

# Climate Change Post Copenhagen

Jonathon Porritt  
Ian Katz  
Malini Mehra  
Peter Luff

**iCES Occasional Paper 05**

Institute of Contemporary European Studies



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Institute of Contemporary European Studies  
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## Foreword

### Imagining the Future of Climate Change Action

Michael Scriven

The failure of the Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change to live up to expectations has inevitably led not only to a deep sense of frustration and disappointment but also to a feeling that the whole issue needs to be re-framed or re-imagined in some way if practical progress is to be made in this area. The ambition underlying the Institute of Contemporary European Studies (ICES) Jean Monnet Memorial Lecture held on 28 April 2010 at Regent's College and entitled 'Climate Change is "Dropping off the Agenda" – Does it Really Matter?' was to take stock of the revised environmental landscape that has emerged in the aftermath of Copenhagen.

Organised in partnership with the European Commission Representation in the UK, the Lecture offered an opportunity for four prominent commentators on climate change to present their views on the impact of Copenhagen: Jonathon Porritt, writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development, Co-Founder of Forum for the Future, formerly Director of Friends of the Earth (1984-90) and Co-Chair of the Green Party (1980-83); Ian Katz, Deputy Editor of the *Guardian*, currently overseeing the paper's ambitious plans on the environment including both on-line and newspaper coverage. Malini Mehra, Founder & CEO of the Centre for Social Markets (CSM), a non-profit organisation that has pioneered work on sustainability and corporate responsibility in India and the Diaspora; Peter Luff, Chairman of the European Movement UK and Chief Executive Officer of Action for a Global Climate Community for whom he has been working on a High Level Dialogue between India and the EU on climate change and sustainable development as a step towards a north-south climate community.

Jonathon Porritt outlined the case for the need to re-frame the entire debate on climate change, shifting the emphasis away from what he perceived as an over-dependency on scientific truth as the means of 'setting us free'. 'Science alone will not constitute a sufficient body of persuasion and advocacy to get change in our policy and in the way we behave', he asserted. In its place, he proposed a new way forward that

required on the one hand making the case for a creative and innovative low-carbon approach to future development, rather than a sackcloth and ashes doomsday scenario, and on the other advocating publicly and vigorously the social and economic benefits of an accelerated transition to a low carbon world.

In contrast, Ian Katz, although agreeing with the majority of Porritt's ideas, insisted that the case for climate action in the aftermath of Copenhagen and Climate Gate must be based on solid scientific evidence and that the credibility and trustworthiness of science needs to be re-established. At the same time, he argued not only for a more coherent and convincing coverage of climate change in the media but also for the need to make progress on climate action through incremental and steady progress on the ground rather than through what will probably remain elusive globally negotiated deals. At a time when politicians appear to be disengaged, it falls in his view to civil society 'to pick up the running, and keep this issue alive'.

Malini Mehra offered both an overview of climate change activity in the international arena and a specific analysis of India. Highlighting the real sense of fatigue now surrounding the gatherings of conventional groupings in the climate change field, she made the case for moving beyond the conventional actors and creating new 'coalitions of the willing' who genuinely believe in a low carbon economic future. At the same time her analysis of India highlighted specifically the dramatic impact of the appointment of Jairam Ramesh as the Environment Minister, a development that has seen the emergence of an entirely new positioning of India in the global environmental debate. Additionally, her comparisons between India and China and her emphasis on the potential climate actions by a growing population of young people in India provided much food for thought.

Peter Luff reinforced Ian Katz's conclusion regarding the elusiveness of global deals on climate action, focusing specifically on the plight of developing countries in Africa and Asia. Arguing the need for enhanced cooperation between the developing and developed world in projects based on large scale renewable energy, he made the case for the European Union to take a leadership role in this field. Although sidelined at the Copenhagen Conference, the EU should in his view, following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, assume a more imaginative climate action role that can build trust and confidence with the countries of the developing world.

There can be little doubt that the environmental landscape post Copenhagen looks very different. It remains to be seen whether the emerging challenges posed by climate change internationally will be met effectively either by traditional political and economic actors or through the work of new alliances and new coalitions operating from within civil society. The following discussion posits an embryonic framework for imagining the possibilities for future climate change action.

Jonathon Porritt  
Co-Founder of Forum for the Future, Writer and  
Broadcaster



Jonathon Porritt, Co-Founder of Forum for the Future, is an eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development. Established in 1996, Forum for the Future is now the UK's leading sustainable development charity, with 70 staff and over 100 partner organisations, including some of the world's leading companies.

In addition, he is Co-Director of The Prince of Wales's Business and Environment Programme which runs Seminars for senior executives around the world. He is a Non-Executive Director of Wessex Water, and of Willmott Dixon Holdings. He is a Trustee of the Ashden Awards for Sustainable

Energy, and is involved in the work of many NGOs and charities as Patron, Chair or Special Adviser.

He was formerly Director of Friends of the Earth (1984-90); Co-Chair of the Green Party (1980-83) of which he is still a member; Chairman of UNED-UK (1993-96); Chairman of Sustainability South West, the South West Round Table for Sustainable Development (1999-2001); a Trustee of WWF UK (1991-2005), a member of the Board of the South West Regional Development Agency (1999-2008). He stood down as Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission in July 2009 after nine years providing high-level advice to Government Ministers.

His latest books are *Capitalism As If The World Matters* (Earthscan, revised 2007), *Globalism & Regionalism* (Black Dog 2008) and *Living Within Our Means* (Forum for the Future 2009).

Jonathon received a CBE in January 2000 for services to environmental protection.

## Re-Thinking Climate Change

Jonathon Porritt

I am delighted to be able to participate in this evening's event and I hope that between us we can shed some light on the difficulties that we seem to be facing in terms of the climate change debate today, which is to all intents and purposes stalled in a very disturbing fashion.

I want to try to reflect on that, not just in terms of the UK context, which is slightly peculiar in a way, but more broadly in terms of the way in which different countries around the world are seeking to address this issue.

