

Enough Is Enough

Climate casualties are on the rise so are climate culprits. Everybody is alarmingly concerned about climate change and failure of successive climate negotiations and yet no major power would like to adhere to the principle of “common but differential responsibilities”. After Cancun it is business as usual. And America continues to push what it has been pushing for long—to blame it on the South for climate chaos.

In 2009 India and China joined a small band of pro-American third world countries to push through the Copenhagen Accord at the Copenhagen conference on climate change while bailing Obama out of the woods and saving the meet from ending without a ‘result’. But the accord was too volatile and voluntary as well to produce any meaningful blueprint to combat climate change in its entirety. Last October China again took the lead and hosted the Tianjin conference in preparation for November’s Cancun summit. But the Cancun gathering too was a departure from the all-embracing norm, having adopted a text prepared by bureaucratic methods and in the end developing countries including emerging big power aspirants—India and China—found themselves caught a situation of ‘back to square one’. As Japan announced at the start of the Cancun conference that it would never ever agree to making another commitment under the Kyoto Protocol, what they finally accepted at Cancun was a proposal to make pledges on the quantity of emissions without any mandatory compulsion. In essence ‘Cancun’ was a great escape for the world’s major polluters from their commitments and differential responsibilities but the text in reality introduced new disciplines for developing countries as they are now bound to put forward their plans and targets for climate mitigation, which are to be compiled in a document and later in registries.

This time the Mexicans as chair obliged America and its western allies by creating an atmosphere in which the victims—developing countries—were forced to agree on the ‘take it or leave it’ basis. Only Bolivia rejected the text outright but most third world delegates fell in line because Uncle Sam’s baton worked. Given the post-Cancun scenarios developed countries by 2020 may reduce their green house gas emissions by only a little or even increase their level, mocking at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate.

If industrialised America and West and Japan as well fail to abide by the Bali Roundup, to enforce the convention and the Protocol in a full, effective and sustained manner, and to make overall plans for slowing down while adopting to climate change, Cancun will go down in history as another footnote in international negotiations.

Cancun or no Cancun corporate evil is getting serious attention worldwide from environmentalists though the man on the street is yet to speak out. Even a UN report, otherwise conservative even by the prevailing standards, admits the impending catastrophe, estimating without any ambiguity that 3000 of the world’s largest companies have already caused \$2.2 trillion in environmental damage. And they are still destroying environment with impurity.

People are familiar with ‘genocide’, ‘war crimes’, ‘ethnic cleansing’ and ‘crimes against humanity’. And there is a debate over ‘ecocide’, thanks to former British Barrister Polly Higgins who has actually revived the debate over corporate evil globally and is knocking at the UN doors to take legal action against corporate culprits. At Nuremberg trial in 1947, 24 officials of I G Farben, a powerful company accused of sponsoring mass murder at its notorious Auschwitz plant, were tried. War Crimes Tribunal can now be conceived against corporate people who kill thousands of people and destroy environment and ecological balance once and for all.

Environmentalists like human rights activists are increasingly under attack. With multinational corporations and domestic big houses resorting to indiscriminate mining activities in almost every state under neo-liberal package, panic seems to have gripped the society everywhere. Even a Gandhian movement to save forest and forest-dwellers faces the iron heels of the state. The recent murder of Amit Jethva, an environmentalist, was the latest in a growing number of disturbing incidents. Activists are at risk. On July 20, 2010, forest campaigner Jethva was shot dead at point blank range as he was leaving Gujarat High Court following a meeting with his lawyer.

Political parties in this country have no agenda on climate change and environmental degradation caused by corporates. Even left parties never say a word or two in their election manifestos which, of course, gather dust immediately after the election. But policy-makers in government, both at the centre and in states are desperate to achieve *unsustainable* growth-rates at any cost, by consuming the future while endangering the very survival of future generations. □□□