

# Fighting global poverty or global warming?

**F**ighting global poverty or global warming? Which is the most urgent challenge facing the world today is a dilemma for many persons. Fighting the economic deprivation of the poor living in the majority world or reducing global warming which has threatened everyone? The world has realised now that fighting global poverty and global warming is the same campaign. Climate change threatens to make poverty a permanent feature in the developing countries. The paper points out how with right strategies and resources, developing countries could achieve a sustainable future.

Climate change is a powerful force in shaping the life chances of poor people. Farmers whose livelihood depends on agriculture, a change in weather and rainfall would be a potent source of vulnerability. Even in urban areas, slum dwellers face constant threat during floods. Climate shocks pose many consequences such as threats to health and nutrition, loss of savings and assets, damage to property, and loss of crops. As a result, poor people have reduced consumption, nutrition, education expenditure and further, to meet the challenges of climate shocks, they have to sell the productive

assets on which their recovery depends. When children are withdrawn from schools or suffer malnutrition, the consequences would be felt in their entire life. The short term and long term cost of extreme climate events can have devastating consequences not only for economic growth and development but also for reducing levels of poverty and inequality. Besides creating risks such as droughts, floods and storms, extreme climate events have the capacity to disrupt the lives of people leading to loss of income, assets and opportunities.

The world's poorest people-least responsible for climate change-are most under threat as climate change represents global systemic risk on a quite unprecedented scale. A poor climate agreement which emphasises short term cost saving and narrow self interest would decelerate the process of development particularly in developing countries and might lead them to acute poverty. But a good climate deal which is based on our shared interest, the scale of the global warming challenge and the value of the world's natural resources could provide a path out of the poverty trap for people in developing countries.

A good global warming

agreement should be based on the following principles which will help the developing countries to reduce poverty as well as extreme climate events. The emission of green houses gases at the global level should be limited to the temperature within two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels. Anything less rigorous would pose very serious risks for the vulnerable developing countries. Next, priority should be based on fair and equitable responsibility for cutting emissions among developing countries and more particularly the developed countries which are responsible for global warming phenomena. Along with the emission cut for developed countries, largest emerging economies such as China, India, and Brazil need to join in this transition too. Further, developing countries should be given financial support to pursue lower carbon development economic paths. Global economy has to be re-ordered towards a low carbon development. This demands a reformed carbon market that has a greater impact, introducing global emissions through schemes to raise new forests as well as to prevent deforestation.

Development should be based on diffusion of low-carbon techniques which will enable developing countries to benefit from green collar jobs and low-carbon growth. Poor countries should be supported to increase their capacity to innovate as well as encourage greater collaboration between technology firms and research institutions in advanced countries and poor countries.

As climate change poses serious long-term threat to development in developing countries where people are vulnerable and very poor, they must be provided with finance, capacity building support with all tools and information.

All the above ideas have been agreed upon by the developed countries at Bali in 2007 and at Copenhagen in 2009 to provide additional resources to help poor countries to tackle climate change challenge. If we do not tackle climate change seriously as stated above, it threatens to make poverty a permanent feature of the world.

