

## **Conference on Global Carbon Budgets – Taking Equity in Climate Change Forward**

*Mumbai, June 28, 2010*

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai is organising with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, a 2-day international conference on “Global Carbon Budgets and Climate Change” on June 28 and 29. **The conference is intended to discuss the critical question of “equity”, a fundamental issue in climate change discussions and negotiations, from the perspective of carbon budgets.**

The conference will be inaugurated by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Environment and Forests on June 28 at 9:00 am, at the TISS Campus. The Minister is also expected to closely participate in the discussions. Welcoming the conference, the Minister noted, *“Ensuring equity is fundamental to a global climate change agreement. For this, equity needs to be an operational, implementable concept, rather than just a theoretical one. Events such as these play an important role in giving equity the operational dimension. A number of operational proposals are being presented at the event, and we look forward to a good discussion.”*

**The conference is to be attended by a wide cross-section of the climate policy community. Delegates from India, China, Brazil, South Africa, Germany, Switzerland and UK are expected to attend.** These include including former and current Planning Commission Members Dr Kirit Parikh and Prof Abhijit Sen; Dr Prodipto Ghosh; Mr Surya Sethi; members of the Planning Commission's Low-Carbon Expert Group Girish Sant, D. Raghunandan, and Navroz Dubash; former policy advisor to the UNFCCC Mukul Sanwal, and others. MoEF officers will include Mr JM Mauskar, Additional Secretary, and Mr RR Rashmi, Joint Secretary and India's focal point on Climate Change negotiations. Among the international participants are Martin Khor, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva and a leading advocate of the Third World perspective in climate policy; Prof Suzana Kahn Ribeiro, an IPCC Vice-Chair and President of the Scientific Committee of the Brazilian Panel on Climate Change, Meenakshi Raman of the Third World Network, leading NGO involved in Third World issues and Prof. Benito Muller of the Oxford Energy Group. Several NGOs leading in the field of climate policy are also participating.

It may be noted that the issue of climate change has to be seen in the context of economic development and poverty eradication, which are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries, as enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This makes addressing the issue of “equity” even more critical. The UNFCCC is the sole overarching global framework for addressing climate change issues, to which both developed and developing countries are signatories.

The conference will discuss a number of carbon budget proposals from academics and think tanks from India and abroad. It is expected that the conference will undertake an in-depth discussion of carbon budgets and equity that will assist the Government of India in pursuing a strategy for an equitable, fair and feasible outcome in climate negotiations.

The carbon budget perspective under discussion at this conference typically focuses on consideration of the total stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere rather than referring only to annual emissions of greenhouse gases. At the centre of interest will be the more stringent per capita principle in terms of greenhouse gas stocks (rather than the per capita principle in terms of only annual emissions) and issues related to the operationalising of the equal per capita principle. The equal per capita principle in terms of stock is closely related to the concept of historical responsibility, widely referred to by developing nations in climate negotiations. In terms of the stock of GHGs in the atmosphere today, the share of emissions from developed countries in the total stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is roughly four times their share of the global population. The G77+China at the climate negotiations have consistently upheld the

principle of “equitable access to global atmospheric space”.

Prof S. Parasuraman, Director, TISS, will chair the inaugural session. Dr Martin Khor, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva will address the session. The inaugural session will be open to the media. This conference is being organised by Prof T. Jayaraman, the Chairperson of the Centre for Science, Technology and Society, School of Habitat Studies, TISS, who heads an active climate change studies group.