I say that the UK context is slightly peculiar, because it is. And we are in the middle of a quite peculiar election campaign, which some of you will have noticed has been largely untouched by any emerging issues with the words 'climate change' in them or anything of that kind. Ian Katz may reflect on this from the *Guardian's* perspective on it. The *Guardian* wrote a wonderful piece about the launch of the Labour Party's green manifesto which sounded like one of the most hysterically incompetent events in a pretty extraordinary campaign. Read the manifestos of the parties which sad people like me do, as a sort of hobby, and you might come away from that engagement with the written word feeling quite heartened and upbeat, because actually there is a lot in the manifestos that shows how over the last five years, an understanding of climate change has now worked its way into the entrails of all our major political parties, has translated through into increasingly progressive policy positions and has led to some quite brave and bold commitments as to what needs to happen in the next parliament, depending on who it is that makes up the government in that next parliament.

Contrast those manifestos with what is actually happening on the ground and you would wonder if we are actually in the same country, listening to the same political parties, led by the same political leaders, apparently interested in the same issues: very difficult to read...

So, there is a deeper issue going on here. It is not just at the surface level that we are facing real difficulties, there is a whole set of really complex concerns as to why climate change both still matters and problematically has definitely gone off the boil at the moment.

Some of those you will be very familiar with: the fiasco in Copenhagen, the great difficulty we are having at the moment in terms of the science of climate change, little stories like the University of East Anglia, the Climate Gate furore which blew up in our faces a few months before the Copenhagen conference. A largely untutored and extremely bigoted media in the UK (it goes without saying of course that the *Guardian* and the *Independent* are exempted from any such charges) as they have really led the way in terms of providing their readers and the users of their web pages with an extremely enlightened and progressive approach to what climate change is all about. But the main newspapers in this country still demonstrate a quite extraordinary desire, perversely, to destroy anybody's sense of understanding of what climate change is all about, let alone any commitment to do anything about it. So this is all quite complicated stuff.

Not helped by a government campaign 'Act on CO2' which in many respects sent people off in completely different and conflicting directions and I don't think helped at all, and a failure to understand that people are really unlikely to change their behaviour out of a sense of fear that the world is crashing in around our heads - that cuts little ice with anybody, so the old adage that the truth will set us free, and that all we need to do is to inculcate people with a better understanding of the science of climate change and it is sorted, that assumption, if it was ever part of the body politic here in the UK, must now be set aside. And that in itself is really quite an extraordinary proposal, to put, I don't mean this completely you will understand, but temporarily, to put the scientific case for accelerated responses to an accelerated climate change slightly out of the main frame of what we are doing is a pretty remarkable thing in the first decade of the 21st century.

To have come to the conclusion that science alone will not constitute a sufficient body of persuasion and advocacy to get change in our policy and in the way we behave is extraordinary. I have just reeled away from reading a book called *Denialism* by a man called Michael Specter<sup>1</sup> very eminent US commentator and scientist who often writes in the *New York Times*, and this book tracks not just what is happening on climate issues but on a whole host of issues, contemporary controversial issues where science is largely irrelevant to the opinions that people seem to develop around them, and the political positions adopted by different political expressions in the US. So the starting point for my comments this evening: the truth as is in 'the science' and what we know about the 'science of climate change' will not set us free, will not put us on a path to

an appropriate response to this massive challenge of accelerating climate change.

So I want to raise two issues to suggest that these need to be handled with a great deal more skill and creativity, and sense of excitement in the next government here in the UK than has happened in the preceding 5 years, well in the preceding 13 years. Let's be absolutely honest: Labour didn't really get going on its climate change actions, it got going on the exhortation and the strategy from 1997 onwards, and it basically thought that strategy and exhortation would be sufficient to ward off accelerating climate change. It is only really in the last two years that the Labour government got serious about doing anything on the ground. There were essentially 10 to 11 wasted years, and 2 years of quite impressive action right at the end, quite impressive, under the leadership in particular of Ed Milliband. So two things, firstly, and this will sound very crass, but remember we are talking about moving the general perception of a nation from one of largely hostility to indifference to one where I hope it will get a more enthusiastic response.

The first thing is that we have to change the mood music behind this, we have to persuade people that addressing climate change is not the end of everything that they hold dear in their lives, it is not an end to a particular model of progress that people have come to love over the last 50 or 60 years, is not, if you like, an agenda based on sacrificial exhortation, sackcloth and ashes promises, but one that is based on a very different, far more innovative, creative, inclusive way of creating wealth in a low carbon world. Part of that has to be driven by a growing sense of excitement at the technology pipeline, those technologies that are now being brought forward to help provide solutions to many of these problems.

I have to own up to the fact that I have spent most of my life, especially when I was in the Green Party and in Friends of the Earth, advising people not to get over-excited about technology on the grounds that this was just a fix - 'technofixing' was not a solution to the problem, and it is not the solution now. But if we don't get excited about low carbon technologies becoming available to us today, then you are condemning yourself to a permanently depressed state of mind, because this is essentially going to have to be a technology driven revolution - don't forget the scale of the change we are looking at.

To go from where we are today to where we need to be by 2050, I will just give you one statistic to bear in mind, we have to move from today's carbon intensity in the global economy of around 768 grams of carbon per dollar of value created, 768gr of CO<sub>2</sub> per dollar of value created in the global economy to 15. That's the nature of the transition. 768gm per dollar to 15 grams per dollar, and we have 40 years to do it. There has been no challenge like this in the history of humankind, nothing, nothing even moderately comparable with the challenge on that scale.

So the technology is fundamental, and governments are going to have to get so much smarter and applied about driving that innovation story in order to really make a change in people's lives. It is happening all around us. By the way, a timely anecdote: I was at a conference yesterday, where the Innovation Director for Philips, told a very interesting story, how Philips actually brought forward the technology for compact fluorescent light bulbs at least 15-20 years before they even started to get any penetration in the market place. The hold of the incandescent light bulb on the domestic lighting market was so intense that it took about 15 to 18 years to get any penetration for the compact fluorescents.

