

ECO



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ECO: Your Wingperson

Setting up a first date is a nerve-racking process. ECO has been there: spending hours overanalysing the details of what your crush did or didn't say, writing vague texts that don't express what you really mean, trying to play it cool by acting non-committal...

Always keen to give out relationship advice, ECO couldn't help noticing that Parties' discussions on the first date of the global assessment (still called a "stocktake" for the moment) are in dire need of a helping hand—not to mention their caginess around further developments for the ambition mechanism. Here are ECO's top tips for Parties on setting a date with destiny for a long-lasting relationship based on mutual understanding and trust:

Don't delay! It might seem scary, but someone has to initiate and suggest a clear date for your first get together. Why wait? You're only delaying making your dreams of a fossil fuel-free future a reality! Don't let all the intensity that's been building up before Paris go to waste. ECO reckons the first date for an assessment to raise ambition should happen well ahead of 2020. Who's going to seize the day and suggest 2018? Don't forget, you need agreement on this in Paris to avoid being stood up!

Be clear about your intentions. If you want things to prog-

ress, don't be shy about these ambitions! Put it down, in writing, that you're keen to take things to the next level with each successive date. Having the confidence to say how quickly you'll kick your dirty habits (like that fossil fuel addiction) is a true sign of commitment.

Make a good impression. Don't be shy in showing your wide range of interests in adaptation and finance at these assessments, too. This will show you can make informed decisions and plan for all eventualities. What a keeper!

Regular communication. Make time for regular check-ins to communicate how you're feeling about your current level of commitment. Be forthcoming about your expectations for robust transparency and MRV, but don't be afraid to ask for support. Global assessments to review and raise ambition should take place every 5 years. It's important to put this in your diaries now. Could there be a more romantic location than Paris to seal the deal?!

Look for your match. Learn about each others' needs. Are you a developed country looking to support greater decarbonisation? Are you a developing country with a conditional INDC just needing some support? Try establishing a match-box where Parties with reciprocal needs can achieve common goals.

Negotiations Yield Major Breakthroughs Thanks to Continued Exclusion of Observers

Observers are savouring more than just the chocolate muffins since their exclusion from negotiations. ECO's inbox has overflowed with updates and inside scoops, suggesting they can learn more about the negotiations by not being in the room. More positively still, these reveal some remarkable breakthroughs that have occurred since they were banished.

Firstly, the US has performed an impressive backflip and both endorsed Loss and Damage as a stand alone section and committed an annual 0.7% of GDP to financing it. As one US negotiator explained, "This backflip is in our national interest. We are deeply concerned about our projected gymnastics medal count at the 2016 Olympics and really need to practice".

A breakthrough on human rights was also achieved. Apparently, after tasting the "Mango Heaven" smoothie (following ECO's recommendation), negotiators from Saudi Arabia came to a newfound appreciation of human rights and are now supporting their comprehensive integration throughout the document.

Furthermore, Australia has convinced the Umbrella Group to accept major compromises on both mitigation and the long-term goal. This follows a bilateral with Marty McFly, who arrived yesterday from 1985, shocked to see that a comprehensive agreement to limit global warming had still not been signed. Strong language on decarbonisation and ratcheting up unconditional INDCs are now to be included. Sight-

ings of delegates from Australia and New Zealand joyriding in the DeLorean confirm ECO's suspicions of how this occurred.

Finally, and less positively, security has informed ECO that access to the first floor restrooms is now exclusively restricted to the Japanese delegation. Others can only use those restrooms by utilising guest passes, which Japan has reportedly distributed to EU and Umbrella Group delegations only. This aside, with plenty of press conferences to come, civil society organisations are looking forward to sharing the great progress being made with the rest of the world. ECO will toast to these recent developments as they are included in the final text. They provide clear evidence that excluding observers both helps them bring greater transparency and accountability to negotiations and Parties to be more productive. Now that's a "co-benefit" if ECO ever saw one.

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Adaptation Fund: Do Not Put All Your Eggs in One Basket

In recent years, ECO has observed, with concern, the negotiations on the future of the Adaptation Fund (AF) in the post-2020 agreement.

Among all of the financial mechanisms under the Convention, the AF has made unique progress. The AF plays an important role in the climate finance landscape by providing funding for small-scale adaptation projects. It now has a portfolio of 50 such projects, enabled especially through its direct access modality. Furthermore, the AF has successfully accredited 20 national implementing entities (NIEs) and helped build local capacity. The AF's wings should not be clipped.

Unfortunately, the Co-Chairs' earlier draft text did not

recognise these achievements, and failed to paint a clear picture of the AF in the future finance architecture. Thanks to the last surgical insertions, the new version contains a good proposal featuring the AF as a key instrument of the Financial Mechanism.

