

ECO

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Engulfing
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Bridging the Gulf

From one aggressively air-conditioned conference centre to another... Only three months ago, ECO was sitting in tropical Bangkok pondering the outcome of COP18, and now here we are on the edge of the desert. But what a change three months can make. A new Chinese leadership, a new mandate for US President Obama, elections in Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania and Venezuela, as well as many, many more extreme weather events, resulting in severe loss and extensive damage. But will such monumental shifts in global politics affect the outcome in Doha?

Despite high hopes, Doha was never going to be a cup final. Durban, marked out for the grand 'huddle', gave the negotiators new political instructions. Doha must prepare the roadmap for 2015. ECO would like to remind delegates this

doesn't mean you can kick back and snooze till then. Remember – if you snooze, you lose! Too much is at stake. The final saga of the Kyoto Protocol rolls on, the LCA requires successful closure and a work plan for the new Durban platform for both a 2015 deal and near term ambition must be established, along with progress under the subsidiary bodies. Doha must not renegotiate Durban. We must only move forward.

Bismarck once said, "Politics is the art of the possible", and ECO firmly believes a deal is possible in Doha. But deft diplomacy will need to be at the heart of that deal. ECO waits with bated breath to discover how the COP Presidency will lead Parties to deliver a Doha package.

ECO is delighted that Australia has set a constructive tone going into Doha, with their intention to sign up to the second

commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (albeit with low ambition and those pesky conditions attached). If only other brollies would follow suit. New Zealand's intention not to sign up to the second commitment period is a scandal. How can countries like New Zealand call for a legally binding agreement in 2015, when they're not even prepared to put their own skin in the game?

ECO still believes that the EU will put a target on the table that results in real mitigation, since it already achieved 20% reduction in 2011. Perhaps the Polish delegation would like to consider this, given they're prepping to host the next COP.... But ECO is prepared. We even packed our souvenir "I ♥ KP" t-shirts from Durban, no doubt much to the delight of

continued on page 2

The Pathway to Ambition

Is equity really the pathway to ambition? ECO is here to say that it had better be. Without equity, nothing else will work. Which is to say that nothing else will work well enough. Without equity the story of the low carbon, climate resilient transition will be a story of "too little, too late." And as the scientists are anxiously telling us – see, recently, the World Bank's Turn Down the Heat report – this is a story without a happy ending.

Let's admit the public secret that we all already know – equity will either be shaped into a pathway to ambition or inequity will, assuredly, loom before us as an altogether unscalable wall. We can see how this would happen. The US – while insisting that it's pushing bravely

past the sterile politics of an obsolete North/South firewall – has managed to purge CBDR (and RC) from all official texts. But to what effect? For an overwhelming majority of Parties, absence of new equity language affirms the obvious. The Convention language applies. Has the US noticed that actions provoke reactions?

The head of the US delegation has rejected the Annexes as "anachronistic," and has gone on to call for "the differentiation of a continuum, with each country expected to act vigorously in accordance with its evolving circumstances, capabilities and responsibilities." It's a good idea, though alas it suffers by its association with the US's aggressive – and of-

ten abrasive – drive to destroy 1997's Kyoto Protocol. Coming into Doha, ECO can only wonder if this unfortunate picture is about to change. With President Obama's re-election, there's a chance to reset Washington's international strategy, tactics and personnel. There won't be many more chances before 2015.

Meanwhile, the position is obvious. The ambitious, global principle-based regime that we need can only come by way of a creative elaboration of the Convention's principles, CBDR/RC first among them. So, yes Mr. Stern, we need a dynamic approach, one that takes



continued on page 2

Gulf continued

many developed country delegates... An amendment in Doha to the KP that secures environmental integrity by closing down the loopholes will be critical to opening up a productive outcome on the LCA. But ECO cannot ignore the early escape from the Kyoto framework by Canada, Japan and (will they? won't they?) Russia – these countries are neglecting their obligations and their own national interest.

