

Which is the conclusion?

Since the beginning of COP15 many people thought that no achievement could be made. The problem, as the newspaper said was that the US didn't want to help if developing countries don't accept some restrictions and these developing countries (especially China and India) said that they will not accept them until US helps. This was the main view of the newspapers, but it is not appropriate.

Given these terms, it seems that the developing countries were the bad ones because they were so desperate with the idea of using their resources for growing that they do not want to help finding a solution. But reality was different. During his speech, president Lula da Silva made big promises such as reducing the deforestation rate so it can soon stop, and he said that it doesn't matter if the international community manages to do an agreement, these projects are being paid by Brazil because human security is in risk. Also, in a side-event, Sunita Narain, speaking about the situation of India, said that global warming will be terrible for India because poverty can magnify its effects. For example, in topics such as energy, India knows that it shall develop big projects to avoid oil, and indeed it has such megaprojects. So this is a proof that the developing countries are helping, and the reason is clear. Meanwhile rich countries can have some benefits with a low global warming (let say, for example, more crops, tourist places, less energy in winter, etc), developing countries will begin suffering it from the beginning. But, someone may ask, why aren't they doing these clean projects? Because there is no money. This is the reason why it was necessary to get at least 200 billion dollars approved for investment in developing countries. COP15 manage to get 100, at least is a step forward, but we still need more.

Then, if they have the good will (and the necessity for changes), which was the problem? It is well known that the actual problem is mainly caused by the rich countries, but if they are the only ones that solve the problem, it will be so costly that they will lose their status, so they don't really want that. Also, it is true that if developing countries continue in their business as usual behaviors, they will be the main actors of future problems, so they need to change attitude now, but this may imply more poverty and inequality. Just to give an example, many people suggested that oil price shall rise so that green energies will be available. Now, a big group of people live with only 2 dollars a day, which shall be use for shelter and food. If energy price is up, these people will need to use a big share of their income in energy, so food and shelter will be sacrifice, but those needs can't be sacrifice, so energy will be sacrifice...then their life quality will go even lower.

So, there is a great necessity for action, but the cost of the solution each time is higher, and countries don't want to assume it. Hopefully for us, there were some projects approved in the plenary that can help solving the problem in "a cheaper way". A good example of this is the approval of REDD which will help in the protection of forest and helping the population nearby. Also there was a big work done related to patents so there is a bigger incentive with the creation of ideas. At last, I think that one of the mayor achievements was that developing countries proved to all of us that they really care for the environment, and really need action. This is really important because some countries such as Canada use the developing countries argument to avoid taking action, but now it is not valid. It was sad that there were no legally binding agreement, but it was really important that, showing their conviction, many countries create a lot of promises that, even though they "are not written", it is easier for us to make pressure so that they are actually done.

Then, COP15 was not a completely lose of time. It is true; the really wanted goals were not achieved. But it is important to remind the declaration of Ban Ki-Moon, in which he said that even though the world needs a lot more of work to be done, we are beginning to look in the right direction, now it is our job to make this process keep on moving, each time faster.

(by Nicolas Paez)