Montreal Mandate Moves

The US walked out of the negotiations last night, refusing to even participate in the negotiations on the COP text offered by the President of the negotiations. Even more outrageous was that a senior US official blamed Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin’s stirring plenary speech for American opposition to the COP paper. The US tantrum was clearly a premeditated gambit aimed at scuttling the COP paper. The US fastened on the Prime Minister’s speech in this instance but could just as well have blamed the food in the conference centre.

Mr Martin said what all leaders should have said some time ago: the world will move ahead without the obstructionist Bush administration. Bush’s negotiators have now rammed home how out of touch he is with the rest of the world, including the people of America.

Parties should side-step the US’s diversionary tactics. As Japan’s Environment Minister so eloquently stated in her plenary speech, “unless we act together in solidarity and partnership, our journey will be in a wreck.”

In order to continue the journey, Parties should ignore the US and keep their eyes on the prize: elaboration of a more effective Kyoto Protocol that leads to greater emissions reductions, builds the carbon markets and fosters collaborative action between industrialised and developing countries.

Negotiators are close to a deal on the key elements of a package to move the process forward and this momentum must continue based on the following:

First and foremost, Parties must agree on Article 3.9. ECO understands there is a draft text that was agreed by the contact group. While not ideal, it is acceptable. It contains a robust process, if adequately resourced, to come up with new targets for Annex B countries. In our opinion, three years of negotiations is plenty and there ought to be a firm end date of 2008. The imperative is to send a strong signal to the business community that carbon markets are here to stay, and that the future belongs to cleaner technologies. It is essential that commitment periods be continued on a five-year cycle, and that countries have sufficient time to ratify and implement the new agreement before the second commitment period begins. ECO is confident the issue of a firm end date, if not decided here, will be revisited at COP/MOP 2. The vital outcome for Montreal is to keep the Kyoto process moving.

Secondly, Kyoto is not perfect and its implementation requires a significant amount of learning by doing. Parties should take the time between now and COP/MOP 2 to adequately prepare for the mandated Kyoto Protocol Article 9 review at that session. Parties need an opportunity to share their ideas and information, and discuss these proposals for improving Kyoto.

Thirdly, ECO welcomes the agreements on the Five-Year Plan on Adaptation. If negotiators can sort out the issues regarding financial governance of the Adaptation Fund at the next SBI, this would constitute real progress.

Ministers! These elements are in your grasp. Seize the day. Time is running out.

No one has more at stake in the ongoing

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Action on Adaptation at COP/MOP1

Adaptation featured prominently in almost all speeches of Ministers from developing countries as well as in many side events over the past two weeks. Unfortunately discussions on adaptation did not have an equally high profile in the formal COP/MOP process as the issue was covered under a number of different agenda items in both SBSTA and SBI. The five-year work programme on adaptation is the main item under SBSTA and has not been finalised.

Funding for adaptation activities in developing countries is the most important discussion on the issue and falls within the SBI. However, the presence of a multitude of different funds makes it hard for even negotiators to keep track of what each fund is supposed to do. In spite of this, this conference managed to reach agreement on the operational modalities of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) as well as the adaptation component of the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). However, they did not reach full agreement on operational modalities and procedures of the Adaptation Fund (AF) under the Kyoto Protocol.

The LDCF and SCCF are both voluntary funds and have hardly any resources. Only the AF has the facility of automatic fund flow from the two per cent levy on certified emissions reductions from clean development mechanism (CDM) projects. The G77/China have proposed that the fund should not be operationalised under the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the US is the major player in
Inuit File Human Rights Claim Against the US

Two years ago, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), came to COP9 in Milan to announce that the Inuit would defend their right to live in the tradition of their ancestors. The Inuit – the people of the ice – have watched their homeland melting before their eyes.

Two days ago, the Inuit followed through with their pledge. Because the main culprit, the US, still refuses to take meaningful action to lower its emissions, the Inuit lodged a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, DC.

