

eco



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 CAN groups attending the climate negotiations in Bangkok, September-October 2009.

Not the Wakeup Call, the Final Call

As Parties took stock of the snail paced progress achieved during the first week at the Conference Centre, residents of Metro Manila were taking stock of lost lives, dwellings and personal belongings that came about due to tropical storm Ondoy. An unprecedented flood, drenching the region with a month's worth of rain in 6 hours, seems clearly linked to climate change.

Following the dual plenaries on Friday afternoon, stretching into the evening, ECO

wondered how many people would have to die and how much property would be destroyed before governments around the world take stock of their serious lack of ambition and wake up to the urgency of the moment. As the representative from Mauritius pointed out, "This is not the wake up call, this is the final call."

The KP and LCA plenaries seemed a flat ending to a fitfully productive week. Was it the late hour, the profusion of repetitious

rhetoric, or the inability of delegates to find new and transformational elements in the long discussions?

To be fair, negotiations have moved forward at a slow but measurable pace on adaptation, technology transfer and capacity building. But the keystone, emission reduction targets by developed countries, was sadly still cast in cotton. This is not at all good news. Perhaps, as New Zealand said, enhancing the scale of actual aggregate and country by country proposals for emissions reductions is out of the hands of this process and must be taken up at the political level.

So that leaves the other essential task to be completed by next Friday in Bangkok: very substantial progress toward clean, non repetitive, negotiating text. Parties should be in a position to step on the accelerator starting immediately. This was the clear message from vulnerable country parties in the plenary.

The week-long discussions in the AWG-KP did not deliver the paradigm shift that would help keep global warming well below 2°C. Developing country parties raised the issue repeatedly in their interventions, pointing out among other things that for them this is a question of survival.

But a different and rather unfortunate emerging theme is the clear realization that the Kyoto Protocol is at risk of unraveling; indeed, as Mauritius said, a feeling that a deliberate attempt was being made to do so. This is hardly the kind of news the world is looking for while watching the evidence of our vulnerability to natural disasters (whether or not climate related) in Metro Manila, Sydney, Samoa and Sumatra.

– continued on back page, col. 1



Although flooding ravaged through Metro Manila on the eve of the climate change talks, claiming more than 350 lives, it did very little to expedite the sense of urgency of the debate, and business goes on as usual. Photo courtesy of: www.irinnews.org

Auctioning Off?

It's a familiar theme: developments within Annex I countries are worrying ECO. In the recent European Commission proposal, auctioning seems not to have made the grade. This doesn't instill confidence in European leaders whilst they make up their minds on a financial package at the end of this month. Whilst Europe procrastinates, we see developing countries focus their efforts (quite rightly) on pushing Annex I on scale, not sources.

And so we come to a standstill. As a decent proposal withers away, no one is nurturing it. "So what?" some Parties might add. Well, there is real merit in auctioning: it's automatic, supports compliance, doesn't have to flow through national budgets, provides money that is new and additional to ODA commitments, and can raise substantial amounts to name but a few.

So what's the problem? ECO says: back to the drawing board, and keep working to fill out the sketch into a complete design.

– Not the Wake Up Call, The Final Call

The lack of sufficient aggregate targets put on the table by developed countries, and only reluctant discussion on finance and legal architecture, are holding other key parts of the discussions hostage. The lack of clarity on the future form and regulatory aspects of market and non-market based mechanisms is muddying the waters further.

The deliberate insertion of response measures into the adaptation text by some developing country parties is unhelpful and is verging on blocking progress in the contact group. And the inability of both developed and developing countries to get their act together on bunkers (especially on the issue of International Air Passenger Levy for Adaptation) is a looming failure in an increasingly climate constrained world.

Over the week in various contact groups it seemed that parties were resorting to their favorite activity – reiterating long memorized positions across the spectrum of issues so they can play the blame game later. But blame aside, it is readily evident that the slow pace of negotiations only plays into the hands of those parties who don't want a real deal at Copenhagen.

Despite the predictable recycling of rhetoric this past week, ECO doesn't mind


**NGO
PARTY**
 SATURDAY
 OCTOBER 3
 9 PM – LATE
 AT INCH CLUB
 IN THE ESCALADE CENTER,
 55/49-60 RATCHADA-PISEK RD
 DINDANG, BANGKOK
 MAP AT: [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/YAEZRO2](http://tinyurl.com/yaezr02)
 ALL WITH CONFERENCE
 BADGES ARE WELCOME!
PRESENT YOUR BADGE AT THE DOOR
 ENTRANCE: 450 THB/PERSON
 INCLUDES: OPEN BAR ALL NIGHT!
 MUST BE 20+ PLEASE BRING PROOF OF AGE

repeating itself on this key reality: global emissions must peak within the next 5-year commitment period, and be reduced thereafter on the order of at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, in order to ensure the survival of the poorest and most vulnerable countries and communities. These reductions must be pursued in the spirit of equity and justice, especially when it comes to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in developing countries.

Delegates should note that what was true in New York last week on the immensity of the climate challenge remains true here this week and next. Bangkok cannot be another lost opportunity for the international community to deliver on its obligations to the environment, future generations and particularly the most vulnerable communities and countries. The disaster zones we saw on our TV screens and laptops this week were a mere hint of the losses to come if dangerous climate change is not averted.

So ECO returns to the theme that closed our first review of the week. Delegates here in Bangkok must realize that the best rhetoric in the world won't by itself build a single wind turbine, save a single acre of rainforest, or help a single village respond to the impacts of climate change. Actions speak louder than words.

Fair Deal = Just Transition

Addressing climate change is not only critical for the environment, but also for the economic and social interest of all peoples of the world. Ambitious action is fundamental if we want to leave our children a sustainable world and a chance to achieve the social and development goals they deserve.

The labour movement started calling some time ago for a "just transition." This is a framework for ensuring social justice in the necessary transformation towards climate-resilient societies. The idea is that transitioning to a low carbon economy is possible, and therefore climate action is a driver for sustainable economic growth and social progress. Mitigation and adaptation policies can be part of a broader strategy, shaping the societies of the future in a way that is socially fair and environmentally sustainable.

But for this to happen, a process of social consultation, green investment and social protection has to be put in place. The first steps are already being taken, as the concept is making its way through the UNFCCC process, and text calling for a just transition now appears in the Shared Vision.

The aim is to build the necessary consensus leading toward ambitious action, smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a "green economy" to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all. The steps beyond that will engage concrete policies and programs to turn this shared vision into a reality that provides sustainability to people's lives as well as nature itself.

Fossil of the Day
02.10.09

1st Place
Canada



Full details on Fossil of the Day will be available at:

www.climatenetwork.org/fossil