

Nature and Legacy: Climate Change
November 5, 2009

"International Climate Justice: Unequal Risks, Unequal Coping
Resources, and the Need for Adequate and Predictable Funding for
Developing Countries to Adapt"

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Abstract

Those people who are least responsible for causing the problem of climate change are also those most likely to suffer directly its early impacts like hurricanes, droughts, flooding, heat waves and sea level rise. Poor and disempowered groups bring fewer resources to prepare for, cope with, and recover from climate disasters. I first briefly review the level of inequality between nations who suffers from climate disasters and who has created the problem of climate change by emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. To redress this inequality, I focus then on the need for reliable, adequate, and appropriate funding to help poor nations adapt to the worst elements of climate change. Given the "polluter pays principle" that those who created a mess ought to clean it up, we need to quickly develop mechanisms to justly and effectively raise and distribute these revenues.

Such funding is needed to "seal the deal" at Copenhagen in December, 2009 to extend and improve the Kyoto Protocol. I turn then to how to raise these funds, weighing national harmonized carbon taxes, tradable emissions permit schemes, and other "innovative financial options." On these points, I weigh the difficult position of the climate justice movement and possibilities for productive action when cap-and-trade approaches are so firmly entrenched. Finally, I will offer some initial thoughts on the remarkably difficult issue of distribution of these funds, and how to assure their usefulness to those most in need.