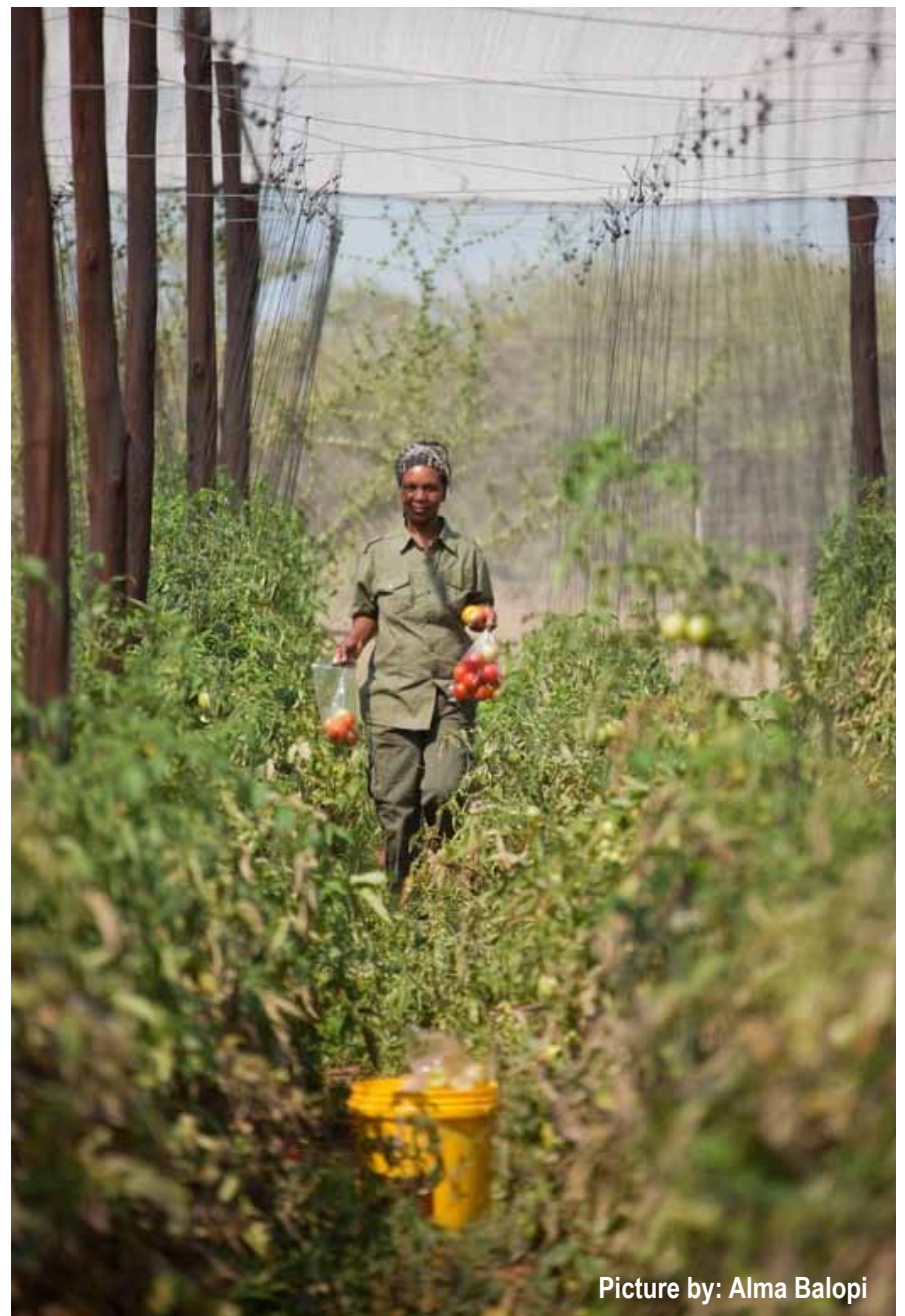
They say large corporations that dominate the production of seed and fertiliser, and in many cases determine the prices food and cash crops fetch are as much of a problem for small farmers as increasing climate shocks. They reject the use of chemical fertiliser or proprietary seed to boost productivity, preferring organic fertiliser and water-saving techniques such as permaculture.

