Go Green Go Clean

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The UN Climate Summit, the largest conference on climate change and its environmental significance which was held in Durban, South Africa, brought up its own concerns and issues by member nations with regard to climate change and its global impact. The main objective of the meet was to establish a new climate treaty to replace or extend the Kyoto Protocol when it expires at the end of 2012. The Kyoto protocol adopted in 1997 was an international environment treaty aimed at achieving the stabilization of greenhouse gases, thereby aimed at fighting global warming. Prior to the meeting, it became clear that individual nations were polarized in their expectations from Durban.

The nations present at the summit were divided into two categories on the basis of how they view and understand the issues of global warming. While some developing nations and the European Economic Community (EEC) are looking for agreements to limit global warming, there was also a second group of countries that wanted to put off any activity until 2018 or even 2020, referring to use the intervening period as a time to gather more scientific evidence. These countries include the USA, Canada, Russia, Japan, Brazil and India. It was argued that putting off action on climate change while more research is done will save money and clarify the risks. On the other hand, it was also observed that while research may be comparably cheaper than taking any immediate action, it could get too late went it came to controlling the ever increasing carbon emissions. Also, it was indicated that early action t o stabilize greenhouse gas emissions would be a significant cost saver in the long run.

Though it is generally recognized that just the agreements would not lead to achievement of the 2C limit in global warming, governments have professed that they want to involve themselves in further talks this clearly means that at a number of governments accept that the need for definite action is felt by both developing and developed countries. The Durban groups agreements also accept the need for climate change to be tackled under the strong gambit of international law.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), 450 ppmv (parts per million by volume) CO2 is the level at which the 2C global warming figure is exceeded. The 1.5C figure, desired by many developing nations, now may look scientifically unrealistic, unless new technologies are invented to remove CO2 from the atmosphere.

From earlier scientific research, it is already clear that immediate action is needed if the 2C limit is to remain realistic. This is partly because of the committed warming in the climate system: even without increases in greenhouse gases, the atmosphere will continue to warm until the receipt of energy from the sun and the emission from the earth become balanced.

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