

ECO



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Adaptation: Take Action Now

Breaking news suggests the possibility of a substantial output from COP10 to finally provide for progress on adaptation. This may involve a breaking of the deadlock related to 5/CP7.

This is welcomed as mounting evidence of climate change demands immediate action to identify all groups vulnerable to increasing impacts, and to develop and improve effective adaptation strategies. These strategies need to contain concrete actions to cope with immediate effects as well as prevent devastating impacts from happening in the future. And as a matter of consistency, development strategies will need to be made sensitive to the needs for adaptation.

The rapidly increasing number of climate-related disasters indicate that effective adaptation efforts are lacking or insufficient. Only mitigation can truly limit the need for emergency relief by reducing the likelihood of disasters. Adaptation is also essential to enhance disaster preparedness and prevention.

Those accountable for human induced climate change should take on the responsibility to support adaptation activities, and as a matter of equity, the polluter should pay. Investments to limit the impacts of climate change must include support for both mitigation and adaptation.

As adaptation activities take place, emphasis must be given to ensure a bottom-up approach. Ongoing practical initiatives on adaptation by local actors and national governments must be supported and strengthened as the first priority.

At the next level, disaster management, development, environment and climate change institutions must recognise the importance of adaptation and join forces to reduce vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change.

Detailed analysis of the existing strategies and investment policies of international institutions is another important step towards sound adaptation strategies.

The National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) have already effectively raised awareness and expectations on adaptation in least developed countries (LDCs). It is now time to move from planning to action by implementing prioritised national projects. As follow up, existing financial mechanisms such as the LDC Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund should be made easily accessible to local adaptation initiatives.

Finally, all financing of adaptation should be guided by the principle of polluter pay and reflect common but differentiated responsibilities for the various stakeholders involved.

CAN Releases Scorecard Results

At the Climate Action Network (CAN) International side event yesterday, a scorecard was presented comparing the performance of a shortlist of key countries and the EU. The ratings were the result of a consultative process amongst CAN members in the chosen countries, against two sets of criteria.

The criteria for Annex I countries were: leadership role in climate negotiations; emission trends and target fulfillment; national policies; contributions to funding; and long-term targets to reduce emissions.

The EU earned the highest score with six out of 10, mostly due to leadership, while the US, having distinguished itself as the most destructive in negotiations and careless of emissions, was awarded a negative score. Japan took second place with three out of 10 (the funding helped). Russia, which was saved by ratification, scored two, and Australia earned a score of 0.

The criteria for developing countries were: action on convention commitments; status of national communications; sustainable development policies and measures; emissions trends and forecasts; and role in international negotiations.

China, Mexico and South Africa shared second place with four out of 10, while Brazil and India shared first place with five. Brazil and South Africa were saved from total disgrace by their roles in the negotiations; Mexico scored for having already initiated its third national communications, and India and China were boosted by their renewable energy commitments.



CAN International yesterday presented a country-related scorecard on climate change.

World Bank Climate Malpractice Exposed

The World Bank – the development institution entrusted with carrying out the goals of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro – has been strongly criticised by the Sustainable Energy and Economy Network (SEEN) for both failing to live up to this mandate and for actually undermining it.

“Wrong Turn From Rio: The World Bank’s Road to Climate Catastrophe,” a report which will be released today, reveals how the Bank deceptively touts its renewable energy and carbon finance programmes, and masks the climate impacts of its conventional projects. The study examined the contradiction between the Bank’s development mandate and its support for global fossil fuel proliferation.

Since the 1992 Earth Summit, once every 14 days, the World Bank approved a fossil fuel project, overwhelming renewable energy lending by a 17 to 1 ratio. It approved over US\$28 billion in finance for fossil fuel extraction, power plants, and sectoral reform. These projects, when consumed, were estimated to release over 43 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide; global consumption generated 24.5 billion tonnes of CO₂ in 2002.

Incredibly, most of these emissions will occur in industrial North (Kyoto Annex B) countries. The Bank approved 52 projects to extract conventional fuels for the global marketplace. In the oil sector, over 82 percent of the Bank’s approved finance supported export-oriented projects.

