

**Minutes:
Climate Change Task Force meeting**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2010 – 09:00-13:00
Eigtveds Pakhus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Participants: Barbara Louise Bech (NIRAS), Bjørn Kaare Jensen (GEUS), Celie Manuel (KU), Claus Jørgensen (NIRAS), Claus Hvasshøj Jørgensen (COWI), Dinne S. Hansen (COWI), Henning Høgh Jensen (Aarhus University), Iona Eberle (DDRN), Jacob Korreborg Andersen (Klima- og Energiministeriet), Jan Andersen RUC), Jens Fugl (UFT/UM), Jens Raunsø Jensen (LIFE/KU), Karen Holm Olsen (UNEP Risø), Karsten Havnø (DHI), Kirsten Halsnæs (UNEP Risø), Kjeld Rasmussen (KU), Kris B. Prasada Rao (DDRN), Lars Christian Oxe (UFT/UM), Lea Ravnkilde Møller (UNEP Risø), Martin Enghoff (NORDECO), Martin Stendel (DMI), Mike Speirs (UM/UFT), Mikkel Funder (DIIS), Miriam Feilberg (DWF), Mogens Buch-Hansen (RUC), Niels Ørnberg (LIFE/KU), Ole Mertz (KU), Philip Mellen (NORDECO), Pia Pannula Toft (Enreca Health), Povl Frich (KEMIN), Sara Lærke Meltøfte Trærup (Risø DTU), Simon Bolwig (Risø DTU), Thorkil Casse (RUC), Thomas Skielboe (NORDECO), Anders Dalsgaard (LIFE/KU), Anette Aarestrup (UM), Geert Aagaard Andersen (UM), John Christensen (UNEP Risø), Karen Villholth (GEUS), Søren Moestrup (LIFE/KU)

Rapporteur: Iona Eberle (DDRN)

1. Introduction

John Christensen (JC) Board Member of Danish Development Research Network (DDRN)/UNEP Risø Centre welcomed the participants on behalf of the core group of the Climate Change Task Force (CCTF). The meeting was subsequently opened by Bjørn Kaare Jensen (BKS) Board Member of Danish Water Forum (DWF)/GEUS, chairperson of the meeting.

2. Presentations

COP15: Outcome and process towards COP16 - Geert Aagaard Andersen (GA), MEK, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Geert Aagaard Andersen gave a presentation on the process leading up to COP15 and addressed challenges and prospects for the forthcoming negotiations.

GA outlined central discussions and developments that occurred during and after COP13 in Bali, where it had been established that an agreement should be settled in Copenhagen at COP15. A key outcome of the Bali negotiations was an increased focus on adaptation and technology. With mitigation and adaptation measures being expensive interventions, the global financial crisis was highlighted as one of the key elements hindering the process and possibility of attaining a legally binding agreement at COP15, as national economies were shifting their focus. Next to China and the U.S., the other BASIC countries were highlighted as having been important and influential players during COP15. The fact that BASIC countries are reluctant to set binding targets to cut CO₂ emissions in their own countries present a central challenge to (future) climate negotiations and the mitigation of climate change.

Despite the inability to reach a legally binding agreement at COP15, GA pointed out the positive outcomes of the meeting. Whereas previous meetings had primarily involved ministers of environment and energy, COP15 managed to bring together heads of state to discuss climate change. Furthermore, the fact that China and the U.S. had been brought together and agreed on a political document was underlined as a significant achievement. Moreover, COP15 managed to set an objective of keeping global temperature increased below 2 degrees, developed countries' target reduction had been established and the need for attention to mitigation (technology), adaptation (financing) and forestry (REDD) had been acknowledged. GA underlined the need to fast start financing as being of particular importance. In relation hereto it is pertinent that the EU gets on board with fast start financing and reaches out to third countries. GA subsequently discussed potential scenarios for COP16 and COP17, which are envisaged to move forward on forestry, adaptation and technology (COP16) and on carbon markets, mitigation, MRV and financing (COP17). There is however a risk that political developments in the U.S. may hamper negotiations at COP16 and one of the main challenges will be to secure that climate change negotiations not solely will lead to a 'coalition of the willing', but gain political momentum.

In the subsequent Q&A session, the role of the BASIC countries was further debated. It was argued that in relation to the BASIC countries, which have big economies, the old partition between developed and developing countries is no longer applicable. It was also noted that a different approach to discussing and negotiating climate change may be of use, for instance discussing the different matters pertaining to climate change in different subgroups. The subject of financing mitigation and adaptation was discussed, and it was underlined that financing most likely will occur through already existing channels, through multilateral organisations such as the World Bank. Danish focus and support in relation to climate change was debated and it was noted that Denmark will continue its support to land and water with forestry also gaining attention.