These are now being overtaken as you know, in many respects, by a new suite of technologies, light-emitting diode (LED) technologies and those people on the cutting edge of lighting technology will tell you that LEDs will probably have no more than 2 to 3 years in the sun because the next generation of technologies coming up behind the LED's suite of technologies is even more breathtakingly exciting from the perspective of reducing carbon dioxide emissions per lighting experience.

So, this is an extraordinary story. It is happening everywhere and most people don't have a clue what's happening in terms of the innovation pipeline, and it is brilliant and exciting. So we need to get much better at that, we need to get politicians talking with excitement about this, instead of talking endlessly about what will happen to the world if we don't do something.

You then have to couple that with my second point, a point that I think has been borne out in Germany in particular, where the leadership offered by the politicians in Germany has been of a different kind. Angela Merkel does not give speeches on climate change that start with apocalyptic visions of a 7 meter rise in sea levels. She starts by talking about the 268,000 jobs that have been created in the retrofit programme for Germany's existing housing stock, she talks about the number of new

patents that are being created by bringing forward new investments in photovoltaics and other solar technologies, she talks about the impact that this has made on German industry and on creativity in the German economy. And then she will tell you: Guess what? This is quite a sensible thing to do, because if we don't, we are stuffed.

Unfortunately, we don't do it like that here, we don't really talk enough about the social and economic benefits of an accelerated transition to a low carbon world. It has taken a long time to get to the point now but every one of the political parties in the UK is now, in theory, completely signed up to the idea of a massively ambitious retrofit scheme, to bring every single house in the UK up to a fit for purpose low carbon quality. It has taken God knows how many years of advocacy to get people into that position. We are thankfully there now. All the major parties are now committed to schemes of this kind.

What is the essence of that? The essence of that is about social justice, it is essentially about improving the lives of some of the poorest and least advantaged people in our communities and our economy at large because that is where the biggest difference can actually be made. And when you start talking of dealing with climate change from the perspective of social justice, as well as the perspective of innovation, gradually people begin to think that this is a rather different story from the one they have been told so far.

We are way off the pace about this. Our advocacy around dealing with climate change is in my opinion deplorable. I am not really sure that the NGOs have helped terribly much in sharpening up advocacy along the way. And we are going to have to do it from here on in a very different way from anything that we have done up until now. Thank you.

#### Notes

1. Specter, M. (2009), *Denialism: How Irrational Thinking Hinders Scientific Progress, Harms the Planet and Threatens Our Lives*, Penguin Press.

Ian Katz  
Deputy Editor of the *Guardian*



Ian Katz is Deputy Editor of the *Guardian*, responsible for the weekday paper. Ian joined the *Guardian* in 1990 and has since been a reporter, foreign correspondent, and features editor. In 1993 he won the Laurence Stern Fellowship awarded by the *Washington Post*.

He served as the paper's New York correspondent from 1994 to 1997 and in 1998 he launched the paper's acclaimed website - [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk).

Between 2006 and 2008 Ian edited the *Guardian's* Saturday edition and was responsible for all editorial marketing. Ian is currently overseeing the paper's ambitious plans on the environment, including both on-line and newspaper coverage.

## Climate Actions from the Ground Upwards

Ian Katz

I do feel something of a fraud standing up and talking to all you about the environment, particularly with Jonathon Porritt, Malini Mehra and Peter Luff who are all experts on the subject. I am just a journalist. The problem is slightly compounded by the fact that Jonathon has said everything that I would have said and considerably better than I will do. So I am going to cover some of the same ground and perhaps pick up on one area where I do rather disagree with him, which is the one about the extent to which we give up on the scientific arguments at the moment or try to repair the scientific case.

Just to start I was reflecting as Jonathon did on what a Martian would make of our national concerns if they landed around now during a UK general election campaign. I think they may conclude that we are quite concerned about something called the deficit, quite concerned about national insurance, and there is absolutely no way that the environment would register on the radar of our concerns notwithstanding I thought the slightly farcical set of anecdotes that popped up during the second of the televised leaders debate: climate change is simply the invisible issue of this election campaign.

And one shouldn't read too much into that, because election campaigns are unnatural times which accentuate domestic issues, short term issues, issues of self-interest, but it is fair to say I think that even prior to this campaign, there was a sense that the nation was collectively pulling the duvet over its head on the issue of climate change, and saying if I pull the duvet over my head and put my fingers in my ears maybe this thing will go away for a while. What struck me particularly was the speed of the fall off in engagement and concern with this issue since last November and December when obviously you had a huge peak around Copenhagen. A month or two ago I wrote something about this reflecting on the extraordinary journey that we had gone on from the end of November 2009 when I was involved in organising a coalition of 56 newspapers around the world who together ran the same editorial on our front pages, all with the headline '14 days that will shape history's judgement of this generation'. Not only does that seem mildly histrionic now but, when I reflect on what would happen if I call up those editors

now, I think they would laugh me off the line, so much has the mood around the issue changed.

Jonathon talked about some of the reasons why this is so. I just want to dwell longer on the most obviously conspicuous reason: the failure of Copenhagen around which a lot of energy was focused at the end of last year. It is worth conveying I think the extent of the damage that has been done. There is one conversation in particular that I think is indicative of what happened. I sat down with a very senior British climate change negotiator just prior to Copenhagen, and I said: 'it doesn't look to me that you are going to get this deal. What will the consequences be?'. He said: 'it will be ok if the game goes into extra time but it will be a disaster if the crowd leaves the stadium'. I think what has clearly happened is that the crowd has not only left the stadium but has no intention of coming back to the replay anytime soon. I met the same negotiator about a month after Copenhagen, and I am going to mix metaphors awfully but I said: 'What is it like, what does it feel like at the moment?'. 'It feels like we are the beaten remnants of an army wandering across the battlefield with no idea in which direction to go'.