For these campaigners, the key is to prevent agriculture and food production from being further dominated by business principles and big business. They are firmly against any attempts to set up a system to pay farmers to sequester carbon.

"We do not want agriculture in the negotiations because that will make it a business," Via Campesina organiser Boavenjura Monjane told TerraViva, referring to the efforts to get carbon credits for farmers. "We farm to feed people - not for business. If agriculture is included, it will kill small-scale farmers because they will start using methods (simply) to increase carbon credits."

They want to see measures that would give small farmers more independent control: control over their seed, control over their land, control over their wages and working conditions.

What Monjane wants from the 17th Conference of the Parties is a fresh commitment from developed countries to reduce emissions. "If there can be a treaty to influence the bloc to commit to reducing emissions. No second Kyoto



Picture by: Alma Balopi

***"We want a fixed programme on agriculture. That will open up other possibilities."***

Protocol without a commitment to reduce emissions by at least 50 percent."

Muchiri, of the EAFF, does not see the Via Campesina approach as feasible. "One hundred percent organic farming is not 100 percent sustainable. If we want to increase output and meet food demands, we have to embrace different ways of improving our farming methods. Otherwise we will end up importing our food."

He and others at Agriculture Day say meeting future demand for food and securing rural prosperity requires improving access to markets and agricultural research, the expanded use of inorganic fertiliser to build soil fertility, and credits for agricultural practices

that would trap carbon in soil and biomass.

They are optimistic that their calls will be heeded. With influential international organisations backing them, and South Africa's Agriculture Minister, Tina Joemat-Peterson, among the high profile spokespersons pushing their agenda, they hope to make a mark in the conference's final declaration.

Monjane is somewhat more pessimistic. "We do not believe in the COP. For 20 years leaders have been meeting but nothing has changed. COP is a place where government and corporate meet to use public funds and do business.

"Why must we believe in it?"

# Cape Town Stand, What's next?



The Cape Town stand at COP17, Durban, South Africa

By Ramatamo wa Matamong and Joseph Bushby

After winning the award for best stand at the exposition outside the climate conference, Cape Town's striking entry is continuing to score big in terms of the number of visitors per day.

Outside the distinctive building, constructed of green and black milk crates and recycled wood, there is a solar-powered stove putting the Durban sun's rays to good use boiling water and cooking meals. Groups of visiting school children circle the perimeter, exclaiming over the lettuce and spinach growing in recycled two-litre bottles.

The building's design keeps the interior cool without the use of electricity-hungry air conditioners, and members of Cape Town's ClimateSmart team are taking advantage to discuss how to carry the project forward.

Cape Town's stand won top prize after assessment by a panel of four

judges drawn from various environmental organisations.

"ClimateSmart deserved this acknowledgement as they were harnessing all the power needed for their stand through a wind turbine and solar panels," said judge Pippa Walker, from the Event Greening Forum.

"They also used plastic bottles and crates to build the walls and the roof of their stand (an innovative example of how one can recycle materials). They did so with no need for sophisticated air conditioning."

But the team responsible is not resting on its laurels.

"Honestly, the work doesn't end here," says Stephen Granger, Green Campaign Manager for the City of Cape Town. "We didn't build the four walls where we meet the people, but the stand that could tell the message." Stephen Lamb, who built and co-

designed the stand agrees. "The most important thing is to think about poor people, those who are most affected. The stand can become a creator of climate jobs. In building the stand, we employed and transferred skills to local people. We've also used local material," he said.

"With the support and a mandate from the government, we would like them to try and apply this. It cost literally nothing.

"It comes from the Mother Nature with love. The scaffolding is the only material that is not natural. This can be converted into a day care centre, an environmental centre or a mobile clinic of some sort."

Lamb said there has been interest from the office of the mayor in Cape Town which should ensure the stand's life extends beyond its exhibition at the conference.

## Green Talk



## High school kids show the way

Some very enthusiastic and excited teachers and environmentally aware students fresh from completing their year-end exams visited the U.N. climate conference this week.

The group came from at Zwelibanzi High School in Umlazi just outside Durban, a township ravaged by poverty and unemployment and a high incidence of AIDS.

TerraViva spoke to teachers Zonke Msholo, Zarro Mbatha and Busi Ngwenya who seemed as delighted as their young charges as they toured exhibitions and activities at the climate conference.