Climate change in the new Danida strategy - Anette Aarestrup (AA), UFT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Anette Aarestrup briefly presented the process and outlines of the new Danida strategy in relation to climate change. First of all it was stressed that the new strategy is a political rather than an operational paper; hence, the strategy is meant to be adapted to local conditions and needs. Climate change and the environment is a focus area in the strategy, and are intended to be considered in a range of areas, including green growth, food security and hunger. Moreover, the strategy also reflects Denmark as part of the EU and collaboration with the EU in relation to subject matters of the strategy is intended. The next step in the development of the new strategy includes the preparation of action plans for the five key areas of the strategy; one action plan will be developed covering energy, climate change and environment. AA underlined that it is important that Danish competencies are brought to the forefront, thus Danish competencies within the area of climate change; energy and environment need to be identified. Furthermore, concepts such as green growth, which are central to the strategy, need to be conceptualised and debated in more detail.

Adaptation – Land and Water - Karen Vilholth (KV), Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS)

Karen Vilholth initiated the presentation by going back to the question of Danish competencies and the possible role of Danish research. In relation hereto KV stressed that climate change should not solely be perceived as an additional challenge, but also as an opportunity and possible catalyst for enhanced and concerted efforts on development. KV also underlined that the world at the same time still is facing challenges in relation to natural resource management and the achievement of sustainable development. Hence, the uncertainties pertaining to climate change data and impact assessments should not deter us from acting.

The interlinkage between mitigation and adaptation in relation to energy and natural resource management, and the interlinkage between different types of crises and barriers was stressed. KV talked of a triple crisis, where the financial crisis, the food crisis and climate change are linked and influence each other. For instance, the financial crisis is leading to smaller aid budgets and is keeping food prices at an artificially low level. Biofuels were mentioned as an example of the interlinkage of crises, as biofuel production on one side is emphasised as a means for climate change mitigation, while possible having adverse consequences for food production and food security. Hence, solutions to one issue may exacerbate another.

Subsequently, the issue of water resources and water scarcity in relation to climate change was discussed. KV pointed out that water scarcity is most commonly economic rather than physical, where human, institutional and financial factors limit access to water despite water being abundant. Moreover, the importance of seasonality was underlined, as one of the main challenges is to ensure water availability throughout the year or at the right time of the year. Research into means of water storage, rainwater harvesting etc. is thus essential. In relation hereto, groundwater was highlighted as being of key importance as improved groundwater usage can act as a buffer against climate change and climate variability. This is also an area where Denmark has significant research and professional capacity. Additionally, water quality and land quality were stressed as being central to questions of scarcity and KV underlined the need for thorough water resource assessments, where both water availability and quality are examined.

KV called for increased cooperation across scientific disciplines and the integration of institutional aspects when addressing natural resource challenges. There is a need for better knowledge of local use of resources in order to avoid clashes between external initiatives and local practices as well as information on how

initiatives and solutions are received and implemented in local communities. Moreover, with the private sector as user of natural resources becoming increasingly concerned with natural resource management, there is considerable scope for public-private interaction in relation to research and development of climate change adaptation tools and solutions.

As recommendations for Danish efforts, transboundary water issues were stressed as becoming increasingly critical and requiring global and regional responses. In relation hereto, a better understanding of natural disasters, which often hit regionally, and solutions to handle extreme climate variability in a sustainable manner was highlighted. Moreover, there is a crucial need for climate-proofing of water investments.

Human Health and Climate Change Adaptation - Anders Dalsgaard (AD), Faculty of Life Sciences/Copenhagen School of Global Health

Anders Dalsgaard stressed that human health is central to climate change as health is 'the' bottom line and "all other forms of damage, disruption and depletion due to climate change ultimately converge on threats to human wellbeing, health and survival". Not only will food and water scarcity as a result of climate change ultimately impact human health, changes in temperature and precipitation will result in microbial changes and alter viruses and local and regional disease patterns. Together with climate change, the trend of growing urbanisation is another concern, with lack of inadequate sanitation and lack of funds to improve sanitation being a major issue.

Climate change multiplies and intensifies risk and much of adaptation in relation to health will focus on already known basic, preventive health actions, i.e. improving surveillance of weather events and community involvement in disaster risk reduction, addressing diseases of poverty and vaccination programmes, provision of safe water, sanitation and control of air pollution. Furthermore, the adaptation challenge for many countries in the South is of a very practical nature with lack of funding, technology and medical equipment being central barriers. In order to tackle the challenge of climate change, questions of exposure and vulnerability factors need to be addressed and adaptation strategies formulated. AD suggested that local ministries of health conduct national assessments of health risks from climate change and participate in emergency management and preparedness. The need to increase communication and cooperation between ministries was underlined.

