



Addressing Climate Change (Part 2)



In the previous article, we discussed the general approaches to addressing climate change and learnt that actions are grouped under two broad headings - Mitigation and Adaptation. This week we will continue to explore such actions and learn more about the global and local framework for addressing climate change.

Climate change was identified as major global issue over the last couple of decades. In 1992, countries joined an international treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to work together to consider what they could do to limit global temperature increases and the resulting climate change, and to cope with whatever impacts were, by then, inevitable.

By 1995, countries realized that emission reductions provisions in the Convention were inadequate. To strengthen the global response to climate change they adopted the **Kyoto Protocol (KP)** in Kyoto, Japan, on 11th December, 1997. It was entered into force on 16th February, 2005.

The KP legally binds developed countries to greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. The Protocol's first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012. The second commitment period began on 1st January 2013 and will end in 2020.



Under the Protocol, countries must meet their targets primarily through national measures. However, the Protocol also offers them an additional means to meet their targets by way of three market-based mechanisms: International Emissions Trading, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint implementation (JI).

There are now 195 Parties to the UNFCCC and 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

The Convention and Protocol make special provisions for the specific needs and special circumstances of least developed and developing countries and apply the principle of **“common but differentiated responsibilities”** with regard to such countries. The principle recognizes that the developed country parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.

Therefore, many developing countries like Guyana and least developed parties (termed Non-Annex I parties) that have ratified the protocol are not legally obligated to any emission reduction target at this stage.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP) is the “supreme body” of the Convention, as it is its highest decision-making authority. Parties to the Convention like Guyana meet regularly to take stock of progress in implementing their obligations under the convention, and to consider further actions to address the climate change threat.

Since the establishment of the UNFCCC, many mechanisms and initiatives to address climate change have been developed and implemented at the international, regional and local levels.

Guyana's Actions

Guyana established a commitment to work towards the reduction of the negative impacts of climate change by becoming a signatory to the UNFCCC in 1992, then ratifying the Convention on 17th November, 1994 and acceding to the KP on 5th August 2003.

The country has taken proactive steps to support the implementation of the Convention. To enable effective coordination and implementation of climate change initiatives, the Office of Climate Change (OCC) was established within the Office of the President in 2009.

Guyana prepared its Initial and Second National Communication to the UNFCCC in 2002 and 2012 respectively. The preparation of the Third National Communication has been initiated. These reports provide a general status of key aspects related to climate change in Guyana including: an inventory of Greenhouse Gas (GhG), climate change vulnerability assessments, programmes containing measures to facilitate adequate adaptation and mitigation to climate change, an analysis of measures for GhG abatement and information related to the implementation of the UNFCCC.

Several other key studies, research and plans were prepared to address specific areas related to climate change.

Many sectors in the country have already begun to integrate policies, legislations and programs in line with addressing climate change. Some also have developed specific climate change initiatives.

Guyana works along with many countries, institutes and groups to support capacity building for adaptation and mitigation to climate change. For example on November 9th, 2009 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Governments of Norway and Guyana was signed regarding cooperation on issues related to the fight against climate change, in particular those concerning Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Plus (REDD+). Norway has committed to providing Guyana up to USD 250 million to 2015, depending on Guyana's delivery of results as measured against two sets of indicators.



Guyana has also made considerable progress internationally in negotiating its position on climate change through the UN and other major processes. Guyana has played a key role in the UNFCCC negotiations on REDD+, as well as in the interim REDD+ Partnerships. The country also works along with negotiating groups such as the Coalition for Rainforest Nations and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

The most significant step taken to address climate change in Guyana is the development and implementation of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) which was launched in June 2009. The Strategy outlines Guyana's approach to promoting economic development while at the same time addressing the issues associated with climate change. It articulates the country's vision to transition towards a low carbon, green economy and provides the over-arching framework for achieving Guyana's long-term developmental goals, using nationally appropriate green growth strategies to achieve this transition.

Guyana has played and continues to play an important role in the global effort to combat climate change. Its LCDS and agreement with Norway have gained international recognition, and it is a leading example to other developing countries in demonstrating that the creation of a low carbon,

climate-resilient economy is possible, and serves as an example to other forest countries of how the world's forests can be conserved without sacrificing the development aspirations of those who live in them.

In the next article we will provide more details on the LCDS and other major climate change related initiatives in Guyana.

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