Climate change in an unequal and divided world: *Is media part of the problem or solution?*

Sunita Narain, editor, *Down To Earth*
IFEJ Congress 2009, Delhi

Climate change: Real

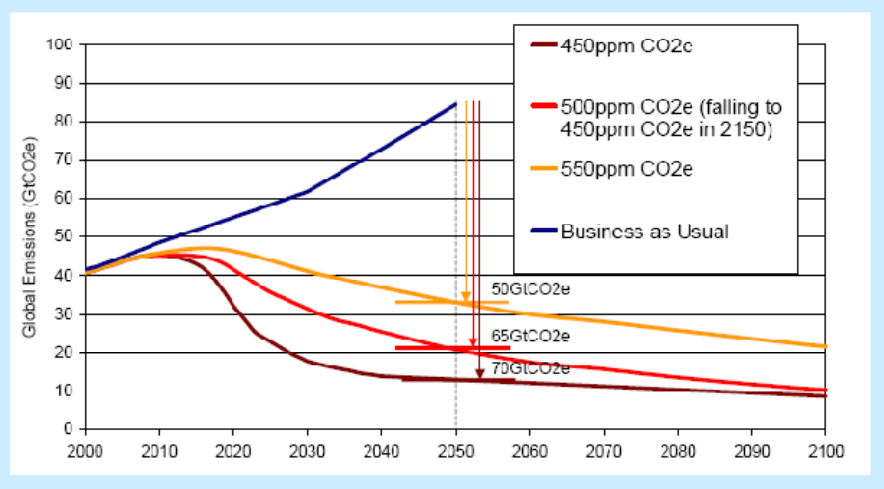
- Climate change is ***real***; it is already dangerous; heading towards catastrophe
- Climate change is ***urgent***; it needs us to act quickly and drastically
- ***But how?*** Climate change is linked to economic growth. Can we re-invent growth?

The climate-divide begins here

The challenge: 2 ° C

- If annual emissions remain at today's level, greenhouse gas levels would be close to 550 ppm by 2050
- This would mean temperature increase of 3-5°C
- The difference in temperature between the last ice age (3 million years ago) and now is 5°C
- **2°C** target need us to cap CO2e at **450 ppm.** World already reaching 430 ppm -- still dangerous

Drastic reduction needed: For 450 ppm (2°C) reduce *85% by 2050*



The N/S divide: Myth 1

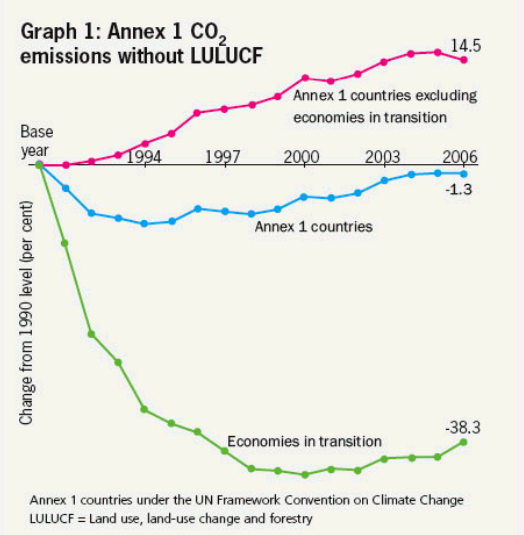
"We will reduce by 80% by 2050 but it will not help as developing countries are not taking on emission reduction targets"

The fact: Annex 1 (industrialised countries) have not reduced emissions as yet. In fact, emissions have increased.

