

Thai Civil Society's Recommendations to Thai Government Towards COP15, December 2009

Recommendations of Thai Civil Society

on the Thai Government's Positions

Towards the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention

on Climate Change (COP 15), Copenhagen, Denmark,

and Related National Policy Formulation

Background

This document represents comments and recommendations of the Thai Working Group for Climate Justice (TCJ) and the networks of Thai people organizations namely the Assembly of the Poor, Northern Resources Network, Thailand Land Reform Network, Surin Community Forest Network, Dong Khum Kham and Phu Kham Community Forest of Ubon Ratchathanee, Alternative Agricultural Network, Thailand Indigenous Network, Southern Women Traditional Fisheries Network, Southern Traditional Fisheries Association, and Energy and Industry Network. It is prepared to advocate the position of the Government of Thailand towards the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 15), during December 7-18, 2009, Copenhagen, and to the related national policy formulation.

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The comments and recommendations have been collected and prepared based upon the key principles of people's participation in contributing to the global solution of climate change, of social, environmental and economic justice and equity, and of the development pattern to achieve sustainability and security of human society. The set of comments and recommendations herewith emphasizes upon the key issues that would impose direct and indirect impacts on Thailand and other developing countries, namely, mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer and capacity building, finance and shared vision.

1. Overall Comments and Recommendations on COP 15

1.1 "Historical Responsibility" and "Justice";

The main cause of climate change today is due to increasing emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) since the industrial revolution period in the developed countries. The traditional economic-growth driven pattern has required energy intensive investment, especially on fossil fuel which significantly contributes to dramatically increase of GHGs emissions and the global warming impacts.

Consequences of climate change is considered as "ecological debts"; or

“climate debts” that needs the immediate responsibilities. In justice terms, it is high time now that developed countries were aware of their historical responsibilities and paid back these debts, in two ways. First, developed countries must take ambitious emission reduction targets and reduce their emissions domestically. Second, they must provide supports to developing countries affected by impacts of climate change in pursuing their resilience and adaptation to those impacts, including finance and technology transfer especially for adaptation.

1.2 Principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Climate change negotiations must be guided by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), without any attempts to divert the intention and principles already being stated and accepted. Commitments and obligations under the Convention must be fulfilled. Of particular, Article 2 stipulates the stabilization of greenhouse gases concentration in a safer level and food production being unthreatened. Article 3, stipulating the key principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability, information dissemination and supports to the vulnerable countries, must be reflected. Finally, Article 4, stipulating all the commitments by developed countries must be fulfilled.

1.3 Recent Climate Science

Climate change negotiations must be based on recent climate science, especially that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other widely accepted studies. Science has now indicated and confirmed the dangerous climate change should the global temperature exceed 1.5-2 degree Celsius of that of the pre-industrial era. Globally, urgent actions are therefore needed to ambitious emission cuts and at the same time to adapt to growing impacts of climate change.

1.4 Enhancement of “Livable and Sustainable Society”

Solutions to climate change cannot be completely separated from development pattern a country pursues. Ways towards livable and sustainable society in all dimensions would require a significant development paradigm shift. This must be reflected at the national policy level and seriously implemented under the framework of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental, for the short, medium and long term. People’s participation must be included and their rights to resources must also be recognized.

Enhancement of people’s participation as well as the respect and recognition of communities’ rights to access resources are keys to empower communities and would significantly enable them to respond, adjust and adapt to external pressures, including impacts of climate change. All these practices, especially from the community level, must be recognized and supported by the national policy of the country so that they could be extended in a larger scale.

