

E-news update 10 August 2009

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CLIMATE

1.1. Climate talks risk failure unless accelerate: UN

14 August 2009, Reuters

U.N. talks on a new climate treaty due to be agreed in December risk failure unless negotiations accelerate, a senior U.N. official said on Friday after a sluggish week-long session involving 180 countries.

Many nations also bemoaned scant progress at the Aug 10-14 talks that failed to break deadlocks on issues such as sharing out curbs on greenhouse gases among rich and poor, and raising funds to help developing nations cope with global warming. "If we continue at this rate we're not going to make it," Yvo de Boer, head of the U.N. Climate Change Secretariat, told a news conference after the meeting in Bonn.

He said "selective progress" has been made towards trimming a huge 200-page draft treaty text in Bonn, one of a series of talks meant to end with a U.N. deal in Copenhagen in December.

He warned participants that just 15 days of negotiations remain before Copenhagen -- at meetings in Bangkok in September-October and Barcelona in November.

"It is clear that there is quite a significant uphill battle if we are going to get there," said Jonathan Pershing, head of the U.S. delegation. But he said there were some signs of movement. "You absolutely can get there," he said.

Developing nations accused the rich of failing to take the lead in setting deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and of trying to get the poor to shoulder more of the burden of emission curbs without providing aid and technology.

"We still have the same problems that have been hindering us," China's climate ambassador Yu Qingtai told Reuters. He said that China was keen to see its emissions peak but that fighting poverty had to remain an overriding priority.

China and India want the rich to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 to avert the worst of climate change such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and rising sea levels.

ISLAND STATES WANT MORE

Small island states and least developed nations, 80 in all, teamed up to call for deeper cuts, of at least 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, to keep global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.4 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

"Copenhagen is the last chance to avoid a global human tragedy," said Dessima Williams of Grenada, who chairs the alliance of small island states. Many are at risk from stronger cyclones and rising seas.

She said cuts promised by industrialised nations so far totalled just 10 to 16 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and would mean a world temperature rise of 3 Celsius. "Such a path would be catastrophic for all countries," she said.

The European Union, which has offered some of the deepest cuts, also criticised average offers by developed nations.

"They are gravely insufficient," said Anders Turesson, the chief negotiator of Sweden which holds the EU presidency. He also said that developing nations had to show "more engagement".

Major emitters agreed at a summit in Italy last month to try to limit global warming to a maximum of two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Many delegates said that a meeting of world leaders at the United Nations in New York and a meeting of leaders of the Group of 20 in Pittsburgh, both in September, could help.

"Delegates are kept back by political gridlock. The political leaders must now unblock the process," said Kim Carstensen, head of the WWF environmental group's global climate initiative.

Greenpeace also criticised a lack of promised leadership at the talks by nations like the United States, Germany and France.

Link: <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJ0E57D0DF20090814>

1.2. China says rich up pressure on poor over climate

13 August 2009, Reuters

China accused rich nations at U.N. climate talks on Thursday of increasing pressure on the poor to do more to combat global warming while shirking their own responsibility to lead.

"There has been a general feeling of unhappiness about the level of efforts that (developed nations) say they will take,"

China's climate ambassador Yu Qingtai told Reuters on the sidelines of August 10-14 climate talks in Bonn.

"What is even more worrying is a continuation and even a strengthening of the tendency of trying to shift the burden to the developing countries," he said. "That must change."

Many rich nations at the 180-nation talks, negotiating a new U.N. climate pact due to be in place in December, are far above their 2008-12 goals for cutting greenhouse gas emissions under the U.N.'s existing Kyoto Protocol.

And earlier on Thursday, Australia's parliament rejected, as expected, a plan for the world's most ambitious emissions trading scheme. The government said it would try to push through the scheme before the December climate talks in Copenhagen [nSYD16743].

"It's unfortunate that the Australian plan didn't get through," said Jennifer Morgan of the E3G climate think-tank. "It would be helpful to have a cap-and-trade system in a major coal producing nation to encourage others."

India also said the rich were expecting too much of the poor while failing to lead in setting deeper 2020 cuts for emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels burned since the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago.

"There are developing countries which are doing much more perhaps than developed countries are doing," Shyam Saran, India's special envoy for climate change, told Reuters.

"Whether it is in terms of renewable energy programs, or promoting new technologies, you will see far more action in developing countries than in developed countries," he said.

