

ECO



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Poland: Coal, Climate and Contradiction

There is not much worse you can do as the presidency of the COP than hosting and blessing what's advertised as the 'coal industry's most important event of the year'.

Just three kilometres away from the venue where discussions on how to avoid the worst impacts of global warming are ongoing, coal lobbyists will be repeating the lie that saving the climate and burning coal can go hand in hand. All of this is applauded and supported by the Polish government, the very same one that invited climate negotiators to Warsaw.

While the government of Poland is fixated on protecting the coal industry against effective climate policies, an overwhelming majority of the citizens of Poland are in favour of climate protection and would like to see more investments in renewable energy instead of the massive state subsidies going to coal.

Finding itself isolated in the EU and accused of misusing the COP Pres-

idency for promoting its own agenda, the Polish government has turned to one of its last true friends, the World Coal Association. To demonstrate their shared love for coal, these soul mates together developed together the agitprop of the decade: the 'Warsaw Communiqué'. This short screed advocates that you can tackle climate change with continued coal burning. It's like claiming you can cure lung cancer while smoking two packs of cigarettes a day.

But ECO reminds the Polish government that according to the International Energy Agency, two-thirds of proven fossil-fuel reserves must remain in the ground if we want to have any chance of staying below 2°C of warming.

Coal and Climate have only one thing in common -- both words start with C.

Continuing that Contradiction will lead to Climate Catastrophe unless the Coal stays in the ground.

Coal and Health

Only two days apart, Warsaw is playing host to two major conferences in parallel with COP19. You all know about the first one -- the International Coal and Climate Summit starting today. The second was a climate and health summit over the weekend organised by the Global Climate and Health Alliance. Both are seeing involvement from medical students and health professionals, but in dramatically different capacities.

The climate and health event dealt extensively with the health impacts

of climate change. Keynote speaker Dr. Liz Hanna, president of the Australian Climate and Health Alliance, described the situation as 'grim, grim and more grim'. Expert speakers from the World Health Organization and a wide range of public health entities around the world spoke to the ways climate action and clean energy can benefit health. The conference also dealt in depth with the negative effects of air pollution, including those of coal, the most polluting of all fossil fuels.

At the same time, there are determined on page 2



The Siekierki coal power station is readily visible south of the National Stadium in Warsaw. First operational in 1961, it now generates 622 MW of electricity and provides district heat for a large part of the city. It is owned since 2012 by PGNiG, a large oil and natural gas company controlled by the Polish state. The station CO2 emissions are about 3.2 million tonnes/annum. Installing a proposed 'clean coal' power block would not reduce the impact in a major way. Instead, the Siekierki plant represents the last generation of coal if we are to have a planet worth living on. (Image: Wikipedia)

Side-Stepping Finance

Now that Parties' proposals for decision text came in late on Saturday, negotiations on long term finance can start in earnest as we start the second week in Warsaw.

But ECO wonders if some of the submissions were written in a rush on the way to the NGO non-party, considering how they drove past the crunch issues with only a passing glance. A case in point: the text by several Umbrella countries ticks the boxes for Noting, Recognizing, Welcoming and Reiterating, but somehow leaves out Committing.

As well, their text fails to accept that the 2020 US \$100 billion goal requires actual scaling-up of finance. Fortunately, this important assurance can be found in the proposed text by the G77 and China, just a bit above a paragraph that deals with another crunch issue: the urgent need to fix the imbalance between funding for mitigation and adaptation -- another topic skillfully avoided by the Umbrellas.

The need for predictability of finance is supported in South Korea's proposal to craft a

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Coal and Health, from page 1

ined members from the health community who are insisting that we hear the truth about the impacts of coal on parts of the body. The 'People before Coal' protest outside the Coal Summit will cite recent research conducted by the Health and Environment Alliance highlighting that the health cost of coal in Poland alone amounts to over 8 billion Euros, and causes around 3000 premature deaths every year.

Well, it seems that the Polish government, while hosting the Coal and Climate Summit, couldn't quite make it to the climate and health summit. Then, again, this is entirely consistent with the host country's actions during COP19 as a whole. But the people of Poland know better which side their interests are on.

Finance, from page 1

global climate finance roadmap. That could include intermediate finance levels towards 2020, set disbursement targets for key multilateral climate funds, plan collective action to mobilize additional finance, etc.

