

eco

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DECEMBERHOST
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 groups attending COP9 in Milano in December 2003.

Adopt a COP Decision on Third Assessment Report

The First Assessment Report of the IPCC led to the Climate Convention while the Second led to the Kyoto Protocol.

SBSTA has now been working for more than a year to translate the scientific findings of the Third Assessment Report (TAR) into a political response to the threat of climate change. Two SBSTA sessions saw long and tedious negotiations on the TAR, which were often close to a failure. There is now a new attempt.

Two days of constructive pre-session workshops on the TAR were held prior to SBSTA 19. The urgent need to enter into substance led SBSTA chairman, Mr Haldor Thorgeirsson, to take over the Chair of the contact group on the TAR and propose a draft COP decision and a draft SBSTA conclusion.

The former requests SBSTA to consider a series of themes on adaptation and mitigation.

It must be noted that the draft COP decision does not contain ambitious breakthrough proposals.

Yet Malaysia, which spoke on behalf of G77&China, said it could agree to the conclusions but that no COP decision should be made. In what surely was a highly unusual response, the grouping's stand was opposed by a series of strong statements in favour of a COP decision from countries with usually divergent positions like Australia, the European Union, Switzerland, Norway, Japan, New Zealand, Canada and Russia. Even the United States chose not to intervene in its trademark negative manner.

India and China supported the G77&China position but did not appear to be completely inflexible on the matter. It was only Saudi Arabia which strongly opposed a COP decision on the TAR.

With such an intransigent position, Saudi Arabia is pushing its own interest at the expense of the vast majority of developing countries including AOSIS.

The Climate Action Network (CAN) strongly appeals to these countries to stand up for their interests. They should not let themselves be held hostage by a rich oil exporting nation.

Italy: Implement Kyoto at home

Italy, which increased its emissions by 7.3 per cent between 1990 to 2001, does not have a credible national plan to reduce them. Its new climate policy, presented Wednesday in Milan, states that the emissions cut required under the Kyoto Protocol will instead largely (60%) be met by making use of sinks and external credits from flexible mechanisms.

Domestic reduction measures designed to make up the remaining 40 per cent refer mainly to ongoing action. Only a marginal role is foreseen for renewable energy resources, with a planned increase of 2,800 MW.

Italy is currently way behind Europe's trend which registered an average 2.3 per cent decrease in CO₂ emissions (excluding land use and forestation) for the 1990 to 2001 period. Italy's current increase means it is effectively 14 per cent of 1990 emissions away from its 6.5 per cent reduction objective by 2012 foreseen under the EU burden sharing agreement. The Ministry of Environment has further declared it will not fulfil its share of the EU target to increase electricity from renewable energy sources to 22.1 per cent by 2010. This is not the leadership one expects from a COP host.

Italy's strategy highlights a short-sightedness which will lead it to fall further behind countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom which have accepted the Kyoto Protocol challenge with concrete interventions, and seen the economic benefits materialise at home. Without domestic policies and measures, the starting signal contained in the Kyoto target for the long-term transition to a decarbonised Italy will go unheard.



Floods wreak havoc in the south of France and in Australia

“Montagnes russes”

The French name for roller coaster is “Montagnes russes”. Literally translated, it means “Russian mountains.”

Considering what we have been through over the last couple of days with regard to Russia’s position on the Kyoto Protocol, “Montagnes russes” would seem appropriate.

However, the perspective on whether Russia’s position is up or down is relative. Those who want to see the treaty dead may have felt up-lifted by Andrei Illarionov’s comment on Tuesday when he declared, claiming to speak on behalf of President Putin, that the Kyoto Protocol was a non-starter for Russia in its present form.

Reassurance for the 120 countries that have already ratified the Protocol came just hours later, when Deputy Economy Minister, Mr Mukhamed Tsikhonov, declared, also claiming to speak on behalf of the Russian Government, that: “There is no decision about ratification

apart from the fact that we are moving towards ratification”.

