

ECO



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ECO email: ecopaper@hotmail.com – ECO website: <http://www.climatenetwork.org/eco> – Editorial/Production: Nithiyanthan Nesadurai/ Nugroho Nurdikiawan, Arief Darmawan

Bali: Road map or road-kill?

Outside the luxurious surroundings of the Bali climate negotiations, with its leisurely Ministerial receptions overflowing with food, drink and talk of leadership, there is a real world. Things are happening. Carbon dioxide emissions and concentrations are rising faster than ever. Droughts are worsening. Arctic sea ice is disappearing faster than was believed possible. New projections reported in recent days indicate that in the first year of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in 2013, there may be no sea ice in the Arctic in summer.

Pause for a minute to digest this please: Within six years the perennial summer sea ice of the Arctic could be gone. With it will go many sea ice dependent species and ecosystems. Such a massive and abrupt change in a key part of the earth system was almost unthinkable 10 years ago when the Kyoto Protocol was negotiated. It is not predicted in the recently concluded IPCC AR4, which Saudi Arabia has had such a hard time “welcoming.”

Back in the world of the Bali Roadmap, with its cozy groups of fossil fuel lobbyists drinking late into the night with friendly government delegates at beach front soirees, things are moving at a more leisurely pace. Absent is a sense of urgency, or a deadline to save the planet.

Yes, urgency! Or should we say emergency?

Some Ministers of Environment and Heads of State seem to understand this emergency and are, in some cases, taking significant action. German Minister Gabriel today stated he is so confident that this conference will be a success, that Germany already

decided to reduce emissions by 40 per cent by 2020 compared to 1990. He then noted that “a reduction of 20 per cent by 2020 should be acceptable for all of us in the industrialised world, and also for our friends and colleagues in the US.”

One might hope that the Bush Administration, still marching to a different drum, will change their tactics here in Bali. While they smile nicely and say they want a negotiation to lead to an agreement in 2009, they are working to kill the key elements crucial for a positive outcome by: blocking agreement when decisions are close to being complete; destroying trust just when it seems things are going well; working to water down technology and finance text to the point of being meaningless, or non-existent; blocking decisions on REDD for no reason; and even proposing mitigation actions for themselves that are weaker than those proposed for developing countries. This administration is determined to have a road crash, leaving behind an empty shell, to be filled by their junk of an unreliable, purely voluntary initiative.

Down under, Australian Prime Minister Rudd stated his government ratified Kyoto because: “we believe that climate change represents one of the greatest moral, economic and environmental challenges in our age.” As he said “There is no Plan B. There is no other planet we can escape to. We only have this one. And none of us can do it alone. So let’s get it right.” *ECO* reckons that this requires active support for including a scale of ambition, under both Convention and Protocol, in the range of 25-40 per cent emissions reduction against 2020 starting yesterday.

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Technology: Phoenix rising?

After the debacle in the technology transfer negotiations on Tuesday night, *ECO* is relieved that the COP President is resuscitating the patient. Technology transfer may yet be coming on track as a fundamental element of the negotiations – both for current implementation and the post-2012 framework. Parties and Ministers now have an urgent responsibility to work together towards a progressive outcome.

The need for finance and investment in developing countries was emphasised in the UNFCCC report presented in August. It states that mitigation measures, sufficient to return global greenhouse gas emissions to current levels by 2030, require additional investment and financial flows of between US\$200-210 billion. Adaptation needs further tens of billions of dollars. In response to these scenarios, Bali outcomes must signal that technology transfer will be a scaled up and significant part of the post-2012 agreement.

The ‘non-paper’ emanating from the GEF – or from some official(s) – and from other non-Parties did not serve to build trust amongst parties (nor on the outcomes of recent trade talks). With regard to funding, a new technology “facility” to be run out of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been proposed. While its terms of reference sound good, *ECO* is concerned that it could distract from the big sums of funding needed for the future. Instead, a “facility” may result in bureaucratic negotiations over operational matters for a few years, with no funding distributed

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Is the U.S. CONstructive?

Just a few months ago in New York, Heads of State committed to come to Bali seeking a deal. While the US couldn't manage to send its President to the meeting, it did signal its strong commitment to success in Bali. Recent US activity throws this commitment into question.