He noted that India had approved a plan to install 20,000 megawatts of solar power by 2020. He declined to comment directly on the Australian vote.

Developed nations say the poor must do more to help a new U.N. pact to combat projected heatwaves, droughts, floods and rising sea levels. China is top emitter ahead of the United States, Russia and India.

In Beijing, the government said it would make "controlling greenhouse gas emissions" an important part of its development plans. Global warming threatened China's environmental and economic health, Chinese newspapers reported. Yu said he wanted China's emissions to peak as soon as possible and then fall but declined to say when Beijing would be able to set a peak year. "That's still a problem that our experts are studying," he said. Developing nations led by China and India say the rich should cut greenhouse emissions by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020 and come up with aid and technology to enable the poor to start reining in their own rising emissions. Industrialized nations in Bonn have promised cuts in greenhouse gas emissions averaging between 15 to 21 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, official data shows. The figures exclude the United States, the only developed nation outside Kyoto. It plans to cut emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a cut of about 14 percent from recent levels. As part of the planned Copenhagen deal, developing nations are due to slow the rise of their emissions by 2020. Link: http://uk.news.yahoo.com/22/20090813/tsc-environment-us-climate-011ccfa_1.html

ENERGY

2.1. Australia to split green energy from carbon laws

16 August 2009, Reuters

Australia's government said on Sunday it would split planned legislation to promote renewable energy from its controversial proposal for carbon trading, giving in to a key demand by the conservative opposition.

"We are safeguarding our Renewable Energy Target legislation, so it can come into effect even if the Liberal party continues to block the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme," Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard told Channel Nine.

The emissions trading scheme was voted down on Thursday in the upper house Senate where the conservative Liberal-National coalition hold the largest block of votes. They joined with Greens and independents to oppose the legislation.

The government has vowed to present the scheme again ahead of a U.N. meeting on climate change in Copenhagen in December. Two defeats could provide a trigger for an early election.

By contrast, the renewable energy legislation -- targeting a 20 percent renewable energy target -- has widespread support. The opposition has been calling for it to be treated separately.

Opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull welcomed the decision as "a victory for common sense." A vote on the legislation is expected within days.

If voted through, it would unlock a potential \$22 billion in planned renewable investment.

Link: <http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-GreenBusiness/idUSTRE57F05K20090816>

2.2. Nuclear fuel production issue still open

3 August 2009, The Slovak Spectator

THE RUSSIAN state-run corporation TVEL has not yet made a final decision on the location of its first foreign production plant for nuclear fuel, the economic daily Hospodárske Noviny (HN) wrote on July 28.

The company confirmed to HN recently that Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are in the running.

Slovakia remains among the candidates because of its existing and planned nuclear reactors, its long-term contract for nuclear fuel supplies and the country's experience in installing fuel assemblies carried out by the Z S Dubnica engineering company in the A1 nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice.

Link: http://www.spectator.sk/articles/view/36086/3/nuclear_fuel_production_issue_

EMISSIONS

3.1. China says its carbon emissions to fall by 2050: report

14 August 2009, Reuters

China's carbon emissions will start to fall by 2050, its top climate change policymaker said, the first time the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases has given a timeframe for a decline, the Financial Times reported Saturday.

The comments by Su Wei did not indicate at what level emissions would top out. He restated Beijing's view that because China still needs to expand its economy to pull people out of poverty, it was too soon to discuss emissions caps, the Financial Times said.

At a G8 meeting in July, China and India resisted calls to agree to a 50 percent cut in global emissions by 2050, posing a major obstacle for a new United Nations pact due to be agreed upon in Copenhagen in mid-December.

"China's emissions will not continue to rise beyond 2050," the Financial Times quoted Su, director-general of the climate change department at the National Development and Reform Commission, China's top planning body, as saying in an interview.

"China will not continue growing emissions without limit or insist that all nations must have the same per-capita emissions. If we did that, this earth would be ruined."

Link: <http://www.reuters.com/article/GCA-GreenBusiness/idUSTRE57E0BA20090815>

PUBLICATIONS

4.1. Water for Development

14 August 2009, WWF

A review of integrated water resource management in EC development programming.

The services provided by freshwater ecosystems are crucially important to the livelihoods, health and security of many millions of people in the developing world. However, water is a limited resource facing many competing demands

