

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 Bonn, June 2009.

Japan: Twisted Numbers and Weak Targets

Today Japan will finally announce its long-awaited 2020 target, due ever since Bali. Better late than never.

But ECO is puzzled by advance leaks that hint at an oddly tortured form for the target: a 15% reduction at home, but with a 2005 base year, instead of the usual 1990 Kyoto base year. After translating the target into a 1990 base year, it turns out the reduction is only -8%. The Japanese delegation here in Bonn is famous for claiming they don't play the numbers game. But it seems that Japan has decided to take up the sport after all.

And, to an insult to injury, the new target is only 2 points above Japan's current Kyoto target of 6%. Let's get this straight: Japan is claiming that the world's second

largest economy can only decrease its emissions by 2% over the next 8 years?

But it doesn't stop there. Japan presents its target as much more ambitious than the other industrialized countries, using cost analysis to define comparable effort. But what happened to the other criteria, such as capacity to act (GDP per capita) and responsibility (current and historic emissions per capita)? It looks like one of the most responsible and capable countries in the world in the world is trying to hide weak ambition behind strong rhetoric.

ECO is concerned that Japan's weak target will affect the ambition of other industrialized countries. The world we will leave to our children will be a very scary place. Wake up, Japan!

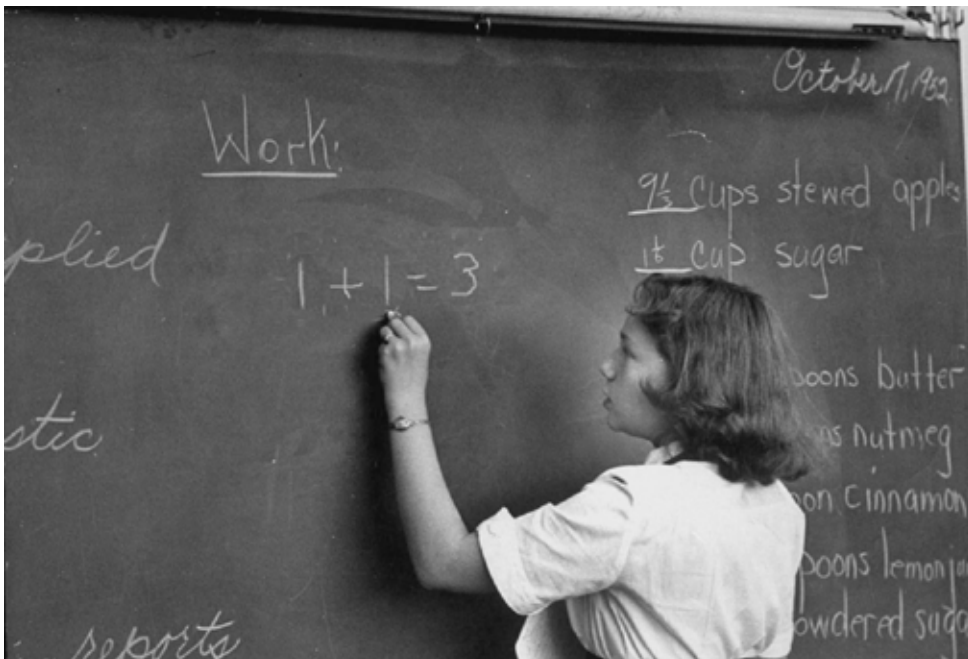
Street Recyclers – Holding Back Climate Change

Climate change usually brings to mind melting glaciers, rising sea levels, loss of forest cover and scarcity of water. Often less conspicuous are its links to waste generated by unbridled consumption, especially in the developed world, but increasingly in the developing world as well.

Invisible environmentalists are making their presence felt at the UNFCCC Bonn meeting. Recyclers reduce emissions by replacing virgin materials with recycled ones, thus reducing deforestation, oil drilling, mining and energy inputs. They have journeyed from distant places – India, Brazil, Colombia – to make a case for investment in the recycling sector.

The recycling sector provides livelihoods and employment to about 1% of the developing world. The workers in the sector live and work on the fringes of the economy, collecting paper, plastic, metal, glass and other recyclables. Their livelihoods are under threat from technology providers hawking quick fix solutions – refuse derived fuel (RDF), plasma, pyrolysis, gasification and other euphemisms for incineration. Cloaked in the guise of renewable energy, these technology providers claim carbon credits for sending toxic gases into the atmosphere.

“Don't burn our bread,” says Baida Gaikwad from India because the feedstock for these plants are recyclables. Silvio Ruiz eloquently holds forth, “the world that we are destroying is not only the world of the rich, it is also the world of the poor.” Baida and Silvio speak for their colleagues when they say the developed world owes them a debt which they have come to collect!



Pre-meeting political briefing for Ecofin ministers (see overleaf)

REDD: What's Right? What's Left?