Extreme weather events such as floods and droughts were highlighted as important focus areas in relation to climate change and health. More research on the burden of disease is called for, and health impact assessments should be an integrated part of adaptation strategies. However, effective early-warning and preparedness systems require functioning health systems, which necessitate information, reliable data and proper communication. Thus, strengthening health systems, health communication and public education, ensuring appropriate governance arrangements and furthering community participation in order to mobilise and prepare for climate change, is necessary.

REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation): A status - Søren Moestrup (SM), LIFE, University of Copenhagen

Søren Moestrup gave a brief introduction to the history of REDD, and discussed experiences with REDD programmes in light of the increased attention REDD is receiving as a climate change mitigation mechanism. REDD is an initiative that both seeks to obtain cuts in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and achieve sustainable development and poverty reduction by rewarding individuals, communities or countries who reduce emissions from forests. REDD has been extended to REDD+, which includes conservation, and REDD++, which takes social and additional environmental dimensions into consideration. Currently, the major REDD facilities are the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, which has focused on getting countries ready for the REDD programme and established collaborative partnerships, and the UN-REDD programme, which works to inform about REDD and assess and develop modalities and methodologies. While there has been a certain geographical overlap between WB and UN-REDD activities, the two facilities are now working towards better national and international coordination and cooperating around REDD readiness processes.

Subsequently, SM provided an overview of current issues and challenges pertaining to REDD:

- Assessments of mitigation costs are needed and the REDD mechanism will need to ensure that funds actually go toward forest stewardship and are not diverted towards other purposes.

- Reference rates for deforestation and national baselines are crucial. Without sound national baseline data, deforestation could simply be shifted from one area to another, thereby also shifting carbon emissions. Furthermore, there might be short-term incentives to quickly deforest one area in order to establish a lower baseline from which it would be easier to gain credits.
- Attention has to be paid to possible governance failures such as lack of political will, weak institutions, corruption and ineffective policies. This is particularly pertinent in relation to unsustainable and illegal timber trade - an issue in many REDD candidate countries - which leads to loss of revenues and deforestation and forest degradation. A challenge will arise in countries where politicians benefit from existing forest use, e.g. timber trade.
- Possible negative social effects need to be addressed, as there is a risk that local people may lose access to land or may no longer be able to benefit from the multiple services that forests provide.

SM stressed the importance of civil society, particularly in contexts with weak and poor governance. Under such circumstances there is scope for civil society to act as watchdogs and conduct monitoring and verification and thereby enhance transparency and accountability.

Recommendations for Danida were provided. The need to support civil society and their independent 'watchdog' function was emphasised; REDD bilateral support could for instance be provided to countries where civil society and the environment/forestry sector already receives Danida support. Moreover, 'islands of development', i.e. countries where conditions are favourable for REDD intervention, were stressed as possible target areas for support.

The presentation was followed by a short Q&A session. The issue of governance and lack of political will and the often considerable distance between government and local populations was further debated. SM underlined that REDD programmes are still only in the process of getting countries REDD ready. Yet it might be useful to include civil society and other actors in this process, not just governments, which is the current strategy. It was stressed that the central aspect of REDD is forest conservation and one of the challenges will be to keep this focus and not turning REDD into an emissions-trading programme like CDM. By making it profitable to keep forests, it is anticipated that governments will have an interest in preserving forests (instead of engaging in unsustainable activities), yet gaining and ensuring political will for forest conservation therefore remains a key challenge for REDD. Additionally, the scope for expanding REDD to include agriculture and other land uses (REDD++) was discussed; however, it was noted that while certain organisations like ICRAF are promoting this, one must be careful as not to attach too many extra modalities into a programme like REDD.

Low carbon development - John Christensen (JC), UNEP Risø Centre

In the presentation on low carbon development John Christensen focussed on energy poverty and prospects for renewable energy (RE) development. Energy is central to poverty reduction as lack of access to energy exacerbates poverty, constrains delivery of social services, increases gender inequality and erodes sustainable development.

Ensuring access to energy is a significant challenge, particularly on the African continent where a large proportion of the population does not have access to electricity, especially in rural areas (although access to electricity may also be significantly limited in peri-urban and urban areas). JC pointed to barriers and possibilities in relation to increasing access to electricity. It was stressed that countries with large segments of the population lacking access to electricity often cannot rely on finance generated from the power sector in order to expand electrification, thus public funds and dedicated policy effort linked with sector reforms may be needed.