2009: Talk, no action

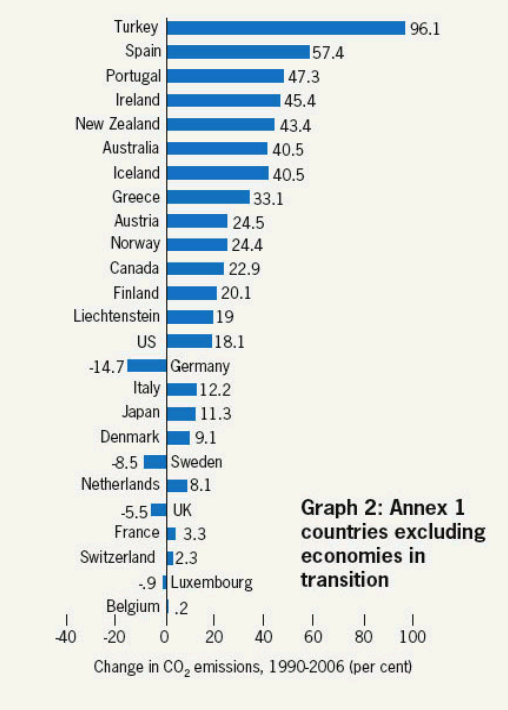
- First climate conference in 1988; Convention signed in 1992
- In 1997 world agreed in Kyoto to small change – 5% reduction by developed world
- In 2009: Kyoto targets not met; industrial country emissions increasing; world at risk
- Now pressure on China and India..
- All want to buy -- 'offset' emissions -- not to change domestically: **Why?**

Annex 1 have not cut emissions. Hiding behind the decrease of Economies in Transition

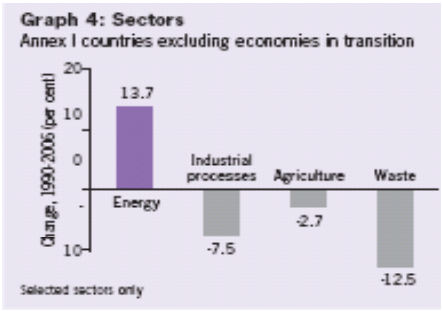


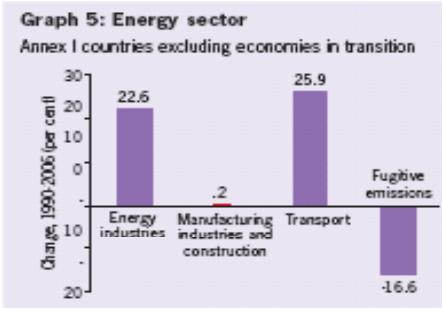
Between 1990-2006

- CO2 emissions have increased in the industrialised world
- Only small gains in UK, Sweden and Germany
- But beginning to increase again
- Gas and reunification impact fading?



No energy transition made when the world needs transformation





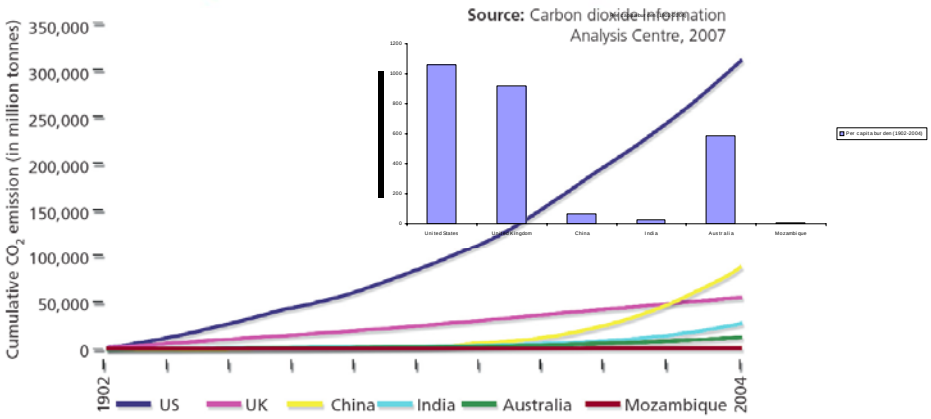
Myth 2: India and China..

"We will take on emission reduction only if India and China are willing to join. They are big polluters..China has overtaken US..They are building new power stations.. will blow up the planet".