ECO would like to help delegates with their homework before the second reading of the LCA Chair's text on REDD, and before SBSTA finalizes its recommendations. Many delegates have voiced uncertainty as to what the definition of this REDD thing is. We understand the confusion. Different people have been squeezing more and more into the definition to make sure they are all eligible for funding. What started as RED (reducing emissions from deforestation) became REDD (adding degradation) then REDD+ (adding the role of conservation, sustainable forest management and sink enhancement) and now, although nobody has yet used the term, something you could call REDD++ (including afforestation). Why does this matter?

The core of REDD is keeping mature standing forests intact, and reducing the degradation of those that are not intact. In the title of the REDD section in the LCA Chair's text, there is a semi-colon dividing two clauses. That semi-colon means some-

thing. On the left, the text is about the mitigation outcomes we are seeking from REDD. The right hand side (the "plus" bits) refers to several activities that *might* contribute to that aim. The role of any REDD+ activities should be evaluated on the basis of their contribution to REDD.

Forests are not just trees, and trees are not just carbon stocks. Intact natural forests are ecosystems. They regulate the regional climate, protect watersheds, maintain biodiversity and provide livelihoods for millions of people. Indigenous peoples and local communities have long been their best stewards. An activity that ignores biodiversity or peoples' rights will also fail to reduce emissions.

In constructing a REDD mechanism, don't be diverted into constructing a Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) mechanism. A REDD mechanism is needed. It must stand or fall on one criterion: does it help preserve our forests in all their glory, by taking care of their carbon stocks, trees, biodiversity and people?

Keep Temporary Crediting

Given all the problems with the CDM, ECO would have thought UNFCCC sink negotiators had enough work without launching an attack on temporary crediting for afforestation and deforestation in the CDM – something that actually works more or less as designed.

"A & R" projects under the CDM are currently issued with Temporary Emission Reduction Units (TERs) that run for five years. This is because the carbon sequestered in the forests that generates offset credits in the CDM is also temporary: trees can be lost to fires, pests, disease and logging, and more. The five-year renewal forces a check-in to see if the carbon is still there, not back in the

atmosphere, and has clear and fair consequences for any such carbon reversals.

Changes proposed to this rule would require reliable monitoring over a long, potentially infinite period, or more likely would result in less climate protection as carbon reversals go undetected. There are also likely to be significant liability issues for host countries.

Yet again we see environmental integrity and common sense getting trampled by Annex I Parties in their quest for the holy grail – cheap compliance units in the LULUCF sector. Enough! ECO suggests that LULUCF negotiators start cleaning up the messes they've already made, not creating new ones.

Bunking Off

Since 1990 emissions from aviation and shipping have skyrocketed. There has been around the world – young people in the UK have been breaking onto runways and climbing onto the roof of Parliament in protest. Twelve years ago, back in Kyoto, world leaders left it up to the IMO and ICAO to try and get a grip on the problem. Now it looks as if these organizations have been bunking off. Global emissions have doubled.

To stay below two degrees, we need to emit no more than 7.2 GtCO₂e in 2050. Recent projections, one by the IMO and another by a group of leading scientists, estimated that bunker emissions are on course to emit anything from 3.5 to 6.2 GtCO₂ by 2050.

That's between 50 and 85% of a safe global carbon budget.

It's good news then to hear that Australia wants to stop the free-for-all. News reaches ECO that, later this week, Australian delegates will propose that the UNFCCC take control of these industries' emissions. Since the expertise and discussions lie in the UNFCCC, this makes a lot of sense. Doubters should consult a proposal to the IMO by Japan, which proposes recycling 75% of a shipping levy back to the industry. In ECO's view those tens of billion dollars could be better used to help vulnerable people adapt to the devastating impacts of climate breakdown.

Stealing the US's Cookbook

It looks like the EU has developed an appetite for the US's cooking. Yesterday, European finance ministers argued that emissions reductions in developed countries could be achieved through both public funding and carbon offsets, something that certain other parties agree with (recall last week's ECO article 'Cooking the Books'). ECO would like to remind these European ministers that offsets only shift reductions around rather than increasing total cuts. If they or other developed countries want to use offsets to permit additional emissions at home, these must come on top of MRV-supported or voluntary mitigation actions taken by developing countries. If developed countries are allowed to claim offsets as financial support, they will surely reduce MRV financing, saddling developing countries with a greater mitigation burden. Offsets should only be used sparingly to help developed countries meet domestic targets and must not be confused with financial support for mitigation in developing countries. For all of you cooks, some simple maths to remember: $1 + 1 \neq 3$.

If we held a minute's silence for every person who Kofi Annan tells us has died from climate change so far, we would have over two hundred days of silence. This would take us beyond the last day of COP15 in Copenhagen. Let us show our respect in a different way – by NOT being silent! We cannot be silent until the world's leaders finally get serious about climate change and do something meaningful about it. We owe at least that to those 300,000 involuntary climate martyrs.

LUDWIG

As many who know him are aware, Ludwig's memories can be somewhat erratic. He can't be sure if this one is true, especially as it seems to be so wildly out of step with current realities. However, according to his recollection, the EU's position going into Kyoto was that it would cut its emissions by 15% by 2010 – next year. Can anyone enlighten him as to the truth, or otherwise, of this?