For many, the successful closure of the LCA track will be the political hot potato. In addition to adopting the Kyoto amendments, there remains much work to be done, in particular on finance and MRV of developed country actions. Reassuring developing countries that progress is being made on long-term finance and that there will be a ramping up of finance flowing post 2012 will be crucial to ad-

ressing their concerns about closing the LCA. This is also indispensable to help them with ambitious climate action.

ECO thinks the G77 proposal on MRV under 1(b)(i) hits the spot. Ensuring greater transparency and accountability of developed country mitigation actions will help to restore confidence amongst G77 and those signing up to Kyoto (i.e. the majority of the world's people!) that the Annex I countries not subject to the KP rules will make comparable efforts.

And finally to the ADP. ECO would like to remind Parties that for 2015, equity and ambition are two sides of the same coin, and securing a negotiation on this will be vital in addressing the concerns from developing countries and concluding the LCA. Likewise on short-term ambition, ECO looks forward to hearing from Parties which action they will take to ramp up efforts in the immediate fu-

ture. One such concrete measure is that more countries put forward pledges, particularly the COP host and its neighbours. We need to build bridges from the era of burning coal, oil and gas to the cleaner and brighter future of renewable energy access for all, and a safe climate.

The global shifts in politics and economics we are witnessing are having profound implications on both the need for and dynamics within the UNFCCC negotiations. The gulf to bridge between lofty intentions and credible action is wide. Whilst the political will is still lagging amongst many critical emitters, the weather is turning (metaphorically and meteorologically). Success in 2015 will require fundamental shifts in the real and political economies of many countries. Doha must build on and move forward from Durban to ensure we still have a cup final worth fighting for.

Ambition continued

the evolving realities of this mad and dangerous world into full account. Which is to say that we're not going to get it without an approach to dynamism that is widely accepted as both procedurally and substantively fair.

Where does this leave us? With a desperate situation in which all wealthy countries must quickly do their part to close the short-term emissions gap. This, fortunately, is a goal that can be agreed politically and legally within the bounds of the existing accords and treaties, but only if Parties negotiate in good faith. In particular, existing commitments – to mitigate and to support the mitigation and adaptation of others – must be achieved. Beyond the short-term, a new accord will be needed, a more challenging accord that we're not going to get without a vocal and political commitment to make "equitable access to sustainable development" into something real. This, in turn, will demand a robust negotiation on creative, principle-based approaches to sharing the long-term global costs and opportunities of mitigation and adaptation.

There's still time to launch the ADP with high and cooperative ambitions. But, frankly, there's not much time left. What's needed now is courage and real statesmanship. The Obama Administration, for its part, has to begin negotiating for a regime that's fair enough to actually work. And the G77's negotiators must do better as well. When BASIC Ministers, writing in their September declaration, called

for "an enhanced global effort to be implemented after 2020, under the UNFCCC, which would respect the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and differentiation between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties," they weren't exactly signalling an openness to fresh and expansive approaches to CBDR/RC. Given the current situation, their reticence was understandable, but it didn't suggest the kind of leadership that we're going to need in coming years. Perhaps, after Doha, such leadership will finally be on the agenda.

Difficult negotiations lie ahead. How can they best be organized? Equity is quite important enough to get its own work stream. But if this is not to be, we're confident that either the Vision or Ambition workstreams – or both! – will be more than willing to open their doors to the equity discussion. One way or another, the discussion is going to have to take place, and no one should be foolish enough to believe that, by attempting to push it aside, they're doing the hard and thankless work of true realism.

Here's some free advice: Let's discuss principles first, and having agreed on the keystones (hint: the indispensable points are ambition, capacity, responsibility and the sustainable

development rights of the poor) we'll be in a position to move forward to a practical, non-nonsense conversation about indicators and comparability. We'll be in a position to move, that is, down the equity corridor – or, if you prefer, up the equity ladder – from principles, by way of indicators, to coherent and reciprocal agreements.

This situation will not be quickly resolved. But there's not going to be any real trust, or momentum, until equity is a recognized, respected, and foundational part of this negotiation. And – does this still need to be said? – until there's substantive progress on the finance front as well, for this and only this can translate rhetoric and good intentions into believable action. The good news is that both of these breakthroughs are ours for the taking.



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