From Paris to ?: can we save the planet?

Bobby Peek
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The Problem

“Climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.”

See The Lancet Commission (page 1839)
Health impacts of PM$_{2.5}$

**Lungs**
- Accelerated progression and exacerbation of COPD
- Increased respiratory symptoms
  - Reduced lung function
  - Higher lung cancer risk

**Brain**
- Increased cerebrovascular ischemia

**Heart**
- Altered cardiac autonomic function
- Oxidative stress
- Increased myocardial ischemia

**Blood**
- Reduced oxygen saturation
- Peripheral thrombosis

**Vasculature**
- Atherosclerosis
- Hypertension

Source: HEAL 2013, adapted from APHEKOM 2012, Pope & Dockery 2006
Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health

• The 2015 *Lancet* Commission on Health and Climate Change maps out the impacts of climate change, and the necessary policy responses, to ensure the highest attainable standards of health for populations worldwide. This Commission is multidisciplinary and international, with strong collaboration between academic centres in Europe and China. The central finding from the Commission is that tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century.
Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health

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The Lancet

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Independent Research and MES

- **Reviewed 36 peer studies:** “Drawing on available academic peer reviewed literature, government statistics and other reports, this desktop study attempts to understand the contribution of the coal industry and Eskom to the health risk of the people of the Mpumalanga Highveld.”

- Eskom’s coal-fired electricity generation is **responsible for 51% of hospital admissions and 51% of mortalities** due to respiratory illnesses caused by outdoor air pollution. This is three times the impact of outdoor pollution due to domestic coal burning.

- **54% of deaths from air pollution-related cardiovascular diseases can be attributed to Eskom’s electricity generation** compared to 16% attributed to domestic coal burning.
Context

• Next to a graveyard!
• Military lock down!
• Countries were bullied into voting for the agreement.
• Protest and contestation within the process – ‘managed and polite’ – and ignored!
• UNFCCC an important space for civil society to gather and to build unity and ongoing momentum.
• Strong movement process on the outside – despite the security challenges.
Criteria to assess if governments at the UNFCCC are serious about challenging climate change

• Prioritise climate over economy but also to recognise that a commitment to economic justice flows from prioritising climate.

• Number of countries negotiating for climate rather than their economic advantage. (To date only Bolivia did this in Cancun)

• Number of countries actively promoting people’s agenda. (Cochabamba)

• Credible targets:
  • 1.5 degrees maximum with low risk of missing it.
  • In the range of 300 to 350 ppm CO2 in the atmosphere.
  • Peaking now.

• Negotiations focus on a credible global carbon budget and consequent distribution of that budget.

• Market solutions are disavowed.

• Corporates (including state owned) do not have the free run of the place – or they see civil society as a threat! They demand we are excluded. We then fight to stay in!
A walk-out

• A walk out, which would mean a decision to abandon efforts to influence the text and COP outcomes, including tactics of defending compromised positions on the rationale that the alternatives are worse. E.g. defending Kyoto as a block to Pledge & Review; negotiating terms of REDD.

• It implies a reduced civil society presence at the CoPs and inter-sessionals to monitor and expose. So the objective is not to influence the text but to inform people of what the parties are doing and what they are not doing. Blocking bad things would then be an outside task.
People’s Test

- Sustainable energy transformation
  - redirecting finance from dirty energy to clean, affordable, reliable and safe renewable energy, supporting people’s solutions including decentralized community renewable energy systems, banning new dirty energy projects, ensuring that access to clean, affordable, reliable and safe renewable energy is a public good, reducing energy consumption particularly by wealthy elites, and ensuring that reducing poverty and achieving justice is prioritized throughout the transformation.
People’s Test

- The right to food and water
  – ensuring people’s access to water and to land for climate resilient food production, stopping land grabs and the ongoing conversion of land from food to commodities like biofuels that are falsely presented as solutions to the climate crisis, and supporting sustainable agro-ecology and climate resilient food production systems.
People’s Test

