

People's Protocol on Climate Change (Draft)

Monday 14 January 2008, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 10 December 2007).

"Climate and Capitalism" editor's note: The document below seems to be a worthwhile initiative, but we have been unable to learn much about its authors and origins. Can any reader of Climate and Capitalism provide more background?

According to the limited information we've found on the web, it was adopted on December 10 at a meeting in Sumer Klampok, Indonesia. The organizers say they will seek input from people around the world, and present a final draft for adoption at a People's Assembly in Poznan, Poland in 2008 during the 4th meeting of parties of the Kyoto Protocol. [1]

There is an online petition in support of the People's Protocol at <http://www.petitiononline.com/ppcc/petition.html>

Preamble

The planet is experiencing a climate crisis of catastrophic proportions. Drastic action is required to reverse the situation. Global temperatures have increased twice as fast in the last 50 years as over the last century and will rise even faster in the coming decades. Eleven of the last twelve years (1995-2006) are among the 12 warmest years on record. This is disrupting weather patterns, severely damaging the environment, and destroying lives and livelihoods - especially of the poorest and most vulnerable.

This dangerous climatic change is driven by the unprecedented increase in human-generated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The most dangerous increase is in CO₂ emissions from the ever-mounting burning of fossil fuels for industry, commerce, transport and militarism. The planet's capacity to process these emissions has also been crippled by widespread deforestation. As a result, the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere is now far higher than its natural range over the last 650,000 years. Concentrations of methane and nitrous oxide, again caused by human industry and agriculture have also increased dramatically and are also implicated in causing global warming.

Climate Change will be universally adverse for the world's people with greater and more frequent extremes of heat and rainfall patterns as well as tropical cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes. Africa, Asia and Latin America face shorter growing seasons, lower yields, lost or deteriorated agricultural land, decreased agricultural production and freshwater shortages. Droughts in Africa will bring widespread hunger and famine. Asia is already confronting flooding, avalanches and landslides, which will increase illness and death. In Latin America, higher temperatures and reduced biodiversity in tropical forests will devastate indigenous communities. Globally, rising sea levels will flood low-lying areas, increased storm surges will threaten coastal communities, and warmer sea waters will diminish fish stocks.

The last centuries have been heralded for great strides in technology, production and human progress - but these advances have precipitated global ecological and development disasters. On one hand a privileged global elite engages in reckless profit-driven production and grossly excessive

consumption. On the other hand, the mass of humanity is mired in underdevelopment and poverty with merely survival and subsistence consumption, or even less. The world's largest transnational corporations (TNCs) based mainly in the Northern countries and with expanding operations in the South, have long been at the forefront of these excesses. Indeed the powerful industrialized nations of today were built on the severe exploitation of the human and natural resources of the global South. The pursuit of growth and profit is at the core of exploitation, structural poverty and global warming.

There have already been high-profile schemes for concerted action and co-operation to combat global warming. This includes the landmark 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the succeeding Kyoto Agreement. Yet the problem has not been stemmed or much less reversed, indeed it has worsened as the limited targets and timelines set by the Kyoto Protocol have made no headway. Importantly, the Kyoto Protocol does not decisively acknowledge the real roots of climate change - globalization and the mad pursuit of TNCs for profits. Instead, Kyoto has diminished responsibility and accountability for the climate crisis through the marketization of energy resources and supply. The offsets and emissions trading system transfers adjustment costs from rich to poor, creates new dependencies, rewards corporations for polluting and increases their opportunities for profits. Northern TNCs and investors have sustained and even increased their energy intensive operations through relocation to Southern countries, capturing and co-opting local elites into the destructive process of capitalist-dominated production and consumption.

Significantly, the Kyoto Protocol does not truly involve grassroots communities and peoples who are worst-affected, especially in the South. It has grossly neglected the severe damage to their livelihoods, well-being and welfare. It does not consistently and coherently adhere to the vital developmental principles, especially people's sovereignty over natural resources.

The gravity, scope and depth of the problem demand the greatest collective effort and cooperation. No peoples or state can succeed alone in addressing the root causes of the problem. At the same time, stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions today will not immediately impact on rising global temperatures since climate processes involve long time scales and a global responsibility must be taken for the immediate and negative impacts that will be felt by the poor and marginalized.

This declaration articulates the values and principles that should guide international action and people's struggles against climate change and its associated ecological and socioeconomic destruction.

Statement of values and principles

We, the people, are united behind certain core development values and principles of social justice, democracy, equality and equity, gender fairness, respect for human rights and dignity, respect for the environment, sovereignty, freedom, liberation and self-determination, stewardship, social solidarity, participation and empowerment. This statement further articulates these principles in the context of the global climate crisis.

