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## At Cancun, MPs have some say

By Keya Acharya

***It's an impressive-looking lobby, comprising some hundred MPs and MLAs from all major political parties of the legislatures of the G8, European Parliament, together with Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa, and its latest entrant, Korea. Several of them are prominent internationally.***

The body calls itself GLOBE International, or Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment, convening, since 2005, twice a year to discuss a series of focused policy dialogues in the US Senate, the UK House of Commons, the Brazilian Senate, the German Bundestag, the Japanese Diet, the Italian Senate, the Danish Folketing, and now most recently, the Mexican Senate. The dialogues, mainly on trade, environment, and climate change, have included the heads of state of each convening country, and have essentially tried to push national laws into being so they coincide with international environmental legislation.

### Testing the proposals

GLOBE recently convened in the Mexican Senate, two days prior to the commencement of high-level delegation climate talks at Cancun mid-December 2010. Sixty-three MPs and MLAs from 16 of the G20 major economies, and the EU Parliament, came up with three guidelines to help their ministers take the historically divisive climate talks forward. GLOBE says it had been 'testing' their proposal for the last two years.

GLOBE suggested that a politically acceptable deal would be to get all members of COP-16 (Conference of the Parties in Cancun) to agree to control global average temperature increase to below two degrees Celsius with a clause to revise this percentage in the future; and a decision under the 'Kyoto Track' that committed Annex 1 (industrialised countries) parties to a second commitment period (2013-2017).

Additionally, GLOBE suggested a new parallel treaty under the 'Convention Track' that placed 'comparable commitments' on the US without its joining the Kyoto Protocol, and to provide finance and technology to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation programmes. This parallel agreement should also 'formalise' developing-country actions that allow international transparency on domestic actions taken.

But GLOBE's pre-appointed meeting to hand over its suggestions to Mexican President Felipe Calderon, UNFCCC president Christiana Figueres and COP-16 president Patricia Espinosa, fell apart because of 'Mexico's internal politics', as South African MP Mlungisi Lulu Johnson put it. With the friction apparent at the meeting itself, where only opposition party MPs were present, and with the Senate Speaker Manlio Fabio Beltrones Rivera openly criticising Calderon's climate change policies, it is hardly surprising that GLOBE'S demands fell into the 'cenotes' (deep, natural water pools in the rocks) surrounding Cancun.

GLOBE is now pushing for official accreditation to the COP talks in the future. The interesting part is that the carefully couched agreement of sorts sorted out at Cancun incorporates at least two of GLOBE's suggestions on the US becoming part of a parallel process, with Kyoto parties continuing as before and some noise about having developing countries fall within external monitoring for their emission reduction programmes. What did not see the light of the sun was a legally binding commitment for the US or other 'Kyoto renegades'. That has been left to be fought over at Durban in 2011.

It might also bode well for upgrading the quality of the national debate and monitoring of climate policies if MPs were familiarised on the extremely complicated nuances that international climate talks are shaping into. The problem is when national MPs seem unable to leave party politics behind when wanting to be part of a global agenda.

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Certainly, it would do India no harm at all to be part of the process.

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