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MAY
Cooperative
Action
Issue

Eco has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at major international conferences since the Stockholm environment Conference in 1972. This issue is produced co-operatively by CAN groups attending SB-24 in Bonn, May 2006.

MADAME PRESIDENT: LIVE UP OR STEP DOWN

Eco has heard distressing news from Canada. When we all left Montreal in December, the clear message was that the Parties gave themselves a strong mandate to strengthen the Kyoto regime and to work together to prevent dangerous climate change, setting ourselves a roadmap to bring us there.

But now we hear that your government has officially decided not to meet its emission reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. We have also witnessed the abandonment of your country's Kyoto implementation plan and the dismantling of existing programs and initiatives aimed at reducing Canadian greenhouse gas emissions.

And as if that weren't bad enough, we hear that your government is taking an unhealthy interest in non-binding "new" approaches with voluntary and intensity targets or 50 to 100 year timelines, that would ensure Canada's and the world's emissions keep on growing. To ECO, these "new" approaches sound a lot like what we have been hearing for years from the Bush/Cheney Administration.

We've heard that your government has been badmouthing the use of the Kyoto market mechanisms such as the CDM and calling them all "hot air";

claiming that most Annex 1 Parties will not meet their target; and that key developing countries have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Is Canada really rejecting key mechanisms designed to achieve emissions reductions at the least cost as well as contribute to sustainable development both North and South? Have you read the ratification list for the Kyoto Protocol or any of the national communications?

ECO had become accustomed to Canada as a tough, but constructive, negotiator in these talks. Canada has also historically made important contributions to this process. Didn't Canada host the first intergovernmental conference on climate change in 1988 in Toronto? Wasn't Canada one of the first countries to sign the Climate Convention in Rio in 1992, which set out the key principles underlying the Kyoto Protocol? And didn't Canada provide strong leadership in Montreal to map out the process that we are continuing here over the next two weeks?

Reading your country's submissions on the review of article 3.9 and on the Dialogue, one cannot help wondering if your government really wishes to see this process move forward.

Continue on Page 2

A CRY for HELP from CANADA

Canada is telling the world that it is impossible to meet its target under the Kyoto Protocol and appears to be the first Party to give up. It was foreseen that there would be challenges along the way to protecting the climate. The compliance system was designed to help Parties in just such a case. To quote the compliance rules:

"With the aim of promoting compliance and providing for early warning of potential non-compliance, the facilitative branch shall be responsible for providing advice and facilitation for compliance with commitments under Article 3, paragraph 1, of the Protocol, prior to the beginning of the relevant commitment period and during that commitment period."

Canada needs help. Canada should immediately request assistance from Chairman Hamanaka so that the facilitative branch can assess the practicality of Canada meeting its target for the first commitment period. As the rules state, a Party itself can flag times when it needs assistance before the enforcement provisions kick in. By doing so, Canada can receive advice and facilitation of assistance, as well as financial and technical assistance, including technology transfer and capacity building.

Lucky for Canada, the facilitative branch of the compliance committee exists!

MAINTAIN THE MONTREAL MOMENTUM

As Parties arrive in Bonn for these two weeks of negotiations, CAN urges that the sense of community and achievement from Montreal be maintained and augmented. Against all odds, the global community came together and agreed the Montreal Plan of Action. These sessions, which are much more than just the subsidiary bodies, should build on that momentum and continue the spirit of South-North cooperation to achieve a commonly shared outcome and vision for the future. Almost every Party, in their recent submissions as well as over the last year, has acknowledged the threat that climate change poses for development, and for the well-being of people and ecosystems across the world. Scientists are urging transformational change as never before. Now is the time to act.

Montreal set the stage for this action. It created the necessary platforms for countries to assess what is needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and decide who is going to contribute what to achieve the common objective of setting the world on a pathway to meet development goals in a different, lower carbon fashion. The international regime must assist in scaling up domestic efforts already underway to achieve the deep emissions cuts that are so clearly necessary.

Time is of the essence. In order to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 degrees C in comparison with pre-industrial levels, global emissions will have to peak and begin to decline in the next 10 to 15 years. Although very challenging, we can still meet this target if we act now. Many studies show the potential for substantial cuts in global emissions,

through transformation of the current fossil *fuel*-based energy system into a very energy efficient system based ultimately on renewable energy.

The Montreal Action Plan provides an unprecedented opportunity to move forward in tackling climate change. This Bonn meeting must be the place where clear goals are set and the organisation of work is decided upon for the next two years, culminating in a new agreement by 2008 that maintains climate security well into the future. Parties should bear in mind the opportunities for large-scale carbon-friendly technology created by the Kyoto Protocol's carbon markets. Both in Montreal and in their submissions for this meeting, most parties voiced their support for strengthening the CDM and other flexible mechanisms in the second commitment period.

Negotiators stand at the threshold of an amazingly important undertaking. Now is the time to continue the spirit and momentum of Montreal and to forge ahead on building global consensus on how to tackle climate change. Time is tight. To meet the challenge, and avoid carbon lock in at very high levels, Parties must put aside competition and fears, look each other in the eye, and move forward jointly on this new adventure.

Continued from Page 1

As an Annex B country, we would have expected Canada to talk about future reduction commitments, especially for industrialized countries, in the Second Commitment period.

As Environment Minister in a government that seems to be doing so much domestically to weaken efforts to reduce emissions, we wonder if you are the best person to lead these negotiations. Parties expect their Chair to support the decisions reached last year and to help them strengthen the global regime born in Rio, Berlin, Kyoto, Bonn, Marrakech and Montreal. The task confronting us is urgent. Parties will be better served by a Chair that supports and wants to build on all of the Parties' work over the past 15 years.

Avoiding dangerous climate change clearly requires leadership from industrialized countries such as Canada in reducing emissions now and an agreement on deeper reductions for the Second Commitment Period. If you feel, as Chair of these proceedings, that you and your government are not committed to fulfill your obligations under the Kyoto Protocol and that you cannot provide this needed leadership for the future, please, do the honorable thing. Step down.