

ECO



Build trust before COP-9

We all came to this COP knowing it would not be a milestone in the decade-long series of climate negotiations. It would not have the high profile of Rio, where the convention was born. It would not see the youthful enthusiasm of Berlin, which launched the Protocol negotiations, nor the drama of Kyoto, where they reached fruition. Bonn and Marrakech saw the rest of the world move forward without the United States. Delhi was to see the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, but Russian dithering has given this honour to COP-9. Still, there were hopes that Delhi would be a serious work session, moving ahead on several of the remaining “technical” issues, while offering ministers a chance to take stock of the current situation and the road ahead.

Instead, this COP will be remembered as the “deadlock in Delhi.” Little progress was made on Kyoto implementation issues. While not helpful, this is not a big setback as time remains to get things right before COP-9. The

bigger concern is the re-inflaming of North-South tensions, which threaten progress over the longer-term. Everyone knows that to reach the ultimate objective of the Rio treaty – avoiding dangerous interference with the climate system – action on emissions will have to be both deeper and broader.

The European Union and others made statements acknowledging this reality. They proposed that in advance of formal negotiations required to start no later than 2005, informal discussions be launched on how this challenge can be met in an equitable manner that promotes sustainable development in the South. The US saw its opening, and knowingly misrepresented these proposals as what they explicitly are not – efforts to impose unrealistic commitments on developing countries that hamper their economic growth. Given that the Bush Administration cites the lack of developing country commitments as one of its main reasons for abandoning Kyoto, the US tactic gives cynicism a bad name. The Saudis and other OPEC countries piled on, and soon even the Indian Prime Minister felt compelled to term these suggestions “misguided.”

All the recycled rhetoric in the world will not paper over this breach. High-level talks before COP-9 will be essential to establish the higher level of trust that must provide the foundation for a just, equitable and adequate global climate agreement. They should start first between countries that truly want progress towards this goal. In other words, the US and the Saudis should not be invited. The discussions should focus initially on developing a shared awareness of the magnitude of the challenge ahead. ECO suggests that when everyone gets home, they do their homework.

—continued back page, column 1

Norway sets the pace on CDM quality

Ongoing debate in the Norwegian parliament on how to achieve its Kyoto targets has seen a majority embrace the idea that additional rules and standards are needed at a national level to strengthen the weak project eligibility rules in the CDM. Political parties, Arbeiderpartiet and Sosialistisk Venstreparti, have gone even further and are advocating that credits from sinks, coal and large hydro projects be specifically excluded from the Norwegian climate registry. This is an extremely encouraging sign that we hope will encourage other Annex I countries to act unilaterally to promote an effective and sustainable CDM.

Having buyer countries exclude certain technologies has a clear precedent. At COP6.5 last year, all Annex I parties agreed not to source credits from nuclear projects. But other problematic technologies and practices remain eligible for the CDM. Large hydro projects are flooding the emerging CDM market with non-additional cheap credits. The PCF is pushing ahead with a plantation-based project in Brazil. While no coal projects have yet been proposed, it is only common sense for Annex I countries to act now, and make clear they will not pour petrol on the climate fire.

EU countries in particular should take the lead. It was only a couple of years ago at COP6 in The Hague that they sought to exclude sinks and large hydro projects from the CDM. Despite the failure of that effort, they must now refuse to accept CERs from these technologies in their national registries. As in any market, buyers have an absolute right to decide what they will buy or not buy. Credits from these technologies must remain on the shelf.



US NewSpeak

While US head of delegation Paula Dobriansky's speech did not elicit the boos, catcalls and howls of outrage that greeted US Secretary of State Colin Powell's address to the WSSD last month, it certainly deserved it. She demonstrated a mastery of "NewSpeak" which has come to characterise public statements by members of the Bush Administration. As one US official put it succinctly last week, "The United States is fully committed to climate change." It would appear so.

In Bush's NewSpeak, an "ambitious climate change policy" is one which will see US emissions rise by some 30 per cent over 1990 levels by 2010, or 36 per cent above their Kyoto target. Well done. Way to package business-as-usual.

An "unprecedented level of resources" committed to climate change, means a recycling of pared-down versions of leftover Clinton-era programmes. Excellent spin - hope nobody does the math.

And just to be clear who is responsible for environmental degradation, it is nice to know

that "poverty...ravages the environment." Oh, sorry, is that the source of the problem? We have been labouring under the misconception it had something to do with pollution from industrialised countries and their unsustainable lifestyles. Thanks for correcting those wrong thoughts.

Finally, misquoting the WSSD text, Ms Dobriansky noted that the impacts of climate change, particularly the effects in LDCs and the developing world, "remain at the centre of local attention." Well done. Hope nobody notices that the *actual* WSSD text reads, "the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to water and food and human health remain *at the centre of GLOBAL attention* (italics added - WSSD Plan of Implementation, para 36). We would not want to imply any responsibility on behalf of the industrialised countries for the problems of climate change, would we? And if we use the word "global," that will remind people of all those pesky treaty obligations and international agreements we are not living up to, and we would not want to do that.

– *Build trust before COP-9, from front page Assignment no.1: What is dangerous climate change? (Hint, you can find the new CAN paper on "Preventing dangerous climate change" at www.climatenetwork.org)*

The EU and other non-US industrialised countries can do their part by fully meeting their financial commitments to the South, and by demonstrating they are serious in meeting their emissions reduction commitments at home. As the President of the COP until COP-9, India needs to reclaim a leadership role. It could start by taking up the EU's offer of basing long-term allocation frameworks on the principles of equity and fairness India has always called for. These steps could put the climate negotiations back on track in the run-up to COP-9.

"Fossil of the Day" Awards

The US received a super fossil award yesterday for its intervention at the Ministerial round table discussion. It claimed that protecting and ensuring US economic growth should be of primary importance to developing countries – implying that the US should not be asked to take any reasonable climate action (which Bush tells us will wreck the US economy).

The US also maintained that it is

committed to the aims of the Convention, and that its national target of an 18 per cent reduction in carbon intensity is a helpful and challenging one. We wonder how increasing emissions from the world's biggest polluter will help stabilise the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

With one day to go, the US and Saudi Arabia are in a commanding lead, followed by Canada. Do turn up for tomorrow's final awards presentation ceremony at 6pm in the main hall to see at first hand what effect it will have on the final rankings.

COP-8 Fossil Awards Score Card as at October 31

Rank	Country	Points
1.	US	14
2.	Saudi Arabia	12
3.	Canada	8
4.	Chile	3
5.	India	3
6.	Iran	3
7.	Nigeria	3
8.	China	2
9.	Kuwait	2
10.	Australia	1
11.	Brazil	1

Brazilian switch

ECO welcomes the efforts of Brazil, as the spokesperson of G77&China on non-annex I communications, to take into account the concerns of many countries and NGOs on vulnerability and adaptation. Some of you may remember that Brazil, representing the G77&China, received a fossil last week for being difficult on this issue. We are happy to note things have taken a pleasant turn for the better. Now, that is the Brazil we are used to.

Rajiv

We know a certain chair has been working long hours but he must be teetering precariously on the brink if he expects countries to adopt decisions in the absence of the relevant documents. When an objection was raised by the EU, he accused them of hijacking the process. Ok, so we have given the rich a hard time for being unfair but even Rajiv was relieved when the meeting was adjourned until tomorrow morning.

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