I think it is that bad, and I think many of you would have seen the perpetually optimistic, verging on the Panglossian, Ed Milliband, talking up the results of Copenhagen. Even he I have seen at moments in the last month or two looking rather downbeat about the prospects of getting a global deal back on track. That, it seems to me, has been a rather spectacular bust.

Jonathon also touched on 'Climate Gate', and the problems around the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). There are so many gates now that I lose touch: Climate Gate, Glacier Gate. We have a style ban at the *Guardian* on using gates now because it is getting confusing. I think that it is worth just reflecting for a moment longer on exactly what the cost of this is. I have been in a number of arguments recently with people about this and they have said: 'the climate issue is something that has not permeated the wider consciousness'.

I think that they are wrong. I think two substantial things have happened: one is that there is a general sense out there now that the science cuts both ways, that the scientific picture is cloudy and I think there is a perception out there too, that the scientists have been somehow involved in some sort of conspiracy to drive us into this self-

denying action, that none of us were too enthusiastic about and they were collectively pulling the wool over our eyes.

I have had a series of conversations recently with people that made my blood run cold. I hosted a meeting the other day for bosses of senior advertising agencies in London which I understood to be about people who wanted to be involved in raising consciousness about climate change and even campaigning to some extent. After I gave my short piece to start, the head of the agency turned around and said: 'But why on earth are we even having this conversation when we now know that the science is all over the place and even if the science wasn't all over the place we now know there is nothing that we could do'. 'So why are we having this conversation?' Day by day I come across really quite chilling experiences of the damage that has been done.

One issue that Jonathon didn't touch on but I think has had a huge effect is the freezing winter, the coldest that any of us can remember for a while. If you doubt the effect that it is having, there are several important websites which I recommend that you consult.<sup>1</sup>

It is obviously not just about the moment of the obviously ridiculous empirical evidence of the last winter. But if you cast your mind back to the way in which the case for action on climate change grew you had this period of very hot weather between 2000 and 2005 including the 2003 heat wave in Europe, which I think was a really crucially important moment for drumming into people's heads that it was getting hotter. And although from 2005 for the next two or three years there was not such hot weather, what you had was a series of set piece events like the Stern Report, *An Inconvenient Truth*,<sup>2</sup> the IPCC report, you had a series of these set pieces which kept the momentum going and suddenly we are both without weather and without set pieces. I think that it has taken the air out of the balloon of the argument.

The next thing that has contributed perhaps more than some of us acknowledge is the recession. Others will know better than me. I am told you can actually correlate very closely the green vote over years to growth in the economy. One interesting question in this present general election campaign is that we may get two green MPs. We may get three but there is a pretty good chance we may get Brighton and there is a decent chance that we get Cambridge. And that maybe will prove or disprove the rule but I think that the recession has certainly contributed.

And then there is the area of domestic politics in the countries that made the running on this. Obviously in the States you had President Obama who said really positive things about this and was heading in a very positive direction. And then came Massachusetts, and suddenly he had to focus all his resources on saving health care, and now he has another fight on his hands around immigration and so on. In this country you had Ed Milliband who, I agree, has been one of the most effective advocates for this issue who suddenly has been bogged down in a British election campaign, which I am afraid he is not likely to emerge from unscathed. And then in Germany Angela Merkel, who has been wonderful on issues like green jobs and transforming Germany's energy base, has quite a problem on her hands because she has been out today saying that Greece should never have been allowed into the Eurozone. I think that her head is full at the moment of slightly more immediate and pressing concerns.

So, what can we do to fix this now? I cannot dwell on the issue of how to fix a global deal because I think that's above my pay grade. The one thought that I would, however, toss into the discussion is that I think that we collectively have arguably made an error in going for what in American Football you would call the 'Hail Mary pass', the all or nothing deal, and I think perhaps the way in which we need to think about this, again to revert to the American football analogy, is 'to make the yards on the ground': the individual components of this deal may have to be eked out almost one by one.

Coming to the science which Jonathon felt probably is best put to one side for the moment, I am afraid that I don't agree with that. I think it is critical in the media in the longer term, that the credibility of the climate science and the credibility and trustworthiness of scientists in general is re-established. I think that this may be the most important thing. I think that it may not yield dividends in terms of turning the argument at the moment but I think that it is an absolutely vital task.

What depresses me slightly is that I encounter quite a lot of intransigence and an ostrich mentality among many of the scientists who have been involved in Climate Gate specifically and I am afraid that this attitude has been compounded by the fact that the first two reports on the Climate Gate affair, on the East Anglia affair, have broadly exonerated the scientists.

I agree absolutely, and all our investigative reporting on this has shown that the scientists were not fiddling the science, but what is absolutely clear is that they were not behaving in a transparent way. They were behaving in a way that was defensive, exclusive and creates suspicion about what they are doing, and what we need is the scientific community more broadly to accept that they are going to have to operate with a new level of transparency. They may not like it but this is an issue of such intense public interest that there has to be an acceptance that people should have access to what they do. And I think there must be some public expression of contrition for what happened and a commitment to doing science in a more transparent way.

Coupled with this there needs to be a professionalisation of the presentation of science. The IPCC aspect of the story, Glacier Gate and the attendant stories were largely a disaster of media handling. Most of the stories in that period largely produced by the *Sunday Times* had nothing to them, and I think that anyone who has looked at the dissections that have gone on, on credible websites like real climate [<http://www.realclimate.org/>] over the last month or so, knows that they are now broadly knocked down with the exception of Glacier Gate. But who would know that out there? The IPCC proved itself to be completely incapable of operating in a digital age, of rebutting allegations that were made, of coming out and dealing openly with the situation.