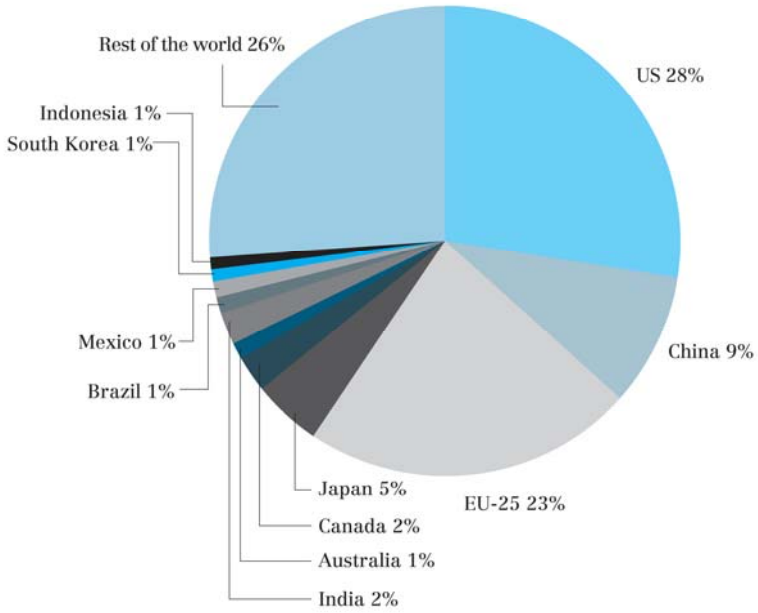
Fact: Climate change is about sharing atmospheric space and economic growth. The rich have to reduce so rest can grow

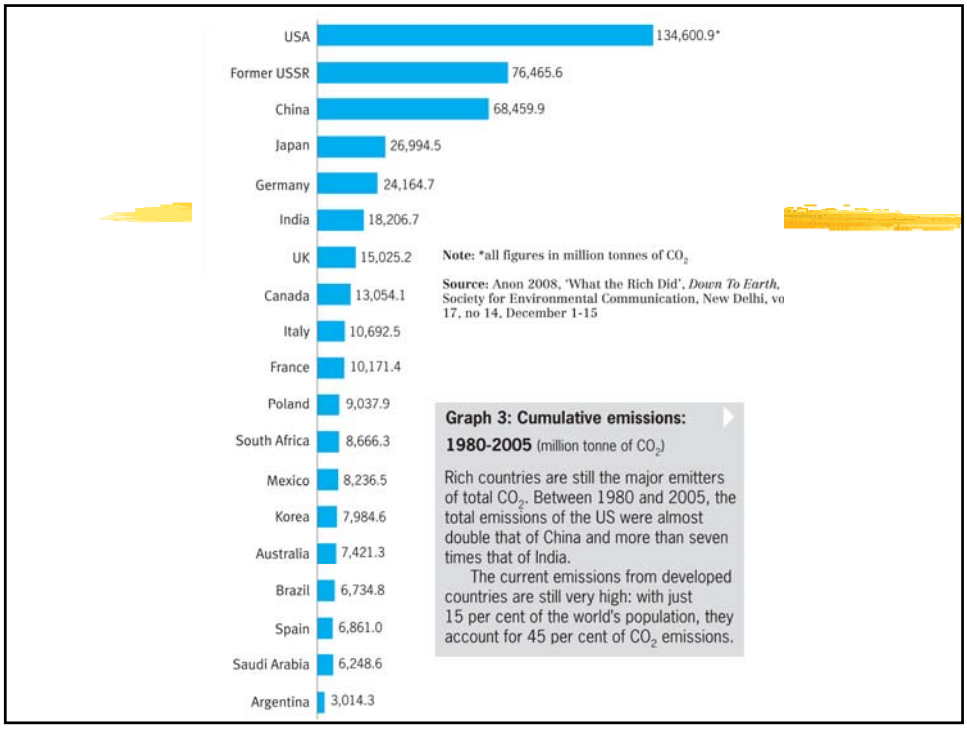
Historical emissions: A tonne of CO2 emitted in 1850 same value as tonne of CO2 emitted in 2005

Cumulative CO_2 emissions from fossil fuels, 1902-2004



Graph 2: Cumulative emissions 1950-2000 (CO_2 emissions without land use):

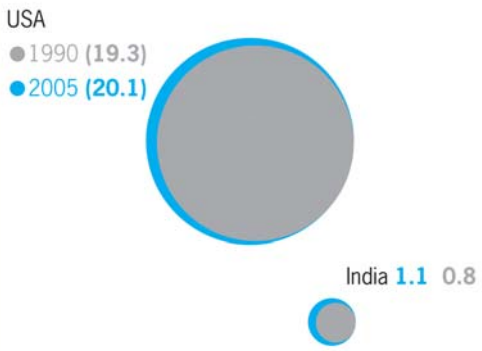




Climate injustice: per capita emissions in the world

Figure 1: US vs India

Beyond compare



The per capita increase in emissions, between 1990 and 2005, in the US is three-fourths of India's total per capita emissions in 2005. The current per capita emissions of the US is almost 20 times higher than India's.

