

South Asian Civil Society Declaration on  
**Trade, Climate Change  
and Food Security**



Recognizing both direct and indirect linkages between and among trade, climate change and food security and their implications for each other, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE), Oxfam Novib and Climate Action Network in South Asia (CANSAs) organized a South Asia-level Civil Society Consultation for setting and disseminating a Trade, Climate Change and Food Security Agenda from 9-11 September 2009 at Gokarna Forest Resort, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The event brought together a cross-section of 72 stakeholders and came up with a Declaration on “South Asian Civil Society Agenda on Trade, Climate Change and Food Security”, putting forward certain demands and recommendations at three levels: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The event was part of the Regional Programme on Research, Capacity Building and Advocacy on Trade (ReCAT), which SAWTEE, together with Oxfam Novib, is implementing in South Asia.

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We, the participants of the South Asian Civil Society Consultation on Trade, Climate Change and Food Security Agenda for Copenhagen, held from 9-11 September at Gokarna Forest Resort, Kathmandu, Nepal, view that addressing climate change impacts, food insecurity, and trade concerns in times of global economic crisis has become more important than ever.

We also view that trade, climate change and food security issues are interlinked both positively and negatively, and, thus, need serious attention for harmonization of related policies and practices by all governments, actors and agencies. We believe that trade and climate change negotiations and deals—mainly under the aegis of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), respectively—should be mutually supportive so as to contribute to sustained growth, food security, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

We also believe that such trade and climate change negotiations

and deals, as well as all the local, national, regional and international efforts in agriculture, including those of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other United Nations bodies, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, need harmonization and coordination for sustained world food security.



In particular, we take note of the fact that South Asian countries are highly exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change although their historical contribution to climate change is insignificant. We draw the attention of South Asian governments and the international community, including UNFCCC parties,

to the past, present and future impacts of climate change on South Asia. In particular, we are concerned about the impacts on South Asia projected by the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—glacier melting in the Himalayas causing increased flooding and affecting water resources; compounded pressures on natural resources and the environment due to rapid urbanization, industrialization, and economic development; decrease in crop yields by up to 30 percent by the mid-21st century; rise in mortality due to diarrhoea primarily associated with floods and droughts; and sea-level rise exacerbating inundation, storm surge, erosion and other coastal hazards. We also note that melting Himalayan glaciers and other climate change impacts pose a direct threat to the water and food security of more than 1.6 billion people in South Asia.

We are also concerned about the unequal playing field and unfair trade deals at different levels, including the WTO, and take note that there has been limited cooperation at the multilateral level as well as at the level of South Asian Association for



Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for harnessing the potential of using trade as a means to achieve growth, food security and poverty reduction. We note that, as a result of the global economic crisis, world trade is projected to decline by 10 percent in 2009, and there has been some slippage towards protectionism. We express our deep concern over the threat of a new kind of protectionism—climate protectionism—which, if not addressed, may have adverse ramifications for the development-friendly functioning of the multilateral trade regime, as well as the South Asian and global economies.



We also take note of the fact that South Asia accounts for 23 percent of the world's population but generates hardly 2 percent of the global income. We are concerned that housing 40 percent of the world's poor and 35 percent of the world's undernourished people, South Asia continues to have the highest concentration of poverty and hunger. We call for attention to the growing vulnerability of the poor in South Asia as they depend significantly on rain-fed agriculture and live in settlements that are highly exposed to climate variability. We are worried that failure to make trade and climate change negotiations and

deals mutually supportive will deepen food insecurity in South Asia with severe implications for the region's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the SAARC Development Goals.

Realizing the crucial roles that the UNFCCC, the WTO, SAARC governments, and other actors and agencies can play in reexamining, redefining and strengthening the linkages among and between trade, climate change and food security, we put forth the following recommendations and demands that we believe must be addressed for a world oriented towards inclusive and sustainable global integration and development.

### Demands at the UNFCCC level

- We demand that Annex 1 countries ensure full and faithful implementation of the commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol, and make a time-bound commitment for deeper greenhouse gas emissions cuts compared to 1990 levels.
- We demand that developed countries provide at least 1 percent of their gross national



product to climate adaptation and mitigation fund and the COP/MOP Authority mobilize the fund in a fair, equitable and just manner and in the interest of developing and least-developed countries. We also call upon developed countries to ensure that a larger share of funding is made available for adaptation.



- We demand that support to the climate adaptation and mitigation fund be over and above other aid commitments and in line with the Partnership Commitments made in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. We call upon UNFCCC parties to ensure an enabling environment for the development and implementation of local community-centred action

programmes on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and to ensure that such programmes are measurable, reportable and verifiable, as well as accountable to the communities and societies affected by climate change.

- We urge developed countries to provide financial and technical assistance to vulnerable countries, mainly developing and least-developed countries, to cope with climate-induced dislocation and distress, and address the concerns relating to environmental refugees.
- We urge developed countries to agree on legal and institutional options and make time-bound commitments to introduce incentive mechanisms and implement measures that remove the obstacles to and provide financial and other incentives for scaling up the development, transfer and acquisition of climate-friendly technologies in developing and least-developed countries.
- We call upon UNFCCC parties to recognize the impacts of climate change on agriculture productivity and food security, and identify and provide environment-friendly agriculture support measures for enhancing agriculture

productivity and food security. In this regard, we also demand that UNFCCC parties refrain from promoting faulty solutions to climate change such as encouraging those biofuels that negatively affect food availability and prices, as well as the resource base.