1. Social Justice must be guaranteed, acknowledging the systemic roots of the climate crisis, the disproportionate responsibility of a narrow elite, the disproportionate vulnerability of the majority to the adverse effects, the grossly uneven capacity to confront and respond, and the legitimate aspirations to development of the people apart from the crisis.

- 1.1 We emphasize that Climate Change must be understood not merely as an environmental issue but as a question of social justice, its causes are rooted in the current capitalist-dominated global economy which is principally driven by the relentless drive for private profits and accumulation.

1.2 We stress that the current global economic order, driven by the Global North and their transnational corporations is the fundamental origin of over-exploitation and depletion of resources, of the gratuitous use of energy resources and the excessive release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

1.3 We thus condemn “free market” policies of “globalization”, and its aggressive and intrusive expansion into every sector of the economy and into the global South, and the exploitation by TNCs of the people and the planet.

1.4 We firmly believe that these neoliberal policies are imposed particularly on the people of the global South by powerful foreign governments wielding influence through multilateral, regional and bilateral mechanisms such as World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, regional and bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), investment agreements and aid conditionalities.

1.5 We recognize that a very significant part of supposedly “Southern” emissions actually result from the energy-intensive operations of Northern TNCs located in the South for the purposes of exploiting local labor and natural resources. We further acknowledge that the severe deforestation across Latin America, Asia and Africa is most of all due to Northern TNC-driven commercial logging, plantation agriculture, mining activities and dam projects

2. Sovereignty means asserting the power of the people through their social movements and genuinely participatory structures as the foundation of the global response to the climate change issue.

2.1 We stress the vital importance and essential role of communities and peoples that will be most adversely affected by climate change in defining, guiding and determining the work of any and all major conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields at the local, national, regional and global levels.

2.2 We commit to spare no efforts in strengthening civil society and social movements and, especially, the people’s organizations and struggles that are the indispensable foundations and most dynamic driving force of these. We affirm that people’s sovereignty of natural resources is indispensable to dealing with the problem of climate change and that this must be won in struggle.

2.3 We are aware that people in both the global North and, especially, the South are excluded from participation in governance with the unfortunate result that powerful private elite and corporate interests exert far greater influence over socioeconomic policy-making.

3. Respect for the Environment means a rejection of market mechanisms that impose the cash nexus on ecological priorities. The needs of the planet and its people must take precedent over the push for growth and profits.

3.1 We recognize that nature is vital for the survival of all and that natural resources and their use are essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable human development, and the elimination of poverty, ill-health and hunger. We are committed to building societies where the people enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in a way that the world we create does not unjustly deny the same for future generations.

3.2 We assert that the needs of people and planet must be placed above those of global capital and the wholesale pursuit of private profits. The planet’s resources must never be reduced to being assigned property rights that can be bought, sold, accumulated and monopolized by a few for the sake of private gain.

3.3 We believe that population growth increases humanity's demands on nature but that the resources of the planet are sufficient to meet these demands if only production, resource-use and consumption are organized to meet the needs of the people for life and not of a select few for profits.

4. Responsibility, expressed in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, requires a mechanism for globally-inclusive equity. Northern countries share a disproportionate responsibility for historic emissions.

4.1. We acknowledge the greater vulnerability of poor and marginalized communities to the adverse effects of climate change.

4.2. We recognize that there are elite segments of society whose current levels of consumption are grossly excessive and cannot and should not be maintained, even as those large populations globally who are denied basic needs should have these met. These elite segments of society must bear the greatest responsibility for the climate crisis.

4.3 We recognize that there are large parts of humanity who are more dependent for their survival on their access to and use of natural resources, as well as on the state of the climate and the natural environment. We then stress that the specific needs of farming communities, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, fisherfolk, and other marginalized, poor and rural producers need to be given special attention in all adaptation efforts.

4.4 We acknowledge that adaptation is not acceptance of climate change but is necessary to provide temporary relief from the initial impacts of climate change until global mitigation efforts are sufficiently developed to halt global warming.

Statement of goals and purposes

1. We acknowledge climate change as a multifaceted issue and that the score of interlinked challenges and threats therefore need to be confronted in an integrated and coordinated manner if any real progress is to be achieved.

2. We declare our commitment to the significant and far-reaching reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in line with our core values and principles.

3. We further declare our willingness to work for and support any international climate change agreement that is consistent with these essential foundations.

4. We believe that the climate change crisis is not simply about adaptation and mitigation, but changing the whole economic framework into one of eco-sufficiency and sustainability.

5. We assert that Kyoto represents a false compromise and commit to redressing the fundamental weaknesses of the Kyoto agreement in any new protocol or post 2012 agreement.

a. We reject market-based mechanisms to address climate change as diversionary and designed to perpetuate current levels of economic activity and profits, if not brazen maneuvering by corporations to pass on the burden of dealing with the negative effects of their greenhouse gas emissions to the people of the global south.

b. We acknowledge that technological developments can play a role in addressing the climate change issue but are conscious that technological fixes in themselves are not just grossly insufficient but even used to divert from the need to address root causes.