And the G77 and China suggest not only an intermediate finance level for 2016 but also a requirement for developed countries to prepare their pathways for scaling up from fast start finance towards 2020, outlining projections and scenarios for various sources and channels of finance countries aim to deploy.

What does the Umbrella countries' text have to say about predictability and pathways? As they say under the red-white-and-blue Umbrella, "three strikes and you're out!"

Finally, the G77 and China have proposed an open ended working group to ensure continuous progress on climate finance. For this to work, it is important to clearly spell out the functions and expected results of such an undertaking, and to set it up at a reasonably high political level so it does not get downgraded in the final hours at Warsaw to being just another extension of the work programme.

¿Qué tal, Costa Rica?

ECO is quite disappointed with Costa Rica. While the country holds an international reputation of being environmentally sound, peaceful and actively engaged in the protection of nature, the current government began developing a huge petrol megarefinery some time ago.

We appreciate that Costa Rica always pushes for good outcomes in these negotiations and says that it



Image via getup.org.au

Uplifting News from Down Under

At last, some great news from Australia. But you can bet your bottom Aussie dollar it doesn't come from the coalition government. Action over the weekend demonstrated in the clearest possible terms how far off the track they are with the people of Australia.

On Sunday 60,000 people, from all the state capitals and from tiny Outback towns, took to the streets to set the record straight. To be honest, it takes a lot to get those laid-back Aussies riled up in late spring. But not even torrential rain in Sydney could keep people indoors, with 10,000 showing exactly where Australians really stand. In Melbourne they numbered 30,000. Whether in gumboots or sandals, no matter the increasingly unpredictable weather, the country was on its feet this weekend rallying for climate action.

For years, politicians have ignored a simple fact – the majority of Australians want more action on climate change. On Sunday the message could not have been louder. As we head into week two in Warsaw, let's get one thing straight: Australians are not happy with what their government is doing on climate change, and they are not happy with what is going on here. They are rightly and loudly demanding more.

leads by example. For example, look at the confirmation for funding (US \$10.7 million) for a NAMA with regard to coffee beans. That is great news, especially for those of us who like our morning cup. But while NAMAs promote low carbon development, the minister of environment is actively promoting the creation of dirty fossil fuel industries in a country that set up a target of carbon neutrality by 2021.

Concerns by the citizens and several academic and independent groups focus on the impacts of construc-

tion of the refinery and the lock-in to the fossil fuel economy this initiative promotes over the longer term.

So why insist on a refinery when the country's national goal is carbon neutrality? Is a refinery really a necessary 'necessary evil'?

Excitement is growing as Ministers start arriving for the High Level Segment. The Bali Action Plan saw near-global inaction, the Copenhagen Accord covered over discord and Durban's platform is unsteady. Given this short-of-the-mark track record, ECO is responding by running a little contest to name the Warsaw outcome. Will it be a name to signify real action or coal's last choke?

It's a party driven process, so you tell us. Send proposed names for the Warsaw >>> to ECO via the CAN exhibit booth.



FOSSIL OF THE DAY AWARD

In a case of doubling down on a dastardly display, **Australia** was handed the **First Place Fossil of the Day** award for an unprecedented fourth time in a row at the Warsaw climate negotiations.

This is getting silly, folks. It's almost like the new Australian Government is trying to compete with Canada for being handed the most fossils in a UNFCCC session.

After their first fossil on Monday for refusing to make any new finance commitments, Australia has today gone even further with their nasty rhetoric, willfully and completely undermining the very concept of climate finance.

The Australians said obligations for new, predictable and reliable finance from developed countries are 'not realistic' and 'not acceptable'. This is nothing short of an attack on an important cornerstone of the UNFCCC.

In the same statement, Australia said that climate finance 'is not welfare transfer'. Indeed. Climate finance isn't welfare – it's a moral obligation (sorry Australia, it might not be acceptable to you, but it's true) and a legal commitment that developed countries have made because of their responsibility in causing climate change.

New, additional, adequate and predictable finance – which must primarily be public money if it is to reach the poorest countries and communities and meet UNFCCC obligations – is not an optional part of the UNFCCC. It's a key building block without which the entire international climate architecture falls apart.

Read all the Fossil texts at www.climatenetwork.org/fossil-of-the-day