

# ECO

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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 Climate Action Network (CAN) groups attending SB-26 in Bonn in May 2007. ECO website: <http://www.climatenetwork.org/eco>

## Climate change takes centre stage

The spotlight of the world is on you, the Parties to the UNFCCC, as you meet during these two weeks in Bonn. The stage has been set for the international community to strengthen substantially cooperative efforts against climate change.

The IPCC reports have shown that the scientific, technical and economic cases for urgent action are stronger than ever before. It is up to all Parties together to decide if this play will have a happy end. The world is watching - it is time to act.

The report of the IPCC's Working Group I (WGI) lays to rest for good any doubts over the reality of climate change, declaring the proof to be "unequivocal". Evidence for human activity as the main cause has also further increased and strengthened.

The WGII report underlines the scale and speed of adverse impacts on humans and their livelihoods and on unique ecosystems. It clearly states that unmitigated climate change will be beyond the adaptive capacity of ecological, structural or human systems. At the same time, under all IPCC scenarios the world will continue to warm for at least the coming two decades. The need for greater attention to adaptation is, therefore, indisputable.

The report by WGIII, released only four days ago, shows that avoiding dangerous climate change is technologically and economically possible, but that the time left to act is short. Global emissions will need to peak before 2015 and decline thereafter. To

achieve this, clean technologies will need to be deployed on an unprecedented scale supported by commensurate flows of finance.

Not only is the science clearer than ever before, the key message that action must be taken is more widely understood than ever before. Media outlets across the world have reported the IPCC findings, informing the public on climate change and the risks that exist if we don't make the necessary deep cuts in emissions. People are demanding that policymakers actually make the policy that will avoid dangerous climate change, protect the most vulnerable, and foster innovative solutions.

There are no excuses left for inaction.

Parties need to come to agreement on what must be done to avoid dangerous climate change, and then act. To avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change global average temperatures need to stay as far below 2°C as possible, compared with pre-industrial levels. For this to be achieved, global emissions will need to peak by the middle of the next decade and to decline thereafter. A delay in action of only 5 to 10 years will require much greater rates of emission reductions later to achieve the same target, at significantly higher cost.

The priority for this 26th Meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies must be to make real and substantive progress on all of its agenda items.

Specifically, Parties need to

make use of the AWG and the Dialogue to lay the groundwork to enable a consensus to be reached, in Bali in December of this year, to begin negotiations for a Kyoto-Plus agreement. Preparations for Bali at this session and in Vienna later this year must provide concrete building blocks, including draft decisions.

Such a comprehensive negotiations framework must derive from an express commitment to a common objective of keeping the world safe from dangerous climate change well below 2 degrees C.

Building on this common global objective, this agreement should include the following necessary elements: deeper absolute emission cuts for developed countries of at least 30% by 2020, a differentiated set of options for broader participation by other significant emitters, an expansion of the market and financial mechanisms that stimulate investment and technology cooperation for low-emission sustainable development and incentivise a significant reduction in emissions from forests, as well as adequate adaptation finance.

The negotiations will require a concrete time table. In order to avoid a gap between the first and second commitment periods, these negotiations must be completed in 2009.

Failure to do so would condemn most regions in the world to great human suffering, economic loss and species extinction.

This would be a tragedy.