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## UNBALANCED PARTICIPATION

BETWEEN RICH AND POOR COUNTRIES IN THE GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Some of the countries in the world that are most vulnerable to global climate changes are also among the countries with the poorest representation in the current climate change negotiations, leading up to the UN climate summit in Copenhagen 2009.

The present analysis clearly shows that vulnerable developing countries are underrepresented in negotiations, with some countries sending only 1 or 2 delegates to the Conferences. In general, there is disproportionate participation between industrialised and developing countries in the crucial climate talks: On average, the G8 countries have been represented by almost five times as many delegates as LDCs. The UNFCCC is taking some action on the issue, but DanChurchAid recommends that initiatives be taken in order to more effectively solve the problem of underrepresentation.

### How does climate change affect developing countries?

Climate change has devastating effects on many of the poorest countries in the world: Droughts, floods and unpredictable weather conditions lead to emergency situations. It is anticipated that before 2050, about 30 mio. people will go hungry because of low agricultural yields. In Sub-Saharan Africa, just within this century, 182 mio. people are in risk of dying from diseases directly linked to climate change. And in some Asian countries, rising sea levels are an urgent issue, threatening to submerge i.e. 18 per cent of Bangladesh.

Poor countries such as Ethiopia, Vietnam, DR Congo and Honduras, for whom the effects of climate change will be more than apparent in forthcoming

years, lack the capacity to cope with climate change. Climate change negotiations are therefore of the utmost importance for these countries, and the outcome in Copenhagen in 2009 will have crucial effects for generations to come.

### Why is the number of delegates important?

In the global climate change negotiations, as in the UN in general, all countries are represented by one vote, and are thus, in principle, on equal footing.

But UNFCCC conferences are more than just voting. Negotiations are complex and go on in various constellations in both formal and informal settings, with rapid changes throughout the conference. Coordination with allies is as important as debates with opponents, and up-to-date information about the different topics of discussion are crucial for any delegation that wants to play an active role. A successful negotiation will always depend on thorough preparations before the actual meeting, but being there is at least as important, and 2 or 5 delegates is hardly sufficient.

In the negotiations, developing countries work together within the so-called Group of 77, plus China, to establish common negotiating positions. The G-77 is an important player in line with the EU and the USA, which could lead to the conclusion that the size of each national delegation within the grouping is less relevant. However, national interests also need to be protected, not only because of the 'one-country one-vote'-principle, but also because of great differences of interests within the group of developing countries.

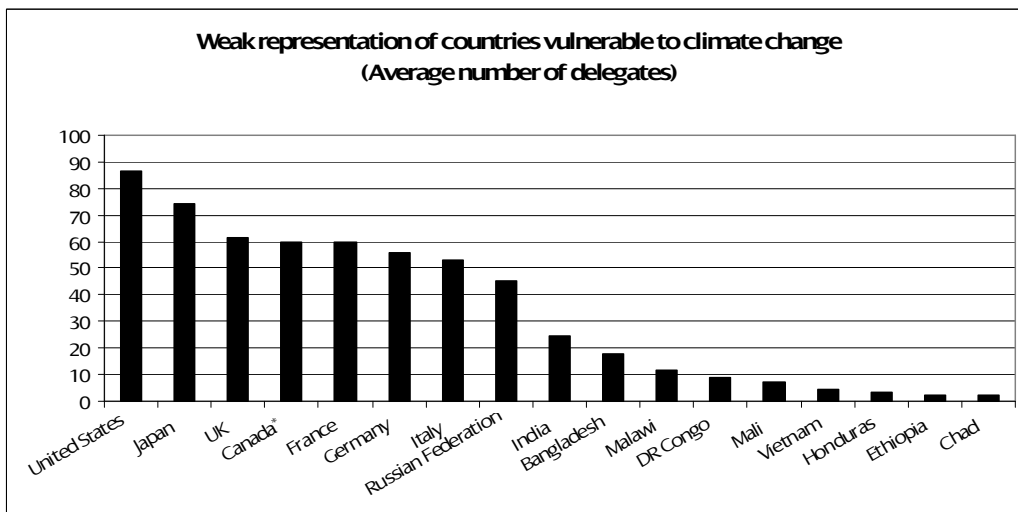


FIGURE 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF DELEGATES AT THE COP 11, COP 12 AND COP 13, FOR THE RESPECTIVE G8 MEMBER COUNTRIES AND A SAMPLE OF 8 COUNTRIES ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

\* THE AVERAGE FOR CANADA IS BASED ON NUMBERS FROM COP 12 AND COP 13, SINCE CANADA HOSTED THE COP 11 AND THUS HAD A HIGHLY INCREASED NUMBER OF DELEGATES AT THIS CONFERENCE

## Results from the analysis

An analysis of a sample of countries illustrates the unbalanced participation at the three latest Conferences of Parties (see Figure 1). The number of delegates from G8 countries - the 8 most wealthy nations in the world - are compared to the number of delegates from 8 of the world's LDCs, illustrating the general imbalance between industrialised and developing countries.