However, yesterday at 09:47, GMT global wire news agency, AFP, published yet another report about Mr Illarionov. He was quoted as saying: “The statement I made two days ago repeated word for word what the Russian president said at his meeting with EU representatives”.

This was not the end of the saga. AFP, at 14:08 GMT, published yet another piece quoting a high-ranking Kremlin official who said: “This does not mean that Russia is refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Quite the reverse, we are aiming to ratify it.”

Having never really been fans of “Montagnes russes” and beginning to feel somewhat dizzy about the whole performance, we request that someone within the Russian Government quickly pull the plug on this roller coaster ride with immediate effect.

Delegates can nominate Parties for CAN’s fossil awards

All delegates can now make nominations for the “Fossil of the Day” awards, following an exciting enhancement to the programme.

Until yesterday, this privilege was restricted to members of the Climate Action Network (CAN).

Nominations are only to be made for country or countries judged to have made the worst input to the negotiations.

A maximum of three winners are selected daily – based on nominations made – through a voting process undertaken by CAN members at

14.00 hours.

The awards are then presented during a ceremony held at 18.00 hours close to Plenary Hall 2 on level one.

Delegates wishing to make nominations have to send them to fossil@gmx.com by 13.00 hours to be considered for an award presented the same day.

While those making nominations will invariably identify yourselves, you are assured your identity and your nomination will remain strictly confidential.

“Fossil of the Day” Award

The US won first place yesterday, in a close race, for its delegation head Dr Harlan Watson’s assertion that the US has a target of “18 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas intensity, which is 30 per cent below business as usual.” Implying this would be an improvement over the spectacular US emissions rise since 1990, he asked delegates to look to the future and not at the past.

(The basic fact is that over the last 10 years the emission intensity of the US economy improved by 17.4 per cent while its actual greenhouse gas emissions increased by 14 per cent at the same time. The Bush plan is for the same intensity improvement over the next 10 years, but for total emissions to grow by

another 18 per cent – a faster rate of growth than before. This is not an improvement by any metric measure known to science. To imply otherwise is to deliberately state a lie.)

Host nation Italy won its first fossil for increasing its emissions by 7.3 per cent in the 1990 to 2001 period and for not having a credible national plan to reduce them (see article on front page).

Long-standing COP fossil favourite, Saudi Arabia, came in third for strongly opposing having a group on the Third Assessment Report draft a COP decision.

Instead of making progress in substance, it wanted further time consuming discussions on process.

Party, party, party – Latino party

Get ready to discard your suits and put on your dancing clothes for a Latino Party this Saturday evening (December 6).

CO9’s most eagerly awaited event – the NGO Party – will be held at the Garden Gallery (Galleria Meravigli) from 21.00 hours. Offering a Latin theme this year, the party is open to all delegates and observers who support the Kyoto process.

You can reach the venue by taking the Metro – Red Line – and getting down at CORDUSIO. The venue – at Via Gaetano Negri number 6 – is a 200-metre walk from the station.

The entrance fee is €10 and is inclusive of three drinks. Additional drinks will cost €4 and water will be served free. COP badges must be worn to gain entry.

We invite all of you to join us for a fun-filled and relaxing evening.



LUIGI

Australia is a curious country. Luigi had heard rumours – no doubt unfounded – that our Antipodean chums had refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on the grounds it was not good enough for them. Yet in Thursday’s plenary the Ozzie delegation could not have been more enthusiastic about the Kyoto accounting measures. This is perhaps because only by these arcane standards can Australia claim to have “stabilised” its emissions at the 1990 level, while its fossil fuel emissions are currently 42 per cent above the 1990 level. Come to think of it, the strange Kyoto Article 3.7 accounting trick that makes a country virtuous because it runs out of trees to cut down, was the work of a certain large Southern Hemisphere nation.

THANKS

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