

E-news update July 17 2006

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G8 SUMMIT

- 1.1. G8 countries reaffirm climate change commitments

16 July 2006, RIA Novosti

Leaders of G8 countries pledged to continue efforts to fight the greenhouse effect and resolve the problem of climate change in a joint statement Sunday.

"We will continue to work to reduce greenhouse gas and deal effectively with the challenge of climate change," the leaders said in a statement on global energy security adopted at the G8 summit near St. Petersburg.

"We also affirm our commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's ultimate objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system," the document said.

UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has been ratified by 189 countries. It sets out a framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.

- 1.2. Greens Slam G8 Over Climate Change

16 July 2006, By Reuters

Environmental advocacy groups accused the Group of Eight industrial nations on Sunday of failing to take seriously the problems of climate change and the dangers of nuclear energy.

At a summit in St. Petersburg, the leaders of the G8 approved a statement that acknowledged divisions among the world's top economies on promoting nuclear energy and tackling climate change.

But the statement said those who favor nuclear energy -- six of the eight G8 members -- see it as key to providing energy security amid booming global demand and as a clean form of power that can help slow dangerous global warming.

The G8 members are the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and Japan.

Tobias Muenchmeyer, an analyst at anti-nuclear environmental group Greenpeace said acknowledgement of a split did not change the fact that the statement is strongly pro-nuclear.

He said that apart from Germany and Italy, ``Bush and Putin and the rest are committed to expanding nuclear technology that at the same time gives countries the nuclear weapons option."

German governments officials said the text was acceptable to Berlin, which has committed to an early phase-out of nuclear energy by the early 2020s, because it emphasized the need to ensure nuclear power plants are safely run.

Nuclear energy, which is making a comeback worldwide, especially in Asia, produces few greenhouse gases and has been hailed by some environmentalists as a good way of protecting the climate while meeting growing demand for electricity.

Critics, however, say there is no good solution for the storage of dangerous nuclear waste. They also say nuclear power plants are vulnerable to terrorist attacks and result in an increased risk of nuclear weapons proliferation.

Climate change

Alice Slater, president of the GRACE Policy Institute, said it was time to focus on "green" renewable sources of energy, namely solar, wind and hydro power that can stop the climate from changing for the worse.

"People don't get told the story that these things are possible, that the sun, water and wind can work," Slater told Reuters. She pointed to the example of Iceland, which she said has pledged to rely 100 percent on renewable energy by 2050.

Green groups want the G8 leaders to unanimously back the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement on cutting emissions of the "greenhouse gases" blamed for global warming.

It has been hampered by the fact that President Bush withdrew support for the protocol in 2001.

As expected, the G8 did not back the protocol. Instead it said only "those of us committed to making the Kyoto protocol a success underline the importance we attach to it."

Graham Saul at Oil Change International said the G8 statement predicted a massive increase in demand for fossil fuels over the next quarter century.

"The G8 can't fight climate change and subsidize an expansion of fossil fuels at the same time. This is a complete contradiction and a dramatic failure of leadership on the part of the G8," Saul said.

Saul and other environmentalists' views appeared to get some support from French President Jacques Chirac, who urged G8 members to get serious about protecting the planet.

"We cannot talk about energy security while there is no progress on climate change. Mankind is dancing on the edge of a volcano," Chirac said at the St Petersburg meeting of world leaders in the G8 group of nations.

1.3. G8 to feed oil addiction, fuelling climate change

14 July 2006, Foe International

G8 plans to address global energy security are dirty, dangerous and will continue to fuel climate change, Friends of the Earth International warned today on the eve of the G8 summit taking place in St Petersburg, Russia.

An early draft of the G8 Plan of Action suggested that world leaders had forgotten last year's G8 efforts in Gleneagles to tackle climate change.

Despite G8 pledges to take action against climate change, the draft plan currently includes backwards proposals for major investment in finding new oil and gas reserves, for increased oil refining capacity and for greater reliance on nuclear power.