The figures speak their clear language: On average, G8 countries have had 4.8 times more delegates at the meetings than has the sample of 8 LDCs. At all three conferences, the total number of delegates from the 8 sample LDCs was exceeded by the total number of delegates from G8 countries. At the COP 11, G8 countries participated with 5.8 times more delegates than the sample group of LDCs. At the COP 12, the G8 delegates counted for 3.8 times the number of LDC delegates, while at 2007's COP 13, G8 countries had 4.8 times as many delegates as the selected LDC countries.

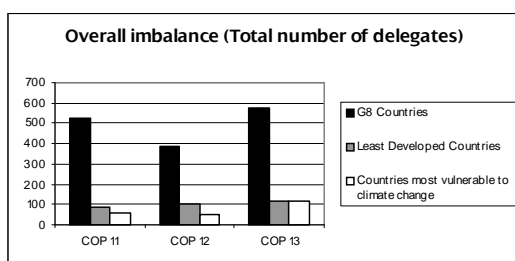


FIGURE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF DELEGATES FOR THREE GROUPS OF COUNTRIES AT THE COP 11, COP 12 AND COP 13.

The G8 and LDC samples thus illustrate a marked imbalance that needs to be addressed, if LDCs are to participate on equal footing with industrialised countries in climate negotiations.

When comparing individual countries, the differences become even more evident. Comparing industrialised countries with the countries in the study which are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change, it is clear that their capacity to take part in the conferences is extremely weak. As an example, Germany and Denmark had respectively 68 and 81 delegates at the COP 13 in Bali, while Ethiopia had 2, and Vietnam 4 delegates (see Table 1).

Some of the countries with the lowest total participation happen to be, as mentioned, some of the countries most urgently threatened by climate change: Ethiopia, Chad, Vietnam, India, Honduras, Mali, Fiji and Malawi (see Figure 2).

## The need for financing from industrialised countries

The importance of representation at the conferences is acknowledged by the UNFCCC, which, by way of its 'Trust Fund for Participation', makes sure that poor countries receive financial

support in order to send more delegates. But since the Trust Fund is based on voluntary contributions, it is dependent on the goodwill of wealthy states. The Fund is currently not able to finance more than 1 delegate per country, plus 1 more delegate per LDC, and this is, evidently, far from sufficient if countries are to participate on a more equal footing in negotiations. It is therefore crucial that industrialised countries increase their support if the unequal balance is to be evened out.

Country	Number of delegates		
	COP 11	COP 12	COP 13
<b>Industrialised countries</b>			
Germany	47	52	68
Japan	82	61	80
UK	66	56	62
United States	77	47	136
Denmark	48	42	81
Norway	26	28	54
Netherlands	33	21	33
<b>Countries vulnerable to climate change</b>			
Ethiopia	2	3	2
Malawi	11	8	17
Chad	1	1	4
Bangladesh	12	12	29
Mali	7	5	10
Vietnam	3	4	7
Honduras	5	1	4
India	15	18	41

TABLE 1: SAMPLE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THEIR NUMBER OF DELEGATES AT THE COP 11, COP 12 AND COP 13.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The participation of industrialised and developing countries in climate negotiations is unbalanced. This conclusion is not surprising, given the great economic inequalities between industrialised countries and developing countries. It doesn't show a new trend, but rather highlights an urgent and critical issue that needs to be addressed.

Based on these results, and the overall importance of the present UNFCCC negotiations, DanChurchAid sets forward the following recommendations to the industrialised countries:

- **Support participation** of developing countries in the UNFCCC negotiations financially, by supporting the Trust Fund for Participation, and by taking initiatives to give support to a greater amount of delegates.
- **Take active initiatives** to listen and respond to developing countries, also those that are not well-represented at future Conferences.

DanChurchAid August 2008

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