

E-news update September 11 2006

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POLICY

- 1.1. China, EU to further strengthen cooperation on climate change
10 September 2006, Xinhua

Leaders of China and the European Union (EU) attending the EU-China Summit on Saturday vowed to further strengthen their dialogue and cooperation on the issue of climate change and to promote further development of international climate change policies.

In a joint statement issued after the summit attended by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen of Finland, whose country holds the six-month EU presidency, and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, the two sides welcomed the progress on the implementation of the EU-China partnership on climate change, and vowed to work positively towards a rolling work plan to further implement the partnership, covering the period 2007-2010.

The statement welcomed closer cooperation by the two sides on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism and the start of cooperation on the research of near- zero emission power generation technology through carbon dioxide capture and storage.

It also underlined the need to exploit the synergies between the promotion of energy security, sustainable energy supply, innovation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to ensure consistency between meeting the ultimate objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and energy policy goals.

- 1.2. Global Warming Heats Up Capitol Hill
18 September 2006, Business Week

Lawmakers may finally be crawling closer to a consensus -- with business at the table, By John Carey
In the Summer of 2005, Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) proposed a bill calling for modest mandatory limits on emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change. The utility industry and its Washington-based trade group, the Edison Electric Institute, publicly opposed such curbs. Yet even as

the bill failed to win support, some executives at EEI's annual meeting privately voiced a heretical idea. The next President will be more aggressive in taking action against global warming than George W. Bush, one CEO argued, so "this may be the best deal we'll ever get."

Now this heresy is gaining momentum. "The time has come to do something on climate change, and it is better to act sooner rather than later," says Jeffrey E. Sterba, CEO of PNM Resources Inc. (PNM), a New Mexico and Texas utility, who will be chairman of the EEI next June.

Washington is trying. Congress is awash in carbon-capping bills and proposals from Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.), Jim Jeffords (I-Vt.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), and others. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) plans to introduce legislation on the first day of the next session of Congress, and Bingaman is preparing a more detailed version of his original 2005 bill.

Companion measures are floating in the House. And as Senator Carper makes personal appeals to fellow lawmakers, he's finding increasing support even among Republicans. "They are hearing a growing awareness that global warming is happening, and a growing awareness that people in the utility industry want [regulatory] certainty," he says.

In addition, "energy efficiency, biofuels, and climate change are starting to converge in one grand design," says John Stowell, head of environmental policy at Duke Energy Corp. National security hawks are pushing high-mileage cars and biofuels to reduce oil dependency and the flow of oil-buying dollars to the unstable Middle East, while farm states see revenues in growing crops for fuel.

With California's landmark plan to cut emissions, companies are also increasingly worried about an onerous patchwork of differing state rules. "The California action is a great spur to industry to push for a coherent national policy," explains Bob Simon, Democratic staff director of the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee. Add in the list of Presidential hopefuls who are talking about climate and energy, from Hillary Clinton and John McCain to Mitt Romney and George Pataki, and "a tidal shift is occurring," says Philip Clapp, president of the National Environmental Trust. As Congress begins to look ahead to the post-Bush era, no matter who wins in November, "the legislation that the U.S. will put in place by 2009 or 2010 is taking shape now -- and the number of members of Congress abandoning George Bush's position against mandatory caps is just extraordinary," Clapp says.

All of this is eerily similar to the final two years of the Reagan Administration when lawmakers bucked the Gipper's opposition to environmental regulation by shaping what George Bush I would sign as the Clean Air Act of 1990. Now, "if we can get modest mandatory bills passed in one or both houses, we are laying down the likely bill for whoever is the next President," says Paul Bledsoe, strategy director at the bipartisan National Commission on Energy Policy.

It won't be as easy as it was in 1990 when lawmakers were able to focus solely on pollution from power plants. Now they have to deal with bigger issues. Should greenhouse gas legislation start with utilities only, as in the Carper bill, or rope in the entire economy, as in McCain's? Should Uncle Sam first fund development of new technologies to help companies meet the rules? And should the U.S. act alone, without pushing for limits in China, India, and elsewhere?

Despite the complexity, Washington is beginning to inch toward a possible consensus, with business at the table. "Getting something by 2008 that phases in gradually and is able to bring in some of the developing countries could make a lot of sense," says PNM's Sterba.