**Q: How has your school involved learners to participate in environmental issues on a practical level?**

A: We have many single household families in Umlazi, but also many child-headed families, and they are all going through difficult economic times. So food garden projects become very important as a source of cheap food for our communities.

Learners are centrally involved in planting and caring for these gardens. Despite many challenges, they have proven to be very dedicated and enthusiastic about the gardens.

We have integrated environmental awareness in our school programme and curriculum, in subjects like social science, natural science and life orientation. But we will definitely also take the knowledge and materials we have gathered here and apply them in our teaching.

**Q: What are the challenges?**

A: I would say it's maintaining interest from parents and the community, but even that is improving. The school is really a second home for many of our learners. But poverty and malnutrition are made worse by AIDS and the cost of HIV to families.

**Q: What support do you receive from the education department?**

A: The department has encouraged our initiative, but of course more can be done. They provide the feeding scheme which our food gardens supplement.

**Q: How many of your learners do you think will consider environmental jobs as a career option?**

A: Well, many of them already have an interest in the area of science. We must wait and see...



# Changing climate impacting life in the Sahel

By Happy Ntsanwisi

**A** just-published study of trends in temperature, rainfall, droughts and flooding in the Sahel region of West Africa over the past 40 years provides further evidence of the threat posed by climate.

New evidence of a changing climate in the Sahel - a semi-arid savannah that stretches across West Africa from Senegal in the west to Chad in the east - has major implications for food security and regional stability.

"In the 1970s and 1980s, the Sahel suffered devastating droughts and famine that killed thousands people and forced hundreds of thousands to migrate elsewhere," says researcher Jakob Rhyner from the United Nations University.

The report, titled "Livelihood Security: Climate Change, Migration and Conflict in the Sahel", was released at the U.N. climate conference in Durban, South Africa, and adds to the pressure to reach a new international agreement to limit global warming as well as adapt to the changes that it is already too late to prevent.

The research is a joint effort by the U.N. Environment Programme, the U.N. office of the Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs, U.N. University, the International Organization for Migration, and the permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, with technical input from the University of Salzburg's Centre for Geoinformatics.

The study looked at regional trends in temperature, rainfall, droughts and flooding over the past 40 years and their implications for the availability of natural resources, sustainability of livelihoods, and increased migration and conflicts in 17 West African countries

The trends show significant changes in climatic conditions between 1970 and 2006, including an overall rise in temperature of approximately one degree, with the far eastern



Jakob Rhyner

parts of Chad and the northern parts of Mali and Mauritania warming by between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius.

The report identified 19 "climate hotspots" where changes have been the most severe, including sites far inland in Niger and Chad and coastal regions of Togo and Benin.

The report's authors say the consequences can be seen in the loss of livestock and crops due to drought leading to not only higher food prices, but migration of farmers to



A Darfuri woman outside a refugee camp in Eastern Chad. Picture by: Anne Holmes

find new opportunities. The changes have also increased conflict linked to competition for water and land among fishermen and farmers.

In their recommendations, the researchers said it would be important to follow-up by monitoring livelihoods throughout the region: keeping a close watch on changes in the availability of resources and any linked migration and conflict. Systematic data collection and early warning mechanisms will also be important.

They called for support for smallholder farmers, including tips for farming in the new conditions and assistance to expand production of valuable organic cash crops for export. It may also be essential to introduce new crops that

can withstand harsh climates.

Speaking to TerraViva separately, Nick Nuttal, from the United Nations Environment Programme, agreed. "Across the world, it is important that the right kind of crops are planted."

Alongside support for agriculture, the researchers urge investing in renewable energy sources can create jobs and income for farmers and herders; building and maintaining solar installations for instance, to supplement their income.

They also warned that programmes must take care not to reinforce existing gender or ethnic inequalities, but should involve local participation and perspectives to reach the most vulnerable.

## Green Talk

# A view from the streets...

It has been two weeks since the City of Durban went green with delegates arriving from all over the world. However, while Durbanites are proud that their city is hosting such a prestigious meeting, many seem unaware of what is happening at the United Nations Framework for Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC). We spoke to the people of Durban and asked them what they thought about COP17, climate change and global warming.



