

Paris Climate Conference

Wanton Failure to Prevent Climate Change

The global climate conference held in Paris ended with the approval of an agreement that commits none of 196 signatory countries to a single action. The 31-page document sets nonbinding targets for emission of greenhouse gases by each country, which is in many cases do not even represent a reduction in projected future emissions.

The imperialist countries described the summit as a big success. Obama called it as a “turning point” and claimed, “Together, we have shown what’s possible when world stands as one”. The French president Hollande said “today it is the most beautiful and peaceful revolution that has just accomplished”. The imperialists showered praises on the summit because they got what they wanted from the Paris summit – a pretense of action on climate change to hoodwink the people of world, while doing little to combat global warming.

During the last 150 years of industrialization, the US imperialism alone is the major polluter with 28.8 per cent of total emissions. The Europe stands second. The imperialist countries are avoiding their historical responsibility of undoing the damage they had inflicted on the climate. They have offered negligible cuts in their gas emissions, while mandating targets to the third world countries.

The Copenhagen climate conference of 2009 has failed in reaching an agreement due to the differences arose between the imperialist countries and the so-called emerging economies – India, China and Brazil. This led to widespread criticism that exposed the US and other imperialist powers refusal to take the responsibility. In Paris summit, they used “carrot and stick” to cajole the backward countries to an agreement that achieved nothing and portrayed it as a success.

The demand of the leaders of 20 small island nations in the Pacific Ocean, which face inundation by rising sea levels or destruction by storms, to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees C rather than 2 degrees C, was brushed aside with the offer of additional cash aid.

The Guardian reported another backroom action that gave ample evidence arm twisting by the US. “When the US officials realized Paul Oquist, Nicaragua’s delegate, planned to deliver a fiery speech denouncing the deal, Secretary of State John Kerry and Raul Castro, the Cuban leader, telephoned Managua to make sure Oquist spoke after the agreement was adopted, when it would in effect be too late.”

The Paris climate agreement needs to be looked in detail. Here we limit to an over view. The agreement will have to be ratified by the signatory countries for it to come into effect. It will enter into force after at least 55 countries accounting for 55 per cent total greenhouse gas emissions ratified it. So the fate of Paris agreement depend upon the ratification by the imperialist countries which have refused to do so regarding many such international agreements in the past.

The agreement failed to provide action that fulfil 2 degree C pathway. The emissions gap between what countries in the aggregate should do and what they pledged to do is very large. So even if the pledges were fulfilled, the target of 2 degrees C could not be achieved. And the pledges are nonbinding.

The imperialist countries wanted that the Paris agreement be mitigation centric, so that they could avoid all the issues concerned like adoption, loss and damage, finance and technology, besides mitigation. They were able to manage to retain the mitigation centric approach of Paris agreement despite some resistance from the backward countries. The Paris agreement placed heavy burden on the backward countries, particularly the so-called emerging economies, to do much more on the mitigation.

The developing countries were able to resist to some extent the attempts of the imperialist countries to rewrite the objectives of UN Conference. Yet they were not able to stop its dilution because of nonbinding and voluntary nature of the agreement. Mote over the imperialist countries emphasized the need for voluntary nature of the agreement saying that it would encourage reliance on private capital. The US government hailed the pledges of billionaires like Microsoft’s Bill Gates to fund the

development of new technology for extracting carbon from atmosphere. The UN secretary General Ban Ki Moon said that the deal meant “markets now have clear signal to unleash the full force of human ingenuity”.

It is the markets that is the capitalist profit system, which is the main cause for the environmental crisis we are witnessing today. The same markets are now given prime leading role to prevent the climate change.

With the neoliberal ideology promoted during the last 30 years, the life sustaining components of nature – rivers, mountains, forests and land – are increasingly being turned into a market commodity to facilitate the easy plundering by MNCs. This is destroying the livelihoods of millions of poor particularly the adivasis by displacing them from their habitat.

Karl Marx explained 150 years ago how capitalist production alienates man from nature and breaks the existing equilibrium with unprecedented plundering of resources. He argued that a sustainable solution to the global environmental crisis requires the establishment of “associated producers” under collective ownership of natural resources and means of production that is a socialist society.
