

ECO



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Kyoto Club Creates an Impact

The first day's COP plenary provided a familiar heady mix: clear information from countries facing climate impacts; calls for action and political will; and more devious tactics from the Bush Administration.

Minister Garcia, in his speech, was very clear. Climate change is happening now and Argentinians are worried. "We must do more," he said. "Climate change is already happening," he added. The impacts the Minister reported are far reaching – from increased storms and receding glaciers to the worrying impacts on human health. He went on to call upon developed countries to set in motion a new world economy in which the protection of the climate is an integral part. We at ECO could not have put it better ourselves.

It was clear from their statements that many delegations see the impacts hitting

harder and occurring faster than they had feared. Many – from Japan, to Tuvalu to Tanzania (on behalf of the LDCs) – urged the Bush Administration to reconsider its position and ratify the Kyoto Protocol now. As Nigeria put it: the USA must "reconsider and join the Kyoto Club."

The sound of African and Small Island voices together calling for urgent mitigation and help with adapting to the impacts they face should be heeded. As Tanzania put it, many such countries face a "struggle for survival." Delegations should sit up and realize their actions will determine the future of millions of people around the globe.

The EU, to its credit, has faced some of these facts. It reasserted its view that a threshold of 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels should not be breached. It also recognised that the impacts already reported demand action on adaptation. This COP will offer the EU a chance to make specific proposals that live up to this challenge.

Sadly all this warming cuts no ice in the frozen hearts of the Bush Administration, or its representative Harlan Watson. Rather than offering help, the US wanted to prevent any discussion in Buenos Aires about three important fora for the future – the Small Island Developing States meeting in Mauritius, the Disaster Relief meeting in Kobe, and the Commission on Sustainable

– continued back page, column 1

LDCs move forward

The least developed countries (LDCs) only started operating as a distinct caucus group (within G77&China) since COP6 bis in Bonn in 2001. Their rationale to group together within the UNFCCC negotiations was due to their specific mention as a vulnerable group of countries under Article 4.8 of the Convention.

Since their creation, the LDC group has been able to achieve agreement on the LDC Fund as well as the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs). The latter are currently being completed with funding from the LDC Fund through the Global Environment Facility. As UNFCCC negotiations go, this is a fast and credible negotiating achievement, especially considering that the group has had, and still has, to negotiate with a number of handicaps. They include small delegations (usually one person only from one country) and lack of resources or time to prepare group positions in advance of negotiating sessions.

Fortunately this situation should now get better following the pre-COP10 workshop for LDC negotiators to discuss common positions and provide better understanding of the substantive issues being negotiated under the different agenda items. It is likely the LDC group will better articulate its positions at COP10, and play a more comprehensive role at future negotiations, especially by providing input on issues not related to the LDC Fund. As the group of poorest countries likely to be most adversely affected by climate change impacts, it is absolutely essential they use every opportunity to voice their concerns and that their voices be given the hearing they deserve.



Africa Calls for Progress on Adaptation

The G77&China has been instrumental in putting forward concerns of developing countries regarding adaptation to climate change. Due to the diverse interests of its members, it has been difficult for this group to come up with a consensus position in the debate on adaptation.

For some members, the concern has been to give priority to addressing the adverse impacts of climate change, while for others it has been "adapting" to the impacts of response measures. This standoff has made it difficult for the developing nations to receive the financial support they need to implement adaptation action, raising the question of whether it is time that some take the lead in moving the negotiations forward.

Statements made yesterday by some developing nations during the opening session mark an important step forward concerning the African countries' position on climate change

adaptation. Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group, both reiterated the need for concrete action on adaptation to the increasing impacts of climate change, especially in developing nations. They recognised the distinction between the two areas of concern covered in articles 4.8 and 4.9. Problems with accessing funds for adaptation were also highlighted by the Africa and LDC groups, relating to both the Special Climate Change Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), particularly the co-financing requirements.

It was heartening to hear that Qatar was brought to order in Monday's G77 meeting for exceeding their mandate as chair of this group. We hope that the expressed concerns of the Africa group will allow this COP to proceed with decisions on adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change.

- Kyoto Club Creates, from front page - Development (CSD) 14 meeting which will focus on energy. It tried to remove all reference to climate change from those agendas, substituting the words "climate variability." Since the US claims to be proud of its efforts to fight climate change, ECO has to wonder why it is so keen to avoid discussion of the subject. Perhaps a fear that if a link is made between climate change and disasters in a formal conference, liability claims might become

more likely. Whatever the reason, this interference is immoral. Will the US be willing to pay for the relocation of people on small islands when the time comes, or will it be too busy trying to delete the discussion anywhere possible?

Luckily other countries did not let the US off the hook, but came right back at Mr Watson. Keep it up! The Kyoto Club is starting to breathe some much needed life into these meetings. Let's hope for more.

"Fossil of the Day" Award

The United States of America clinched the top award yesterday for trying to block all possible recognition of problems associated with climate change; for proposing the deletion of Agenda item 8, which includes input from the COP to other intergovernmental meetings including the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the Commission on Sustainable Development; and for attempting to replace the words climate change with climate vulnerability.

Saudi Arabia was runner up for its continued fixation on response measures despite the reality that countries which stand to lose the most from high oil prices are developing countries that depend on oil the most, and not the world's leading oil exporters.

Diego

Amongst the vacant space in the exhibition area, Diego was amused to find that even institutions usually well-known for their forward-looking strategic planning such as international NGOs seem not to have found much use for their display tables yet. The sight of empty stands has prompted him to wonder whether such valuable real estate couldn't be better allocated. Informal polls among delegates have revealed a number of ideas. Some have suggested that a hammock could be set up, or possibly a shooting gallery where delegates can win stuffed bears. Some other environmental groups have stated granola-farming cooperatives, inspired by the free-standing greenery in the EU area of the Blue Pavillion. Japan is trying to claim any such growth as creditable afforestation of abandoned land. Meanwhile, Australia has requested that the space be reserved for relocating the population of Nauru when sea level rise has made their islands unliveable. Apparently Australia's own stand is fully occupied.

Commemorating 10 Years of COP

A "Voice of NGOs" side event to mark the tenth anniversary of the creation of the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC will be held on Thursday, December 9. Organised by Climate Action Network (CAN) International, it will be held in the Aguariabay room from 13.00 to 15.00 hours.

THANKS

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