
BLOG

Vietnam Responds to Climate Change

Climate change, shown by global warming and rising sea level, is one of the biggest challenges to mankind in the 21st century. The escalation in both frequency and severity of natural disasters and other extreme climate phenomena is the talk of the day in many countries around the world. Responding to climate change requires not only efforts from individual countries, but also the joint actions on the global scale for both mitigation and adaptation.

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
30/11/2009 16:05

In the past 50 years, Vietnam has witnessed a lot of climatic changes. For instance, the average temperature has increased by 0.5 - 0.7°C, the normal sea level has risen by 20cm, and the number of typhoons and tropical depressions rises to 7 or 8 a year. Though preventive measures have been actively taken, losses and damages from disasters are extremely severe for Vietnam. In the last 10 years alone, natural disasters have cost Vietnam around 800 lives and 1.5% of GDP a year.

According to the latest estimates, in 2100 Vietnam's average temperature could increase by another 2.3°C and the sea level could rise by 75 to 100cm. Many areas in Vietnam could be submerged. The Mekong River delta, which produces more than 50% of rice and contributes 90% of rice export of Vietnam, could see 19-38% of its current land area submerged. Vietnam is among the few countries worst affected by the impacts of climate change, especially by rising sea level due to its long coastline that harbours many densely economic areas and communities. Moreover, the coastal communities are heavily dependent on the weather and climate because of their agricultural, fishery and forestry production. Though full assessment is yet available, it could still be confirmed that climate change has been the biggest and apparent challenge to the protection of food security in Vietnam and the world, threatening the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and the path to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Being a Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, Vietnam has been making its own efforts and closely cooperating with the world community to respond to impacts of climate change in conformity with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" specified in the UNFCCC. The Vietnamese Government has

actively been implementing the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol and has attained concrete results. The Vietnamese population is 1% of world population and the carbon dioxide emission is only 0.4% of the world. Vietnam has submitted its First National Report to the UNFCCC and is now preparing the second one. The Vietnamese Government has also approved the National Strategy on prevention and mitigation of natural disasters to 2020, published the scenarios on climate change and rising sea level to 2100.

Meanwhile, to actively respond to climate change, the Vietnamese Government approved in 2008 the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC). The strategic objective of the NTP-RCC is to assess the impacts of climate change on industries, sectors and provinces in each periods, and to have feasible action plans to effectively respond to climate change in both the short- and long-term to ensure sustainable development, tap all the opportunities for economic development on the low-carbon path, use energy effectively and economically, explore and use effectively new energy sources, replace fossil fuels by renewable energy, and to develop green industries. Based on climate change and sea-level rise scenarios, Vietnam is assessing the possible impacts and formulating suitable responses.

Vietnam considers responding to climate change, especially to sea-level rise as an important and crucial task to attain sustained socio-economic development. Together with domestic efforts, Vietnam has actively promoted international cooperation to have coordinated actions, joining the international community to effectively respond to climate change, protect the climatic system on Earth, prevent and mitigate natural disasters. Vietnam is committed to effectively implement measures to reduce Green House Gases (GHG) emissions with the active support of developed countries and the international community. The Copenhagen Conference is an important milestone in the course of implementation of the Bali Roadmap. At this Conference, Vietnam brings to the world the following understandings:

First, Earth is our common house that requires the collective efforts and contributions from all nations in the fight against climate change.

Second, the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol should remain as fundamental legal documents for the international community to respond to climate change. However, the Kyoto Protocol should be revised and amended to incorporate new provisions for high GHG emission countries.

Third, developed countries should take the lead in making strong mid-term and long-term commitments on GHG reduction. These commitments should be quantifiable, reportable and verifiable in order to limit the increase of global mean temperature to not over 2°C by the end of this century.

Fourth, developed countries should provide appropriate financial and technological assistance to countries seriously affected by climate change, especially by sea-level rise, through new financial and technology transfer mechanisms and the access to the adaptation fund.

Fifth, countries including Vietnam, which are most vulnerable to climate change and especially sea-level rise, should be given prioritised mechanisms and special supports in financing and technological transferring, and assisted to strengthen capacity to respond to climate change by high GHG emission countries. The

international community should have a coordination body and develop a special support programme for these countries to effectively respond to climate change, and especially to sea-level rise.

Sixth, developing countries should actively contribute to the global efforts by developing and implementing National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) on a voluntary basis to ensure sustainable development.

As a country providing a fifth of world food exports and also a country among the few worst affected by climate change, especially sea-level rise, Vietnam is particularly grateful for the international assistance so far and would urge for more international support in order to effectively address this challenge so as to contribute more to global food security.

H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung is Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

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NEW USER

COMMENTS

frank fog

30/11/2009 18:19

Playing with greenhouse gases is not going to prevent climate disasters.

Renovating the climate system by geo-engineering is the way to proceed.
Cool the Tropics and warm the Arctic

John C Lepant

30/11/2009 21:51

Gentle Readers,

The HON. Nguyen Tan Dung, PM

A temperature increase of 0.5 - 0.7oC is not mathematically significant.

Rather than seeking CO2 emissions, the best policy for Vietnam is to pursue economic development without regards to human atmospheric CO2 emissions.

With economic development there will be resources to cope with negative climate effects and take advantage of positive climate changes.

Kindest Regards to all,

I am,

John Lepant
Brighton