

ECO



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Ministers Urged to Move Forward Without the US

The Bush Administration has made its position on post-2012 commitments crystal clear: it will not engage in any negotiations or discussions about mandatory emissions limits.

This irresponsible stance leaves the rest of the world with three options.

First, ignore the statements of the US and try to engage them in negotiations anyway. This would be like beating one's head against a brick wall – painful and not very productive.

Second, wait for the next US administration in four years. Given the increasingly evident impacts of climate change, the world cannot afford such a delay.

Third, start negotiations next year, as called for in the Kyoto Protocol, without any expectation of meaningful participation by the US. While far from ideal, this is the only option that holds out any prospect of progress.

The EU must take the lead in these negotiations and should declare now that it

will move forward with further emissions' reductions post-2012. The scope of such reductions would, of course, be determined by the next round of negotiations.

The G77&China must break the impasse created by the obstructionist tactics of the Saudis, who clearly have no interest in addressing the threat of climate change. Some developing countries that provided important leadership in the Protocol negotiations, such as India, seem to be sitting on the sidelines at this COP. They must re-engage with the EU and others in shaping the way forward.

Finally, all Parties to the Protocol should support the progressive actions being taken on global warming by a growing number of US states, cities and businesses. These governors, mayors and businesses are providing much-needed leadership, in stark contrast to President Bush's head-in-the-sand approach. They should be consulted with as negotiations move

forward. This would ensure that constructive US views are taken into account, and would build domestic support for whatever post-2012 agreement is negotiated.

It may seem a paradox that the best way to ultimately draw the US back into the international climate treaty regime is by not wasting time trying to engage the current Bush Administration. But that is the reality the world now faces.

Shocking and Awful

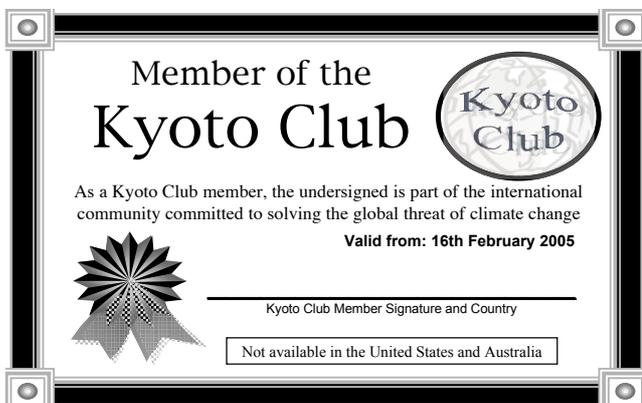
After the absurd US proposal for the Seminars circulated Monday entitled "Draft text of a seminar decision the US could accept" (if you have not seen it, you really should – it is a joke), we were shocked at the content of the text circulated Tuesday morning as the position of G77&China. It was, for all intents and purposes, the same position as that put forward by the US, although dressed up in slightly more serious language. It was awful.

For the Seminars to be useful they must have a mandate that includes a forward looking exchange of views, not the description of current activities suggested by the US. The results of the Seminars should feed back into the negotiations in a transparent and timely manner at COP11. Otherwise, what would be the point?

Groups within G77&China, despite the usual antics from Saudi Arabia, have shown some substantial positive developments at this COP. AOSIS has been vocal as usual, and the LDC group has shown a new assertiveness that CAN welcomes, as well as the more positive contributions from a number of African countries.

So where does this text come from? Does it really represent the opinions (and the interests) of the majority of countries within the G77&China, which are already beginning to feel the effects of dangerous climate change such as increased droughts and floods, coastal erosion and flooding from a combination of an increase in extreme storms coupled by sea level rise?

Do they really not want the Annex I
– continued back page, column 1



The passport to global celebrations on February 16, 2005.

From Rhetoric to Risk Reduction

As COP10 struggles through the negotiations at this so-called "Adaptation COP," the reality is that environmental disasters are affecting millions in poor countries and preventing the path out of poverty for them.

As the impact of disasters will increase with climate change, the funds for adaptation being fought over are nowhere near enough to address the scale of global need.

Disasters are not simply about the severity of hazards; fundamentally, they are about human vulnerability. So, any adaptive strategies must address all the "risks" involved.

