

COP 15

Ma Ah Ngan*

Towards the end of 2009, when there were talks about global warming, climate change and sustainability, we heard a lot about COP 15 and the much anticipated conference on climate change to be held in Copenhagen in December 2009. Many seminars were organized with the theme *Road to Copenhagen* trying to crystallize some firm proposals to be discussed at the conference.

But what exactly does COP 15 means. COP stands for Conference of Parties. This is dated back to 1992 when the United Nations organized the first Earth Summit meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was opened for signature. With more than 50 countries ratifying the convention, it came into force in 1994. Since then, the Conference of Parties was held annually to address the issues concerning the climate change and global warming, and in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was established to legally bind the developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. This was the 15th meeting held for the same purpose, so it is called COP 15.

The main objective of COP 15 was to establish a much talked about and anticipated

climate change agreement for the period from 2012 when the first commitment period under Kyoto Protocol expires. The world is looking to COP 15 to come out with a global agreement on significant reductions on greenhouse gas emissions.

The COP 15 was held from 7 to 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen. It was attended by 194 of its member states and a few hundred climate-change-concerned non-government organizations to deliberate on the pressing issues and come out with a legal agreement to reduce the CO₂ emissions. Unfortunately, the outcome was very disappointing. The delegates, especially those from the Third World and developing countries were infuriated and frustrated. No legal agreement was put forward for debate and discussions. Though everybody at the conference agreed that the climate change or global warming is no longer a myth, there was, instead be the argument that a serious effort to limit the global warming would destroy the economy. This was mainly claimed by the developed nations.

In order to control global warming, every nation has a role to play. The developed nations which had built their high carbon economies over the centuries, should honour their promises under the Kyoto Protocol to cut down their emissions and provide adequate funds and appropri-

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ate technologies to help the developing nations to achieve the common goals. We need a holistic approach to save everyone from this ailing earth. Of course saving the planet does not come free. But it does not cost much either. Looking around we are actually wasting a lot of energy to maintain our

current standard of living. For example, we need not drive big air-con cars to go places, the temperature of our offices, conference rooms, shopping malls *etc.* are too cold for comfort. In other words, we should conserve energy wherever possible.

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