**John Moolman (55)** is a private security guard in the city. He says he has no idea what COP17 is about "but I hear people talking on radio ... I cannot say I have benefitted but I have a hope that I will - maybe in the near future, but not now."



**Mvuyi Dlamini (18)** says he has been following COP17 on TV as well as at school where they have read about it and taken part in recycling programmes: "I have heard that many countries are willing to sign an agreement except the US."



**Mphuthumi Mgcwazi (42)** is a security guard who says he has seen people coming to the city of Durban to discuss climate change: "That is what I know and I have benefitted because we have worked long hours beefing up the security."



**David Zangina (43)** of Kleinmond is a gardener who says he knows what COP17 is about: "I know a few things about COP17 because it has been advertised all over but to me personally, I have not benefitted at all. I was hoping for a better job."



# Planting a Future

By Khanyi Xulu

“One mosquito can't do anything against a rhino, but a thousand mosquitos together can make a rhino change its direction,” said Kjell Kuhne of Global Plan Foundation under the Plant For The Planet Academy.

The academy has been doing many workshops in and around Durban, including in townships such as Inanda and Chatsworth, where they have been working at primary schools and other public institutions to expose children to be aware of the environment.

Their aim is to expose children to what the future might hold for them so that they can become more environmentally conscious and fight for their future.

Plant For The Planet Academy has been explaining to children what climate change is, how it is caused and what they can do to slow it down. Planting trees is an important part of this process.

Once the children have completed the course, they become “climate change ambassadors” said Khune. As such, they are also allowed to be voted onto the board.

“Worldwide, we are already active in over 100 countries. We want to have empowered one million children in about 20 000 academies to become Climate Justice Ambassadors by 2020. As a large network of global citizens, we can change the world,” he said.

**Climate justice ambassadors ...** Children plant trees while the adults negotiate at COP17. **Picture by: Khanyi Xulu**



## Climate Justice Film Festival

By Andre Marais

In between all the very important meetings, debates and protest marches at COP17 in Durban, South Africa, you could take time out to watch some of the most powerful and hard-hitting cinema on climate and social justice from across the world.

Coinciding with COP17 is the Tri-Continental Film Festival entitled “Climate Justice/Celebrate Humanity” which is being held at different venues all over Durban.

The festival combines workshops and screenings with a choice of 24 films dealing with a range of issues related to environmental struggles and climate change.

“Part of the motivation for organising the festival at COP17 facilitate discussion around these concerns,” says Rehad Desai one of the key organisers of the event.

Desai's own film “Weather Gods” was also shown at the festival.

It is a documentary which deals with the impact of climate change on subsistence agriculture and looks at the experience of three communities in South Africa, Mali and Kenya.

### Similar Struggles

An audience consisting of mainly rural women from The Rural Women's Assembly filled a large tent at one of the screenings.

It is amazing how similar our struggles are,” said Gloria Dube from Limpopo Province, South Africa, after watching the film.

Another popular film was director Fanny Armstrong's futuristic documentary “The Age of Stupid” starring the late British actor Peter Postlewaite as a man living in the devastated world of 2055 and posing the question: “Why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?” This particular screening, held at the Bat Centre in downtown Durban, was jam packed with predominantly university students that missed a screening earlier the week held at the campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal.

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Community media coverage of COP 17 is being supported by the Media Development & Diversity Agency of South Africa, which is promoting the participation of local journalists through a programme of training and reporting on Climate Change.

For more community media coverage of COP 17, go to:  
<http://www.ips.org/TV/cop17/category/community-media/>

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# Counting Down ...



Some 30 000 people from 194 countries are in Durban to plan and hopefully agree on the steps needed to fight global climate change. Today is the last day of the negotiations and it seems as if the developed world has dug in its heels, shooting down hopes for further agreements here. NGOs and concerned citizens are trying to make their voices heard in the port city, but very few protests have been allowed close to the ICC.

Pictures by: Zukiswa Zimela





# Pas d'agriculture, pas d'accord

By Busani Bafana

**E**ffatah Jele, une productrice de lait en Zambie, en Afrique australe, ne croit pas en un hasard agricole, mais au pragmatisme à cause des changements climatiques.