Thus, disaster risk reduction, which has been proven to save both money and lives, makes economic and ethical sense. And when dealing with the uncertainties of climate change, enhancing activities that minimise

climate-related risks is one way to strengthen the capacity of communities to cope, both now and in the future.

While there already are many good disaster management projects, these need scaling up if they are to contend with the increasing threats. Governments and donors therefore need to mainstream disaster risk reduction into every development initiative.

Likewise, the climate community must recognise the importance of risk reduction as a component of climate change adaptation, and work closer with the disaster management community to develop cohesive approaches. As a step forward, COP10 must make links with and provide substantial input to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe next year.

– Ministers Urged to Move, from front page – countries to get on with deeper and further emissions' reductions than those called for in the first commitment period? We find that hard to believe.

ECO has to ask the governments who put this forward how they assess the risk of climate change to their population, their economies and their future, and to the future of their colleagues from AOSIS and the LDC group.

What government, at a convention designed to address what many scientists and a number of heads of governments have characterised as "the greatest threat facing human civilisation" and "a much greater threat than weapons of mass destruction," where the benefits of early action are manifest, would want to prevent conversations between governments about how to address this threat in the future? Whose interests are being served?

Unfortunately, ECO has learnt that this document (which as far as we can tell represents the interests of a few large, powerful and relatively rich countries within the G77&China), has not had a full discussion within the group. We would submit that this posture presents almost as great a threat to the millions at risk from dangerous climate change, as the illegitimate, immoral and absurd behaviour of the US.

Dangerous climate change is the most urgent threat facing the world today, and it is already impacting the world's poorest and most vulnerable. ECO urges the leadership of G77&China to take their common responsibilities seriously, differentiated though they may (and should) be.

Diego

The US delegation, for all its rugged good looks and clean living, makes satire very hard. In the face of text like this, Diego can do little but stand aside and admire the work of a master. The US proposal for discussing future action to fight climate change consists of a seminar at the next SBSTA meeting. This seminar explicitly forbids discussion of "any future commitment, framework, or mandate" for addressing climate change. Just in case anyone should draw lessons of some kind from the policy experiences discussed in the seminar (and thinking can be so dangerous that way) "there shall be no written or oral report of the meeting." So it won't discuss anything, and then it won't have taken place. No doubt any participants in this non-existent meeting will be quietly eliminated.

"Fossil of the Day" Award

Italy received the top fossil award yesterday for a proposal by Corrado Clini that post 2012 commitments be based on standards and not on caps; and for his suggestions that the climate convention be linked to the WTO, and CDM should include the nuclear.

The US was awarded the second fossil for its destructive behaviour in the discussions on the Special Climate Change Fund. Japan came in third for allowing its economy and technology ministry to claim the second commitment period should be set up on a long term basis (up to 2040).

Australia Uses Flawed Argument

What is Australia's main excuse for not ratifying the Kyoto Protocol? It is too expensive!

Yet, a recent report from the Kyoto Protocol Ratification Advisory Group (sponsored by two Australian state governments) found that the economic impacts on gross domestic product (GDP) of Australia meeting its Protocol target, through ratifying and using the Protocol mechanisms, would be on average (only) 0.11 percent lower than business as usual (AUS\$875 million per year).

Australia has also said it will not ratify the Protocol but still meet its target. Yet, according to the report, if Australia meets its target without accessing the Protocol's mechanisms – through domestic action alone (primarily through the infamous Australia clause), GDP will be 0.26 percent lower, which is equivalent to AU\$2 billion per year. Thus, by meeting their target without ratifying it increases compliance costs by over 100 percent.

Compare both these figures to the current drought that is expected to reduce Australia's GDP by 0.75 percent.

So if it is cheaper, and the economic impacts of climate change are already higher than compliance, why does Australia not ratify? Who gives it its economic information? What industries or other country dominates the Australian delegation? Could Australia's backward target have anything to do with the coal and aluminium sectors that appear to have the ear of the current government?

Through sheer political short sightedness, Australia has chosen the most expensive option to meet the Protocol target. Australia needs to get its head out of the sand. There is life and business opportunities outside of the coal and aluminium sector that directly employs less people in Australia than are attending COP10.

THANKS

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