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CLIMATE

1.1. UN climate change talks kick off in Ghana

21 August 2008, UN News Centre

21 August 2008 – The latest round of United Nations-sponsored global climate change negotiations began today in Accra, Ghana, bringing together more than 1,600 participants to discuss future greenhouse gas emission reduction targets ahead of a major summit set for 2009.

Government delegates from 160 countries and representatives from business and industry, environmental organizations and research institutions are attending the one-week meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Accra meeting is part of a series of UN-sponsored talks in the run-up to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The aim of the negotiations is to create a successor pact to the Kyoto Protocol, with first-round commitments ending in 2012, on greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

“Parties meeting under the Kyoto Protocol must swiftly reach agreement on the rules and tools that will be available to developed countries to meet future emission reduction targets,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer.

“This is essential because the toolbox will in turn determine the level of ambition of developed countries when setting their new targets,” he added.

At the Accra meeting, which was opened by Ghana’s President, John Agyekum Kufuor, participants will discuss, among other things, policies and incentives to reduce emissions from deforestation – which accounts for 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions – and forest degradation in developing countries.

Also, for the first time, there will be a joint discussion on both the finance and technology needed to limit emissions and adapt to climate change. “Parties will look not only at what is needed in terms of funding, but also at how funding should be generated in the context of a new international deal, and precisely what technologies are required,” said Mr. de Boer.

“The debate will also give an indication of the infrastructure needed to implement a shared vision in the areas of finance, technology and capacity building,” he stated.

The previous round of UN-sponsored negotiations was held in Bonn, Germany, in June. Another set of talks is scheduled to be held in Poznan, Poland, from 1 to 12 December.

Link: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27772&Cr=&Cr1=>

1.2. UN considers more greenhouse gases

25 August 2008, Carbon Positive

UN climate negotiators are considering adding gases used in flat screen TV production to the list of [greenhouse gases](#) targeted for reduction under a new global treaty to follow on from the Kyoto Protocol.

At a UN climate convention meeting in Accra, Ghana, involving delegates from 160 countries, a report was presented on the climate impact of newer gases used in electronics manufacture. The Accra meeting is one of seven leading up to the 2009 annual UN climate meeting late next year, which is the deadline for a new international climate treaty to extend Kyoto after 2012.

Of particular concern is nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃), used in the making of semi-conductors for flat screen televisions, which has a global warming potential almost 17,000 times greater than that of carbon dioxide. While the current total production of NF₃ would represent only 0.3 per cent of worldwide greenhouse emissions if vented to the atmosphere, it’s growing exponentially given the worldwide shift to new-generation TVs and growing markets for all electronic goods in fast-growing developing countries.

Fluorinated ethers used in some refrigerants and iodotrifluoromethane or methyl chloroform, another produced in the electronics industry, are also named. While these new gases are not automatically released to the atmosphere, the report says “very little is known about sources, current and future emissions and atmospheric abundance of these gases”.

Head of the UN climate convention secretariat, Yvo de Boer, told Reuters it was a good idea to add new gases to the group already covered under Kyoto and address all gases contributing to global warming. But it is up to government to decide, he said.

The report said the inclusion of more gases would likely increase the scope of UN carbon markets, raising demand for emissions allowances and credits.

Link: <http://www.carbonpositive.net/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=1211>

1.3. Africa stands to gain little at UN climate talks: experts

24 August 2008, Khaleej Times

ACCRA - The UN-sponsored climate change talks between rich and poor countries offer few benefits to Africa, which bears the brunt of climate change in the world, officials and African delegates said on Sunday.

"Many African negotiators have expressed concern that the current regime delivers few real benefits to the continent," Yvo de Boer, head of the ongoing UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Accra, told AFP.

De Boer spoke at the sidelines of the week-long negotiations on reducing carbon emissions by industrialised countries by up to 40 percent by 2020.

"The total value of projects in Africa financed by the Global Environment Facility in the last 17 years stands at 378 million dollars, while the total value of projects worldwide is more than 2.4 billion dollars, which reflects lack of benefits for the continent," he added.

The projects are being implemented under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a private sector-based fund reserved by developed countries to assist developing nations in mitigating the consequences of climate change.

"The way African countries feel is that we need a fairer, more equitable deal that is sensitive to the looming consequences of climate change on Africa," said Victor Fodeke, head of the Nigerian delegation to the conference.

"Only about two percent of the entire CDM projects worldwide are in Africa which is unacceptably low in contrast to 45 percent located in China, 16 percent in India and 13 percent in Chile," said Ewah Otu Eleri, head of Nigeria-based International Centre for Energy, Environment and Development.

He called for a more flexible mechanism for African countries to access the funds, arguing the current rules were too stringent.

But Nicole Wilke, head of the German delegation at the conference, argued that Africa gets a small fraction of the CDM intervention because it offers smaller emissions reduction potential compared to Asia and Latin America. Countries with higher economic growth also attract more investment, she said.