Present scenario

1 US citizen =

107 Bangladeshis
134 Bhutanese
19 Indians
269 Nepalese

Unacceptable. Need to secure ecological space for growth

3-truths: Climate change political and economic challenge

- Is related to economic growth. No one has built a low carbon economy (as yet)
- Is about sharing growth between nations and between people. The rich must reduce so that the poor can grow. Create ecological space.
- Is about cooperation. If the rich emitted yesterday, the emerging rich world will do today. Cooperation demands equity and fairness. **It is a pre-requisite for an effective climate agreement.**

Myth 3: doing and not doing

"Industrial world is cutting emissions but growth in India and China will negate all our work".

Fact: The industrialised world has still not cut emissions. At best they are working to 'buy' emissions, at the cheapest cost..No transition in the North or the South

Targets: numbers that matter

How much from where?

Australia: 5-15% by 2020 over 2000 level (5% means 18% increase over 1990 level)

Japan: 7% from 1990 level by 2020

US: 20% from 2005 level (stablise at 1990 level)

EU: 20-30% from 1990 level (advantage of EITs)

Table 1: Comparison of Selected Annex I Nation reductions through offsets

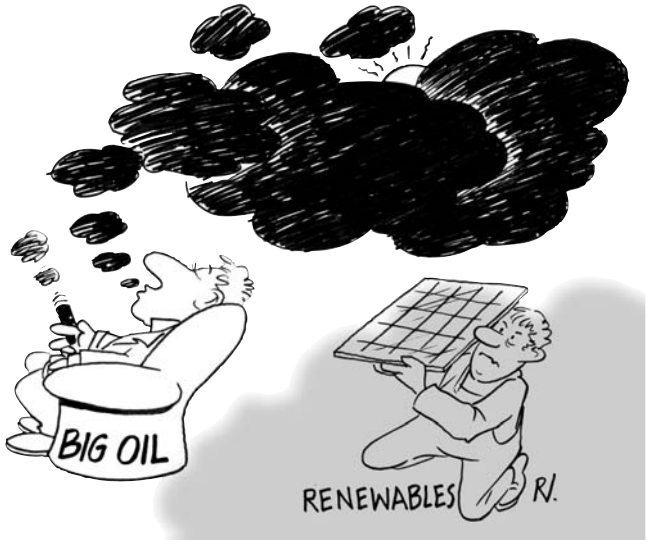
Country	Proposed Reductions		Maximum per cent of reductions allowed through offsets
	By 2020	By 2050	
EU	20-30% from 1990 levels	80-95% from 1990 levels	66%
Australia	5-25% from 2000 levels	60% from 2000 levels	In discussion[2]
Canada	20% from 2006 levels	60-70% below 2006 levels	10% [1]
New Zealand	10-20% below 1990 levels	50% below 1990 levels	Not disclosed
US (under Waxman-Markey or ACESA)	14-20% from 2005 levels	83% from 2005 levels	75%

Notes:

[1] The framework for the domestic offset credit component of the federal government's proposed emissions trading system is outlined in, "Turning the Corner: Canada's Offset System for Greenhouse Gases", released in March, 2008. The offset system is to include projects in as many domestic sectors as is practical, including landfill gas, renewable electricity, bio-digesters, soil carbon sequestration, and forests. In addition to domestic offsets, credits earned by participating in Kyoto Clean Development Mechanism projects can be used by emitters to meet as much as 10% of their emission reductions.; https://wiki.usask.ca/kis/index.php/Section_3:_Emissions_Trading/Offset_Credits_%E2%80%93_A_Market_Based_Instrument

[2] The Australian government is currently in a consultation period on the regulation of Carbon Offsets. The standard will provide guidance on what constitutes a genuine, additional voluntary offset credit, set requirements for the verification and retirement of such credits, and provide principles for calculating the emissions of an organisation, product or service which could be offset.; http://www.climatechange.gov.au/nav/carbon_offset.html

