

## DG Blog

Dr R K Pachauri, December 13, 2010

The 16th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC which was held in Cancun, Mexico concluded last week with a set of positive outcomes, which do not directly lead to action, but have certainly revived hopes of an acceptable agreement that could come into place next year at the COP to be held in Durban, South Africa. What has been particularly heartening in my view has been the spirit that prevailed in the Cancun meeting, wherein most of the countries involved in the negotiations displayed a commitment to move forward. In my view much of the credit for this goes to the host country led by President Calderón, his Foreign Secretary Ms. Patricia Espinosa and the Environment Minister Juan Rafael Elvira. It is surprising to see that the atmosphere created by the Chair of the conference, which in this case was Mexico, would have a profound effect on the frame of mind of the delegations which participated in such a meeting. The physical facilities and general scenery all around are also factors that human beings cannot be immune to. Cancun is a beautiful, clean and well maintained seaside resort which presented such a contrast to not only the weather in Copenhagen last year but the appalling conditions and arrangements that existed there.

Often colleagues feel that we have far too many events taking place in TERI, and perhaps there is some justification for the expression of this concern. We should of course be very discriminating in decisions to take on responsibility for organising events, but often these have multiple benefits. Firstly, they allow us opportunities to interact with the outside world. Secondly, our own profile gets enhanced, particularly with events which get noticed by the public, and then, particularly in the case of project related events, there is considerable professional work that goes as inputs to the event, which helps us in several ways. We need to ensure that our events are well organised and managed, so that routine tasks are taken care of without too much strain and imposition on professional time. For instance, we should avoid any semblance of chaos such as in the movie called "Monsoon Wedding" (which of course I have not seen except for a few sequences), or the manner in which the preparations for the Commonwealth Games were managed.

I am harping on these issues, because now TERI organises a number of such major events including the DSDS and we should not minimise the importance of infrastructure, physical conditions and arrangements as well as the general ambience within which our events are organised. These play a vital role in creating the right conditions for professional success of any get-together or meeting. What I find particularly heartening about Cancun is the fact that despite all the motivated attacks that climate science, the IPCC and I personally have received in the past one year, the concerns highlighted by the IPCC and the opportunities for action which have been assessed were clearly driving the agenda in Cancun. If this powerful reality could remain intact, I feel the world will take effective action to deal with climate change. In the past few years certainly awareness that has grown on the subject of climate change has created a will to act, which cannot be lost on anyone, even the greatest cynic dealing with climate change issues. To that extent I feel proud of the fact that the work of the IPCC would remain unprecedented as a major "social innovation", a term used by the InterAcademy Council, because climate change would represent the most wide ranging set of actions motivated by scientific assessment and revealed knowledge. This fact should give all TERI colleagues a sense of fulfilment and determination, because as a knowledge organisation we too can make a difference not only in India but in other parts of the world as well.