

## Seminar Minutes:

A seminar to discuss the proposals developed by Action for a Global Climate Community (AGCC) with for British NGOs with an involvement in climate change was held on 15th of November at the Commonwealth Club in London.

Present were representatives from Christian Ecology Link (Operation Noah), Global Commons Institute (GCI), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Medact, Practical Action, Stop Climate Chaos Campaign and Tearfund.

Following a brief introduction outlining AGCC's proposal and achievements to date, Peter Luff, AGCC's director, outlined AGCC's proposals for an initiative that could bring countries from the global north, particularly the European Union and the global south, particularly India, Brazil and Africa together to combat climate change based on the principle of 'contraction and convergence'. He emphasized the need to recognize that for developing countries, sustainable development is their highest priority and that for the proposals to be effective, there will be a need for institutional support.

**Some participants drew attention to lack of awareness, or simply differing priorities of southern country offices or partners. The lack of connection of local actors with a global network was also pointed out. To bring climate change issue to the attention of developing countries, and having it integrated into their development agenda, there is a need for some of advanced developing countries to be pro-active and champion this approach. There was a consensus among participants that the impact of climate change would destroy any benefit that mainstream development might provide.**

Some participants noted that their country offices in the developing world, for instance, Bangladesh and Nepal were not yet very much involved in climate change issue on a governmental level. This was, however, likely to change as more and more NGOs

recognized the impact of climate change will have on developmental strategies. There is a need for civil society to become more involved in dealing with their government's position in climate change and awareness-raising activities were of considerable importance.

Other participants pointed out differing priorities of their southern partners. Although they regretted environmental degradation, their concerns about climate change were not yet linked to their own development goals and objectives. Some argued the case that poorer countries should reach western levels of economic growth before having to limit carbon emissions.

It was suggested that apart from SIDA (Small Island Developing States), there was little widespread awareness of climate change in south-Asian countries. Moreover, for these countries, the key issue was not emissions, but impacts. A country like Bangladesh, while accounting for an almost negligible amount of carbon emission nevertheless would suffer very badly indeed from the effects of sea rise caused by global warming. Some NGOs, therefore, are beginning to realize that, as they experience problems such as drought, loss of wetlands, climate change is an issue that they have to engage with. There is a need for some pro-active countries to champion new initiatives. It was stressed that many southern NGO partners operate at a very local level.

Participants also discussed the importance of technology transfer, and sectoral issues, particularly regarding the development of energy sector. Technology would be beneficial in a traditional resource management framework, for example if it helps to regenerate local communities' resources, or making them able to use their traditional resources. It was also suggested that although the UK government talks about low-carbon technology transfer, the effect of this must not be exaggerated: there is a long way to go before effective technologies have been perfected.

Many of the largest UK development NGOs still find problems in reconciling climate change and development issues.

C&C would provide incentives for the development of energy industry in the South in a sustainable manner. AGCC is organizing a meeting for Indian and European Union parliamentarians in India and a further high level meeting in Finland during its EU presidency. The aim is to promote the possibility of an Indian-EU plan for tackling climate change in the context of sustainable development.

At this time, environmental and development NGOs in the UK have not agreed on a clear political programme for tackling climate change. The principle of 'equity' is likely to act as a rallying cry but, as yet, there is no clear manifesto around which all are agreed. On the other hand, there is a great deal of common ground and what might gain ground is a 'rules-based framework', with a recognition of the role of carbon trading.

Since mobilization of NGOs is a core objective of AGCC, it was concluded that AGCC will organize a major conference in 2006 spring, primarily for NGOs in the UK and some southern NGOs to see if agreement can be reached on a clearly defined and unifying political objective. A clear agenda should be set for the meeting and the conclusions should be used to coordinate NGO action throughout the world.