

## E-news update May 28 2007

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### CLIMATE POLICY

- 1.1. UN treaty official sees 'very encouraging signals' on climate change

24 May 2007, UN news centre

Following three definitive reports on climate change and a recent technical symposium, States and the private sector are showing more willingness to move ahead rapidly to stem greenhouse gas emissions, the lead official of United Nations-administered pacts on the issue said today.

"I get very encouraging signals of the desire of countries to move things forward," Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) told reporters at a UN Headquarters press conference following a meeting of parties to the Convention in Bonn, Germany that concluded last week.

The 191 Parties to the Convention and 173 Parties to its Kyoto Protocol, which contains legally binding targets for reducing emissions through 2012, attended the Bonn meeting, which was convened in preparation for a major world conference on the issue in December in Bali, Indonesia.

The meeting, Mr. de Boer said, was also the first opportunity for delegates to react to all three reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which documented the human cause of climate change and its dire impacts with much greater certainty, but also showed that technology already exists to deal with the problem in a cost-effective manner.

Encouraging signs included the fact that important countries such as Brazil have expressed the need to move beyond mere discussions into negotiations on a long-term climate change treaty applicable in 2012 and beyond, he said.

He added that developing countries such as South Africa have spoken of the need for commitments from both the developed and the developing world, instead of laying responsibility at the feet of the industrialized countries alone.

China and India, the largest developing countries, were actually taking steps to create national strategies to reduce greenhouse emissions, and the business community was taking the lead in calling for a clear policy direction so that it could shape its investment decisions over the longer term.

At the same time, he cautioned that serious negotiations on a post-2012 regime would only be launched at the Bali conference, and not concluded there, given experience with the Kyoto Protocol, which took two years to negotiate and another two to ratify and bring into force.

"So basically, the window of opportunity to put something in place that can seamlessly follow on beyond 2012 is closing," Mr. de Boer said, noting that the next few years were also critical because many energy production facilities around the world were due for replacement, and because climate change was accelerating.

"We really need to move quickly, and my sense is that that sense of urgency is increasingly shared by Governments," he said.

At another gathering at the UN's headquarters in New York today, Mr. de Boer urged representatives of small island States and other poor countries to become pro-active in shaping the post-2012 climate change regime.

"As the countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, LDCs and small islands need to raise their concerns on what should be the focus ahead of negotiations for a new regime," he told a meeting of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

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## 1.2. Emissions trading hot topic at APEC

28 May 2007, <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21803100-30417,00.html>

Australia will press members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum to consider working towards an emissions trading scheme, at a meeting of APEC energy ministers in Darwin this week.

The wording of the move will be broad in the context of the ministers' talks on energy sustainability and the environment, allowing for the wide divergence of views among the 21 APEC member countries.

It will be an important recognition that APEC cannot stand aside from the growing world concern over climate change.

The meeting's host, federal resources minister Ian Macfarlane, has made it clear a formal emissions trading scheme is not being discussed or even proposed but that the APEC ministers will be taking the first steps towards a unified view of how climate change might be handled.

A business forum to be held today ahead of the formal ministerial meeting will concentrate on the question of high energy prices and climate change.

The aim is to present APEC's political leaders with a comprehensive and up-to-date view of the climate change debate as business sees it, and consider some sort of program for the year ahead.

Executives such as Russell Caplan from Shell, Charlie Lenegan from Rio Tinto, Rod Eddington representing JP Morgan, Gerry Hueston from BP and Denny Mooney from GM-H will lead sessions in the forum.

Business observers say APEC is an ideal group to take the climate change debate forward. It is estimated that APEC economies will have to invest about \$US6 trillion (\$7.3 trillion) in the energy sector between now and 2030 to meet rapid growth in demand.

According to the APEC secretariat, coal will continue to be the major energy resource contributing to electricity generation, with its share increasing from 44 per cent in 2002 to 53 per cent in 2030.

The expected absence of US energy secretary Samuel Bodman is being remarked on, as the US is the most adamant opponent of mandatory caps on emissions.

The US, Australia and Canada are the main proponents of technology solutions to climate change problems.

That's what the business forum will be encouraging the APEC energy ministers to adopt as the underlying platform for an APEC-wide move on emissions abatement. Mr Macfarlane said last week energy security issues would be high among discussion topics, particularly relating to rapidly increasing demand for primary energy from countries such as China, India and South Korea.