So that's the issue around the transparency of science. I then think that there is a job to be done of re-stating the argument about action on climate change from the ground upwards. I am afraid that I do feel that we have to start with the science. It seems to me that everything has to sit on the science, but at the moment, one of the problems we have if you go out and try to make the argument on science and use IPCC reports people respond: 'but IPCC is in doubt'. We produced a graphic in the *Guardian* a month or two ago trying to make the argument for the science from first principles which included a whole series of IPCC graphics.

And I looked at it and I said, actually I don't think we can use this, because the sceptics simply won't swallow that. We need to go back to the beginning and make the scientific argument first using peer-reviewed science that hasn't had a blemish on it. We need to move beyond the science to the kind of economic arguments that Stern made, and re-make them. And then I think we need to move to the sort of arguments that I absolutely agree with Jonathon, we need to be making, which are if you

like, the lateralized arguments about climate change: about jobs, the quality of life and global competition. The single most powerful driver that I have seen has been to show people what the Chinese are doing in terms of investment and renewables, what the Koreans are doing on investment and renewables, and say to people, you know, 'whose lunch do you think we are going to be if we don't move on this?'

Finally two quick things: I think that we need to push back very hard against the sceptics. I think they have had it their way for the last six months or so, and they have never been subjected to anything like the level of scrutiny that the scientists have in the last six months. The media need to crawl all over the sceptics' pseudo-science at the same level of detail and forensicness as they have caused us all to crawl over the climate scientists and equally we need to look really hard at whose agendas are being pursued, because when we look at where the money is coming from, many of these people are basically funded by companies that have a huge interest in not seeing action on de-carbonisation.

And finally, I think that this is a really interesting moment, because this is the moment in which some of the big NGOs are feeling really exhausted by the campaigning of the last few years, and are at something of a loss as to where to go next. I think the politicians are rather disengaged for their own reasons and I think it is a moment where it really falls to civil society to pick up the running, and keep this issue alive, to keep the feet of the politicians, the feet of the businessmen to the fire, which is a really interesting moment.

I am involved in an organisation called 10-10, which advocates individuals cutting their own emissions by 10%, and although I agree with Jonathon that we can no longer say to people you need to do this out of the goodness of your heart, there is a moral imperative, you need to make the sacrifice. I think that 10-10 offers a way for this issue to be kept alive. The arguments can be made attractive and compelling until we come off the bottom of this particular trough, and return to the steady trajectory towards actually getting something done.

## Notes

1. <http://www.zcommunications.org/if-its-that-warm-how-come-its-so-damed-cold-by-james-hansen>

<http://worldofweirdthings.com/2010/01/06/why-is-global-warming-so-cold-redux/>

2. *An Inconvenient Truth* is a 2006 documentary film directed by Davis Guggenheim about former United States Vice President Al Gore's campaign to educate citizens about global warming.

Malini Mehra  
Founder and CEO of the Centre for Social Markets



Malini Mehra is the founder & CEO of the Centre for Social Markets (CSM), a non-profit organisation that has pioneered work on sustainability and corporate responsibility in India and the Diaspora since 2000.

Prior to founding CSM, Malini worked on international trade, environment and human rights for NGOs including Oxfam and Friends of the Earth. From 2005-2006, she served at the UK government, where she led on international sustainable development partnerships, and initiated the UK's pioneering Sustainable Development Dialogues (SDDs) with China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico. From 2003-2004, she served as a member of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations chaired by President Cardoso of Brazil. She also contributed to UN publications such as the Human Development Reports on Democracy: *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World* (UNDP, Oxford University Press 2002) and *Human Rights and Human Development* (UNDP, Oxford University Press 2000) respectively.

Malini has been involved in climate issues since the United Nations' conference in Kyoto where she coordinated the input of Friends of the Earth International. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts, Commerce & Manufactures (RSA), the Remarque Foundation, and the British-American Project.

## Global Climate Change and the Case of India

### Malini Mehra

I have been asked to reflect on whether the world is doing enough on climate change and also to focus on what is happening in India. I would like to begin by referring to recent developments in terms of global responses to international climate negotiations, but the bulk of my remarks will be focused on what is happening on climate change in my country, in India.

So beginning with the global perspective, I think that one can only really summarize the situation with two words to determine whether the response to climate change at an international level has been enough, and those two words are: 'not really' - there has not been very much response.

We are all familiar with what happened in Copenhagen, the outcome of Copenhagen which was the Copenhagen Accord amongst other decisions which were taken formally under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]. However, the Copenhagen Accord does not give one very much hope for optimism at all.

Just in the last week there has been an analysis of the Copenhagen Accord from a very well respected scientific institute in Germany called The Potsdam Institute for climate analysis [<http://www.pik-potsdam.de/>]. And their assessment is that measures at the Copenhagen Accord, the actions which have been listed by a number of countries in January as to what they would do to abate their greenhouse gas emissions, even if all of those actions were enacted, that we would be still be heading towards a 3 degree world, possibly a 4 degree world by the end of this century. Now, given that globally and certainly in this country, there is a national legally binding commitment to stick to a 2 degree target I think that we have already overshot ourselves. And there is a growing realisation in many countries and certainly within civil society that the game is lost in a sense, if we are looking at 2 degrees.

One feels very sympathetic with the plight of the majority of the UN Member States. You may not know this, but actually more than 100 of the 193 governments, which were parties to the UNFCCC, the Copenhagen climate negotiations, more than a 100 of them had called for the

emissions target not to be just 2 degrees maximum of global warming, but actually 1.5 degrees.

This was articulated most evocatively by the president of the Maldives, President Nasheed. He actually was the one who battled in that internal closed room on the night of the 17-18 December. He personally battled with the representative of China on behalf of those 35 governments that were represented, and insisted on having the words 1.5 degrees retained in the Copenhagen Accord because the position of his government shared by AOSIS (Alliance of Small Island States) and the other 100 of the least developed countries (LDCs), is that the 1.5 degree target is the target for survival, specially for island survival. So they will continue to press for that. They are calling for a review which is contained within the Copenhagen Accord of the 2 degrees target.