1.3. World Needs Far Tougher Action on Warming – UN

8 September 2006, Planet Ark Reuters

Industrial countries will have to make swingeing cuts in greenhouse gas emissions to slow global warming, perhaps of up to 80 percent by 2050 as suggested by some nations, the UN's top climate official said on Thursday.

Yvo de Boer, who took over as head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat this week, also said the UN-led fight to slow warming should be made more attractive to the United States and developing nations which are outside the Kyoto Protocol.

"I think that much more needs to be done, probably in the range of emission reductions of say 60 to 80 percent by the middle of the century that some industrialised countries have been talking about," he told Reuters in his first interview.

He said the world had made a "good start" to rein in emissions -- produced mainly from burning fossil fuels in factories, power plants and cars -- with a 1992 Climate Convention and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

"But it's not much more than a start," he said.

Kyoto obliges 35 rich nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions by about 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12, via energy savings and a shift to cleaner sources such as wind or solar energy.

He said countries within Kyoto, taken as a whole, were "probably on track to meet their Kyoto commitments" provided they made more efforts at home and made use of Kyoto projects such as investing in clean energy in developing countries.

Many scientists say that Kyoto will have little effect in braking a projected rise in world temperatures this century that could raise world sea levels by almost a metre, spread deserts, diseases and cause more floods and powerful storms.

Smokestacks collapse:

And the collapse of Soviet-era smokestack industries has sharply cut emissions in Kyoto participants such as Russia and Ukraine, outweighing sharply rising emissions in countries including Spain and Canada.

De Boer, from the Netherlands, said the fight against climate change would not work unless more nations were coaxed -- rather than cajoled -- into taking part.

President George W. Bush pulled out of Kyoto in 2001, saying that it would damage the US economy and wrongly excluded developing nations from the 2012 goals. The United States is by far the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases.

De Boer said that many savings could be made in energy use, for instance, by replacing ageing coal-fired power plants. And he said that cost estimates, for instance by one leading sceptic that Kyoto would cost US\$150 billion a year, were short-sighted.

"If you take the example of my own country, you could say it costs a lot to raise the dikes to be prepared for a sea level rise of 50 cm. But if you look at the economic value of the hinterland that the dike is protecting the cost of the dike is rather irrelevant."

In the longer term, he said that developing nations were also "a critical part" of the solution. China and India, the most populous countries on earth, have fast-growing economies.

"I haven't heard of anyone calling for an absolute cap on the emissions of developing countries," he said, adding that they should get incentives to slow the rise of emissions.

Incentives might include, for instance, a new "energy programme financing mechanism, that helps large developing countries to cover the costs of greening their economic growth and their energy consumption," he said.

1.4. UNFCCC Parties discuss approaches to slow deforestation

4 September 2006

180 delegates from 68 UNFCCC Parties and international organizations gathered in Rome last week to discuss ways and means to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries. Deforestation is the source of more than 20 % of global emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily from tropical deforestation in developing countries.

At the workshop, which was hosted by the Government of Italy and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) at its headquarters from 30 August to 1 September, governments presented the results of their actions to slow deforestation and the lessons they have learned.

"This meeting clarified the key challenges in this area and identified useful ways to move forward on this important issue," said Kishan Kumarsingh, Chair of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, who led the meeting.

The workshop was part of a two-year process on deforestation launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Montreal in December 2005.

Concrete proposals of approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation were presented at the meeting. These included calls for the establishment of a financial mechanism to provide positive financial incentives for developing countries that voluntarily reduce their emissions from deforestation.

A range of potential sources of financing was identified, including market-based mechanisms.

The meeting considered the technical requirements for the required monitoring and quantification of the rates of deforestation and the resulting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Delegates also pointed out that capacity needed to be built to address the underlying causes of deforestation.

Presentations from the workshop are available on the UNFCCC website: http://unfccc.int/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/items/3768.php.

The results of the meeting will be reported to the Nairobi Climate Change Conference starting 6 November.