2.Recommendations on Specific Key Issues under Negotiations

The specific key issues under negotiations that Thai civil society sees the significance cover the following issues:

2.1 Recommendations on Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

Mitigation of developed and developing countries

- Developed countries must reduce their greenhouse gases emissions domestically and immediately and pursue ambitious mitigation targets to ensure the world is safe from climate catastrophic dangers, that is to ensure the global temperature stays below 1.5 – 2 degree Celsius with the mid term emission reduction targets of at least 40% below the 1990 level by the year of 2020 and long term targets of at least 90% below the 1990 level by the year of 2050, according to IPCC.
- Developing countries must commit to formulate and genuinely implement emission reduction policies on a voluntary and transparency basis, based on the respective capacity which would significantly depend on the level of finance and technology transfer provided by developed countries. These finance and technologies by developed countries must ensure equitable and livable society and sustainable development objectives in a long term.
- Discouraging the use of carbon market and carbon offsets as a means to avoid direct domestic emission reduction, and pursuing clear position and policy direction not to allow emission reductions of or within developing countries to be included as the attempts of developed countries’ emission reduction.
- Reflecting the principle of climate justice in climate negotiations both at national and international levels in order to avoid the unfair burden being transferred to the poor and vulnerable population, and to enforce domestic emission reduction in developed countries.

Mitigation in the forest sector and REDD

- Not supporting the use of REDD (or REDD+) and opposing the introduction of forests, especially those being managed by communities, to carbon market. In particular, opposing inclusion of community-forestry areas into the market mechanism;
- Recognizing the community right to dwell in and make use of the forests, prior to the adoption of any measures related to forests and their contribution to greenhouse gas emission;
- Acknowledging that the poor are neither the cause of deforestation nor the cause of climate change; therefore, not the ones to be responsible for mitigation;
- Complying to the regulations of public participation, consultation and hearing before taking both national and local policy about REDD

(or REDD+);

- Enhancing public education and participation process, e.g. open for and facilitate full participation of local communities in the impact assessment study process on REDD (or REDD+);
- Fully providing related information and studying outcomes to local communities;
- Setting up a community-support fund of forestry rehabilitation and management as a community empowering mechanism to protect forest, biodiversity and fragile ecology.

Mitigation in the agricultural sector

- Recognizing rights of communities and farmers, as the key principle, prior to engaging agricultural sector in adaptation and mitigation activities. Community rights over the access to key natural resources, e.g. land rights, must also be recognized;
- Providing supports to the changes from the current traditional production system to sustainable agriculture or organic farming, promising more health and environmental friendliness, consuming less energy and enhancing carbon sinks in soils. Mechanisms that encourage people's participation have to be established;
- Should agricultural sector be involved in the GHG mitigation, focusing upon agro-industries, a large production system with high consumption of chemical substances and energy;
- Protecting agricultural lands in order to ensure current and future food security;
- Accepting and signifying local knowledge and intellectual in solving the problem of climate change, not only relying upon modern science alone;
- Rehabilitating and encouraging local traditional species that are more tolerant to changing climate as an alternative to enhance adaptation in agricultural sector, rather than promoting genetically modified organics which would lead to the future monopoly in agriculture by large industries and at the same time, would generate biodiversity degradation;
- Preventing the monopoly of species by large multi-national companies as it would become a major barrier for small scale farmers to attempts to mitigate emissions and adapt to impacts of climate change;
- Taking a control over bio-fuel plantation, especially at the industrial and commercial scale, so as to enhance a balance with food crops. Biodiversity, food security and sustainability must be taken in to serious account;

- Conducting studies on different levels of impacts of the introduction of mitigation from agricultural sector to market system, especially with concerns on food security and land conflicts.