The role of renewable energy technologies (RET), for instance non-electrical RETs, in expanding electrification was highlighted, as they may provide a means to reach energy security for countries with limited access to fossil fuels, many technologies are suitable for decentralised application and could for instance be used to provide energy through local mini-grids. Many of these RETs are becoming financially attractive for both large scale and small scale application, due to decreasing costs and possible financing opportunities through CDM or other climate funding mechanisms. Moreover, low carbon development has the possibility to create employment opportunities at the local level. Yet, despite lowered costs and other financing opportunities, funding remains an issue for RE expansion, as RETs often require high initial investments and funds for maintenance and services, while funding opportunities (e.g. through bank loans) often are limited. Moreover, weak institutional frameworks and inadequate policies as well as simple lack of

awareness amongst planners, politicians and academics are hindering the prospects for RE expansion. In order to overcome some of these barriers, the following points were stressed:

- There needs to be capacity and awareness building at the political level as well as among national and local electricity companies.
- Both on-grid and off-grid approaches should be used.
- Financial viability needs to be ensured and incentives given to improve affordability, for instance through cooperation with larger banks, possibly introducing subsidies in order to lower costs for loans. Private and public engagement should be balanced.
- RE policies need to be integrated with other development policies and strategies.

JC stressed that low carbon development is a long-term strategy. As energy access is crucial for increasing the resilience of poor families, energy also needs to be considered in relation to other MDGs and development programmes. The impact of climate change on energy needs and supply also needs to be further discussed; for instance in Ghana it is expected that the need for irrigation will rise significantly, thus also increasing the need for electricity. However, this issue often neglected as illustrated in the example of NAPAs (national adaptation programme of action), where currently only 17 out of 455 NAPA projects (3.5%) address energy. It was also stressed that the question of energy and poverty is not just about access to energy but also relates to the quality of the energy that is provided.

Areas for further research were pointed out by JC. The meaning of green economies and green growth, informal energy supply systems, growth in peri-urban areas and energy development as well as links between energy services and poverty alleviation were highlighted as areas which need more research.

Adaptation on the ground in Denmark and abroad - Povl Frich (PF), KEMIN

Povl Frich initiated the presentation by emphasising that mitigation and adaptation go hand in hand and presented a number of 'win-win' examples, where the two areas overlap and mutually benefit from interventions, for instance can wave energy plants offer coastal protection. PF additionally discussed the possibility of 'win-win-win' situations, where mitigation and adaptation also is turned into good business. PF stressed that there may be a potential to draw on Danish solutions for adaptation and mitigation for projects in other countries in order to create synergies, as the Danish projects that are being formulated and implemented have experience with some of the same challenges that exist elsewhere, notably in relation to the more practical questions related to governance, cooperation between different institutions etc.

It is central to identify and address vulnerability and to avoid 'mal-adaptation' – developing robust indicators in relation to adaptation efficiency as well as avoiding future residual damage, e.g. landuse planning to limit asset growth in vulnerable locations. PF underlined that adaptation needs to be addressed here and now, not as a future concern. Drawing on experiences from Samoa, PF discussed the role and importance of increased regional collaboration in relation to disaster risk reduction and management, and stressed the need for effective regional hazard centres. However, PF also pointed to the current problem of having too many regional hazard centres, which are often competing with each other, rendering many ineffective.

3. Discussion Round

In the final discussion interdisciplinarity, which was addressed in many presentations, was further debated. While health was mentioned as an area where interdisciplinarity works both in research and in practice, the question was asked whether researchers and donors actually are ready for true interdisciplinarity (e.g. in connection with the added focus on green growth) and willing to work across the different relevant sectors, especially in practice. In relation hereto, AD stressed that the institutional set-up in aid recipient countries may hinder this process, as cooperating local universities may belong to a different ministry than the sector that is supported in a given project, thus obstructing decision-making.

The NAPAs were highlighted as possible starting points for Danish development assistance in relation to climate change. However, with many NAPAs having been formulated without guidelines on how NAPAs should be implemented and how activities should be funded, it was stressed that much attention will have to be paid to the strategic process in relation to the allocation of funding. Furthermore, Danish companies should be thought of in relation to climate change activities which link to technology.

As a final point, in the context of Vietnam just having received additional funds for climate change related research, it was stressed that a more critical approach and critical examination of previous funded projects, and investigation into what works and what does not work, would be very beneficial.