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Copenhagen: `Imperial' climate deal rejected by poor-country delegates

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December 18, 2009 — Speaking on behalf of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela took the floor at the plenary of the COP15 climate talks in Copenhagen to denounce the final deal'' that was soon to emerge and be imposed on the majority poor-country delegates, and which would fall far short of their demands. Chavez accused US President Barack Obama of behaving like an emperor "who comes in during the middle of the night ... and cooks up a document that we will not accept, we will never accept". Chávez declared that "all countries are equal". He would not accept that some countries had prepared a text for a climate deal and just "slipped [it] under the door" to be signed by the others. He accused them of "a real lack of transparency". "We can't wait any longer, we are leaving ... We are leaving, knowing that it wasn't possible getting a deal," he said. Evo Morales, the president of Bolivia, also took the floor to express annoyance at the way a climate deal was being thrashed out by a small group of world leaders at the last minute. "If there is no agreement at this level, why not tell the people?", he said at the plenary meeting . He called for further consultations with the people. "Who is responsible?", Morales he asked. Concluding that "the responsibility lies on the capitalist system -- we have to change the capitalist system". {{Sham deal}} The so-called "Copenhagen Accord" was pushed by the US and Australia, and sealed in meetings behind closed doors with the leaders of China, India, Brazil and South Africa. It was announced by Obama late on the evening of December 18, and presented as final'' even before the COP15 delegates had a chance to vote on it. It does not commit governments to interim 2020 carbon emissions-reduction targets, or to legally binding reductions and only expresses a general aim of limiting the global warming increase to 2 degrees Celcius — well above the 1 degree C-1.5 degree C target most delegations were calling for.

Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping, delegation head of the G77 group of developing countries, rejected the accord and vowed to fight it. "Obama, acting the way he did, definitely established that there's no difference between him and the Bush tradition", he told Time magazine.

Nnimmo Bassey, prominent Nigerian environmentalist and chair of Friends of the Earth International, described Copenhagen as "an abject failure". "Justice has not been done. By delaying action, rich countries have condemned millions of the world's poorest people to hunger, suffering and loss of life as climate change accelerates. The blame for this disastrous outcome is squarely on the developed nations. We are disgusted by the failure of rich countries to commit to the emissions reductions they know are needed, especially the US, which is the world's largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases." In contrast African nations, China and others in the developing world deserve praise for their progressive positions and constructive approach. Major developing countries cannot be blamed for the failure of rich industrialised countries.

"Instead of committing to deep cuts in emissions and putting new, public money on the table to help solve the climate crisis, rich countries have bullied developing nations to accept far less. Those most responsible for putting the planet in this mess have not shown the guts required to fix it and have instead acted to protect short-term political interests."

'Real leadership' on the streets

"The only real leadership at the conference has come from the hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who've come together to demand strong action to prevent climate catastrophe. Their voices are loud and growing - and Friends of the Earth International will continue to be part of the fight for climate justice."

Greenpeace criticised the accord for not having "targets for carbon cuts and no agreement on a legally binding treaty". Oxfam International called the deal "a triumph of spin over substance. It recognises the need to keep warming below two degrees but does not commit to do so. It kicks back the decisions on emissions cuts and fudges the issue of climate cash."

The accord'' confirms the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Developed countries commit collectively to providing US\$30 billion in new, additional funding for developing countries for the 2010-2012 period. It also says developed countries support "a goal of mobilising jointly 100 billion dollars a year" by 2020 from a variety of sources. Erich Pica, president of the Friends of the Earth (USA), said that the "climate negotiations in Copenhagen have yielded a sham agreement with no real requirements for any countries. This is not a strong deal or a just one -- it isn't even a real one. It's just repackaging old positions and pretending they're new. The actions it suggests for the rich countries that caused the climate crisis are extraordinarily inadequate. This is a disastrous outcome for people around the world who face increasingly dire impacts from a destabilising climate... "With the future of all humans on this planet at stake, rich countries must muster far more political will than they exhibited here. If they do not, small island states will become submerged, people in vulnerable communities across the globe will be afflicted with hunger and disease, and wars over access to food and water will rage. "The devastation will extend to those of us who live in wealthy countries'', said Pica. "The failure to produce anything meaningful in Copenhagen must serve as a wake up call to all who care about the future. It is a call to action. Corporate polluters and other special interests have such overwhelming influence that rich country governments are willing to agree only to fig leaf solutions. This is unacceptable, and it must change. "Fortunately, while the cost of solving the climate crisis rises each day we fail to act, the crisis remains one that can largely be averted. It is up to the citizens of the world -- especially citizens of the United States, which has so impeded progress -- to mobilise and ensure that true solutions carry the day. I firmly believe that together, we can still achieve a politics in which climate justice prevails." ----- {{{Rich countries blackmailing poor to sign onto flawed, unjust `accord'}}} December 19, 2009 -- Friends of the Earth International -- On the day that the UN Climate talks officially closed, Friends of the Earth International warned against the false conclusion that the UN Climate Conference has adopted the "Copenhagen Accord''. The Copenhagen Accord announced on December 18 by US President Barack Obama was not adopted by delegates to the United Nations

climate conference here. Instead, delegates merely "noted" the agreement's existence, giving it no force whatsoever. Today rich countries led by the United States are pressuring poorer nations to ditch the UN process and sign onto the Copenhagen Accord. They are threatening poor nations that refuse to sign on with the loss of their share of the US\$100 billion that rich countries have pledged to compensate for climate impacts the rich countries themselves have caused. UN officials are struggling to figure out what the accord even means and how it's related to the UN process, but what's clear is that it was not approved by the 192 countries that are members of the UNFCCC. By signing onto the accord, poor countries risk displacing the legitimate negotiation process taking place under the auspices of the UN. The US is so desperate to claim a Copenhagen success that it is now attempting to destroy the existing climate process and sideline 20 years of real multilateral negotiation. Nnimmo Bassey, Friends of the Earth International chairperson, said: {"First the US came to Copenhagen with nothing new to offer, and now it's trying to package the weak, flawed, unjust 'Copenhagen Accord' as a replacement for the UN process -- and arm-twist poor countries into signing on. President Bush ignored the UN process, now President Obama risks to torpedo it. Countries seeking a just and effective solution to climate change should not sign this illegitimate and distracting Copenhagen Accord". They should instead ensure a rapid return to the formal UN process to achieve a fair, strong and legally binding agreement as soon as possible within the next year.

Developing countries have shown real leadership in Copenhagen and must not give up the UNFCCC for the "Copenhagen Accord".