All three countries are key targets of the Australian liquefied natural gas industry, which is aiming to become the world's second largest supplier by the end of next decade.

It is also expected that South American countries such as Chile will become involved in discussions on LNG and possibly on uranium.

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### 1.3. US rejects all proposals on climate change

Embarrassment for Blair as G8 draft covered in red ink. Little hope of any deal at summit in two weeks.

26 May 2007, The Guardian

The US has rejected any prospect of a deal on climate change at the G8 summit in Germany next month, according to a leaked document.

Despite Tony Blair's declaration on Thursday that Washington would sign up to "at least the beginnings" of action to cut carbon emissions, a note attached to a draft document circulated by Germany says the US is "fundamentally opposed" to the proposals.

The note, written in red ink, says the deal "runs counter to our overall position and crosses multiple 'red lines' in terms of what we simply cannot agree to".

This document is called FINAL but we never agreed to any of the climate language present in the document ... We have tried to 'tread lightly' but there is only so far we can go given our fundamental opposition to the German position," it says.

The tone is blunt, with whole pages of the draft crossed out and even the mildest statements about confirming previous agreements rejected. "The proposals within the sections titled 'Fighting Climate Change' and 'Carbon Markets' are fundamentally incompatible with the President's approach to climate change," says another red-ink comment.

This is embarrassing for Mr Blair, who said on Thursday with some confidence that the US was moderating its position on climate change as the summit approached. Before visiting the White House this month, the prime minister suggested that he was close to persuading George Bush to accept the establishment of carbon trading schemes, one of five main proposals drawn up ahead of the G8. But Washington rejected the sections on carbon trading, saying to back trading schemes would imply acceptance of emission caps.

A diplomatic source said the German EU presidency and the US government appeared now so far apart it was hard to see how negotiators could reach anything other than a meaningless agreement in Heiligendamm in just under two weeks.

As well as cutting global emissions, Germany had stated in its draft that it wanted agreement to curb the rise in average temperatures this century to 2C and raise energy efficiency in power and transport by 20% by 2020. Both positions are compatible with policies in California and other US states, which have set their own targets and timetables.

Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, this week suggested that there was little hope of a deal. She said preliminary talks at the EU-Russia summit and in meetings with G8 members had been "difficult".

The director of Greenpeace, John Sauven, said the leaked document proved Britain had failed to influence the US. "Despite his protestations to the contrary Tony Blair's efforts to persuade George Bush of the importance of tackling climate change have singularly failed," he said.

The scene is set for a showdown between the US and other G8 countries who want early action on climate change. Germany's environment minister, Sigmar Gabriel, said the country was prepared to block decisions on other issues unless the US and other G8 members made concessions on the environment. "America doesn't want to commit to firm goals. We can't put the global future of our children at risk because of the narrow-mindedness of individual negotiating partners."

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## ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

### 2.1. Door left open for deals as Commission calls time on coal subsidies

21 May 2007, Greenpeace European Unit Press Release

Greenpeace accused the European Commission of "dithering and delay" over the future of multi-billion euro coal mining subsidies, after the Commission failed to call for a definitive phase-out of state aid to the coal sector in an official review released today.

Coal state aid is permitted under a special derogation from EU law that will expire in 2010.

Although the Commission has now said that this derogation will not be replaced, it fails to outline a policy for the period after 2010. In effect, this creates a loophole through which governments can ask the Commission to allow an extension of aid for many more years.

In 2005, eight member states granted coal state aid totaling EUR 4.1 billion, or about EUR 11 million per day. Germany and Spain granted the most aid – around 85% of the total - with smaller amounts given by Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and the UK. The situations in Romania and Bulgaria are still being assessed.

"Such dithering and delay on the future of coal subsidies helps no one," said Mark Johnston, Greenpeace EU Energy Campaigner. "The Commission's failure to act decisively today only puts off the day when it will need to do so anyway."

"If Europe is serious about fighting climate change, as is claimed, then it must divert public money and support from polluting energy sources such as coal to clean energy options such as efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies.

"With today's report, the Commission has missed an opportunity to put an end to coal subsidies once and for all."

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## 2.2. U.S. Carbon Emissions Fell 1.3% in 2006

24 May 2007, Washington Post

U.S. carbon dioxide emissions dropped slightly last year even as the economy grew, according to an initial estimate released yesterday by the Energy Information Administration.

