
[The need to incorporate climate change into peoples' agendas](#)

The Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be meeting in Milan, Italy, from 1-12 December. Unfortunately, expectations from the meeting are extremely low, given that the whole process has shifted from addressing climate change to marketing carbon emissions. Money-making is what the meeting will be mostly about, unless public pressure forces government delegates to change course.

Public pressure is however still insufficient. One reason is that climate change is presented as an extremely complicated issue belonging to experts. Those who are and will be most affected by climate change are left entirely out of the process. To make matters worse, many NGOs participating at international climate meetings have adopted the official jargon and seem either unable or unwilling to share their knowledge with the public at large. They tell people about UNFCCC, COP, CDM, JI, PCF, LULUCF, "sinks", "sources", "hot air", and few can understand a word of what they are talking about. If the aim is to disempower people, they are doing an excellent job.

In this bulletin we have tried to provide readers with detailed information and in-depth analysis about the relevant issues in a more understandable manner. Understanding the problem is a necessary stage to getting involved and taking action and we hope that the bulletin will be a useful tool for empowering people.

The first article is focused on explaining what climate change is, why it is happening and what its consequences can be. This is followed by a description of the history of the United Nations process and its hijacking by corporations wishing to continue business as usual. Those and other relevant actors are portrayed in detail in the following article (a sympathetic introduction to the "bad guys"), and so are the market-oriented policies that allow corporations to continue destroying the Earth. The next article focuses on the actors (mostly invisible to high-level negotiators) that are actually doing something to avoid climatic disaster, at the forefront of which are forest peoples and local rural and urban communities. Finally, the bulletin provides some examples of the types of "solution" being implemented by governments and corporations.

After reading the bulletin, we hope that more people will realize that we all need to participate in one way or another in addressing the problem of climate change. At the same time, that we all have the right to do so, regardless of the level of "expertise" we might have: climate change will equally affect experts and lay people. In fact, many so-called experts should try to learn from the struggles being carried out by forest peoples against oil extraction and from local communities fighting against urban pollution, instead of putting forward useless and complicated market-oriented solutions.

People and civil society organizations need not become climate "experts" to get involved. The issue itself is quite simple and so are the solutions: avoid extracting more fossil fuels from below-ground – which implies finding alternative energy sources – and stop deforestation. What is however necessary is that the climate issue is incorporated into the agendas of all types of organizations working on almost every imaginable issue, from human rights to biodiversity conservation, from agriculture to industrial pollution, from indigenous peoples' rights to poor urban communities. Only when this begins

to happen will the Earth and its human and non human inhabitants stand a chance of survival.