



World Forum
Science and Democracy
Statement towards Copenhagen Climate Summit

The grave climate and biodiversity crisis confronting humanity brings to the fore many issues central to the concerns of the World Forum for Science and Democracy. As noted in WFSD's founding Declaration adopted in Belém, Brazil, in January 2009, *"it is necessary to deepen our understanding of the overall economic, climate/ecological and democratic crises that the world faces today as well as crises related to energy use and production, food security... [and] how issues related to science and technology (S&T) are part of these problems and are also part of solutions to these crises."*

The forthcoming Summit in Copenhagen from December 7 to 18, 2009, under the aegis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC), is expected to discuss and finalise global arrangements under the Climate Treaty for the post-2012 period. The Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) -prepared by over 3000 scientists and social scientists from over 100 countries on the basis of over 30,000 peer-reviewed published papers besides actual measurements and modelling exercises - offers compelling evidence that we are very near the "tipping point" beyond which changes in global climate could become irreversible, with potentially cataclysmic consequences for humanity as a whole by the end of the century. Even in the short to medium term, serious impact will be felt all over the world, especially in developing countries and by poor and marginalised communities. The impact will be felt in various ways: Extreme weather events; floods and droughts; rising sea levels that threaten to submerge entire small island nations as well as vast densely-populated coastal areas; likely substantial decline in crop yields threatening food security; increase in vector-borne diseases and other health problems; and severe social problems such as mass migration of climate refugees, loss of livelihoods and exacerbation of poverty and other vulnerabilities.

Equity issues lie at the very heart of the climate debate. This is clear when we consider some of the factors responsible for the current crisis: Prior abuse of the global atmospheric commons by industrialised countries, enormous disparities in emissions and in consumption both between nations and within nations, non-sustainable high-carbon modes of production and lifestyles of consumption of some in contrast to sustenance-level existence of others, commodification and appropriation of environmental goods and services by a few at the expense of the vast majority of humankind, are all responsible for the current crisis. The global debate over the past almost two decades has made clear that solutions too are to be driven by equity considerations and the now well-established doctrines of ecological justice as embodied in the principles of the Kyoto Protocol: responsibility of industrialised nations for historical emissions and global environmental damage; the principle of "common but differentiated responsibility" of developed and developing countries; reparations ("polluter pays") by industrialised nations in the form of finance and technology transfers; and equitable per capita entitlements to the global atmospheric commons. In addition, WFSD holds that these principles should include the responsibility of governments, corporations and social movements to develop new practices that are compatible with and simultaneously serve to enhance, not only environmental sustainability, but also the strengthening of democracy, social justice, and the well being (enhanced income possibilities and better living conditions) of workers, both industrial and rural, and of all the poor people of the world.

IPCC/AR4 Contribution of Working Group I, Chapter 10, page 824 and 825. *"In fact, only in the case of essentially elimination of emissions can the atmospheric concentration of CO₂, ultimately be stabilised at a constant level. All others cases of moderate CO₂ emission reductions show increasing concentrations..."*. Therefore, in order to stave off the crisis, the global emissions have to be stabilised and start declining by 2015. Again according to IPCC/AR4 this in turn will require deep binding cuts in emissions by industrialised nations in the range of 40% by 2020. Appropriate mitigation measures by large developing countries, linked to fund and technology transfers from the industrialised North, would also be required. If such targets are truly to be met, and horrendous climate change impacts warded off, this cannot be left to market mechanisms including offsets and carbon trading which not only dilute emission reductions but also further the commodification of the environment. While it may not be possible at this stage to precisely spell out all the measures necessary to overcome the crisis or even minimise its impact, it is clear that alternative developmental paths will be required. It is also evident that the struggle for such alternatives will be multi-dimensional and will continue well beyond the Copenhagen Summit.

Researchers, scientists and engineers, NGOs and social movements with S&T concerns from all continents, who have contributed to WFSD deliberations, strongly believe that techno-fix approaches cannot tackle the complex socio-economic and geopolitical issues involved. The requisite low-carbon pathways of development will need the participation of the State, corporations, social movements, civic organisations, and society as a whole. Environmentally sustainable and socially just development under these conditions would call for transformative societal goals as well as new directions in scientific and technological research and new strategies for their application that emerge from a broad societal consensus. For this to happen, S&T innovation should occur through increased cooperation between individuals, institutions and nations, and it should not be subordinated to profit or to the commodification and corporate appropriation of knowledge. WFSD will work towards these immediate and long-term goals by bringing together scientists and technologists, social movements and citizens at large with the aims of stimulating the formulation and funding of research projects that simultaneously serve the interests of environmental sustainability and social justice, drawing public attention to those that successfully do this, and challenging those that do not. WFSD reaffirms that it is only through such socially inclusive and participatory processes with such aims that S&T can serve the common good and truly fulfil its history and destiny as the heritage of all humankind.

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First signatories : All India Peoples Science Network (India) - Alternatives (Québec) - Associação Filosófica Scientiae Studia (Brazil) - Association Internationale de Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs - Fondation Sciences Citoyennes (France) - VECAM (France) - World Federation of Scientific Workers

NB. The organisations that endorsed this declaration are involved in the Science and Democracy World Forum (SDWF). This inclusive and open process calls for a permanent and constructive political dialogue between scientists, scientific institutions and civil society actors (NGOs, associations, unions and social movements in general).

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