"It is true the CDM benefits the great emerging economies of China and India, among others, more than Africa because of their fast rate of development and stable conditions for investment," Paul Watkinson, a French delegate to the negotiations, told AFP.

As a result, he said, developed countries may need to devise another mechanism to allow Africa more access to the fund.

Link:

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=§ion=theworld&xfile=data/theworld/2008/August/the_world_August1463.xml

1.4. Why US must invest against climate change

22 August 2008, NewScientist

Eight scientific organisations have urged the next US president to help protect the country from climate change by pushing for increased funding for research and forecasting. The organisations say about \$2 trillion of US economic output could be hurt by storms, floods and droughts.

"We don't think we have the right kind of tools to help decision makers plan for the future," said Jack Fellows, the vice president for corporate affairs of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, a consortium of 71 universities.

The groups, including the American Geophysical Union and the American Meteorological Society, urged Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and Republican rival John McCain to support \$9 billion in investments between 2010 and 2014 to help protect the country from extreme weather, which would nearly double the current US budget for the area.

The UN's science panel says extreme weather events could hit more often as temperatures rise due to climate change.

Each year the United States suffers billions of dollars in weather-related damages ranging from widespread events like Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the more recent droughts in the Southeast, to smaller, more frequent glitches like airline delays from storms, they said. More than a quarter of the country's economic output, about \$2 trillion, is vulnerable to extreme weather, they added.

The investments would pay for satellite and ground-based instruments that observe the Earth's climate and for computers to help make weather predictions more accurate.

Invest to protect

John Snow, the co-chairman of the Weather Coalition, a business and university group that advocates for better weather prediction, said improved computers would help scientists forecast extreme weather events more locally, which could help cities better prepare for weather disasters.

It could also help businesses that produce virtually no greenhouse emissions, such as wind farms, know where to best locate their operations, he said.

The scientists said cooler temperatures in the first half of this year are making their task more difficult. "One of the challenges we face ... is to make the case that while we are in a period of warming, we should not expect every year to be the warmest year on record," Snow said.

The global mean temperature to the end of July was 0.28 C above the 1961-1990 average, the UK-based MetOffice for climate change research said on Wednesday. That would make the first half of 2008 the coolest since 2000.

Neither campaign responded immediately to questions about the plea for funding. Obama and McCain, who face off in a November election, both support regulation of greenhouse gases through market mechanisms such as cap-and-trade programs on emissions.

Link: http://environment.newscientist.com/article/dn14586-why-us-must-invest-against-climate-change.html?DCMP=ILC-hmts&nsref=news1_head_dn14586

EMISSIONS

2.1. New CO2 emissions treaty is imminent

24 August 2008, The Independent

Climate negotiators have made unexpected headway towards a new international treaty to combat global warming, easing a logjam that has held up progress for years.

Representatives of rich and poor nations, meeting at a conference in Accra, Ghana, are nearing consensus on a way to control emissions of greenhouse gases from rapidly developing countries such as China and India, under a treaty which will take effect after the Kyoto protocol expires in 2012.

The US has refused to join any arrangement that does not also tackle these emissions, but the rapidly industrialising countries have refused to accept the overall reduction targets that would be imposed on the rich nations which have been responsible for most of the pollution to date.

But now agreement is beginning to coalesce around a plan that would instead oblige developing nations to set targets for specific, highly polluting industries such as cement, steel, and aluminium.

"Something quiet but dramatic is happening", says David Doniger, of the Natural Resources Defence Council. "People are now talking about the same idea in the same language."

Link: <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/new-co2-emissions-treaty-is-imminent-907305.html>

JOB OPPORTUNITY

3.1. Economic Policy Program Officer, Biofuels

(Washington, DC)

Date Posted: July 11, 2008

The Economic Policy Program in the Washington, DC Headquarters is seeking a Program Officer for Biofuels. GMF's Economic Policy Program promotes cooperation between the United States and Europe on domestic and international trade and development aid policies. This position will work in a challenging and entrepreneurial environment that requires individual initiative and close cooperation with the Economics staff in Brussels, our European Offices, and other GMF Programs.

This position would focus on work related to U.S. and European biofuels policies and how they relate to the international trade as well as sustainable development. The project on biofuels focuses primarily on the reform of U.S. and European biofuels policies that currently contribute to rising food prices without affording trade opportunities for sustainable biofuels production in the developing world.

This position offers the opportunity to design and implement an ambitious project on transatlantic cooperation on trade; in particular, the impact that a fair and equitable international trading system has on economic growth and political stability in emerging and developing countries especially for the poor and those affected by shifts in the world economy.

This position is limited to one year with the possibility of renewal

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Manage and coordinate GMF's biofuels project.

Provide strategic and substantive input needed to expand the current project.

Work closely with the Director of the Program, the Economic Policy Program staff, and the entire GMF organization in support of all aspects of economic policy programming on international biofuels policies, including convening, proposal-writing, managing relationships with funders, and oversee grantmaking.