As the petition was being filed by lawyers from the Center for International Environmental Law and Earthjustice in Washington, Ms Watt-Cloutier spoke to delegates in Montreal.

She said: “The petition is not an act of anger against the United States, but of love for my children and grandchildren. I want my grandson to have the same opportunity as his father to be an Inuit hunter and not merely a footnote to the history of globalisation.”

The 163-page petition draws upon the traditional knowledge of Inuit hunters and elders. It asks the Commission to hold hearings in the Arctic to confirm the damage to Inuit life and culture. It seeks a declaration from the Commission that the United States is violating fundamental Inuit rights. It also asks the Commission to recommend that the US adopt mandatory limits on its emissions, cooperate with the community of nations to protect the climate, help the Inuit adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change, and account for impacts on the Arctic and Inuit before approving any major new government actions.

In conclusion, Ms Watt-Cloutier, said: “This petition is not about money. Nor do we submit this petition in a spirit of confrontation – that is not the Inuit way – but to invite and promote dialogue with the US. Our purpose is to educate, not criticise; to inform, not condemn.

“Inviting the United States of America to respond positively to our petition. As well, I invite governments and non-governmental organisations worldwide to support our petition and to never forget that, ultimately, climate change is a matter of human rights.”

The full text of the petition is available at www.inuitcircumpolar.com

Contributors to ECO
We express our appreciation to: Mozaharul Alam, Tom Athanasiou, Valentine Batra, Antoine Bonduelle, Rob Bradley, Ruta Bubniene, Daniele Calza Bini, Gary Cook, Louise Corneau, Jessica Coven, Guy Daunyce, Matthias Duwe, Gabriela von Goerne, Amine El Kabbaj, Jose Etcheverry, Raphaëlle Gauthier, Jeff Fiedler, Pat Finnegan, Lars Friberg, Kathrin Guttmann, Donald Goldberg, Bill Hare, Nasimul Haque, Karim Harris, Fred Heutte, Martin Hiller, Saleemul Huq, Imogen Ingram, Tom Kelly, Brent Kopppersen, Kaisa Kosonen, Seppo Leimonen (www.seppo.net), Stephanie Long, Mark Lutes, Kirsten Macey, Lester Malgas, Manogaran Maniam, Elliec Mantha, Dale Marshall, Dave Martin, Elizabeth May, Alden Meyer, Jennifer Morgan, Victor Orindi, Catherine Pearce, Michelle Perrault, Mika Obayashi, Eddie Oldfield, Genevieve Prevost, Julie-Anne Richards, Anna Rose, Steve Sawyer, Nashina Sharif, Stephen Singer, Gurmit Singh, Moekti Soejachmoen, Wolfgang Sterk, Johannes Tonderayi, Joshua Tulkin, Sanjay Vashist, Hans Verolme, Giulio Volpi, Johanne Whitmore, Saly Wade, Richard Worthington, Daphne Wysham, Naoyuki Yamagishi, Laura Yates, and everyone else who contributed in one form or another to ECO at COP11 and COP/MOP1.

The Climate Action Network (CAN) thanks CAN Canada, Equiterre, the Swedish NGO Secretariat on Acid Rain, David Suzuki Foundation, Greenpeace International, HELIO International, National Environmental Trust, Natural Resources Defense Council, RAC France and WWF International for their support to ECO.

“Fossil of the Day” Award
The EU won the first-place award yesterday for continuously refusing to support or even propose a date when negotiations on future commitments of industrialised countries and the overall post-2012 climate regime shall be finalised. NGOs and G77/China have proposed 2008 for an end date but the EU has rejected this proposal. Traditional fossil powerhouse US will be second fossil for refusal to meet with other parties in bilateral meetings despite repeated requests during these vital last days of the Conference. Russia received the third fossil for stalling on 3.9.

Outcome of “Thiny” Contest
No delegate came up with a US-friendly alternative for the word “process.”