



Meeting Equity in a Finite Carbon World: Global Carbon Budgets and Burden Sharing in Mitigation Actions

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The “dual character” of greenhouse gas emissions

While on the one hand such emissions are the cause of global warming, it is also clear that for developing countries in the short and medium term, carbon dioxide emissions continue to be a necessary part of growth and development.[7]

However most of these approaches have been determined by purely economic considerations, based on the perception that emissions of greenhouse gases are fundamentally a form of pollution causing environmental damage that must cease at the earliest. ...

the fundamental issue is the one-sided consideration of GHG emissions solely as pollution, without recognizing the dual character of such emissions as a necessary part of development, ... such recognition leads on to a perspective of GHG emissions as utilization of the global atmospheric commons. [14]

The “dual character” of greenhouse gas emissions

Responsibility versus Development Needs

Polluter pays principle + Aristotle = mitigation costs are to be shared in proportion to responsibility.

How does a carbon budget address polluter pays? The carbon budget allocated to countries will entail certain costs, and the more of the budget that has already been used up, the higher the costs, but there is no guarantee that the resulting costs will be shared according to responsibility.

Development needs can be addressed under the Polluter pays principle.

Moral Ambiguity

Cost/Burden Sharing versus Sharing/Privatizing a Commons

Main difference:

Under the burden sharing conception we are sharing a burden. Some may not have to share any of the burden, but it would be morally wrong if someone makes a profit.

Under the Allocation paradigm, particularly if the allocation amounts to an assignment of property right (tradable permits), making a profit is perfectly legitimate.