• Justice for impacted people
  – securing and building the resilience of impacted people including reparations for the world’s impoverished and marginalized people who have no role in causing climate change, yet whose lives and livelihoods are endangered by its effects, supporting a just transition for workers into the new sustainable economy, and supporting people- and community-driven adaptation and rehabilitation solutions.
People’s Test

• Catalyze immediate, urgent and drastic emission reductions
  – in line with what science and equity require, deliver urgent short-term actions, building towards a long-term goal that is agreed in Paris, that shift us away from dirty energy, marking the beginning of the end of fossil fuels globally, and that keep the global temperature goal in reach

• Provide adequate support for transformation
  – ensure that the resources needed, such as public finance and technology transfer, are provided to support the transformation, especially in vulnerable and poor countries.
People’s Test

• Deliver justice for impacted people
  – enhance the support to adaptation in a new climate regime, ensure that there will be a separate mechanism to provide reparations for any loss and damage that goes beyond our ability to adapt, and make a firm commitment to secure workers’ livelihoods and jobs through a Just Transition.

• Focus on transformational action
  – ensure that renewable and efficient solutions are emphasized rather than false solutions that fail to produce the results and protection we need, such as carbon markets in land and soil, dangerous geoengineering interventions, and more.
Key Findings

• Together, the commitments captured in INDCs will not keep temperatures below 2°C, much less 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels. Even if all countries meet their INDC commitments, the world is likely to warm by a devastating 3°C or more, with a significant likelihood of tipping the global climate system into catastrophic runaway warming.

• The current INDCs represent substantially less than half of the reduction in emissions required by 2030.

• The majority of developing countries have made mitigation pledges that exceed or broadly meet their fair share, but they also have mitigation potential that exceeds their pledges and fair share.

• Most developed countries have fair shares that are already too large to fulfil exclusively within their borders, even with extremely ambitious domestic actions.

• Although climate finance is critical for developed countries to deliver their fair shares, there is a striking lack of clear commitments.
The ambition of all major developed countries fall well short of their fair shares, which include not only domestic action but also international finance.
Civil society banned from observing climate talks – Bonn Oct 2015

Hideaki Mizukoshi, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

"We have a very short time left for serious negotiations. Diplomats know real negotiations cannot happen in front of the public. If we open spin offs to observers, we will need another group to do the real negotiations. This is not the time for such show, but for real negotiations."
Corporates lobbying for no action on climate change

• Sasol’s presentation at the David Tax Commission argued that South Africa should not make any firm mitigation offers at the Paris negotiations, that it was already doing enough and that a carbon tax was a bad idea.

• Davis Tax Commission: Business Unity South Africa, Chemical Allied Industries Association (CAIA), Chamber of Mines: “The repeated message in all cases is that South Africa is ‘below target’ and cannot afford to do more.”

• CAIA: “CAIA does not support South Africa’s continued development of climate change policy, including that of the carbon tax.”
If critical global action is not taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now, the human toll could exceed 100 million deaths in the next 15 years (DARA and the Climate Vulnerable Forum 2012).

Costs to mitigate climate change need to be internalised by governments if millions of lives are to be saved. Climate change is already upon us and while some quite serious damage is now unavoidable, certain losses can still be reduced in the short term.

If the South African government is not willing to admit the reality of climate change and that our current economic approach is failing people, we will face a double burden.

To bring about the end of coal is a political decision that has to be made by the South African government.

Market mechanisms like buying and selling carbon does not work and like other financial mechanisms are open to fraud and manipulation as stock markets.
“Despite the hype, the Paris agreement will fail to deliver. Politicians say it is a fair and ambitious deal – yet it is the complete opposite. People are being deceived.”

- Dipti Bhatnagar, Friends of the Earth International climate justice and energy coordinator.

- UNFCCC own assessment of INDC: 1.5 degree budget by 2030 and 2 degree by 2035.

