



e-Parliament

## **e-Parliament Workshop on Climate Change and Developing Nations.**

*Cape Town, South Africa, 09:15 – 10:45am, 17 March, 2007.  
Workshop for participants in the seventh annual Parliamentary Network on the World Bank Conference.*

### **Summary Report**

The e-Parliament organised a ninety-minute workshop, as one of a series of parallel workshops offered to participants in the seventh annual conference of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB). The e-Parliament workshop focused on 'Climate Change and Developing Nations', more specifically the likely impacts of climate change on developing countries, and the opportunities offered by energy efficiency and renewables to promote energy access for all.



*Participants in the workshop, listening to Chair Steen Gade MP (Denmark), and presenters Dr. KWame Ampofo MP (Ghana) and Suresh Prabhu MP (India)*

Approximately 40 Members of Parliament attended the e-Parliament workshop. The workshop began with three presentations outlining the likely effects of climate change on Africa and other developing nations and suggesting how best to address

those effects. The presentations were followed by questions and a lively discussion between the participating legislators and presenters.

## **The Panel:**

### **Expert Presenters:**

- *Professor Bruce Hewitson*, South Africa, Climatologist at the University of Cape Town, and coordinating lead author of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual IPCC Assessment Report.

- *Dr. Kwame Ampofo MP*, Ghana, Member of the Ghanaian Energy Committee, and an energy consultant with a Doctorate in Energy Management.

- *Suresh Prabhu MP*, Indian Lok Sabha, and formerly Minister of Power. Chair of the Adaptation Working-Group of the G8 + 5 Climate dialogue.

### **Chair:**

- *Steen Gade MP*, Denmark, Chair of the Danish Foreign Affairs Committee. Former Director of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency, and former member of the governing body of the European Environment Agency.



*The panel, from left: Suresh Prabhu MP, Steen Gade MP (Chair), Professor Bruce Hewitson, and Dr. Kwame Ampofo MP.*

## **Workshop outline:**

**Professor Bruce Hewitson** gave the first presentation of the workshop, which provided an in-depth analysis of the likely effects of climate change in Africa and other developing nations and stressed the need for a dual policy of adaptation and mitigation. Professor Hewitson stated that as a scientist he does not make specific policy recommendations to legislators or tell them how to respond to climate change, but rather attempts to give them the information required for them to respond effectively.

**Dr. Kwame Ampofo** followed on from Professor Hewitson's presentation by highlighting some of the effects of climate change on Ghana, including increased temperatures and decreased rainfall. He mentioned the increased rates of Malaria and other tropical diseases in Ghana, which have been linked to the changing

climactic conditions. He placed particular emphasis on the need for policy makers to work together with scientists, and he gave a brief outline of the e-Parliament as an effective forum for such a collaboration, using the recent e-Parliament Energy Hearing in Kenya, November 2006, as an example.

**Suresh Prabhu** gave the final presentation of the workshop, speaking from his earlier experience as a Minister of Power in India. He mentioned the difficulties that developing countries face when developing adaptation and mitigation policies, and stressed that working together across borders is vital. He emphasised the need for case-specific action and appropriate technologies to address the climate issue.

The presentations were followed by a 45 minutes **question-and-answer session**, in which a number of important questions were raised, and some issues were explored in more detail.



*Dr. Kwame Ampofo MP presenting to the workshop, with Steen Gade MP (Chair) on the left.*

## **Key Points raised during the workshop:**

### ***Climate change is now undeniably happening***

The evidence that climate change is occurring and is caused by human activity is now undeniable and unequivocal. All three presenters referred to the latest IPCC report as conclusively proof of that. Professor Hewitson also pointed out that the IPCC report was unanimously passed by 130 countries with no dissention. This constitutes an unprecedented level of agreement and acceptance of the fact that climate change is a real.

Thus, a certain degree of change is unavoidable no matter how we respond from this point on. As professor Hewitson and Suresh Prabhu put it, actions taken now can mitigate the effects of climate change, but cannot completely avoid them. Therefore, we must work under the assumption that climate conditions will continue to change for at least the next century and that includes sea-level rises and changing weather patterns.

### ***Mitigation and adaptation efforts are vital***

All presenters talked about the need to act now to to mitigate the effects of climate change as much as possible and preserve the planet for future generations.

Mitigation on its own, however is not enough. It is important that we adapt to the unavoidable changes, and adaptation policy measures must be resilient in the face of continued change over many decades. Both Professor Hewitson and Suresh Prabhu made the point that mitigation and adaptation polices must go hand in hand as a dual policy response to the threat of climate change. Professor Hewitson stated that while mitigation policies are vital, the benefits of such policies would not be seen for many years to come, thus making adaptation policies all the more critical.