6. We are convinced that human progress and the defense of the livelihoods, well-being and welfare of the people ultimately require an economic system that is socially just, democratic and ecologically sustainable. This includes people-oriented agricultural and industrial development.

7. We declare that in order to address the climate crisis, the people must have real stewardship, access and control over the natural resources on which they depend rather than TNCs, international financial institutions or even governments which represent the narrow private interests of a global elite and their local collaborators. In so-doing we assert people's sovereignty over natural resources.

8. To this end, we shall work for:

a. National ownership over the nation's resources and productive assets;

b. Community-level management and decision-making supported by national-level authority or public-community partnership in the utilization and conservation of these resources;

c. Transparency in decision-making and disposition of revenues raised from the extraction, processing and sale of products derived from nature;

d. A comprehensive national policy framework for economic diversification and for meeting the collective needs of the present and future generations, especially the poor and marginalized in society;

e. A national program for research and development on sustainable technologies including recycling methods, renewable energy and other alternatives to unsustainable means of production;

f. Education on ecology and socially responsible consumption; and

g. Cooperative arrangements with other countries in the stewardship of global commons or shared resources such as oceans, rivers, forests and the climate.

9. We affirm the importance of grassroots education, organizing and mobilizations to promote and realize our alternative vision and program for social transformation. We retain our vigilance even where governments have expressed support for a progressive agenda, and hold them accountable through popular participation and mobilization. We are ever critical of attempts to compromise the interests of the majority and the marginalized.

10. We commit to building on the powerful networks of movements for climate action that have emerged worldwide. Localized actions against greenhouse gas emissions have spread across the globe and deepened everyday development struggles.

11. We acknowledge the supportive role of adaptation funding for Southern countries to help deal with the problem climate change, affirm that the far greater responsibility of the North in the current climate crisis means that it must bear a far greater proportion of the funding responsibility. We decry the fiasco of the supposed global adaptation fund which was allotted insignificant funding, and criticize efforts such as those by the World Bank (WB) to use adaptation funding to distract from the overriding need to address the roots of the climate change problem. We stress that adaptation funding must be over and above traditional allotments for overseas development assistance (ODA).

12. We assert that restorative justice requires distribution of responsibility according to historical per capita emissions, not just on a by country basis but more significantly on a by polluter basis. The greatest burden of adjustment must be on the Northern countries and their TNCs (wherever these are located), as well as on Southern elites, who have caused and benefited the most from the

damage. We further assert that this absolutely requires, at the very minimum, Northern commitments and concrete practice to:

- a. Drastically reduce overall energy use and increase energy efficiency;
- b. Increase unconditional financial compensation to directly address the climate crisis in the South; and
- c. Overhaul international trade and investment rules towards sustainable development and improvements in the standard of living in the South, including also an end to the real or effective transfer of Northern polluting industries to the South.

13. We recognize the need for significant global GHG emissions reductions in both the Northern and Southern countries. We assert that action on climate change can only succeed if it addresses southern emissions, and this requires mechanisms for large scale compensatory financing from the global north to global south. Specifically this should entail the creation of a global mitigation fund, contributed to by the global north, and in particular northern TNCs.

P.S.

* From Climate and Capitalism:

<http://climateandcapitalism.com/?p=297>

Footnotes

[1] More information about its authors and origins we given by an email from Ava Danlog of the IBON Foundation, an independent research organization based in Quezon City, Philippines.

The idea of a People's Protocol originated from the Asia Pacific Research Network's Conference on People's Sovereignty on Natural Resources (with the theme People and Planet over Profits) held on October 23-25, 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand. The more than 170 participants from the Asia Pacific region adopted the idea of a People's Protocol on Climate Change in recognition of the Kyoto Protocol's failure to offer a sustainable solution to climate change.

Through a workshop on climate change during the conference, participants came up with resolutions on the issue. based from these ideas, IBON and AidWatch took the lead to synthesize the resolutions/proposals to come up with a draft People's Protocol which serves to highlight key issues and guide people's discussions on climate change.

The need for a People's Protocol has been endorsed by organizations and individuals from many countries. in addition, the series of workshops to discuss, critique and adopt the draft People's Protocol has already started. Thousands of signatures have been gathered in Indonesia but these signatures need to be uploaded in the online petition.

As of this moment, there is a plan to hold a Grand People's Assembly in Poland which will ratify the People's Protocol. From then on, efforts will be directed at pushing for the consideration and inclusion of the People's Protocol in the drawing up of Kyoto II.

The campaign is still new so developments (such as putting up a website etc) are still under way.

I hope this helps. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you need further information.