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ClimateEthics.org Identifies Ethical Issues Entailed by Copenhagen Negotiations

By DONALD A BROWN on December 6, 2009 6:28 PM| 4 Comments | 0 TrackBacks

Over the next few weeks ClimateEthics.org will be reporting on ethical issues at the center of the Copenhagen climate change negotiations as they unfold. ClimateEthics.org has already published several articles on these issues that have arisen as the world prepared for Copenhagen. See, for instance, Recommendations for Strengthening the Ethical Dimensions of the UNFCCC Negotiating Text Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Ethical Failures of National GHG Emissions Reduction Proposals Approaching Copenhagen, Uncertainty and REDD: an Ethical Approach to this Nagging Problem, Contraction & Convergence and Greenhouse Development Rights: A Critical Comparison Between Two Salient Climate-Ethical Concepts

A few days before Copenhagen, ClimateEthics.org sees the following civilization challenging ethical issues raised by the Copenhagen Agenda. References to "non-papers" in the following are documents that have been developed by preparatory meetings leading up to Copenhagen. ClimateEthics.org will be expanding on this preliminary analysis as the Copenhagen agenda moves along in the next two weeks.

A. Long -term Share Vision (See non-paper 52):

1. Should developing countries contribute to moving the world to a low carbon emissions pathway through nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs)**?**
2. Should the long-term global goal for emissions reductions include a stabilization of CO2 at 350 ppm, 400ppm, 450ppm?
3. Will nations commit to do their fair share of ghg emissions reductions necessary to avoid dangerous anthropocentric interference with the climate system?
4. Should there be global goal for emissions ghg reductions at 2020 and 2050? What should the percentage reductions be by these dates?
5. Should the UNFCCC financial mechanism include: (a) an adaptation window, (b) a compensation window, (c) a technology window, (d) a REDD window.
6. Should the international community agree to limit global warming to 2^0 C, or 1.5^0 C?
7. Should the international community agree to reduce average global emissions to 2 tons per capita?
8. Should developed nations agree that further delay in reducing ghg emissions will increase their climate debt/
9. How quickly are parties willing to act to achieve the lowest possible ghg atmospheric stabilization target.
10. Whose interests are considered by nations when they adopted a climate change strategy? Have they considered duties and responsibilities to those most vulnerable to climate change including many of the world's poorest people and particularly vulnerable subgroups?
11. Do nations that have adopted a national ghg targets looked at their international responsibilities or only national self-interest?

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12. What are the ethical issues raised by cost-benefit analyses of proposed international climate change regimes?

B. Allocation and acceptance of national ghg national targets to replace the Kyoto Protocol. (non-paper 28)

1. What is each nation's willingness to accept their fair share of global emissions that will achieve a just and safe ghg atmospheric stabilization level?
2. To what extent is the right to development limited by obligations to reduce ghg emissions??
3. Should adaptation and mitigation efforts under the UNFCCC be given equal consideration?
4. Should developed countries commitments be legally binding while developing country commitments are voluntary?
5. Should ghg stabilization levels be less than 350 ppm?
6. Should aggregate ghg emissions by developed countries be reduced by 25-to 40 percent by 2020 compared to 1990.
7. Is each nation's ghg reduction commitment ethically justified given the urgency of most-recent science conclusions that rapid peaking of global emissions followed by very steep global ghg emissions are necessary to prevent possibly catastrophic warming.
8. What is each nations justification for not reducing ghg emissions as quickly as possible to their fair share of safe global emissions given the longer the international community waits to reduce ghg emissions the more difficult it will be to stabilize ghg at safe levels?
9. What are the duties of those nations that have caused most of the increases in ghg to take responsibility for past emissions?
10. To what extent are economic arguments made by nations in support of their national ghg strategy ethically justifiable?

C. Adaptation To Climate Change (non-paper 53)

1. Who is responsible for paying for climate change damages that are already being experienced, could be avoided if action is now taken, or are unavoidable because there is no way of protecting from some kind of damages?
2. Must financial support for adaptation be substantially scaled-up, adequate, predictable, sustainable, stable, timely, sufficient, commensurate, country and demand driven and additional to ODA?
3. Should adaptation funding be prioritized so that least developed countries, small island developing states, and countries in Africa affected by drought, desertification, and floods get a preference?
4. How much money should be made available for adaptation in any post-Kyoto regime?
5. How to ethically order priorities for likely scarce adaptation funds?
6. Who gets to decide how adaptation funds will be spent?
7. How to fund adaptation in a way that is distributively and procedurally just.
8. Should adaptation funding go to nations, sub-national governments. regions, groups, or individuals?
9. How should historic responsibility be considered in assigning adaptation responsibility given : (a) developed nations have contributed most to recent increases atmospheric ghg concentrations, (b) some countries that are often classified as developing countries are arguably already or soon will exceed their fair share of safe ghg emissions (b) different arguments can be made when historical reasonability should be assigned given the need to consider when nations should have been aware that emissions from their territories where putting people and ecological systems at risk; (c) within all nations there are great differences among peoples and organizations in amounts of ghg that have been emitted, and (d) humans have been affecting the concentrations of ghg in the atmosphere for thousands of years by such activities as forest clearing and agriculture.