ECO feels warm and fuzzy about the proposal by the African Group. Currently, adaptation finance is in crisis. Any enhanced action on adaptation requires contributions of all funds, particularly the AF. The AF can help recipient countries to implement their NAPs and their INDCs. Despite the scarcity of the resources, the Fund's board received an unprecedented 15 proposals (including the first regional programmes) at its last meeting. The demand for and rel-

evancy of the AF is real.

This burgeoning interest should be understood as a call for more pledges to help the Fund reach the fundraising target of US\$100 million by COP21. However, this remains only a short-term solution. The long-term solution would be granting the AF a specific mandate under the new agreement. As the AF is a fund where all developing countries are eligible for financing in principle, it is a powerful tool for advancing the adaptation debate across the globe. Within a few years, the AF has pioneered a robust direct access and operationalised a streamlined and rapid project cycle that enables developing countries to maintain full ownership throughout project implementation and

ensure monitoring and transparency at each stage.

A division of labor between the AF and GCF is needed in order to enhance complementarity and reduce the recipient countries' burden in accessing the funds. ECO reckons that the new agreement should build on well-functioning institutions with proven track records, instead of dedicating all adaptation resources to a newly established Fund to meet the needs of the vulnerable countries. Given the GCF is well-resourced for some time and still has to learn how to spend money on effective adaptation, COP21 could also send an important signal through new financial pledges for the AF—and the Least Developed Countries Fund.

When the Fox Guards the Hen House

There is incredible global momentum on climate change. People, everywhere, are standing up and demanding that their governments take action and are having an impact. Such an impact that many of the biggest polluters have also taken notice and are scrambling to get on the right side of history—but only at first blush; let's not forget that corporate lobbying and corporately funded climate denialism are all-too-familiar phenomena.

For example, the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative released a

report calling for a price on carbon and investment in carbon capture and sequestration. Then there's Shell and BHP's newly announced commission to advise governments on climate policy. The problem isn't just outside the UNFCCC process.

Within the negotiations, major carbon polluters seek to institutionalise their participation and influence. COP21 will be sponsored by corporations that have contributed—and continue to contribute—significantly to the climate crisis.

Case in point: Électricité de France and Engie's current coal operations account for nearly half of France's energy emissions.

The Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA) raises serious questions regarding corporate conflicts of interest with the inclusion of fossil fuel companies like Total, a corporation widely known to undermine climate policy in Europe.

Fortunately, numerous recent developments have exposed the truth behind the lies advanced

by polluting industries like big coal and big oil. We now know, for example, that Exxon understood the science behind climate change—and obscured it from the public for decades.

As Parties work to finalise the negotiating text and look ahead to COP21, ECO calls on them to acknowledge the conflict of interest inherent in the involvement of private actors like big polluters in crafting the outcomes of our public policies to meaningfully address climate change.

The European Illusion

Delegates, you well know that ECO has lamented, time and time again, that the EU's reduction targets for 2020 and 2030 are inadequate, below business as usual, and in general an embarrassment to the continent that once was the leader in global climate action.

This week's news from the European Environment Agency has again proven our point: the latest EU numbers show that greenhouse gas emission fell 4% between 2013 and 2014. This brings the EU's do-

mestic emissions down to 23% below 1990 levels, and will most likely lead to below 30% by 2020. ECO reminds delegates that the EU's current 2020 reduction commitment is 20% below 1990.

Done. Many years ahead of time.

"What should the EU do now?" you may ask. As far as ECO can see, the only action the EU is taking in response is to engage in self-praise and nothing more. We all know that there is more to be done, so, EU, listen up:

- Commit to implementing your conditional 30% by 2020 target (which will happen without any extra effort).

- Cancel the vast surplus of emission allowances weighing down your carbon market to ensure that the 2030 target will not be made meaningless with carry-over of old reductions.

- Do more! We need to phase-out global emissions by 2050 and the EU could be the ones to lead the way.

Capacity Building is the New Black

Capacity building is generally perceived as a low priority. It's an old-school component that all Parties want (including Annex 1 Parties) and is critical to other issues such as mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance. Accordingly, it suffers from being everybody's darling—and thereby ultimately no one's.

For this reason, ECO was surprised to learn that capacity building has become contentious within the draft text. Developing countries have proposed a new mechanism and/or

committee which can act as a focal point for capacity building under the SBI to ensure coherence and coordination with the other negotiating tracks. The rationale is similar to the squabble with adaptation some years ago when Parties accepted that there was a need for an Adaptation Committee.

The time has come to breathe new life into capacity building with a new mechanism that makes it meaningful to developing countries, that need it most, through increased coherence and coordination.