"On devrait enseigner aux fermiers les bonnes pratiques agricoles au lieu d'imputer tout aux changements climatiques", a déclaré Jele, qui dirige une ferme laitière dans la province de Luanshya Cooperbelt, en Zambie, et est la vice-présidente de la 'Dairy Association' (Association des producteurs de lait).

"Les changements sont là, sans doute, mais il est également important pour les agriculteurs de disposer des bonnes pratiques agricoles pour résister à ces changements. Par exemple, certaines femmes produisent des légumes et, à cause de l'ignorance, creusent le sol jusqu'au bord du fleuve. Ensuite, quand il pleut, tout le sable est entraîné dans le fleuve et après quelques années, le flot devient peu profond. Et certaines personnes affirment que c'est à cause des changements climatiques".

Jele a indiqué que les changements dans les conditions météorologiques présentent de graves implications pour des fermiers, comme elle, qui dépendent des ressources en eau de plus en plus rares pour garder un troupeau laitier viable. Les producteurs de cultures, a-t-elle dit, sont moins bien lotis, sauf si la science et des idées pratiques viennent au secours.

"Je pense que nos scientifiques devraient aller vers les agriculteurs pour leur parler et leur faire comprendre la différence entre les changements climatiques et les problèmes auto-infligés à travers l'utilisation des mauvaises méthodes agricoles. Cela est important, parce que, autrement, nous ne

trouverons pas des solutions qui assureront la sécurité alimentaire", a déclaré Jele.

"Certaines des choses que nous imputons aux changements climatiques relèvent de l'incapacité de notre part, en tant que fermiers, à faire la bonne chose au bon moment. Parce qu'il y a une chanson sur les changements climatiques; nous chantons tous 'changements climatiques, changements climatiques', a affirmé Jele.

Les craintes par rapport aux effets des changements climatiques sur l'agriculture africaine sont réelles et en Afrique australe, les fermiers sont en train de prendre des mesures pour s'assurer que les négociateurs à la 17ème Conférence des parties (COP 17) à Durban comprennent le message.

La 'Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions' (Confédération des syndicats agricoles d'Afrique australe - SACAU) – qui a obtenu le statut d'observateur à la session de la Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques (CCNUCC) - veut que les négociations mondiales mettent fermement l'agriculture sur l'agenda des changements climatiques et établissent un programme de travail qui présentera et coordonnera des réponses nécessaires, telles qu'une allocation spécifique au secteur dans le cadre du Fonds vert pour le climat.

Des initiatives intelligentes face au climat, telles que l'agriculture de conserva-

tion, la récolte de l'eau, permettront non seulement aux fermiers de faire face aux conditions météorologiques extrêmes, mais aussi de s'assurer qu'ils réduisent les émissions de carbone. Selon des scientifiques, l'agriculture est responsable de 15 à 30 pour cent des émissions mondiales de gaz à effet de serre, telles que le dioxyde de carbone, qui influence la température de la terre.

Les agriculteurs font campagne pour un accord qui comprend spécifiquement l'agriculture, qui sera fortement touchée par les changements climatiques en termes de baisse de rendements agricoles et de la faiblesse de la productivité. Pour eux, les termes 'productif', 'durable' et 'fermes' constituent l'assurance contre les risques des changements climatiques.

Notant les liens étroits qui existent entre les défis de la lutte contre les changements climatiques et le fait de nourrir une population mondiale croissante, Kanayo Nwanze, le président du Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA), doit demander à la COP 17 de se concentrer

sur l'aide à accorder à un demi-milliard de petits fermiers dans les pays en développement pour qu'ils produisent plus de nourriture d'une façon écologiquement durable.

Selon une étude menée par le Groupe consultatif pour la recherche agricole internationale, les changements climatiques feront baisser la productivité agricole, avec des projections d'une hausse des tempéra-

tures et d'une augmentation des sécheresses et des inondations, qui changeraient les saisons agricoles et entraîneraient une baisse des récoltes.

"Nos attentes en tant que fermiers d'Afrique australe, c'est que l'agriculture soit incluse dans le texte qui sera adopté à la fin de la COP 17 à Durban", a souligné Stéphanie Aubin, chargée du développement des politiques à la SACAU.

"L'agriculture doit être incluse dans le texte spécifique afin qu'il existe un fonds particulier et une action spécifique qui soient mis en œuvre".