Big words and small change

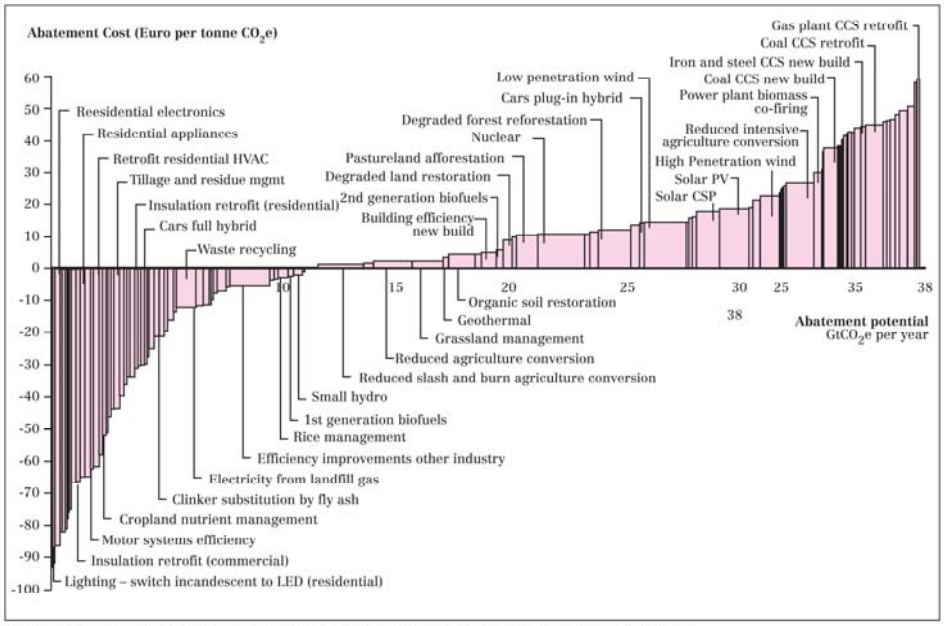


Myth 4: low-carbon economy

"Even if we made mistakes..India and China must not. They must move to a low-carbon economy. They don't. They want the right to pollute."

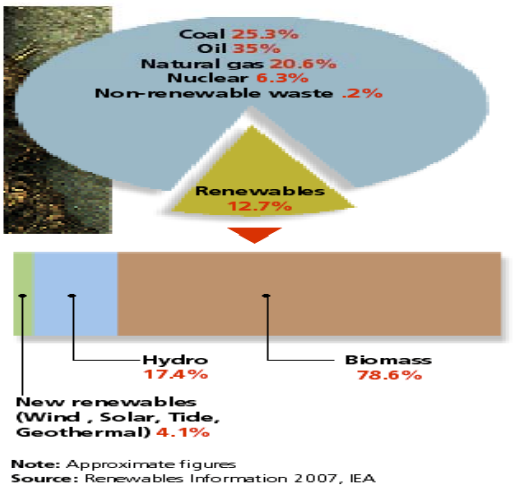
Fact: Nobody knows what a low-carbon economy will be. Trajectory of growth has been to first pollute, get rich and clean up. We are being asked to clean up, before we get rich. Then technologies that exist are expensive. This is why the rich world has still not made transition

Figure 1: McKinsey's global GHG abatement cost curve



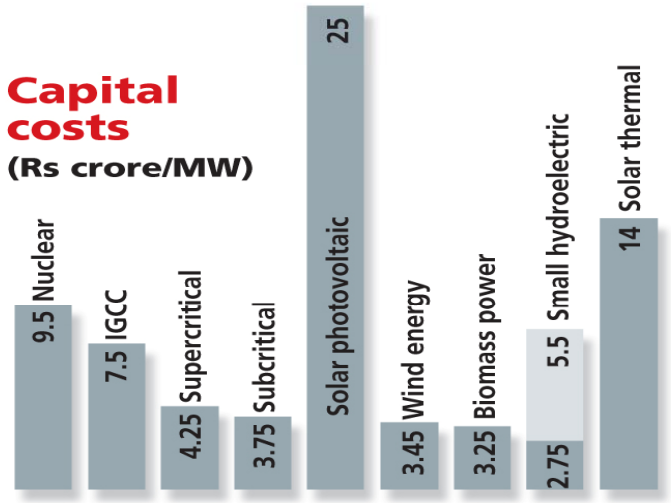
Source: Pathway to a low carbon economy, version 2 of the GHG abatement cost curve, McKinsey & Company