Catherine Pearce, Friends of the Earth International climate campaigner said:

"Last year heads of state at the G8 summit in Gleneagles recognised the urgent need for decisive action against climate change whilst 'eradicating energy poverty' around the world. But this action plan is a backward step which will mean a return to dinosaur-like dependence of fossil fuels. If the world's richest countries are serious about tackling climate change and energy security,, they must look to the solutions and heavily invest in energy efficiency and the clean, renewable energies, which is what most people want.

Collectively the G8 nations, which represent just 13 per cent of the world's population, are responsible for 45 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

The G8 summit is expected to reaffirm last year's commitments on renewable energies and energy efficiency as well as "eradicating energy poverty". But such laudable plans are little more than window-dressing in light of the focus given to triggering investments in fossil fuel extraction and the use of nuclear power, Friends of the Earth said.

Jan Kowalzig, Friends of the Earth Europe climate campaigner said:

"It is unbelievable to see how our leaders are holding the world in the grip of dirty energy, feeding our addiction to oil instead of overcoming our dependence on fossil fuels. At a time of high oil and gas prices, political instability in producer countries, the threat of climate change and rising mountains of nuclear waste, common sense dictates cutting energy waste and investing in renewable energies like solar and wind -- this will ensure a long-term sustainable energy supply."

Friends of the Earth is particularly concerned by recent attempts to revive the nuclear industry despite its economic failures over the past 50 years.

Although European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, who will attend the G8 summit, has highlighted the need to promote greenhouse gas reduction and large scale use of renewable energy, the EU's own energy policy is still strongly dominated by political and financial support for fossil fuels and nuclear power.

EU leaders calling for more nuclear power at the G8 summit act against the interests of their citizens, who do not consider nuclear power a solution to secure energy supply in the long-term. Over 400,000 Europeans have so far signed a petition to phase out nuclear power.

Friends of the Earth International wants to see commitments from the G8 leaders in the following areas:

1. Global average temperatures must not be allowed to rise two degree centigrade higher than pre-industrial levels . To minimise the risks of warming above two degrees centigrade global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak and decline within the next 10-15 years. An average of two degrees could mean up to five or six degrees centigrade increase in some parts of the world. Just 2-3 degrees centigrade of warming could mean up to 300 million more people will be at risk of malaria, three billion will face water shortages and 100 million people will be more at risk from coastal flooding. We are already 0.6C higher now than pre-industrial levels.

2. An agreement by G8 nations for specific, substantial and timetabled cuts in their domestic emissions of greenhouse gases. G8 leaders must commit themselves to strong future actions to combat climate change. These should include increased efforts to meet Kyoto targets, and a clear signal that their commitments will increase after 2012 (when the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is due to end). Crucial talks on international action to tackle climate change are scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, later this year.

3. An agreement that offers innovative and substantial financing mechanisms to increase and diversify the energy mix. This must include more renewable energy and greater efforts towards energy efficiency. Broad economic instruments such as mandatory cap and trade need to run alongside specific support mechanisms for renewable energy and demand reduction. There are clear funding streams from international institutions and agencies which, with a strong steer from governments, can divert greater financial support to these proven technologies. G8 countries must stop promoting fossil fuel extraction in developing nations through international financial institutions such as the World Bank and export credit agencies and immediately phase-in public finance for sustainable clean energy.

4. Urgent assistance is needed for those developing countries already facing the devastating effects of climate change. These are countries which have done nothing to contribute to the current threat of climate change. Much is already understood on how these countries will be affected. Money and increased support must be given now.

1.4. Blair wants G8 to be G13 to tackle climate change

13 July 2006, SciDev.Net

By Mike Shanahan

This weekend UK prime minister Tony Blair will call for the G8 group of industrialized nations to admit five developing nations to the group in order to tackle climate change and other global issues. Leaders of the five nations — Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa — will attend part of this weekend's G8 summit in St Petersburg, Russia.