Compared to the Bank’s conventional fuel programmes, support for renewable energy and energy efficiency has been minimal. It exaggerates the extent of such programmes. When the Bank management rejected the Extractive Industries Review – which demanded a phase-out in coal and oil finance – it claimed supporting “over US\$6 billion” in renewable and energy efficiency projects.

SEEN examined the list of projects on which the Bank based this figure, and found less than US\$2 billion actually supported these types of projects. When told of these massive errors, a Bank staff informed in mid-September that there were mistakes that would be corrected; no such correction has been issued. Similarly, the Bank’s new schemes under the Clean Development Mechanism have left even staunch carbon trading supporters dumbfounded.

The Bank’s inept handling of Rio mandates is rooted in the deep influence of the US government. The US holds an exclusive veto power, appoints the Bank’s president, and blocks initiatives by developing countries to gain greater power at the board and project implementation levels.

The report urges global climate negotiators to kick the Bank out of CDM programmes; to force the Bank to account for downstream emissions from its extractive projects; and, to prohibit the use of development funds in export-oriented oil and coal projects.

Australia’s Eight Weeks’ Criteria

After the negotiations to refine the Kyoto Protocol at Marrakech in November 2001, the Australian government commissioned new modelling of the expected economic impacts of ratification. It concluded that the economic cost of the Kyoto Protocol will be higher if Australia does not ratify the treaty than if it does. Australia’s gross national product (GNP) will decline by 0.40 percent by 2010 if Australia stays out of the Protocol but will decline by only 0.33 percent if it ratifies. This is because actions by other countries (such as Japan reducing its coal imports) will have a negative economic effect, which Australia could partially offset if it started to cut its emissions too.

No wonder the Government refused to release the results of the modelling for five months and then did so at 18.00 hours on a Friday night (last week). If accurate, they demolish any remaining rationale for Australia’s continued refusal to sign up to the treaty.

It should be conceded that although the modelling concluded that Australia would be better off if it ratified over the period to 2010, it calculated that it would be economically worse off by 2020, with real GNP declining by 0.21 percent. But how painful would it be if GNP were 0.21 percent lower? In fact, this is a tiny amount; one that will be swamped by the statistical error in measuring GNP.

According to the modelling results, if the government continues with business as usual Australia’s real GNP will almost exactly double on December 1, 2020. If Australia ratified the Protocol then its GNP will not double until the end of January 2021, a delay of eight weeks. This eight week wait to become twice as rich is the basis for the repeated stories about the huge economic costs Australia will face if it ratifies the Kyoto Protocol.

Get Your Dancing Shoes Ready

COP10’s hottest event is only one day away and participants are urged to get their dancing shoes ready. The NGO Party will be held on **Saturday, December 11 at Hotel Bauen** at the corner of Av. Corrientes and Av. Callao. To provide the true spirit of Argentinian nightlife, the party will only commence at **23.00 hours** and extend well into the next morning.

All who turn up are assured of plenty of fun, music, dancing, food and drink. There is no cover charge, and food and drinks will be charged on a per consumption basis. Once again, ECO reminds that only delegates of Parties that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol are invited, but an exception will be made for delegates of non-Protocol signatory countries who personally do not support their country’s position.

Diego

With the G77&China still deadlocked on adaptation under the charmingly-named 5/CP7, things were beginning to look hopeless. The Saudis were determined to see small island states sink below sea level; the small island states themselves were reluctant to do so: what meeting of minds could there be? Enter that mysterious hero, Raul Estrada, and his secret weapon...er, conversations about beef. Cajoling delegates along with earnest arguments about the superiority of Argentine steaks to their weak and feckless American counterparts, he created what seems to have been a miraculous spirit of bonhomie. How this worked on the vegetarian Indians we can only speculate, but it somehow resulted in a deal. Apparently we have found another Argentine who can call on the Hand of God.

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ECO email: ecopaper@hotmail.com
ECO website: <http://www.climatenetwork.org/eco>
Editorial/Production:

• Nithiyanthan Nesadurai/Sander Wijsman