

Preface

On January 11, 2013, the US Global Change Research Program released the National Climate Assessment Development Advisory Committee Draft Climate Assessment Report. The Committee coordinates federal research on changes in the global environment and their implications for society. Thirteen US government departments and agencies participate in the Research Program. The Executive Office of the President of the United States oversees this program. The Draft Report concludes that the evidence for a changing climate has strengthened considerably since its last Climate Assessment Report of 2009. Most significantly, the Draft Report concludes that observed climatic changes are having wide-ranging impacts in every region of the United States and most sectors of its economy. Climate change is no longer a future threat. It is happening now. This Draft Report changes the tone of the climate change debate significantly. In an appendix to Chapter 1, we reproduce the Draft Report's Introduction, which is entitled "Letter to the American People." The Joint US–China Statement on Climate Change is also significant, and notes "the overwhelming scientific consensus about *anthropogenic* climate change and its worsening impacts."¹

Climate change represents an unprecedented global challenge. Because climate change raises scientific, economic, financial, social, political, and legal issues, it requires interdisciplinary research. This book analyzes the challenges that climate change poses for global economic governance, integrating economic, financial, and legal perspectives. Our research reveals that several policies are misguided and some are just plain backwards.

The division of countries into developed and developing is too simplistic to address the complex issues that arise from climate change. If one is to categorize countries according to their capacity for mitigation and adaptation, or according to their vulnerability to climate change, then one must use a more sophisticated categorization. We propose one.

The role of intellectual property rights with respect to technology dissemination should be analyzed according to different types of technologies. They may create obstacles to technology dissemination where plant varieties are concerned, which has implications for the capacity of subsistence farmers to adapt to a more variable climate. However, they are less likely to create obstacles to the diffusion of clean energy technologies. Nevertheless, many developing countries insist that intellectual property rights are an obstacle to the adoption of clean energy technologies, while other developing countries agree to stricter intellectual property rights for new plant varieties. These policy stances are backwards.

¹ Joint US–China Statement on Climate Change, Media Note, Office of the Spokesperson, Washington, D.C., April 13, 2013 <<http://www.state.gov/t/pa/prs/ps/2013/04/207465.htm>> (accessed April 15, 2013).

Developing countries insist that developed countries pay for climate finance. However, subsidies for fossil fuels in developing countries are four times the amount of climate financing that they seek for mitigation and adaptation actions. In WTO subsidies law, the legality of clean energy subsidies is uncertain. At the same time, WTO subsidies law permits Members to apply countervailing duties on imports of clean energy technologies, which raises their cost. Lowering the cost of fossil fuels, while increasing the cost of clean energy technologies, are also backward policies.

These policy incongruencies need to be addressed if multilateral climate change negotiations are to advance towards effective solutions. We hope that this book will contribute to that end.

PowerPoint slides to accompany this book are available at <http://cdei.itam.mx/medios_digitales/educacion.php#materiales>.

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