So that provides a very depressing background to our discussions this evening. I don't want to enter into the kind of nihilism and pessimism that Jonathon referred to in his talk, but that is a fact that all of us who work on climate change have to deal with. We have to retain in a sense a kind of false consciousness about being optimistic given what we know about the science.

Over the last few weeks we have had a number of international gatherings at which governments continue to manoeuvre around the climate change negotiations. We have had the Major Economies Forum (MEF) hosted by the United States government which brings together 17 of the world's major economies which account for more than 80% of the world's global emissions. That was basically a greeting session in Washington DC where there was nothing substantive built on further to the negotiations in Copenhagen. We have had interestingly in the past week, the first formal session of the UNFCCC in Bonn. Arguably the most interesting outcome of the Bonn negotiations was that there is now an agreement between the two different working groups which are working for an outcome: there is the ad-hoc working group on long term cooperative action and the ad hoc working group on the Kyoto protocol. They have now decided that it might be time to talk about common issues. This is something that has evaded these two working groups ever since Bali, three years, and finally in April 2010 they have agreed they may have something to talk about.

This is great for the Americans because the Americans want there to be a one-track approach. It is not so great for the Chinas and the Indias of

this world because they don't want there to be a merger between the two because if there is a merger between the two tracks, then effectively it means that you don't have Kyoto. You have one great global agreement where the major polluters, and my country is the fourth largest polluter in the world, where those major polluters will have to undertake some possibly legally binding actions.

We have also had, more interestingly, I think, the renegade's answer to Copenhagen, which has been Evo Morales, the President of Bolivia's climate summit, the people's summit, the Rights of Mother Earth summit, which took place just a week ago in Cochabamba. This was a complete circus. Anyone who is anyone on climate change just had to go. The jamborees go on and the conversations keep going on but we are not really getting anywhere, and there is this incredible sense of tedium now, a real sense of fatigue that we have been there, we have done it, now we really need to do something different.

You can begin to see that there are new alliances and constellations which are emerging. Within the civil society community what we are focusing on now and what we have been arguing for years is that you have to go beyond the traditional actors, beyond the G77, beyond the Annex 1, and focus on developing 'coalitions of the willing', those who really believe that low carbon pathways are the only sustainable answer to economic competitiveness, national security, and prosperity issues. And there is an increasing number of countries who are aligning themselves with that new vision. One can talk about Costa Rica, Singapore, Korea, certainly in the Middle Eastern region you have Qatar, Abu Dhabi, etc., still small countries but countries that certainly the UK and Europe need to talk to. That's very exciting.

Let me just take a step back from that global arena and talk about what is happening in India because we have some very similar trends which are occurring. At the national level, at the level of the government, there has been a real rupture in the last year. India for more than a decade had a very predictable position on international climate negotiations, and that was: 'it ain't our problem, we don't need to fix it. You guys in the West, you guys who polluted the global atmosphere for the last two hundred and fifty years, you clean it up, and what we need to do is to make sure that we grow, grow, grow, grow, grow. And once we are as rich as you, then we will do something about cleaning up the mess that we have made'.

Now, that allies with the great focus on equity, which was India's response as a large country with more than 1.2 billion people and yet still had a growing carbon emissions profile. The Indian planners for a long time have focused on the per capita principle approach to climate equity. This basically meant that if the carbon footprint of every American is, let's say 20 tons, the Indians, whose per capita footprint is 1.2 tons, should actually get a free ride for the next ten years. The Indian government is planning on the next twenty years before we have to take on any legally binding emissions reductions ourselves.

These two arguments came under ferocious attack last year. Groups such as my own have been challenging them for a number of years, but since they are effectively the orthodoxy which is accepted certainly by the media, you couldn't find a single media commentator in India who challenged the existing government position. But they came under attack from a very unusual quarter, and that was from the newly appointed Minister for the Environment and Forests, Jairam Ramesh, who was appointed in May last year. The single most important thing that has happened to Indian climate politics was the appointment of this new Environment Minister. Because as soon as he came on board, he basically took the first two months to get his feet wet and to look around and assess: 'Where am I? Am I with friends or with enemies? Where are the allies that I can make?'

His key political advantage was that as a relative newcomer (he had been the Minister of Commerce before but he had never held this portfolio before), he had already the strong confidence of the key people in the Congress Party (Indian National Congress Party) that he came from, the Prime Minister and Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. He had been appointed with the blessing of both these two people - in the Indian political set up they are still the most important people - and so he felt that he had now a mandate to actually follow a very different course for the Indian environment as well as for climate politics. This came at a very interesting time in the last half year. Effectively what he was saying was that we now have to do something quite different because climate change is an issue for India's national interests. No politician before him had actually made this argument. It had never been argued as an issue that climate impacts will destabilise India.

India is a very vulnerable country, and since then he has been making the argument that, forget about the Maldives and Bangladesh and the Island Nations in the Pacific etc., India is the number one most

vulnerable country. No politician in India, no business person, not even the NGOs had been making this argument. It was a really radical departure to what we had been hearing before. And through the strength of his personality and his political alliances he was able to do something that has simply not happened in the past, which was to provide an internal challenge to the positions which had been taken by the government on climate policy. Certainly in terms of the negotiations but also in terms of what the national response should be. For the first time for those of us in India within social society, within business, within cities, municipalities, academia we had a reference point. We had a champion in government. This creates an electrifyingly different national context for us and for our work.

What this meant for him personally, however, was that he was subjected within his ministry and within the government to a great deal of personal attack, and the negotiators who had been responsible, the mandarins of our climate policy, basically, abandoned ship. They said: 'We refuse to work with this man because he is undermining India's national interests' as they articulated it. They effectively refused to work with him because he was saying that it was necessary to chart a new course.

To fast forward from that ancient history of six month ago, six to eight months ago, what happened is that he is now the lead negotiator because all of the key negotiators who were responsible for climate policy have now been sacked effectively. And he is there, as the prime negotiator who is making friends and influencing people in key countries, in the United States in particular and China.