New renewables: still small part of world primary energy supply: less than 1%



39% of India's primary energy comes from renewables – because of chulhas of poor

Energy: a win-win
But has cost

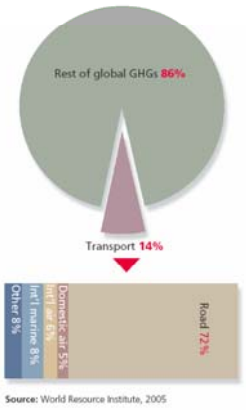


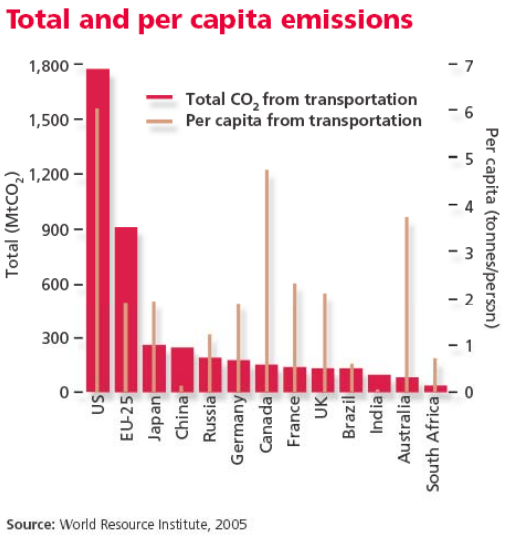
How will India "afford" solar transition

- Target: 20,000 mw of solar installed capacity in 2020;
- Indians can afford power: **5-8 cents/kwhr**
- Solar will cost: **20-40 cents/kwhr**

Can only upscale if we use equity framework to pay the difference between existing options and new (more expensive) options

