

'The Great Escape III'

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This commentary was written on 7 December 2011, three days before the Durban negotiations ended on overtime, with many developing country negotiators having already left Durban.

Durban, South Africa

After nine days of negotiations there is no doubt that we have seen this movie before. It is the third remake of Copenhagen and Cancun. Same actors. Same script. The documents are produced outside the formal negotiating scenario, in private meetings and dinners, which the 193 member states do not attend. The result of these meetings is known only on the final day. In the case of Copenhagen it was at 2.00 in the morning, after the event should have already ended. In Cancun, the draft decision appeared only at 5.00 p.m. on the last day and was not opened for negotiation, not even to correct a comma. Bolivia stood firm on both occasions. The reason: the very low emission reduction commitments of industrialised countries that would lead to an increase in average global temperatures of more than 4°Celsius.

In Cancun, Bolivia stood alone. It could not do otherwise. How could we accept the same document that was rejected in Copenhagen, knowing that 350,000 people die each year due to natural disasters caused by climate change? To remain silent is to be complicit in genocide and ecocide. To accept a disastrous document in order not to be left alone is cowardly diplomacy. Even more so when one trumpets the 'people's diplomacy' and has pledged to defend the 'People's Agreement' of the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth held in Bolivia last year.

Durban will be worse than Copenhagen and Cancun. Two days before the close of the meeting, the text being negotiated is still unknown. Everyone knows that the actual 131-page document to be discussed is merely a compilation of proposals that were already on the table [at the negotiations] in Panama two months ago. The formal negotiations have barely advanced since. The real document will appear towards the end of COP17.

But more importantly, the substance of the negotiations remains unchanged from Copenhagen. The emission reduction pledges by developed countries are still 13–17 per cent based on 1990 levels. Everyone knows that this is a catastrophe. But instead of becoming outraged, they attempt to sweeten the poison. The wrapper of this package will be the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and a mandate for a new binding agreement. The substance of the package will be the same as in Copenhagen and Cancun: do virtually nothing during this decade in terms of reducing emissions, and get a mandate to negotiate an agreement that will be even weaker than the Kyoto Protocol and that will replace it in 2020. ‘The Great Escape III’ is the name of this movie, and it tells the story of how the governments of rich countries along with transnational corporations are looking to escape their responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In response to the failed Copenhagen summit, Bolivia took the initiative to organise the 'World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth' in Cochabamba, April 2010. Approximately 30 000 people from over 100 countries participated. The results of the deliberations were formally moved into the climate negotiations through submissions by Bolivia.
<http://pwccc.wordpress.com>

Instead of becoming stronger, the fight against climate change is becoming more soft and flexible, with voluntary commitments to reduce emissions. The question is, who will step up this time to denounce the fraud to the end? Or could it be that this time, everyone will accept the remake of Copenhagen and Cancun?

The truth is that beyond the setting and the last scene, the end of this movie will be the same as in Copenhagen and Cancun: humanity and Mother Earth will be the victims of a rise in temperature not seen in 800,000 years.