The 1.3 percent drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions marks the first time that U.S. pollution linked to global warming has declined in absolute terms since 2001 and the first time it has gone down since 1990 while the economy was thriving. Carbon dioxide emissions declined in both 2001 and 1991, in large part because of economic slowdowns during those years.

In 2006 the U.S. economy grew 3.3 percent, a fact President Bush touted yesterday as he hailed the government's "flash estimate" that the country's carbon dioxide emissions dropped by 78 million metric tons last year.

"We are effectively confronting the important challenge of global climate change through regulations, public-private partnerships, incentives, and strong economic investment," Bush said in a statement. "New policies at the federal, state, and local levels -- such as my initiative to reduce by 20 percent our projected use of gasoline within 10 years -- promise even more progress." A number of factors helped reduce emissions last year, according to the government, including weather conditions that reduced heating and air-conditioning use, higher gasoline prices that caused consumers to conserve, and a greater overall reliance on natural gas.

Edison Electric Institute spokesman Dan Riedinger, whose association supplies half of the nation's electricity, welcomed the news but noted that an increased demand for natural gas could prove costly over the long term.

"Investment in advanced coal, carbon capture and storage, and a host of other technologies is essential to making and sustaining significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions," Riedinger said.

Critics of the administration, including Democratic lawmakers and environmentalists, said the one-year decline did not prove Bush's voluntary approach to cutting greenhouse gases is working. They noted that the emissions have been rising worldwide since 1990 and that the rate accelerated to 3 percent a year between 2000 and 2004.

"This is more proof that this President just doesn't get it when it comes to combating climate change," Sen. John F. Kerry (D-Mass.) said in a statement yesterday. "The house is on fire, and he's trying to douse the flames with a watering can. The science tells us that we need to reduce our emissions by 60-80% by 2050 in order to avoid catastrophic damage."

Jeremy Symons, who directs the National Wildlife Federation's global warming program, said the administration estimates U.S. greenhouse gas emissions will rise more than 30 percent over the next 25 years.

"The question is why we don't have the leadership from Congress to set firm targets to cut pollution year after year," Symons said. "Unfortunately, until we have government mandates to cut global warming pollution from big polluters, this year's good news will be swallowed by the trend of rising pollution levels."

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## CLIMATE IMPACTS

### 3.1. U.N. says climate change to spur allergies and ticks

22 May 2007, Reuters

Climate change could extend the pollen season and encourage more disease-carrying ticks in northern Europe, and allow mosquitoes to thrive in new areas of Africa and Asia, public health officials said this week.

Experts at the World Health Organisation's (WHO) annual assembly in Geneva said global warming had already begun to impact on patterns of water-borne and parasitic illness in areas vulnerable to droughts and floods.

Respiratory and heart problems may become more marked following heat waves and increased particulate matter such as dust in the air, said Bettina Menne of the WHO's European division. She noted allergy-causing pollen could be released earlier and last longer with warmer temperatures.

She cited the movement of ticks, small mites that can spread Lyme disease, into northern Europe as an example of new health challenges that will accompany the continual heating-up of the Earth, a phenomenon scientists have linked to human activity.

"Climate change has already affected human health," she told a WHO technical meeting on Monday evening.

Outbreaks of cholera and malaria in the developing world were a result of environmental shifts affecting parasites and water sources, she said.

South Asia was described in the session as particularly at risk because of its flood-prone low-lying countries such as Bangladesh, melting Himalayan glaciers, desert areas and large coastal cities, where climate change could facilitate disease transmission and exacerbate malnutrition pressures.

Maria Neira, the WHO's director for public health and the environment, said it was critical for policy-makers to remember that climate change would have a broader impact than often-discussed environmental and economic threats.

Health experts should be more involved in decision-making on energy use and conservation, and should impress upon political leaders the need for more emergency preparedness in health, such as the fast distribution of malaria nets and drugs, Neira said.

"The health community, more and more, needs to influence and be present when those decisions are taken," she said.

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### 3.2. Southern Ocean drowning in carbon dioxide

17 May 2007, Reuters

The Southern Ocean around Antarctica is so loaded with carbon dioxide that it can barely absorb any more, so more of the gas will stay in the atmosphere to warm up the planet, scientists reported on Thursday.

