

The reduction of the carbon emissions



As we know that most of the least-developed countries (LDC) or called developing countries are in the areas with harsh natural conditions. To some extent, poor natural resources limit those countries developments. It is different from the least-developed countries that the developed countries have favorable geographical and environmental advantages. They have emitted greenhouse gases for over 200 years without any limitations. The average global temperature during the 1980s exceeded that of any other decade since reliable temperature recording began a century ago, and 1990 was the warmest year on record (Hansen, 1991). The consensus among climate scientists on the threshold marker for dangerous climate change that consensus identifies 2°C (3.6°F) as a reasonable upper-bound (UNDP, 2008). The issues above explain the global warming problem is becoming more serious and threat human survival in the 21st century. And the first measurement to decline the global warming is reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. Therefore, we have placed a challenge in front of the least-developed countries. How do they balance development and reduction of carbon emission is a big problem. Therefore, I think the reduction of carbon emission is the most serious obstacle to development faced by most least-developed countries in the 21st century. In this paper, I discuss this problem from two sides: one is the internal causes of large carbon emission, and the other is the conflicts with developed countries on reducing of carbon emission.

The global warming seems like a collective problem which faced by all the people in the world. However, for different interests both of the developed country and least-developed country are not willing to reduce their carbon

emission. Although both of the two camps face the same problem, they still have some conflicts are inner of them. Because, limiting the emission of greenhouse gases will constraint the development of a country in some degrees. At the meanwhile, the reduction emission of greenhouse gases has been becoming a hot potato.

In the least-developed countries, if agricultural productivity were drastically reduced by climate change, the cost of living would rise by one or two percent, and at a time when per capita income will likely have doubled. In developing countries, in contrast, as much as a third of GNP and half the population currently depends on agriculture. They may still be vulnerable to climate change for many years to come (Schelling, 1997). However, agriculture contributes only a small percentage-three percent in the United States-of national income. But agriculture is practically the only sector of the economy affected by climate (Schelling, 1997). So the developing countries will concern more about the effects of climate change on agriculture, if the developed countries have large emission of greenhouse gases which makes the climate becoming worse and worse.

Another problem for the least-developed countries is the great amount of population. The large population will have more consumption of carbon productions. In other words, larger population will cause more emission of greenhouse gases. For such amount of population, the developing countries will make a big expense on the improvement of climate. So where the money comes from is a problem. Furthermore, a large population will cause poverty which will cause greater waste of resources and larger emission of greenhouse gases.

For the developed countries, the problems are more complex. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution the concentration of CO₂, the principal greenhouse gas affected by man's actions, has risen by 25 percent (Bongaarts, 1992). The developed countries have very high level of industrialization which means they have very big emission of greenhouse gases. Bongaarts' article gives the evidence that in 1985 per capita CO₂ emission from the developed world was more than five times higher than in the developing world. It seems the developed countries have fewer problems be faced than the developing countries, because the developed countries have basically eradicated poverty in their countries. However, it is not all the case, because the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) asks the contracting countries to fulfill their obligations. And the obligations of the developed countries are delivering the fund assistances to the developing countries. But few of the developed countries will to give fund assistance to the developing countries, because it would affect those countries' GDP in a certain extent. Therefore, the least-developed countries will become much harder on reducing the carbon emission without any assistance from the developed countries.

Also the least-developed countries are lost in the transfer of carbon emissions from the developed countries. For example, the vast majority of the world's MP3 players are made in China, where the main power source is coal. Manufacturing a single MP3 player releases about 17 pounds of planet-warming carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Carbon leakage^{1/4} This is the idea that countries can reduce their own emissions by sending dirty industries abroad. The same countries may still import the finished goods

from the developing world, creating a situation in which global carbon emissions rise, even as individual nations meet their targets (Spencer, 2007). For the least-developed countries, on the surface, their GDP has increased, but actually their environment was damaged permanently.

So here both of the least-developed countries and developed countries are turning the core to the agreement which can deal the conflicts of greenhouse gases emission, funds, and distribute the responsibilities. The suggested measurement given by Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations says “ the world urgently needs to step up action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. Industrialized countries need to make deeper emission reductions. There needs to be further engagement of developing countries, as well as incentives for them to limit their emissions while safeguarding economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty.”(UNDP, 2007) Although Ban’s words give the suggested solutions to the global warming, he doesn’t give precise standards for the developed countries. Either, this is the bargaining topic in Copenhagen Climate Talks.

China, India and other developing countries are currently exempted from the Kyoto Protocol, because they did not have large-scale emissions of greenhouse gases in the industrialization which caused by the current global climate change. However, some critics argued that China, India, and other large developing countries will soon become the large-scale greenhouse gas emissions countries. Also, if the Kyoto Protocol doesn’t limit these countries who are outside the treaty now, it cannot achieve greenhouse gas reductions, and even accelerate the warming because it is possible that developed countries will move their carbon-intensive industries outside to

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the developing countries. For example the developed country invested in a developing country, and builds their carbon-intensive economy in the developing country which equals the developed country transfers their carbon emissions to the developing country. Although the treaty allows the developed countries can buy the carbon emissions from the developing countries, the developed countries prefer to investment because the costs of labor are cheaper and the environment of their countries won't be polluted. But for the developing countries, these kind of investments most likely harms to their development in the long-run.

As conclusion, although it is difficult to find a balance between reduction of carbon emission and development for the least-developed countries, but the sustainable development is a long-run plan for every country. In the short run, the investment on the improvement of technology to reduce carbon emission will be paid in the future. And either developed countries or developing countries should strengthen international cooperation because we have a same target, and I hope the farce of Copenhagen won't repeat itself in the future.