Un projet de texte a été discuté et négocié au cours des réunions des COP passées, à Copenhague et à Cancun, mais a été abandonné parce que l'agriculture a été mise dans la même catégorie que les combustibles de soufre.

"Il est important que l'agriculture bénéficie d'un traitement spécial lors des négociations de la CCNUCC parce qu'elle est spéciale en termes de moyens de subsistance pour des millions de personnes en Afrique et de sécurité alimentaire pour la planète, et c'est le secteur le plus sensible au climat qui peut en même temps contribuer aux efforts d'adaptation et d'atténuation", a expliqué Aubin.

"Nous voulons un chapitre spécifique sur l'agriculture dans le texte et une action à long terme, puisque cela déblocquera le financement dont le secteur agricole a besoin en Afrique pour répondre efficacement aux changements climatiques".

Aubin était optimiste qu'avec la COP 17 qui est organisée actuellement en Afrique, les gouvernements africains feront l'effort nécessaire pour faire pression afin que l'agriculture soit incluse dans le texte final.



Effatah Jele



Fishermen in the oil-refining municipality of Carirubana, Venezuela. Picture by: Yanethe Gamboa

# Water Needs Commitment

Joshua Kyalimpa Interviews JOAO SAMUEL CAHOLO, Deputy Executive Secretary, Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has devised a plan to mainstream water resources management. On the sidelines of the U.N. climate change conference taking place in Durban, there have been efforts to establish water as an agenda item in its own right in climate change negotiations.

Water experts say this will lead to greater focus on developing policy, and attract more resources into the water sector through adaptation programmes. Joshua Kyalimpa spoke to SADC's Joao Samuel Caholo on why water is important at COP17.

**Q: SADC has been part of efforts to get water into the United Nations on the agenda of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - thus far without success.**

A: Questions of climate change are matters of global

responsibility, so we shall continue with the issue. There is the Rio+20 conference next year, there is also COP 18 next year: we should continue to discuss within our constituencies and plan for how the issues of water can be brought to the larger agenda of climate change.

**Q: What is SADC's next step?**

A: We already have political consensus, enshrined in the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses, so the political commitment in SADC is already there. The next step is for us to establish real institutions to address the issues at the national level and also



Joao Samuel Caholo

develop transboundary water resources.

**Q: But how are you going to achieve this when water is not mainstreamed? Where will you get the financial resources to have develop water resources?**

A: For us, money is not actually the issue. It's a question of a commitment to implement what we have agreed upon, because money can be found in different ways.

It can come from various international sources, but also it can come from our own treasuries and SADC has best practices in this regard.

**Q: What are you doing to raise the general awareness of water issues in the region?**

A: As SADC, we have the protocol which recognises the need for transboundary water resources to be managed jointly.

That programme is being implemented. I don't want to say that SADC is singling out just one issue with water, but we are confident it will be accorded due attention in future negotiations.



Picture by: Stephen de Tarczynski

## What role for Old King Coal?

By Busani Bafana

Coal currently fuels 40 percent of global electricity needs, according to the World Coal Association, which argues there is a place for the abundantly available fuel even in a future with reduced emissions.

"Just as there are some bad examples of coal, there are good ones as there are many governments around the world that want to use coal in a way to fuel their economic growth and alleviate poverty," WCA CEO Milton Catelin told a side event on the role of coal in climate change at the 17th Conference of Parties in Durban.

"The trick from a policy and activity perspective is how do you make companies and governments that mine the coal to gasify it in a way that is environmentally sustainable."

According to Catelin, the world has an estimated 984 billion tonnes of proven reserves of coal, but environmentalists have argued that coal should be done away with as energy source because it pollutes the environment.

The current negotiations for a new agreement on climate change hinge on cutting global emissions. The Coal Industry Advisory Board – a group of high level executives which advises the International Energy Agency – says coal is responsible for more than 40 percent of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions worldwide.

Speaking at the same side event in Durban, Norman Mbazima, CEO of mining giant Anglo American, said coal companies support cleaner use of coal. One way to achieve this is to improve the efficiency of coal plants in the world.

"The biggest contribution to emissions reduction comes from efficiency. We must all have more efficient cars, more efficient ships and more efficient planes, but most importantly more efficient coal-powered power plants," said Mbazima.