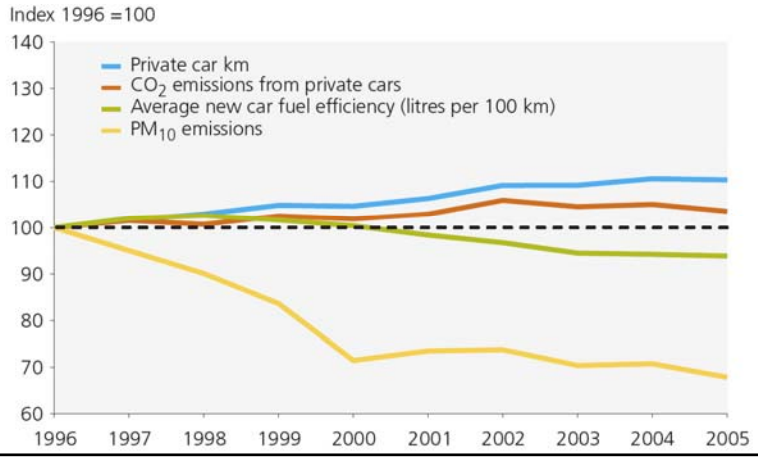
Mobility: Failing to reinvent

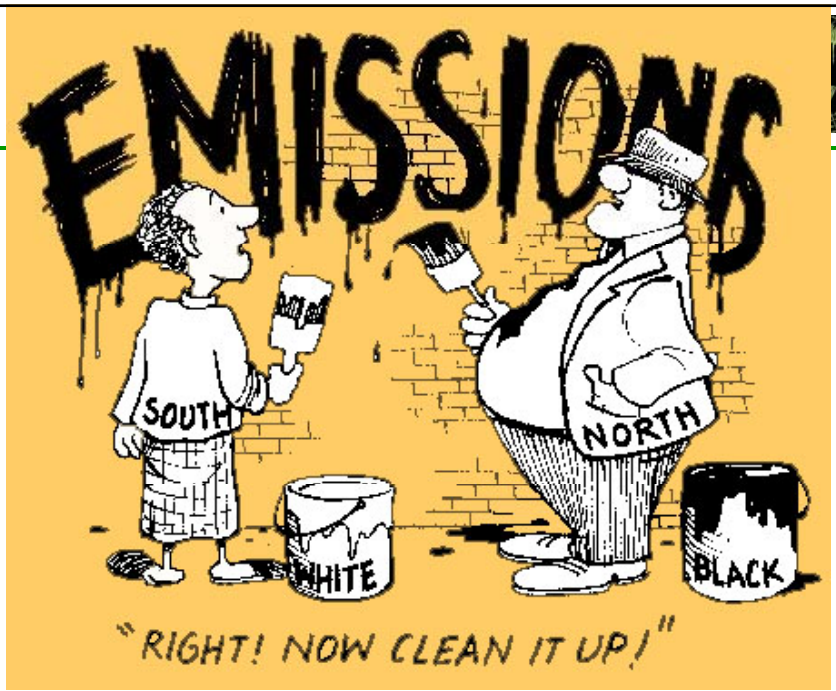




Efficiency is not the answer; sufficiency.. Can we restrain cars?

In UK, cars became more efficient; emissions increased as people bought more; drove more





No more kindergarten approach

Framework for global agreement:

- ⌘ Industrialised countries to take deep cuts (40% by 2020) minimum.
- ⌘ Emerging rich and rest to participate, not by taking legally binding cuts but through a strategy to '**avoid**' future emissions.

Not in our interest to first pollute, then clean up. Not in our interest to deforest our lands and then worry about water and livelihood security

Copenhagen: No deal or bad deal?

Current moves:

Bring US on board at all costs

US set the bar low: wants domestic legislation; wants to cut little (20% over 2005 levels -- emissions have increased by 16% between 1990-2005); wants offsets; demands India and China be party.

Coalition of the willing: Bring Obama to Copenhagen..Let him earn his Nobel..

Coalition of the willing: bad for the Planet

1. **Domestic legislation** needed, not multilateral targets (see Harvard proposal; link to Australian plan on national schedules).
2. **Single agreement for all countries** (except LDCs, vulnerable). Dump Kyoto. Domestic legislation will become international commitments..(see Australian proposal and US support for it).
3. **Pledge and review**: Political binding agreement in Copenhagen based on above..(see Danish PM statement)

India not 'naysayer'

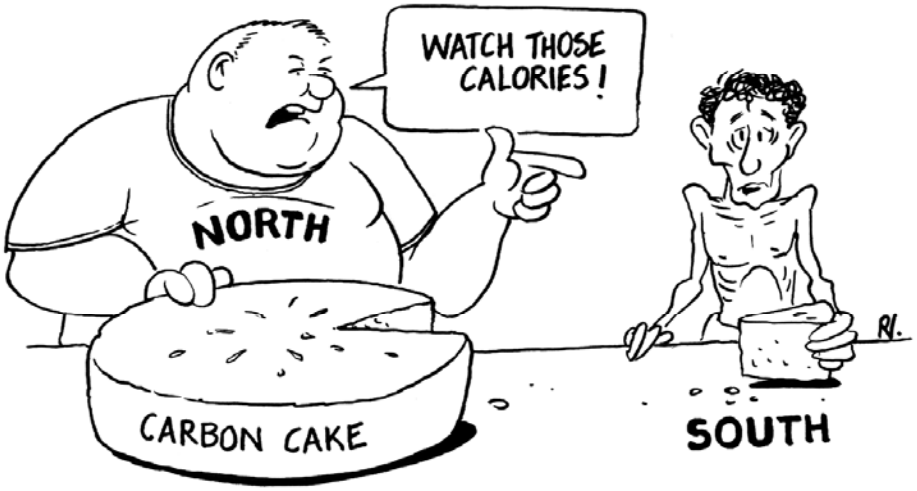
India if it rejects this position is not the deal-breaker or the naysayer..

This agreement is bad for the planet. Bad for us.

We need an effective climate agreement. We need an equitous climate agreement.

Asking for it is not wrong..We must not mind **being hated in the rich man's world**

Not acceptable



Otherwise road to 'common' hell