Blair's government warned today (13 July) that climate change could devastate much of Africa, negating any benefits from aid packages agreed at last July's G8 meeting in Scotland. But it remains to be seen what prominence climate change will have at this year's summit, whose agenda is set to be dominated by energy security, global health, trade and Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Blair says a 'G13' would be more effective at negotiating a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change than the considerably larger UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which counts 189 parties. "There is no way we can deal with climate change unless we get an agreement that binds in the US, China and India," Blair told The Guardian newspaper. "We have got to get an agreement with a binding framework. There is no point in thinking [the United States] is going to enter a binding commitment to change the structure of the US economy without China and India being part of the deal."

But according to Saleemul Huq and Camilla Toulmin of the International Institute for Environment and Development, the 13 nations must realize that their efforts to tackle climate change have "been woefully small in relation to the scale of the problem".

"This global issue cannot be left to the leaders of a handful of countries to decide behind closed doors, however powerful or populous they may be," they said in an article published yesterday by OpenDemocracy. "It must involve citizens and civil-society groups from countries around the world."

Saleemul Huq chairs SciDev.Net's advisory panel on climate change.

PUBLICATIONS

2.1. Phasing out state aid for coal production in Europe

The final text of the CAN Europe and EEB joint submission to the EU Commission concerning the review of Council Regulation 2002/1407 on state aid to the coal industry is available at: http://www.climnet.org/resources/060711_CoalAidReview_CANEEB_Final.pdf.

2.2. Clearing the Air: The Myth and Reality of Aviation and Climate Change

T&E and Climate Action Network Europe's latest report on aviation and climate change is now available to download.

To find out more, please visit the following web link: http://www.climnet.org/EUenergy/aviation/2006-06_aviation_clearing_the_air_myths_reality.pdf.

Some hard copies can be made available upon request.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

3.1. Invitation for comments – Ji project in Bulgaria

The Certification Body "Climate and Energy " of TÜV SÜD Industrie Service GmbH realizes a determination of the JI-project: "Portfolio of new cogeneration power stations for combined production of heat and electricity in District Heating Company Pleven and District Heating Company Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria".

Purpose and short description:

The project comprises the design, construction, and operation of a portfolio of one highly-efficient gas turbine and two gas engines with a total electrical power capacity of around 37 MW. The type of installations is co-generation type, which guarantees highly efficient and reliable generation of electric and thermal power. Through the installation of the described co-generation units, a significant reduction of CO2 emissions to the atmosphere from the operation of the two DHCs compared with the existing situation will be achieved.

We invite all parties, stakeholders and observers in accordance with the JI rules and modalities to comment on the project on our webpage: http://www.netinform.net/KE/Wegweiser/Guide2.aspx?ID=1904&Ebene1_ID=26&Ebene2_ID=550&mode=0.

This project will be open for comments within the next 30 days - from July 12 to August 10, 2006.

3.2. The Energy Globe Award

The Energy Globe is today's most prestigious environmental award. This prize goes to projects, which use our resources like water, earth, energy and air carefully and which apply renewables.

We cordially invite all projects which fulfill such criterias, to participate in the Energy Globe Competition! We would very much appreciate if you could distribute this invitation to the your member organisations and relevant project representatives.

Details for possible projects in each of the categories are listed on the application form. The 1st prize each category is endowed with 10.000 Euros.

The Award's presentation ceremony is held annually on a different continent within the framework of an international television gala, which is broadcast worldwide.

As of now in Europe national award presentations will be held in all 25 EU member states. The national winning projects will be introduced during a spectacular television gala at the European Parliament in Brussels, where also the European Awards are presented to the finalists in the 5 categories.

All submitted projects will be listed in the Energy Globe database, which will be open for the public in the near future. Any project submission helps us, to present to the world best practice sustainable projects which can be implemented elsewhere as well.

Today's environmental challenges can only be solved with joint forces – each small contribution becomes in total a big contribution.