China has now become arguably the most important political ally for India on the climate agenda. Paradoxically, India and China at a national level have a very fraught relationship on virtually every issue that you look at whether it is border security, whether it is regional trade or investments. The single issue on which we have a reasonably good relationship is the environment and climate change. And that has to do with Jairam Ramesh's re-positioning of the Indian climate agenda. He thinks that India has to align itself with China for two reasons: one because India has to distinguish itself from China. India does not want to continue to be seen by the rest of the world as a major climate criminal, as a major polluter which is irresponsibly spewing out its pollutions and asking for free passes. India is number four. Per capita emissions in India are 1.2. China

is the largest polluter. Its per capita emissions are 6 and it is much more rapidly exceeding India's projections in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

So there is a differentiation agenda. However, there is a common agenda when it comes to the demand from these two main countries that we do not want any legal restrictions, any international legal restrictions on our right to some would say 'pollute', others would say 'develop'. And hence you have a very interesting new G2 effectively which has emerged which has really unsettled climate politics. For those of us who have been watching what was happening within the basic countries and within the G2, with these two countries, what happened in Copenhagen on that last day when there was a deal between Barack Obama and the four basic countries did not come as a surprise to us frankly. It came as a surprise to the European Union and to many other countries because they had not actually seen all of the work that had been going on in the last six to eight months bringing these two major powers closer together, China and India, and having a very different kind of conversation around where they wanted to be placed in terms of global climate responsibility.

To conclude, let me just flag up a couple of key points: I have been speaking largely about the central government's lead on this issue around climate as well as climate negotiations. One key factor to mention is the significant take up that we have in many states in India around the climate agenda. One of the northern states the one most affected by Glacier Gate and Glacier Melt, Himachal Pradesh, has now entered into an agreement with Costa Rica to focus their state level development plans on one that keeps their emissions down, preserves their bio-diversity, effectively wanting to become the first climate resilient green state in India, a real departure. In terms of business we have a very active business conversation. We produced a film last year which focused on corporate Indian leadership around climate change. That is taking off at the elite level and it is taking off at the level of Indian eco-entrepreneurs.

We have for the first time a really interesting social conversation around climate change. It is still very much couched in terms of 'climate as environment camp' and it is not really looking at climate change as a completely different life condition issue requiring us to re-orient the way in which our development model has been articulated. We have to challenge basic things like the reification of GDP in our country, but that conversation has begun now. And most interestingly, and this is really the place to watch, it has taken off in a completely unpredictable way within the youth

community, given that in India we are a very young country, unlike China. 70% of our population is still under 30. The youth bulge will continue. Our young people are now asking for green jobs, they are holding green fairs, at business, on campuses and demanding a new kind of green consumerism and green ethics from companies, a phenomenon which has not been there. I have certainly not experienced it. There is a new green youth cultural trend in India now which is now also global. I would like to conclude on that point. It is perhaps the most optimistic development that we have seen for a long time.

Peter Luff  
Chairman of the European Movement, Director of  
Action for a Global Climate Community



Peter Luff is Chairman of the European Movement UK and Chief Executive Officer of Action for a Global Climate Community, for whom he has been working since 2003 on a High Level Dialogue between India and the EU on climate change and sustainable development as a step towards a north-south climate community.

Previously, Peter was director-general of the Royal Commonwealth Society, director of the European Movement UK, Vice-President of the International EM, marketing director of the Social Democratic Party and assistant director of Amnesty International UK. He was the founder-director of the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group and originator and producer of the first two shows in *The Secret Policeman's Ball* comedy series. He has appeared on radio and television programmes including Question Time and Any Questions and written two books: *Maastricht – A Simple Guide*, (European Movement 1992) and *A Brilliant Conspiracy – Britain and the Federal Debate in Europe* (Greycoat Press 1996).

Peter is presently a trustee of the Coalition for an International Court for the Environment and the European Multi-Cultural Foundation, a council member of the World Federalist Movement and a board member of Chelsea Arts Festival.

## Climate Change, the European Union and the Developing World

Peter Luff

It is extremely difficult to remain positive in the present global political climate. The rich world appears to be directing its energy towards re-establishing much of the financial system that contributed to financial crisis. Public awareness of the perils of climate destabilisation seems to have been reduced following media misreporting of recent scientific disputes and a sense that climate change is yesterday's news. This last point was reinforced by the failure of the Copenhagen negotiations to achieve a positive and lasting treaty acceptable to both the developed and developing world. Indeed, one of the main problems facing everyone engaged in climate change issues is dealing with the fickle and trivialising impact of the media and its determination to create headlines that by creating expectations which frequently cannot be fulfilled lead to cynicism and apathy.

There never was a realistic hope that Copenhagen could deliver a lasting settlement for the simple reason that Barack Obama could never commit to an agreement without first having the support of Congress – a lesson he will have learned from Bill Clinton's failure to get the Kyoto Treaty ratified.

All of which points to the necessity for other initiatives to be developed in parallel to the official negotiations and, most specifically, initiatives that can address the central issues of how climate destabilisation and energy security can be tackled without handicapping the developing world's momentum towards economic growth.

It is, of course, clear that climate destabilisation is already being felt in the developing world and, unless urgent steps are taken to deal with both mitigation and adaptation, we shall soon see – and indeed are already seeing - loss of life through agricultural failure, water shortage, environmentally charged conflict and an increase of fatal disease. But what we are already witnessing is as nothing to what may hit the developing world, and especially Africa and Asia, if we see a 2 degree or greater overall rise in global temperatures; it is not exaggeration to say that the impact could be of biblical proportions.

So to my mind, the key question is how to build enhanced cooperation between those nations in the developed world and the poorest and fast developing countries who will bear the brunt of change. And by enhanced cooperation, I do not mean negotiating targets but programmes that can lead to the development of renewable energy at a scale that can dramatically reduce dependence on fossil fuels and provide incentives for the explosion of what has been called the third industrial revolution based on green technology.