Mitigation in energy sector and CDM

- Enhancing livable and sustainable society with low carbon emission, in line with the principle and directions of sustainable development. Carbon offsets and other false solutions, particularly nuclear, clean coal, large hydro power, large bio-fuel plantation, must not be promoted and continued as they only respond to greenhouse gas emission reduction, but not contributing to other aspects of sustainable development;
- Stopping an approval or endorsement of new CDM projects and introducing a review of national benefits from engaging in CDM, with key focus upon climate justice as well as benefits delivered at the national and local levels, especially to those surrounding the project sites;
- Encouraging an initiative to energy transition or energy revolutions, through
- Developing decentralized renewable and alternative sources of energy with good governance, significantly based on democratic principle;
- Separating economic growth from fossil fuel consumption;
- Minimizing the level of fossil fuel dependency and discontinuing the use of nuclear;
- Enhancing equity in the access and use of resources;
- Encouraging energy efficiency in all development activities e.g. the design of production system, transportation networks, infrastructure networks, and buildings to ensure energy savings;
- Promoting sustainable consumption through the changes on the ways of life, attitudes and behaviors towards less energy consumption.

2.2 Recommendations on Adaptation to Impacts of Climate Change

- Preparing and formulating adaptation framework for international negotiations to ensure developing countries, vulnerable to impacts of climate change, receive significant supports and finance that is new, additional, adequate and predictable;

- Undertaking planning and implementation of adaptation activities under long term sustainable development contexts while encouraging an integration of adaptation into ecological rehabilitation and protection to enhance basic resilience and adaptive capacity. Adaptation activities must be country driven with bottom-up planning approach and through communities’ participation process;
- Implementing adaptation activities in such a manner that respects, protects and enhances basic community rights as endorsed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), including related conventions and protocols;
- Recognizing and signifying women as being a highly vulnerable group to impacts of climate change and their important role in the adaptation attempts;
- Empowering community capacity in developing countries in learning, sharing knowledge and information, understanding and assessing risks and vulnerability through regional climate change adaptation centre;
- Implementing adaptation activities that are neither introducing negative impacts or conflicts on, nor affecting the traditional way of communities. Rather, they must ensure positive outcomes that would help reduce poverty, for instance;
- Actively participating in the negotiations and studies as related to the definition of the most vulnerable countries to ensure transparency and good governance of the adaptation funds for developing countries;
- Taking into consideration the development of local or national entity for adaptation to ensure effective and continuous adaptation activities and to enhance knowledge and information sharing domestically.

2.3 Recommendations on Finance and Technology Development and Transfer

- Enhancing negotiations towards a balance of finance and technology between mitigation and adaptation as they both are equally important;
- Developed countries facilitating and accelerating the development and transfer of technologies through their public sector, not shifting the responsibility to and significantly relying upon markets;
- Developed countries removing patents and intellectual property rights of technologies, particularly related to mitigation and adaptation, and at the same time, encouraging technology transfer among the developing countries;

- Insisting on the new and additional climate change finance to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as well as adequate and predictable for developing countries. Also ensuring that finance to adaptation must not be counted as the fulfillment of developed countries' ODA targets;
- Ensuring developing countries' direct access to finance for mitigation and adaptation;
- Finance being under the guidance and governance of COP, not supporting the climate change related finance outside the framework of the convention (e.g. World Bank, ADB, JBIC, GEF etc.).

2.4 Other Issues

Shared vision

- Measures and their implementations under climate change must significantly reflect climate justice, and payment of historical debts to the current and future impacts of climate change;
- Urgency and immediate actions are needed both for mitigation and adaptation, and particularly in the most vulnerable countries;
- Developed countries must show their commitment to deliver finance and technology to enhance both mitigation and adaptation in developing countries;
- Emissions reduction target of developed countries and the time frame must be clearly stated, with significant focus on domestic actions;
- Supports to developing countries must be consistent with the overall sustainable development objectives, with means to enhance sustainable consumption;
- Community's rights to access resources must be recognized, respected and protected;
- Thailand needs to have its own voluntary emission reduction targets including a legal framework to enhance and direct its development towards a more equitable, livable and sustainable society.

Legal outcome of the Copenhagen Agreement

The civil society supports the extension and enhancement of the Kyoto Protocol to its second commitment period with two important considerations:

- stronger emission reduction targets of developed countries.
- Review the Flexible Mechanisms to achieve a genuine emission reduction at the sources.