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First Ray of the Day Awarded, But 3 Fossils – Canada Takes 1st Place Yet Again

Cancun, Mexico – Canada once again took the 1st place Fossil of the Day today at the United Nations climate negotiations, this time for calling the idea that the biggest polluters should take on the biggest pollution reductions a “side car” issue. This is Canada’s sixth Fossil in Cancun. Papua New Guinea won its first Fossil, coming in 2nd place, for watering down environmental and social safeguards in a potential REDD forest protection agreement. The United States earned a Fossil for the third day in a row, this time for blocking progress on a host of issues unless developing countries took on more commitments.

On a positive note, a large bloc of the countries most harmed by climate change impacts, especially sea level rise, earned the first Ray of the Day at the Cancun negotiations for putting the reference to the safe upper limit to temperature rise, 1.5°C Celsius, back in the negotiating text.

The Fossils and Ray of the Day, as presented, read:

“The United States of America wins the third place Fossil. UK weather forecasts warn that Christmas could be canceled due to a once-in-a-lifetime cold front coming from the North, but it seems a similar cold front has already arrived from Washington. US officials indicated today that they won’t allow movement on adaptation, capacity building or technology until developing countries move more on MRV and Mitigation to keep them happy. Throwing up such roadblocks to progress is at odds with what Ambassador Stern said himself, 'Let's not do nothing...Let's not be hung up for year after year after year.'
FOSSIL OF THE DAY AWARD

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Yet nothing but blocking and blaming appears to be all that the world may get from the US here in Cancun. The deal back in Bali agreed by the previous US President, George W. Bush, was that the US would cut its emissions and provide finance and technology. In fact, that’s pretty much the deal agreed to almost two decades ago by his father!

The world expects even more from President Obama, who only a year ago was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for his potential to contribute to multilateral cooperation, including cooperation on climate.

No one wants to give another lump of coal to the country we all need for a truly global climate solution. So let’s make this the last one we ever give to the US and use it to fire up their delegation to put the 'Yes We Can' into Cancun!

"Papua New Guinea earns the 2nd place Fossil. In their desperation to get a REDD agreement at all costs, Parties have been pushing for weaker and weaker text almost on a daily basis. The implementation of the social, environmental and governance safeguards is just about at rock bottom. Some countries want no mechanism that would guarantee compliance, and instead proposed a weak system to 'monitor and inform' how the safeguards are addressed, but for PNG, even that was too strong!

PNG has now proposed to weaken the text even further to simply establish a process to only share information - with no actual obligation to do so. And we all know how poor PNG is at sharing information. We must ask - share with who? Themselves perhaps! We hope our friends in PNG will share with the world what's going on behind the scenes in their country especially with carbon cowboys riding into town stealing local peoples land and rights. So for that clanger, a fossil to PNG."

“The 1st place Fossil goes to Canada. In a briefing with journalists this morning, Canada’s environment minister dismissed the principle of historical responsibility as a ‘sidecar’ issue.

That’s a pretty convenient stance for a country in the top tier of cumulative greenhouse gas emitters. But maybe it’s not surprising that Canada considers historical responsibility as nothing more than a distracting side issue — after all, this is the same government that decided Kyoto targets were optional.

(more)
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With that kind of attitude, it’s not surprising that the rest of the world has started to consider Canada a ‘sidecar’ country. And Canada’s current government seems to be more concerned about getting oil into the tank than about the safety of the passengers.”

"The Alliance of Small Island States, Small Island Developing States, and Least Developed Countries win the first Ray of the Day in Cancun, and what a bright one it is! Returning the reference to 1.5 degrees C in the Shared Vision text is crucial for shining some light on the line between survival and destruction for some nations. For keeping our attention, and the text, on what matters most, AOSIS, the SIDS, and the LDCs earn a Ray of the Day."

About CAN: The Climate Action Network is a worldwide network of roughly 500 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climateneutral.org

About the fossils: The Fossil of the Day awards were first presented at the climate talks in 1999 in Bonn, initiated by the German NGO Forum. During United Nations climate change negotiations (www.unfccc.int), members of the Climate Action Network (CAN), vote for countries judged to have done their 'best' to block progress in the negotiations in the last days of talks. The Ray of the Day, a newer award, honors countries that have done something exceptional to move the negotiations forward.

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