- We also demand that UNFCCC parties agree to implement measures to regulate environment-unfriendly use of biotechnology and the unjust application of intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the area of biodiversity and agriculture, and implement measures to protect the environment and the rights of local, indigenous and farming communities over their biological resources and associated knowledge.
- We call upon UNFCCC parties to make a fundamental change in the manner in which the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) operates, in that its environment integrity is ensured and it benefits the least-developed countries (LDCs) and the poor. In this connection, we also demand that the parties implement measures that harness CDM more closely with development and sectoral priorities as well as

attract and utilize both public and private funding.

- We call upon UNFCCC parties to seek compliance of a global climate change deal with other international conventions, treaties and agreements that govern trade, biodiversity, environment, etc., and necessary support from relevant bodies, as and when required.



### Demands at the WTO level

- We demand that any outcome of multilateral trade negotiations on environmental goods and services reflect the trade, development and environmental interests of developing and least-developed countries.
- We urge developed countries and those developing countries



that are in a position to do so to provide concrete support measures for building the supply-side capacity of the LDCs in environmental goods and services. We also demand that the WTO's aid for trade initiative be implemented for enabling the developing and least-developed members to realize their trade potential in environmental goods and services.

- We call upon WTO members to address the possible negative implications of preference erosion for the LDCs in the event of the liberalization of environmental goods and services.
- We urge WTO members not to resort to climate protectionism by taking unilateral trade

measures to compel trading partners to take on emissions reduction commitments.

- We urge developed countries to create incentives, including through the provisioning of technology transfer funds and relaxation of IPR rules, for ensuring transfer of climate-friendly technologies to developing and least-developed countries. In particular, we demand that developed countries develop and implement concrete measures for the implementation of their commitments on technology transfer to the LDC members under Article 66.2 of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights



(TRIPS), including for enabling developing and least-developed countries to use the IPR flexibilities.

- We demand that WTO members review the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (ASCM) and agree on incentives and implement measures for the removal of subsidies on fossil fuels and the strengthening of subsidies for renewable energy sources, and in this regard, also address the special needs and development concerns of developing and least-developed members.
- We call upon WTO members to review TRIPS Article 27.3 (b), taking into account its implications for climate change, including biodiversity and the rights of local, indigenous and farming communities

in developing and least-developed countries. We also demand that WTO members accomplish the review negotiations by 2010 and make TRIPS compatible with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

### Demands at the SAARC level

- We call upon SAARC countries to develop and implement a South Asian Framework Agreement on Climate Justice, and to set up a South Asian climate change observatory to assess and forecast climate change impacts, and establish a joint monitoring system to address, among others, glacial melting, sea-level rise and impacts on



river basins.

- We urge SAARC countries to create and mobilize a regional climate change adaptation and mitigation fund and link it with national-level climate change adaptation and mitigation funds.
- We urge SAARC countries to address the impacts of climate change on human rights, and to create and implement a regional insurance mechanism to address the climate change impacts on poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- We urge SAARC countries to use trade as a means to address climate change, food security and development concerns by substantially increasing intra-regional trade, particularly in agriculture products, through, among others, the pruning of sensitive lists, removal of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers, and prohibition of food export ban.
- We demand that SAARC countries develop their common understanding and positions on the liberalization of trade in environmental goods and services for multilateral forums, and strengthen cooperation on it at the regional level.



- We urge SAARC countries to promote public-private partnership for, and South-South collaborative research and development, and investment projects and programmes on, the development and transfer of climate-friendly technologies.
- We demand that SAARC countries effectively operationalize the SAARC Food Bank by improving its governance mechanism. In particular, we demand that its distribution system be made responsive to seasonal food insecurity and food emergencies, and accessible for affected people and communities.



- We demand that SAARC countries reinvigorate national innovation systems to strengthen and develop appropriate technologies for climate change adaptation and mitigation, including for sustainable natural resources management. We also urge SAARC countries to document and disseminate good adaptation and mitigation practices in agriculture, and promote the sharing and adoption of such practices within the region and outside. We also urge SAARC governments to support local and indigenous technologies, and harness the potential of local and indigenous knowledge in agriculture, through community-led biodiversity management programmes, including participatory plant breeding and variety selection programmes.
- We urge SAARC countries to implement policy and institutional measures for the establishment, expansion, strengthening and effective operationalization of community, national and regional seed systems and gene banks. In particular, we also demand that, strengthening and linking with community and national seed banks, SAARC countries establish and operationalize a SAARC Seed Bank so as to ensure an effective long-term mechanism of production, exchange and use of farmer- and environment-friendly quality seeds in the region.
- We urge SAARC countries to support community-led on-farm conservation programmes; develop regional guidelines and frameworks on biotechnology, biopiracy, IPRs and farmers' rights; and develop and operationalize a regional access to genetic resources and benefit sharing regime. ■



South Asia Watch on Trade,  
Economics & Environment  
(SAWTEE) is a regional network  
that operates through its  
secretariat in Kathmandu and  
11 member institutions from  
five South Asian countries,  
namely Bangladesh, India,  
Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.  
The overall objective of  
SAWTEE is to build the capacity  
of concerned stakeholders in  
South Asia in the context of  
liberalization and globalization.