



Analytical Brief on Climate Ambition and Sustainability Action

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Visionary Leadership in Developing Countries and Economies in Transition

Will only national policies suffice?

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Key Questions >>>

- Which developing countries can serve as role models in terms of holistic responses to climate change in terms of sub-national, regional and global initiatives?
- How can developing countries better address bottlenecks such as disconnect between climate change targets and sector and development plans, lack of engagement by key ministries, investment in research, and channelizing finance?
- How can developing countries manage trade-offs with development that can come with mitigation measures?
- What measures can developing countries take in terms of adaptation responses and climate risk reduction?

Introduction

Science has established that due to implications of scale, magnitude, and irreversibility, global climate change constitutes a critical development and security issue. There is a need for action in terms of mitigation and adaptation by all countries irrespective of development status.

Economic implications

The World Economic Outlook of 2017 of the International Monetary Fund identifies climate change as one of the fundamental challenges of the 21st century. The report predicts that climate change will create economic winners and losers at both individual and sectoral level, but developing countries will suffer disproportionately from rise in

temperatures since they are situated in relatively hot climates. Moreover, within developing countries, the poor would likely be the most heavily affected by climate change (IMF 2017).

Vulnerability

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that global warming will worsen human health conditions, especially in tropical regions. In places like Africa, an increase in temperature signifies an increase in mosquito populations, which in turn would lead to escalating the risk of malaria, dengue and other insect-borne infections. Developing countries need to further strengthen responses to such outbreaks through technological know-how, resources and public health systems. IPCC has also placed sufficient

evidence and confidence in terms of global warming leading to hotter days, which has implications for heat related morbidity.

Upping ambition

It is important to stop the rise in greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, and then make deep cuts to become carbon-neutral by 2050. Developing countries, including many vulnerable countries are front-runners in preparations to revise the National Determined Contributions by 2020, with at least 112 nations, representing 53 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, planning for these efforts (UNDP and UNFCCC 2019). Morocco has been responding to climate change through clean energy projects as well as by slowing desertification by planting olive groves and orchards of argan trees, whose oil is in high demand from the cosmetics and food industries. The Marshall Islands has updated its climate response strategy and plans to have greenhouse gas reduction targets by 2035 and also increase coastal defences, along with revising building codes to ensure that new buildings are elevated. Ethiopia's NDC aims at expanding forest cover by more than seven million hectares by 2030, a key nature-based solution. Kazakhstan is the first country in Central Asia to launch a National Emissions Trading System in 2013 to regulate domestic CO₂ emissions and promote a low-carbon economy.

The plus five countries

Climate change discussions especially need to be led by G8+5 (Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa). The brief now talks about key issues in the five countries in addition to the G8 countries. Brazil has a comparatively higher share of renewables, but due to a lack of policies to expand these technologies, there is an increasing use of coal for energy supply recently. There is also a lack of policies to address long term reduction of emissions and phasing out of coal reliance. There are concerns about deforestation, that has been the highest in the last decade. Under Bolsonaro's administration, Brazil does not appear to be in good shape to fight the climate change crisis. During his election campaign, environmental regulations were blamed for holding back Brazil in terms of development. The country's environmental agency's budget for fire prevention has been cut by 95%. Bolsonaro even rejected the emergency financial assistance provided by the G7 countries to fight the Amazon forest-fires (Tidman 2019).

China is the world's largest emitter of CO₂ emissions in absolute terms and it has put efforts to cut fossil fuels, however much is still required to meet the pledges it made in the Paris agreement. Since 2015, strict environmental regulations have been enforced for power plants and there is a drive to reduce air pollution. The implementation of a pilot emission trading scheme shows positive efforts in national climate policy. Manufacturing of electric cars has been heavily subsidised with an intention to reduce the number of gasoline powered cars. In 2018, Chinese consumers bought 1.1 million electric cars, more than the rest of the world put together. China is also the world's largest manufacturer of solar technologies, but it is also the largest consumer of coal. It is also financing the construction of coal-fired stations around the world (Tidman 2019; Mulvaney 2019).

India ranks second in world population figures and fourth in GHG emissions in absolute terms (counting the EU as third). However, it is one of the few countries which is on track to fulfil its pledges to the Paris agreement. India has emerged as a global leader in renewable energy. It has invested more in renewables than fossil fuels. The national target is to generate 40 per cent of its energy through renewables by 2030 and according to estimates, there is a possibility of reaching this target very early. Much of its success is because of its enthusiastic embrace of solar energy. In 2010, the National Solar Mission was established and the goal of generating 20 GW was set to be achieved by 2020 and this goal was achieved early in 2018. It has accomplished this due to a range of pro-solar policies, which have become a model for incentivising the rapid spread of renewables. However, most of the nation's electricity still comes from coal-fired plants that continue to be built to meet the demands of a rapidly growing economy. India is also yet to develop a roadmap for phasing out fossil fuel subsidies (Rosen 2019; Mulvaney 2019).

In the case of South Africa, the country has achieved reductions in per-capita energy use and resources. However, the government does not have any serious long term emission reduction plans for phasing out coal. The Integrated Resource Plan is the official long term electricity generation policy till 2030. The government support mechanism for renewable energy – Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), now stands stalled.

In 2011, Mexico had one of its worst drought where more than 1.7 million cattle died of starvation or

thirst – and at least 2.2 million acres of crops withered across at least five states (Climate Reality Project 2018). Mexico City is set to face water crises as the city has to pump water from deep underground and has to get about 40 percent of its water from remote sources. Climate change, while not the only factor, is predicted to only make the water situation worse and become a vulnerability multiplier. Mexico’s Climate Change Law, issued in 2012, mandates systematic and periodic evaluation of national climate policy vis-à-vis a wide range of

adaptation and mitigation objectives. The National Climate Change System of Mexico comprises the Inter-ministerial Commission on Climate Change, the Climate Change Council, Both Chambers of the Congress, Association of Municipalities and State Authorities addressing Climate Change, and National Institute of Climate Change (Olivia et al 2017). While there is a robust framework in Mexico, further ambition in policy and implementation is needed to respond to climate change in terms of both adaptation and mitigation.

Questions

From the above discussions, the following questions become relevant:

1. Which developing countries can serve as role models in term of holistic responses to climate change in terms of sub-national, regional and global initiatives?
2. How can developing countries better address bottlenecks such as disconnect between climate change targets and sector and development plans, lack of engagement by key ministries, investment in research, and channelizing finance?
3. How can developing countries manage trade-offs with development that can come with mitigation measures?
4. What measures can developing countries take in terms of adaptation responses and climate risk reduction?

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Analytical Brief on Climate Ambition and Sustainability Action

The brief series, brought out jointly by the World Sustainable Development Forum and the Protect our Planet Movement, seeks to highlight a topical issue relevant to the realization of the sustainable development goals and ambitious climate actions. This brief is to feed into the discussions of the Second World Sustainable Development Forum to be organized in Durango, Mexico (5-7 March, 2020).

About WSDF

The World Sustainable Development Forum (WSDF) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated separately in Europe, Norway and the U.S. Its North American arm WSDF-NA, headquartered in Washington, DC carries 501c3 tax exempt status. WSDF is a global initiative to promote and mobilize global action for effective implementation of both the Paris agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly. WSDF's relevance and role lies in acting as a facilitator for helping with implementation of actions required under these two sets of agreements.

About POP Movement

Protect our Planet (POP) Movement believes that the impacts of climate change will not affect a single country but the planet, in its entirety. POP believes that the power of the youth of the world will unite and to address this challenge. POP believes that the time to act is now and that knowledge is the true currency of changing the future.



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