

eco

12
JUNE

CREDIBILITY
ISSUE

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 SB-16 in Bonn, June 2002.

If you don't like the message, shoot the messenger, or at least discredit him

When President Bush dismissed his own 'national communication' to the UNFCCC last week, he did it on the basis that he had 'read' the report put out by 'the bureaucracy'. Well, it turns out, he didn't in fact read it, at least according to White House press secretary Ari Fleischer. But he's sure that even without having read it, that his climate change plan to increase emissions by 30% over 1990 levels is right, and that we shouldn't do anything to combat climate change, just build dikes, dams and houses on stilts. This logic works well so long as you're free to shoot any messenger who tells you that climate change is a reality, and that the rest of the world wants to do something about it.

The same sort of (il)logic is informing the US approach to the role of the IPCC. Not content with driving Bob Watson out of the IPCC Chair, they now seem to

be trying to de-link the IPCC from the UNFCCC process. Which is odd. The same country that in all multilateral negotiations dismisses the notion of targets and timetables as not being 'scientifically rigorous', seems to think that the SBSTA should conduct it's negotiations without the undue interference of the scientific community, research data, or the facts.

Back in Marrakech, the US tried to make sure that scientists weren't involved to muddy the waters in their discussions on sinks definitions. Here, they try to make sure that the findings of the IPCC Third Assessment Report are not used to inform the future deliberations of SBSTA in any focused way, but merely provide a backdrop. The IPCC has asked SBSTA for guidance on the direction of the Fourth Assessment Report and to give very specific input into the focus

of the synthesis report, but the US seems to think that the needs of SBSTA can be better filled by reading USA Today or listening to Ari Fleischer as opposed to a body consisting of 2500 of the world's best climate scientists. The same holds true for the discussion of HFCs, where SBSTA's deliberations are supposed to be informed by the industry-controlled advisory panel of the Montreal Protocol, rather than a bunch of pesky scientists.

And presumably, when all is said and done, the US will dismiss the deliberations of SBSTA/SBI and all other Convention Bodies as 'unscientific' at the end of the day. Go figure.

Science – free for all!

All IPCC reports are available in text and pdf at the IPCC website
Read for yourself: www.ipcc.ch

Clean and Affordable Energy – Action in Joburg Needed!

Last week while negotiators talked away in Bonn, another group of negotiators were meeting in Bali at the 4th PrepCom for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The hope in Bali was a strong action programme with targets and timetables on important issues and for a decision on finance and trade that goes beyond Doha and Monterrey. The huge worry, of course, is that the WSSD will end in failure without any targets nor timetables. If Bali is an example of the level of political commitment to alleviating poverty and protecting the environment, we are in big big trouble. Environment ministers could not come to an agreement in Bali and a text, full of those famous brackets, is making its way to Johannesburg.

But this need not be the case. A number of countries support a key issue for sustainable development – providing access to clean and affordable energy

services to the poor in support of Millenium Development Goals. Also hidden in the text, among many brackets is a real target and timetable to increase the share of renewable energy worldwide. A couple of proposals exist in the text, but we urge countries to support a specific one – increasing the share of “new” renewables globally to 10% by 2010. Such a target would send a clear signal to the market that renewable energy is a big part of the energy future. It should also be backed up with support for the [in brackets] strong language in the text on phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies to the fossil fuel and nuclear industries; and with the necessary finance and capacity building measures such as instructing international financial institutions to shift their energy lending to renewable energy sources

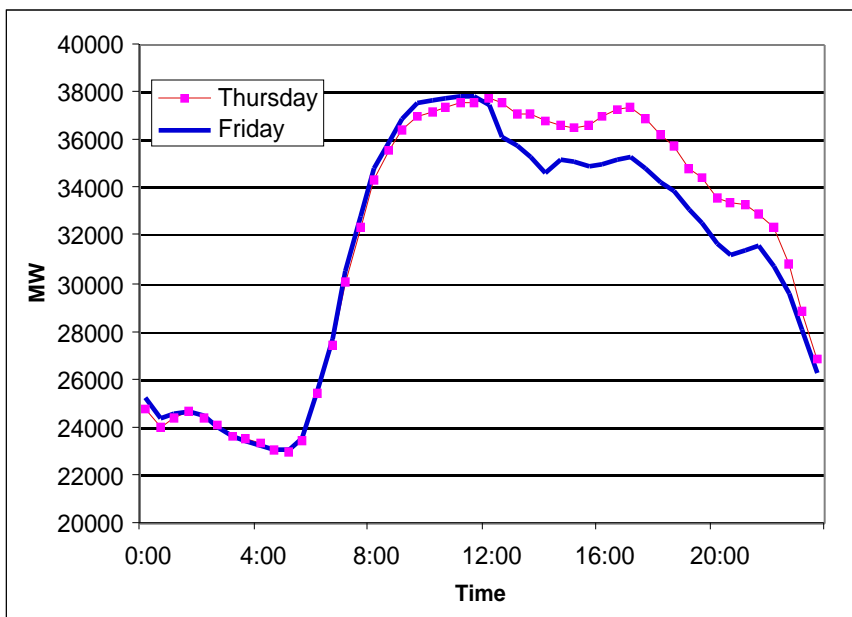
and to do the same for the export credit agencies.

Renewable energy targets are not rocket science. Many countries, such as China, India, the GRULAC countries, the EU and Indonesia already have targets, and so does the US state of Texas. The WSSD target should focus on new renewables as a percentage of primary energy and should not include large hydro or waste incineration.

Wouldn't it be great if heads of state attending the Summit could announce a pathbreaking initiative? If they could bring forth a concrete action that would change peoples' lives in a positive way? It is time for some leadership – leadership in between now and Johannesburg and leadership in Johannesburg for clean and affordable energy services now!!

World Cup as a mitigation measure

The graph shows UK electricity demand for last Thursday and Friday. The UK began using significantly less electricity just before the Argentina versus England match and demand stayed lower than usual, both throughout the game and after it. UK NGOs are already working on football as a mitigation measure and will be proposing CDM football projects to the next meeting of the Executive Board. Unfortunately, the Chair is rumoured to prefer cricket.



Reductions in emissions from reduced demand in electricity:

CO₂ = 9300 tonnes

SO₂ = 60.0 tonnes

CH₄ = 28.5 tonnes

Radioactivity = 0.001 Man-Sieverts

THANKS

The Climate Action Network would like to thank Greenpeace International, WWF International, CAN-Europe, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

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