Human activity is the main culprit, researcher Corinne Le Quere said, calling the finding alarming.

The phenomenon was not expected to be apparent for decades, Ms. Le Quere said in a telephone interview from the University of East Anglia in Britain.

"We thought we would be able to detect these only the second half of this century, say 2050 or so," she said. But data from 1981 through 2004 show that the sink is already full of carbon dioxide. "So I find this really quite alarming."

The Southern Ocean is one of the world's biggest carbon reservoirs, known as a carbon sink. When carbon is in a sink – whether it is an ocean or a forest, both of which can lock up carbon dioxide – it stays out of the atmosphere and does not contribute to global warming.

The new research, published in the latest edition of the journal *Science*, indicates that the Southern Ocean has been saturated with carbon dioxide at least since the 1980s.

This is significant, Ms. Le Quere said, because the Southern Ocean accounts for 15 per cent of the global carbon sink.

Winds from warming at core

Increased winds over the past half-century are to blame for the change, Mr. Le Quere said. These winds blend the carbon dioxide throughout the Southern Ocean, mixing the naturally occurring carbon that usually stays deep down with the human-caused carbon.

When natural carbon is brought up to the surface by the winds, it is harder for the Southern Ocean to accommodate more human-generated carbon, which comes from factories, coal-fired power plants and petroleum-powered motor vehicle exhaust.

The winds themselves are caused by two separate human factors.

First, the human-spawned ozone depletion in the upper atmosphere over the Southern Ocean has created large changes in temperature throughout the atmosphere, she said.

Second, the uneven nature of global warming has produced higher temperatures in the northern parts of the world than in the south, which has also made the winds accelerate in the Southern Ocean.

"Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the world's oceans have absorbed about a quarter of the 500 gigatonnes (500 billion tonnes) of carbon emitted into the atmosphere by humans," Chris Rapley of the British Antarctic Survey said in a statement.

"The possibility that in a warmer world the Southern Ocean – the strongest ocean sink – is weakening is a cause for concern," Mr. Rapley said.

Another sign of warming in the Antarctic was reported this week by NASA, which found vast areas of snow melted on the southern continent in 2005 in a process that may accelerate invisible melting deep beneath the surface.

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CONFERENCES

4.1. International Young Scholar Network for Earth Systems Science, Third Workshop  
2 – 5 June 2007 in Bristol, UK

More information: [http://www.ames.ucar.edu/activities/YSN/2007\\_UK/YSN\\_BRISTOL.shtml](http://www.ames.ucar.edu/activities/YSN/2007_UK/YSN_BRISTOL.shtml).

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4.2. Cities for Mobility - Mobility for Citizens

11 June 2007 in Stuttgart, Germany

More info: [http://www.cities-for-mobility.org/en/news\\_en/news\\_en\\_01\\_01.html](http://www.cities-for-mobility.org/en/news_en/news_en_01_01.html).

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4.3. Local Renewables Freiburg 2007: Powerful local action for secure and sustainable energy in Europe

13 - 15 June 2007 in Freiburg, Germany

More info: <http://www.local-renewables2007.org>.

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4.4. Mobilising the energy saving potentials in local authorities - How to put into practice energy efficiency services

20 June 2007 in Brussels

More info: [http://www.fedarene.org/events/Fedarene\\_events/2007-06-20/home.htm](http://www.fedarene.org/events/Fedarene_events/2007-06-20/home.htm).

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4.5. Espace - Planning in a Changing Climate

29 June 2007 in London

More info: <http://www.espace-project.org/publications/final%20conference/invitationv4.pdf>.

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4.6. Energy for a Clean Environment

2 - 4 July 2007 in Póvoa de Varzim, Portugal

More info: <http://rgesd.ist.utl.pt/cleanair>.

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4.7. IEW meeting 2007

25–27 June 2007 at Stanford University in Stanford, California

More at [http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/ECS/IEW2007/index\\_1stannouncement.html](http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/ECS/IEW2007/index_1stannouncement.html).

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4.8. Scientific framework of environmental and forest governance -- The role of discourses and expertise

27 and 28 August 2007 in Goettingen, Germany

Further information at: <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/61200/61202/activities/> or <http://www.iufro.org/download/file/1648/3058/goettingen07-call-for-paper.doc>.

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4.9. COP 13, COP/MOP3

