Bonn, Poznan and Beyond

Let’s not forget what’s at stake: if current emissions trends continue, global average temperatures will rise by around 3-7°C above preindustrial levels, with catastrophic consequences for all. Sometimes these negotiations are like listening to a group of people on a badly-leaking lifeboat arguing over who should actually start bailing as the water rises inexorably, when the obvious answer is that all should be doing what they can to avoid the boat sinking completely. Those with the greatest capacity should be bailing the hardest, sufficiently motivated by their historical responsibility to be doing their best to keep the others afloat, and making sure everyone has access to the lifejackets.

So what should you be doing? What can Bonn deliver to keep us from sinking?

Parties need to reach a common understanding of what their shared vision is – how far up towards the rim of the boat they will allow the water to rise, as it were.

The LCA needs to break out into contact groups on developed country mitigation, developing country mitigation, REDD, adaptation, technology and finance. What Parties want to see reflected in the Copenhagen agreement should be brought to the table here and now as concrete proposals, to allow sufficient time for their exploration and analysis by other Parties and Civil Society.

ECO recognizes that the negotiations are complicated, with issues spread throughout the agenda and similar items appearing under both AWG and LCA. Parties need to trust each other and consolidate these building blocks. Remember, there will be a re-evaluation exercise in Poznan. The most important thing is not where an issue is discussed, but that it is discussed, in a coherent and constructive way.

ECO expects outcomes from the LCA far beyond Chair’s draft conclusions: but for contact groups to begin to produce actual draft negotiating texts that will define the real negotiating issues to be ready for negotiation in Poznan, to allow the work done in the Dialogue and in more recent discussions to be realized.

The AWG should also be producing negotiating texts and beginning their refinement, so that there are bracketed texts on the table by Poznan.

Delegates, to stop the boat sinking ever lower, don’t bail out of your (common but differentiated) responsibilities.

Busting Bunkers

Yesterday the AWG KP debated how to tackle booming emissions from international aviation and shipping. Discussions centred around a constructive and progressive proposal from Norway. The plan, backed by the EU and due for consideration at IMO later this month, would tackle global maritime emissions in a trading system, with caps allocated by the UNFCCC. Developing countries would be compensated for this non-differentiated treatment with auction revenues for adaptation purposes. (cont p2)
LULUCF: Changing the Rules of the Game

LULUCF negotiations have begun! At the round table yesterday, Tuvalu colourfully reflected that LULUCF accounting resembles the board game “Snakes and Ladders,” where players slide down snakes or climb up ladders as they try to reach the top of the game board. Except, in the LULUCF accounting version, players have created rules to prevent them from sliding down the snakes (emissions) but allow them to climb all the ladders (credits) – and want to climb faster if the ladder is a harvested wood product!

Rather than by the roll of dice, the rules need to be negotiated in a sound and transparent manner -- before Annex I targets are set. ECO would like to draw Parties’ attention to several basic points:

1. Don’t cheat!
   During negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol, Parties called for ‘flexibility’ in counting LULUCF credits, allowing more total Annex 1 emissions than the game should have allowed. This needs to be fixed.

2. Deal with the snakes!
   LULUCF should cut emissions, not just increase sinks. Decreasing emissions from forest and peatland degradation provides greater and quicker mitigation than increasing the size of sinks such as harvested wood products.

3. But don’t kill the snakes!
   The EU reminded us that LULUCF also concerns biological systems with important functions, highlighting potential synergies and conflicts with mitigation. ECO supports Norway’s proposal that this linkage should be explicitly considered by negotiations.

4. Play by the rules
   Parties need to stay committed to the broad principles agreed in Marrakech that guide the development of LULUCF rules.

5. Remember this isn’t the only game in town!
   ECO reminds the Parties that LULUCF is part of the basket of activities to limit global warming to below 2 degrees. Strong commitments and actions to reduce emissions from the use of fossil fuels are essential!

EU Energy Package: Show the Way!

Next Thursday the EU environment ministers meet to discuss the Energy and Climate Package; four legislative drafts tabled by the European Commission last January. Notably, these deal with the division of the EU emission reduction target between countries and with the improvements to the European emissions trading scheme.

A strong Package is crucial to gear the EU toward a low carbon economy and to guarantee it fully exploits the sources of energy savings, innovation and employment. But it is not only about the EU. A strong Package can guarantee the EU’s international credibility and therefore cement the success of international negotiations. To do so, the Package has to fulfil two pre-requisites. First, the European emission reduction target must be science-based. Second, the EU must legally enshrine their support of the developing and vulnerable countries in their fight against climate change. This package must be officially adopted by the EU before the COP/MOP in Poznan. France: the ball is in your court.

ECO and all delegates in Bonn, especially those of developing countries, look forward to a very positive signal from this EU ministerial meeting. To achieve real progress in Bonn, EU ministers must clearly reinforce their commitment to reduce European domestic emissions by at least 30% by 2020, compared to 1990. Global leadership means domestic action. In addition, the EU must give substantial support to help developing countries in economic decarbonisation and adaptation to climate change. The EU ministers must also call for the full auctioning of emission quotas under Europe’s emission trading scheme, and for the use of the revenue – tens of billions of euros a year – for mitigation and adaptation. At least half of this revenue should be used to support developing countries.

The time of national interests in the EU is over. It is time for united leadership. Internal disputes on who should make the biggest effort are short-sighted in times of accelerating global climate change. It is time for a clear political signal to fast-track the international negotiations in Bonn. This political signal must be given by EU environment ministers next Thursday.

Busting Bunkers (continued)

This seems a reasonable way to integrate a global sector with the principle of differentiated responsibility. And a similar approach on aviation would be welcome, if the politics of allocating emissions to states proves intractable. Predictably though, there were protesters, who professed to agree with each other, but who in fact voiced different objections.

Japan, Saudi Arabia, Australia and the rest of the supporters of Article 2.2 as the methodology, insisted that things be left to ICAO and IMO, even though ICAO has done nothing but impede progress since 1997. Although Japan praised the ‘strong resolution’ ICAO took on GHG mitigation last year, the strongest ICAO proposal Japan could cite was ‘aspirational fuel efficiency goals’ – not absolute, and not binding. What part of ‘further commitments’ do they not understand?

Brazil and Argentina initially agreed with the supporters of Article 2.2, but went on to say that IMO overstepped their mandate in committing to a global GHG mitigation instrument. They argued that this is the UNFCCC’s jurisdiction, which operates on the principle of differentiated responsibility. This serves to highlight the paradox of Article 2.2 which asks Annex I countries to find a solution through bodies not subdivided into Annexes.

In contrast to IMO, ICAO is far from proposing a global solution for aviation, so Parties could deal with international aviation emissions directly by including them in their own emission targets on the basis of fuel sales. Marine emissions are more complicated because of ships’ ability to tanker: something like the Norwegian proposal might be a way forward here that parties should explore.