Action for a Global Climate Community (AGCC) has been advocating the creation of a Global Climate Community that could tackle these issues head on whether or not there is a global agreement in Mexico or South Africa or indeed later. We have been arguing that the European Union should take a leadership role with countries from the developing world – India, with its democratic tradition being one of the most obvious – to take practical steps in developing flagship renewable energy projects as well as necessary institutional links to drive this process forward.

The European Union, despite having been at the forefront in committing itself to emissions reduction targets nevertheless found itself sidelined at Copenhagen, largely due to its diplomatic failures. Although it was a progressive step to commit itself to a 20% reduction in emissions by 2020, its endless repetition of the offer to increase this to 30% if the developing world – most particularly China and India – were to make reductions commitments failed to convince and ended up sounding like a record caught in a groove. It failed to understand the key priorities of the governments it was addressing, frequently in a hectoring and patronising manner. Nor did it address the issues of historic responsibility and the principle of equity keenly felt in the developing world.

The hope has been that the Lisbon Treaty, though flawed, might enable the EU to take a more imaginative diplomatic role and build trust and confidence with the countries of the developing world that could lead to action rather than merely posturing. So far, six months into the new structure, this has failed to happen and there seems to be no real progress on engaging with the developing world's key concerns.

My own belief is that the creation of a climate community – a community of the willing – that enables a joint practical programme to be jointly implemented by a partnership of developed and developing countries should be the immediate priority. This could lead to a structure able to attract the levels of private finance required to develop solar energy on a global scale, deal with crucial issues of rural and coastal adaptation

and develop an institutional framework able to identify and carry through key projects.

Why the emphasis on building an institutional framework? I am increasingly convinced that, as time grows shorter, words and treaties are not enough in themselves. For countries and administrations to understand each others' problems requires constant discussions and engagement on a practical level. The business world has grasped this, which is why there was so much pressure to create a World Trade Organisation. I believe that we now require a World Environmental Organisation as well as an International Environmental Court. Both these must be global institutions but the first steps could and should be taken by the European Union with partners in the developing world. AGCC has concentrated on building a dialogue with India. Whether we can convince the Commission to support this initiative is very much in the balance but we shall continue to press for its rhetoric to be translated into practical action.



iCES Publications



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ICES Occasional Paper 01

Sir John Gieve

In this volume Sir John Gieve examines the depth and extent of the global economic downturn from the summer of 2007 and reflects on key lessons to be learned from the crisis. He highlights in particular the need for closer international coordination of macroeconomic policy, for better ground rules for cross-border financial crises, for the strengthening of banks' resilience and for improvements in the sphere of macro-prudential tools. Overall the paper provides a striking record of a major player's understanding of the global financial crisis as it continued to unravel in November 2008, with a brief postscript written six months later.

Sir John Gieve was Deputy Governor of the Bank of England from January 2006 to February 2009. In addition to his membership of the Monetary Policy Committee, he had specific responsibility for the Bank of England's Financial Stability work and was a member of the FSA.

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Leon Brittan, David Hannay, Jan Zielonka  
Senior Experts group

In this volume jointly produced with the Senior Experts group, Leon Brittan, David Hannay and Jan Zielonka review the achievements of the EU on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, assessing the impact of the enlargement process, the establishment of the euro and the Single Market, EU foreign policy initiatives and the perceived gap between the political class and European citizens. Their views are supplemented by an extensive background paper on 20 years of EU developments produced by the Senior Experts.

Lord Brittan was European Commissioner for Competition 1989-1992 and Vice President of the European Commission 1995-1999. Lord Hannay was UK Permanent Representative to the European Communities 1985-1990 and the UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations 1990-1995. Professor Jan Zielonka is Ralf Dahrendorf Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford, and author of *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*.

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John Monks is General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and previously General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). John Cridland is Deputy-General of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Vice Chair of the National Learning and Skills Council. Professor Sylvia Walby is UNESCO Chair in Gender Research and author of *Globalisation and Inequalities: Complexity and Contested Modernities* (Sage, 2009). Sarah Lambert is Head of the European Commission Representation in the UK.

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Graham Avery, Sir Michael Butler, Nicholas Kent,  
Senior European Experts

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Graham Avery is Senior Member of St. Antony's College, Oxford University, Senior Adviser at the European Policy Centre, Brussels, and Honorary Director-General of the European Commission. He co-authored *The Enlargement of the European Union* (1998) and contributed to *The Future of Europe: Enlargement and Integration* (2004) and to *The European Union: How Does It Work?* (2008). Sir Michael Butler was British Permanent Representative to the European Communities, 1979-85, and is chairman of the Senior European Experts. Nicholas Kent is a writer and consultant specialising in education policy and in European Union affairs. He is secretary to the Senior European Experts.

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# Contemporary Europe

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## Climate Change Post Copenhagen

Jonathon Porritt, Ian Katz, Malini Mehra, Peter Luff

The Institute of Contemporary European Studies (ICES) Occasional Paper Series features the ideas of key opinion formers in contemporary European affairs.

In this volume Jonathon Porritt, Ian Katz, Malini Mehra and Peter Luff review the prospects for climate change action in the aftermath of the Copenhagen conference focusing on the credibility of scientific evidence, investment in a low carbon economy, increased incremental actions on the ground, the emerging role of civil society, the impact globally of climate relations between India and China and the potential role of the European Union in climate politics.

Jonathon Porritt, Co-Founder of Forum for the Future, formerly Director of Friends of the Earth and Co-Chair of the Green Party is a writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development. Ian Katz is Deputy Editor of the *Guardian*, currently overseeing the paper's plans for the environment. Malini Mehra is the Founder & CEO of the Centre for Social Markets, a non-profit organisation that has pioneered work on sustainability and corporate responsibility in India. Peter Luff is Chairman of the European Movement UK and Chief Executive Officer of Action for a Global Climate Community.

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