- To weak to late and no basis in the requirement of climate science.
Third World Network

• “Not a commitment to 1.5 … Let’s not be taken by 1.5, it is not a target”
  • Yoke Ling Chee, Third World Network

• “The Agreement also fails to provide actions that fulfil the 2 degree Celsius pathway, let alone 1.5 degrees. The emissions gap between what countries in aggregate should do and what they pledged to do in their INDCs up to 2030 is very large. This has led many commentators to condemn the Paris COP21 as a failure. However another perspective is that COP21 is only a start, and the Agreement represents an agreement internationally to enhance individual and collective actions to face the climate catastrophe.” (2 February 2016)
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance

• The Agreement: A good Start
• “That we have an Agreement that is legally binding is an achievement, especially for the people of Africa”
• “…expressed concern about the shrinking civil society space at the UNFCCC meetings…”
• “To achieve the goal of 1.5°C this century, we would need to stop burning fossil fuels by 2030.”
• Not positive about the agreement!
• “As the civil society representatives coming from the continent most impacted by climate change, our hearts bleed profusely for communities, farmers, fisher folk, indigenous people, women and children who expected in Paris after years of postponement to deliver an agreement that is responsive to Africa realities and aspirations.”
La Via Campesina

- Peasant voices may not be represented at the official negotiations, but in parallel spaces and in the streets, they speak truth to power in reclaiming the change that is needed to achieve climate justice and food sovereignty.

- We are the main victims of climate change—victims of an unjust system that is cruel, patriarchal and unsupportive. **We will not let people wearing suits and ties to decide on our lives and the fate of the earth. Nature can live without us, but we will not survive without nature.**

- In Paris, at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), where representatives of corporations negotiated “false solutions” for climate change, La Via Campesina made it clear that Food Sovereignty and peasant agriculture are the real solutions to global climate crisis, by feeding the world and cooling the earth.
International Trade Union Confederation

• 1. To raise ambition and realize the job potential of climate action
  • Missing
• 2. To deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable
  • Weak
• 3. To commit to securing a just transition for workers and their communities
  • A FIRST STEP ON WHICH WE WILL BUILD
Greenpeace

• “This deals put the fossil fuel industry on the wrong side of history … this deal alone won’t dig out of the hole we in but makes the side much less steeper … we in with a serious chance to succeed.”
  • Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace
WWF

• “Agreement has done something really important and it’s included a long term term target well below 2 degrees with a reference to 1.5 Celsius”
  • Samantha Smith, WWF
Oxfam

• “Landmark agreement … developed countries stepping up on finance…interest of the poorest – in particular for adaptation has been overlooked.”
  • Tim Gore, Oxfam
Christian Aid

• “New deal that ushers a new era …a historic deal … we have hooks in the agreement.”
  • Mohamed Adow, Christian Aid
Paris failing

• Failed the People’s Test
  • FoEI, Oxfam, 350.org, Greenpeace, PACJA, ITUC
• Failed PACJA’s Test
• Failed groundWork’s Criteria
• The failure of the UNFCCC leads to further impoverishment of the poor and increase in wealth for the elite.

WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO HOPE IN A PROCESS THAT HAS FAILED US
NGO MUST STOP THE DAMN SPIN
WE NEED TO ACT WITH PEOPLE – not on behalf of people!
Carbon Tracker Initiative

- London based Carbon Tracker Initiative calculated the proportion of proven fossil fuel reserves that could be consumed to have an 80% chance of hitting the 2 degree target...found that proven reserves are five times over this limit. So some 80% of those reserves would need to stay in the ground.
Locking SA into CC! Coal IPP’s

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Whatever remaining carbon budget we have must be used for a just transition towards socially owned and controlled renewable energy.
Based upon outcomes of Paris we cannot save the planet. BONN – was the funeral of Democracy! Paris – we buried the the climate! Africa is going to BURN. Thank you

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