Carbon capture and storage is also being touted as a way to save coal's dirty face. The concept involves capturing, compressing and storage of carbon emissions from generating plants, preventing them from entering the atmosphere and contributing to global warming. CCS has been identified by the coal industry as a key technology that could help it cut greenhouse gas emissions from burning coal, but it has not yet been demonstrated to be effective. Critics say even if the technique is developed and commercialised, it will likely prove to

be prohibitively expensive.

Mbazima told the side meeting that 1.4 billion people in the world still lack access to electricity – 600 million of those in sub-Saharan Africa. He said coal was the answer to providing electricity to these people because it was plentiful and cheap even though it was not clean.

The WCA argues that if current coal-powered plants were replaced with more efficient plants, greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by six percent. Carbon capture would enable further reductions.

But environmentalists say coal has no place in cleaner, greener future – or in the climate change mitigation agenda.

"We see coal as an unacceptable energy resource because of the extreme impacts it has on human health," said Cesia Kearns, campaign organiser for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign.

"We need to act now and the negotiators at COP17 need to pay attention to the conversation happening outside the venue and remember how much the weight their decisions will have on people from all nations who are bearing the burden of climate change. They need to get us quickly onto the path of doing away with coal and fossil fuel industries that have created the problem of climate change."

Kearns said there are numerous alternatives to coal. Africa has abundant in solar and wind resources that should lead the way for green energy.

Jennifer Morgan, Director of Climate and Energy programme at environmental think-tank the World Resources Institute, says the argument about universal energy access depending on electricity from coal-fired plants has no basis.

Taking India as an example, she said the reason more than 400 million of people have no access to electricity is not so much the cost of expanding generation, as it is that urban areas, and industries in particular are prioritised for electricity supply – and in some cases sold power at very low prices, the government depriving itself of resources for rural electrification.

"We do not have time to act as if we have a lot of the atmosphere left," Morgan warned. Her institute is crafting a policy framework for renewable energy and energy efficiency to help in promoting the development of renewable energy sources.

## No electric cars in the developing world, yet

There are two 100% electric cars on display at the ICC in Durban but when the negotiations are over, the cars won't be on African roads ... just yet. Tinus de Jager bumped into the Xavier Gobille, managing director of Renault South Africa and asked him about electric cars and the developing world.

**Q: Do you actually have plans to distribute electric cars in the developing world?**

**A:** I would like to say that an electrical car is not only a product. There is a market and there is also infrastructure that is needed. In order to make the product successful, there are many parties that need to become part of bringing an electric car to any part of the world. These will include environmental groups, government, and manufacturers. Renault and Nissan have already signed between 80 and 100 contracts with stakeholders. The question is: what will the government do to bring the cars into the developed world. Of course, Renault and Nissan, if there is agreement from the governments, are ready to start producing and bringing in these cars already. We already have five factories ready to produce the electrical cars.

**Q: Can these cars be built in the developing world?**

**A:** It will be built in the developed world. This is because the infrastructure is already in place in the developed world. But another big reason is the market. There is simply not a big enough demand for

electric cars in the developing world. The market for electric cars in South Africa is about 400 000. If you take 10 percent of that, it leaves you with not many cars to produce.

**Q: Some very negative comments are doing the rounds with hybrid vehicles that are on the roads already. Some people are saying that the emissions during the manufacturing process are so high, that it actually does not make sense to manufacture these so-called green cars. Are you looking at ways to make the process more climate-friendly?**

**A:** We did of course study everything before we started building these cars. But, at the moment, I think we are on the verge of a shift in the industry. If we want to change the carbon emissions from transport (I think cars make up around 12% of these), something has to be done. I think the electrical vehicle is a solution for stakeholders, not only for consumers, to find a solution to the problems we are facing today and to save some cities from pollution. After this shift it will be far easier to capture the emissions that we are faced with today. Sure, some emissions do happen in the manufacturing of the electric cars and the electricity that they are using as an energy source. But the emissions are created at a single point ... much different from cars. And therefore it would be much easier to capture the CO2 emissions at that point ... easier in any case than trying to capture emissions from moving vehicles.



The Renault electric cars on display at the ICC in Durban. The Renault sells for 26 000 euro. An overnight charge should give you about 185km on the battery. Picture by: Tinus de Jager