*Suresh Prabhu MP presenting to the workshop, with Steen Gade MP on the right.*

### ***Climate change is a development issue***

For developing nations, climate change constitutes a big challenge to their ongoing development efforts, and Dr. Ampofo argued that climate concerns must be integrated into the development process. Energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies are key responses to the dual problems of climate change and development. This point was also made by Suresh Prabhu and many of the participating MPs during the question period.

### ***Developing nations require assistance to take effective action***

Suresh Prabhu mentioned that developing nations find it hard to finance investments into renewable energy technologies on their own, and that they require assistance from the international community to ensure that they reach mitigation and adaptation goals. He proposed the creation of a global fund to

provide the necessary financial resources for developing countries to acquire renewable energy. He also stressed that international mechanisms for protecting intellectual property can hinder the spread of renewable technologies to developing countries, and make the cost of acquiring such technologies prohibitive. Hon. Prabhu suggested renewable energy technologies be exempted from any protection mechanism for intellectual property rights in order to help developing countries meet mitigation and adaptation needs.

### ***Action must start with policy makers***

Professor Hewitson said that legislators must understand and accept the message that action on climate change is required now. It is only when the message has been fully understood and accepted by the top level of policy that it can be proactively driven down through all levels of governance to the communities. During the question and answer session, Gor Sungu MP from Kenya emphasised that simply working at a country's executive level will not necessarily lead to effective action on the ground, and that as many parliamentarians as possible must be involved in the climate debate.



*Gor Sungu MP (Kenya), asks a question during the question and answer session*

### ***Legislators must take concrete policy action***

Dr. Ampofo stated that legislators need to pursue concrete policy actions to address climate change. As examples of action that legislators can take in their own parliaments, he mentioned two policy ideas that received a lot of interest among legislators at the 2006 e-Parliament Energy Hearing in Kenya, i.e. the Ghanaian appliance efficiency label, and renewable energy feed-in tariffs.

### ***Communication between politicians and experts is vital***

All members of the panel and many of the MPs present at the workshop emphasized the need to improve communication between policy makers and the scientific community. Professor Hewitson said that the lack of communication between these groups is the single biggest stumbling block to effective action on climate change, especially in developing countries. We must invest in communication between the scientific and stakeholder communities.

As members of the e-Parliament council, both Suresh Prabhu and Dr. Kwame Ampofo pointed to the e-Parliament as an effective forum for joint actions, and

for legislators to work together with scientists and other experts to try and address the challenges posed by climate change.

### ***'Polluter pays' model, and its difficulties***

The 'polluter pays principle' was one of the most hotly debated concepts of the meeting. All speakers agreed that the most polluting countries have a moral obligation and ethical responsibility to bear the brunt of the financial burden of addressing climate change. However, Bruce Hewitson noted that while a few countries are responsible for most of the emissions that have resulted in the changing climatic conditions, it is also important to note that some countries are still increasing their emissions. Kwame Ampofo also mentioned that many developing countries will increase their emissions as they develop. All three speakers emphasised the need for all countries to work together to address climate change, and this was a sentiment echoed by many of the participating MPs during the question period. Geri Mueller, MP from Switzerland, commented that increasing prices on oil and gas would help to increase revenues in oil producing countries – many of them poor under-developed nations in Africa and the Middle-East – and in that way tax the high polluting nations, such as the US, that burn the oil.

The Member of Parliament from Botswana closed the question and answer session by stating that if we only hold the most polluting countries responsible for climate change, then no solutions to the problem will ever be found. We must hold everybody, and every country, equally responsible in order to create international commitment to address this problem, and work together to find a solution.



*Martin Gallagher MP (New Zealand) addresses the panel*

### ***Other points***

A number of other important points were raised both during the three presentations and during the question and answer session. Martin Gallagher, MP from New Zealand, mentioned that the island nations of the South Pacific will be the first to disappear, and that both their voices and attention to their impending fate are largely absent from the climate debate.

Geri Mueller, MP from Switzerland, raised the issue of energy efficiency, and its importance in mitigating climate change – a point also emphasised by Kwame Ampofo and Suresh Prabhu. The issue of reforestation was also raised by several participants, including Gor Sungu, MP from Kenya, and Robert Karshiing from the Indian Upper House. Gor Sungu stated that a global fund to protect existing forests, and assisting in reforestation would be a valuable tool.

There was also a great deal of enthusiasm among the participants for the e-Parliament process of bringing together MPs and experts from different parts of the world to discuss climate change. Robert Karshiing from the Indian Upper House emphasised how useful the e-Parliament as a forum could be for MPs, and requested more meetings organised by the e-Parliament to explore climate issues further. Martin Gallagher, MP from New Zealand, thanked the panel for their presentations and stated that in his view this was one of the best workshops of the PNoWB Conference.

The e-Parliament would like to thank the panel and the Chairman for their excellent contributions during this workshop, and all the parliamentarians who participated.



*Participants ask questions to the panel*