

Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy/Stockholm Environment Institute/
Society for International Development

Expert Group Meeting

***Strengthening the International Cooperation for Development
to Address the Climate Change Challenge***

New York, 19-20 November 2007
[CLOSED MEETING]

The expert meeting on “*Strengthening the International Cooperation for Development to Address the Climate Change Challenge*” is part of a series of events that the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is promoting to exchange information and ideas on the challenge of climate change for the future well being of mankind.

International cooperation has played a significant role in championing sustainable development as well as defining and refining effective and practical policies and the institutional changes needed to implement these policies. Yet, while this has led to accretion of considerable experience in the spheres of international cooperation as well as domestic policy, much remains to be done. The emergence of climate change at the top of the global policy agenda adds renewed urgency for concerted action. Although the goal of the UNFCCC is firmly within the vision of sustainable development, the practical steps of realizing this vision seem to be not yet in place.

This question is important for at least three reasons. First, developing countries contribute roughly half of current carbon emissions, a proportion that is foreseen to grow in the future, notwithstanding a much smaller share (about 25 per cent) in the world gross product. Climate stabilization, therefore, cannot be achieved without active involvement by the developing world.

Second, on the surface, climate stabilization is on a collision course with the unfinished development agenda. Addressing climate stabilization in a way that does not jeopardize the aspirations of poor countries and peoples to development is urgently required. In fact, the goals of climate stabilization and development need to be pursued in an integrated manner rather than in a “separate but equal” fashion as has been the case hitherto.

Third, in the ultimate analysis, the climate threat reflects a more fundamental problem, namely the incompatibility between an infinite and unending growth process and finite planetary resources. This calls for changes in values and lifestyles as well as the economic and physical infrastructures of modern society. However, such a transition is difficult to envisage at a time when the degree of inequality between nations is so high. As such, the long-term solution to the climate problem will have to go through the solution of the development problem.

The purpose of the expert meeting is thus to reflect on selected issues in this regard. The purpose of the expert meeting is thus to reflect on selected issues in this regard. The meeting is co-hosted by the Secretariat of the Committee on Development Policy (CDP), an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, the academic journal *Development* of the Society for International Development (<http://www.sidint.org/development>), and the Future Studies Program of the Stockholm Environment Institute (<http://www.sei.se>).