

eco



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'Hey guys . . . the roof is on fire!'

If you're looking for an atmosphere of urgency in the Hotel Maritim these days, you can pay a visit to the restaurants and coffee bars, where stressed service staff try to keep up with orders for latte macchiatos and uninspiring sandwiches. But as soon as you walk into the plenary halls, the level of urgency drops to such a low level that even the coffee lines offer more excitement.

Not surprisingly, the slow pace of these climate meetings is having hardly any impact on global warming. The negotiations are progressing as fast as ever, which is to say, not very fast at all.

Numerous reports recently have focused on our warming globe. For example, last week the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that the past decade has been the warmest ever recorded. And judging on the temperatures measured during the first 7 months of this year, 2010 might almost surely become the hottest year ever, since modern measurements began.

While no single extreme weather event can be linked conclusively to climate change, the gruesome impacts are starting to be felt. It's a good idea to remind ourselves of the reality being felt by every individual who is hit by a natural disaster. The net is being cast wider and wider.

Right now, central and western Russia are suffering from a punishing drought as a result of the hottest summer ever recorded, and large areas are sustaining wildfires. More than 2,000 people have drowned while trying to cool off in rivers and streams, oth-

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Naked (un)Ambition

Yesterday's KP workshop on the scale of emission reductions from developed country Parties was a stark reminder of just how pathetic the pledges from Annex I really are, and the gap between rhetoric and reality.

The truth is that the Annex I emissions reductions targets now on the table are basically all words and no real substance: words that attempt to 'dress up' the need for real ambitious emissions cuts and hide the stark naked truth of an enormous, emperor-sized gigatonne gap between the pledges and what is called for by the science.

The story of the Emperor with no clothes is really the story about an Emperor who wanted new clothes. Some crafty tailors played a joke on the Emperor by pretending to make him special "invisible" clothes. So convincing were the tailors that he would walk down the streets naked. No one wanted to admit to being fooled, but finally a small child stated the obvious – "the Emperor has no clothes."

But there is one difference from that story. Here, the whole town is telling Annex I that their tailoring of the targets will not cover up the gigatonne gap. The naked display of unambition is blatantly obvious.

And no surprise, this was as obvious as ever in the KP workshop, so allow ECO to focus for a moment on the 'target tailoring'.

The first (un)shocker was that even if Annex I secure all their conditionalities, there is no chance that their most ambitious pledges are anywhere near the IPCC range of 25-40% for an aggregate target, the 40%+ target that is actually needed, or really any target giving the world a reasonable chance of achieving the climate stabilisation goal.

Annex I were certainly proud last year

to parade, like the Emperor in his "new clothes," their commitment to a 2° C stabilisation goal. But what's clear is that as a whole they aren't actually willing to do a fair share of the work that professed long-term target requires.

This leaves a question for delegates to address this week. How will Annex I's own agreed long term goal of 2° warming be met if they aren't willing to do anywhere near the level of work required? (And do note, 2° is not even enough to ensure avoiding catastrophic climate change.)

The second shocker of the workshop was the extent to which loopholes undermine the current pledges. If Annex I secure all the loopholes they're seeking, their aggregate emissions could be higher in 2020 than they were in 1990 ... and that's supposed to be moving forward? If that's what poses as leadership in these times, Annex I voters may need to sack their current leaders and find some real ones.

This leads to ECO's second question. How can Annex I morally justify seeking loopholes that will whittle away their targets to, more or less, nothing? Annex I Parties are welcome to give ECO their excuses in writing – we'll consider publishing the best ones later in the week...

ECO has one final question for delegates to address when the KP workshop resumes this morning: Given that there is no chance that the upper end of pledges will reach the IPCC range – much less the 40%+ reductions actually needed according to the current science, even if they get their "comprehensive agreement" – what more will it take for Annex I to lift their pledges to the levels needed to make the difference?

– *Impacts, continued from page 1*

ers have lost their homes, and the dry conditions have already destroyed nearly 10 million hectares of crops. The weather forecast for the rest of this meeting week? Hot and getting hotter, with peat fires creating severe air pollution and a dangerous health hazard in Moscow and surrounding areas.