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D. Technology Transfer (see, non-paper 47)

1. What are the ethical obligations of developed nations to fund technology transfer to developing nations?
2. Is technology transfer from developed to developing countries obligated by climate debt?
3. Do developed nations have a duty to remove barriers to transfer sustainable technology to developing countries?
4. Do developing countries have the right to identify their technology needs in a way that is nationally determined?
5. Do developed nations have a duty to establish a Technology Mechanism that is supported by predictable funding?
6. What amount of funding should be made available for technology transfer
7. To what extent should intellectual property rights be amended to facilitate technology transfer?
8. What institutional structures need to be created to assure adequate and appropriate technology transfer to developing countries?.

E. Deforestation and REDD. (see, non-paper 39)

1. How much funding should be made available by developed nations to prevent deforestation through REDD?
2. What goals should be set for halting forest cove loss in developing countries by 2020 and at late stages?
3. Should REDD be part of the flexibility mechanisms under the UNFCCC given problems with environmental effectiveness, leakage, permanence, measurement, monitoring, and enforcement of forest projects?
4. Should REDD projects be consistent with nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs)?
5. Who should be funded for deforestation projects?
6. To whom should funding go?- nations, regional and local governments, people?
7. How should baselines be set for REDD projects?
8. Should those who have not acted responsibly to protect forest resources now receive benefits of REDD funding?
9. Who should decide on the acceptability of REDD projects?
10. What types of activities should be funded?
11. Should tree plantations be funded under REDD?
12. Who should be responsible for enforcement of REDD projects?
13. How should rights of indigenous people be protected from REDD projects?
14. Should actions under REDD be undertaken in phases including national action plans, policies and measures, capacity building, and technology transfer?
15. Should specialized funds be developed under REDD?
16. Should all REDD funding be additional to ODA?
17. How should measurement, reporting, and verification of REDD projects be managed?
18. Should all REDD projects accounting of carbon stocks be in accordance with methodological guidance adopted by the COP?

F. Ethical Issues Raised By Trading Carbon

1. Is it ethically supportable to give entities property rights to the atmosphere when issuing climate permits?
2. Should allowances to emit carbon be auctioned or given away?
3. Should off-sets from caps be allowed given problems with environmental effectiveness, leakage, permanence, and enforceability of off-set projects?
4. Should any entity be able to avoid reducing their emissions because they can afford to buy permits from someone else?
5. Should developing countries give up their ability to find cheaper carbon reductions when they allow someone to fund a CMD project in their country?
6. Who in any developing country should have the right to approve a CDM project?
7. What would distributive justice issues are raised by how carbon emission allowances are awarded.?

G. Other Cross-Cutting Ethical Issues

1. What are the ethical issues raised by cost-benefit analyses and other cost arguments made in support of slower responses to climate change?
2. Can a nation wait until new technologies become affordable before making a commitment to reduce the threat of climate change?
3. What are the responsibilities of developing countries to reduce the threat of climate change?
4. What are the responsibilities of sub- national governments, organizations, businesses and individuals to reduce the threat of climate change?
5. What ethical issues are raised by scientific uncertainty about climate change impacts?
6. What ethical issues are raised by economic uncertainty about climate change costs and impacts?
7. How to assure that potential victims of climate change have an opportunity to give or withhold fully informed consent to be put at risk by others?
8. What gender considerations should be taken into account in formulating climate change?

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4 COMMENTS

Peter Buckland | December 22, 2009 11:19 AM | Reply

I wonder why there is no discussion of education for sustainable development here as it relates to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Just a few ethical questions:
1. Who defines education for sustainable development (ESD)?
2. Should ESD's definition take a command form from an international body, a national, regional, or even local form?
3. Can education for sustainable development under current definitions and programs realistically impact ghg emissions outside of technological transformations and what does that mean for ESD?
4. Where is education for sustainable development most urgent in light of climate change - In the developed or the developing world? What do/es the answer(s) to this question mean for

the notion of development?
5. How should funding be appropriated to ESD programs?
6. What are the economic implications of current versions of education for sustainable development?
7. Should indigenous peoples be educated for sustainable development?

These are just thoughts that come to mind right now.

kral oyun | June 22, 2010 1:05 PM | Reply

I wonder why there is no discussion of education for sustainable development here as it relates to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Kalibrasyon | June 23, 2010 8:42 AM | Reply

1.Ne etik fayda-maliyet analizleri ve diğer maliyet argümanlar iklim değişikliğine daha yavaş yanıt destek yapılmış yetiştirilir ?

Writing Essays | August 6, 2010 4:40 AM | Reply

Thanks for very useful research materials. I must admit it can be a good topic for my essay or research paper.

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