How do you construct a deal? Everyone gets something they need, everyone gives up something they want. From the beginning it has been clear that the deal in Bali would require something on all four of the building blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance. Cut one portion of the deal and you put the whole deal in jeopardy.

So why would the US take such a hard line on technology transfer. They are claiming they will not consider any attempt to buy down intellectual property rights but certainly there is a way around that problem.

Well, sometimes the appearance of wanting a deal is more important than

sealing the deal. After all, if you appear to be constructive – while admittedly crossing other countries' redlines – then isn't that the same as being constructive? And if those other countries whose redlines you cross, end up in a place where they can't accept the final package...well then isn't it their fault that the negotiations collapse?

Perhaps not! Just suppose that a certain party with a certain "process" waiting in the wings wanted negotiations to end in a deadlock. Now if that party were to blame for undermining the process, it would be pretty tough to get other countries to come to their party. But if they could safely hide behind the skirts of another bloc of parties, after having pushed their buttons to put on the brakes...

A strong Bali road map is the lynchpin for progress on climate change. It is time to call the US's bluff on its goals for Bali. Whether other countries continue to humour the US on its major economies meeting (MEM) process remains to be seen.

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in that time period. What is preferred is an instrument that does not scare away the private sector, but attracts it.

As action must take place in coming years, well before 2012, the creation of an ambitious programme, perhaps under the GEF, which would create more consistency and coherence around the current agenda, is recommended. This could ensure technology transfer is implemented.

The Convention process for a post-2012 outcome should include negotiations on the creation of a new international framework to finance technology transfer. Submissions for this framework should be due in early 2008. A workshop should then be held early on with the financial sector, and technology development and diffusion experts, to flesh out the required specifics.

For the present, the SBI work plan should be approved with a special focus on all the issues suggested in yesterday's *ECO*. These include new mechanisms and innovative financing; involving experts in the private sector through panels; performance review indicators and compliance; and funds and ideas for early and visible action.

There is something for all developing countries in this package, which is emerging as a fundamental component of an effective multilateral regime.

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Staying in the Southern hemisphere, *ECO* notes the words of South Africa's Minister Van Schalkwyk: "If we want to conclude by 2009, we must agree this week on the form and shape of the roadmap, and this roadmap must raise the bar for all. As a developing country, we will take ambitious mitigation action. South Africa will contribute its fair share towards our common responsibility for the future. Our actions will be measurable. They will be reportable as well as verifiable. Given the urgency indicated by the science, there is no longer a plausible excuse for inaction by any country, developed or developing."

Delegates: Road-map or road-kill?

"Fossil of the Day" Awards

The US won first prize for blocking consensus in SBSTA on sending the draft text on technology transfer to the COP.

The US and Canada shared second place for working to remove language in the Dialogue on ranges of emissions reductions for industrialised countries for 2020, and for calling for a peaking of global emissions in 10-15 years.

The US won third prize for its efforts to block consensus on REDD in SBSTA by calling for deletion of the paragraph linking REDD to the Bali Road Map, and by linking deforestation and degradation to broader land use considerations.

What about emissions from Annex I forests?

The forest issue flying under the radar at this COP is emissions from forestry and land use in Annex-1 countries. The proposed REDD framework encourages developing countries to reduce tropical deforestation and degradation. Temperate and boreal forests and peatlands in particular also store massive amounts of "green" carbon.

This fact was showcased at a couple of side events here. Last Tuesday, Professor Brendan Mackay of the Australian National University presented results indicating carbon stores in natural forests are greatly under-estimated by national inventories in Australia and are much greater than in managed plantations. On Saturday, new maps were released by a coalition of Canadian and American groups showing the distribution of the 186 billion tonnes of carbon stored in Canada's boreal forests and peatlands.

Forestry and other industrial activities in these ecosystems degrade these important carbon stocks and release the carbon to the atmosphere. The current rules guiding the treatment of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) fail to place an appropriate emphasis on this fact and fail to fully account for human-caused emissions from all land uses. *ECO* hopes that the review and "enhancement" of these rules, planned for 2008 under the Article 9 review and the Ad Hoc Working Group, will remedy these deficiencies and encourage Annex I countries to reduce degradation of carbon stocks in their natural forests and other ecosystems.



"I can't see *this* catching on."