In fact, while isolated temperate records are always being set, extreme hot weather has spread globally this year. According to meteorologist Dr. Jeff Masters at the Weather Underground web site, at least 14 countries have set all-time high temperature records this year. That's one less than the peak year of 2007, and remember, we are still barely halfway through 2010:

Ascension Island 34.9° C
 Chad 47.6° C
 Columbia 42.3° C
 Finland 37.2° C
 Iraq 52.0° C
 Kuwait 52.6° C
 Myanmar 47° C
 Niger 47.1° C (tied)
 Pakistan 53.5° C
 Qatar 50.4° C
 Russia 44.0° C (Yashkul, Kalmykia Republic)
 Saudi Arabia 52.0° C
 Solomon Islands 36.1° C
 Sudan 49.6° C

But it's not just the heat. The Sahel and especially Niger have been suffering drought for more than a year. The annual rain period has been changing, making it more violent but shorter in duration, and this is helping drive this already dry area to a new food crisis. Where farmers could harvest 30 bundles of millet last year, this year they can just get 11 bundles. This is a fresh reminder that IPCC AR4 clearly laid out these kinds of climate change consequences for Africa.

Recent research has also found that rains become more intense in already wet areas as atmospheric water vapor content increases.

With this in mind, note that China is currently facing its worst flooding for over a decade due to heavy rains. Water levels in one tributary of the Yangtze river were reported to be the highest in 30 years.

At the same time, in Pakistan, devastating flash floods triggered by monsoon rains have caused the death of more than 1,400 people, at least 1 million have been affected in the worst flooding in living memory, and UNICEF warns of knock-on effects from disease spread and devastated food stocks. This all provides hard reality to the some-

REDD+ Partnership, Off on the Wrong Foot

Earlier this year, ECO initially applauded as Parties worked together to develop an Interim Partnership to bring some coherence to the many REDD+ initiatives developed since Bali, and to ensure the transparent and efficient deployment of US\$4 billion pledged for fast start funding. But today it seems that the Partnership has so far achieved nothing but disappointment.

Thanks to Norway, stakeholders were initially able to provide input to the Partnership Agreement, but since the Oslo conference in May they have been shut out of the Partnership process – literally and figuratively.

Only a handful of observers were allowed to attend the meeting held in Brasilia last month after the chairs, Japan and PNG, gave observers and Parties less than one week's notice. Further compounding this failure, the chairs sent an abysmal set of bullet-points outlining their ideas for stakeholder participation that in no way responded to the issue and did not move the process forward.

As of today there has been no full report-back from Brasilia. Stakeholders have not even been invited to the Partnership meetings being held this week, although we understand the majority of Partners consider they should be closed only in exceptional circumstances. ECO calls upon all Partners to open the next meeting scheduled for tonight to participation by all observers. The stakeholder community has knowledge and experience that can support and advance the Partnership's goals. As the Partnership develops its work plan, it is critical that stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on all the documents that will guide interim REDD+ actions.

But there's even more to this unhappy story. The REDD+ negotiations in both the Partnership and the UNFCCC are stuck, each waiting for the other to act first. The UNFCCC side has stalled with no expectation they will resume before Cancún, even as key brackets loom in the text. Instead,

times abstract notion of 'loss and damage'.

Dear delegates – it's time to bring the urgency back. It's time to remind ourselves that these talks are about life and death for millions of people. How about using the big screens to establish a direct TV link to the people of the world who – as delegates are drinking coffee and fighting over which spinoff groups to establish – are experiencing what climate disasters actually feel like.

the secretive Partnership is trying to move forward with incomplete guidance from the COP. ECO calls for an end to this stalemate that allows Parties to ignore difficult decisions, and asks for a resumption of the UNFCCC REDD+ negotiations as soon as practically possible, given the overlap of the LULUCF negotiations. Without final guidance from the UNFCCC there will be no assurance of social safeguards and environmental integrity in the Partnership.

Finally, to ensure that fast-start funding for REDD+ is spent transparently and effectively, the Partners need to develop a work plan based on the provisions in the Partnership Agreement, paying special attention to ensuring implementation of the safeguards. Above all we need to regain the spirit and cooperation that led to so many positive steps forward in 2009.



LUDWIG

Drifting around the official welcoming reception on Monday night, Ludwig thought his compatriots were brave to host the event in the as-yet-uncompleted new negotiating venue. He reckons that the race is on; what will happen first – aggregate A1 target or new venue? It's also curious that both seem to involve some kind of fraudulent accounting.

Speaking of numbers, there was a rumor going round that a small group of countries spent €3000 on photocopies of just one document for Sunday's REDD+ Interim Partnership meeting. Ludwig wonders how many trees could have been saved if those funds had gone to fast-start forest conservation capacity building instead.