For more information, please contact Ms. Jenny Wong, UNFCCC secretariat: tel. (+49-228) 815-1601; e-mail: JWong@unfccc.int

1.5. UNFCCC secretariat receives first initial reports under the Kyoto protocol

5 September 2006

Hungary, Japan and New Zealand have submitted the first three "initial reports under the Kyoto Protocol" to the UNFCCC secretariat. This constitutes an essential step for these countries to become eligible to participate in the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms, including international emissions trading.

The reports have been submitted as result of a requirement stipulated in the "rule book" of the Kyoto Protocol, the Marrakesh Accords, adopted at COP/MOP 1 in Montreal. Among other things, the Accords request Annex I Parties to facilitate the calculation of their "assigned amounts".

The secretariat will organize reviews of the initial reports by international experts, including visits to Budapest, Tokyo and Wellington, during the next 12 months.

After the successful outcome of these reviews, the governments of Hungary, Japan and New Zealand will issue "assigned amount units," which are tradable under the Kyoto Protocol.

Total greenhouse gas emissions from these three countries add up to more than 1.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in their respective base years.

The initial reports are published on the UNFCCC website at: http://unfccc.int/national_reports/annex_i_natcom/submitted_natcom/items/3765.php.

For more information, please contact Mr. Harald Diaz-Bone, UNFCCC secretariat: tel. (+49-228) 815-1435; e-mail: HDiaz@unfccc.int

ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

2.1. Commission takes awareness-raising campaign into schools

5 September 2006, IP/06/1149

As the new school year begins, the European Commission is making available a specially developed range of information tools and materials on climate change for use by teachers and students across the EU. Schoolchildren are also being invited to make a personal pledge to combat climate change. The schools programme marks a new phase in the Commission's "You control climate change" public awareness campaign launched in May. It will be supported by TV, press and internet advertising.

Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "Climate change is already happening. Today's children will be the generation most affected as it worsens, but they are also the ones whose actions will determine whether we eventually win the battle against climate change. It is essential that they grow up fully aware of what climate change will mean for society and of the measures each of us can take to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions causing it."

Schools campaign

The Commission has developed engaging material that can be used in class for discussing the challenges of climate change. A variety of tools are available for use in classroom activities, offering guidance, background information and interesting assignments to illustrate how individuals can play an important role in combating climate change.

In line with the main messages of the awareness campaign (see IP/06/684), students are encouraged to make small changes to their daily behaviour that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These include turning down the heating at home, switching off the TV rather than putting it on standby, recycling waste and walking more often. They are also invited to pledge that they will make a personal effort to combat climate change.

The campaign website features a special section for teachers and students containing brochures, 'Podcasts' (audio or video files) a carbon calculator, downloads demonstrating how to improve the energy efficiency of computers, short films, useful links, contests and the opportunity to fill in the pledge on-line. The site will also host an exhibition area where students are encouraged to share creative expressions of the climate change challenge - in the form of artwork, videos or songs, for instance - with their peers across Europe.

Teachers and students are being informed about the campaign and about the materials and tools available through targeted media relations, on-line information activities and the distribution of brochures. Also, this year's edition of the Europa Diary – a European Commission-funded school diary

distributed to over one million secondary school pupils in the 25 Member States – includes a section on climate change and the campaign.

Advertising

An internet media campaign is under way which aims to drive internet users to the campaign website through strategically placed click-through banners. An attractive and powerful TV advertisement illustrating what individuals can do to combat climate change will be broadcast on MTV and BBC World from later this month until late November. Advertisements are also scheduled to appear in daily newspapers in some of Member States over the next quarter.

Campaign web site: <http://www.climatechange.eu.com>.

Commission website on climate change:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/home_en.htm.

2.2. Solar power ready to dominate the consumer energy market

6 September 2006

Solar Electricity has potential to supply over 2 billion people in 2025.

Solar power can deliver electricity to more than 2 billion people, provide over 2 million jobs with an annual investment of 113 billion Euros by 2025, reveals a joint report, 'SolarGeneration', released today by Greenpeace International and the European Photovoltaic Industry Association. The market report also explains that 350 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions would be cut - the equivalent amount from 140 coal power stations and by 2040, solar electricity could provide over 16% of the global demand.

"Solar energy is on the brink of leading the highly competitive consumer energy market, therefore the industry must invest further now in mass production to bring the costs down," said Teske. "The next two years are crucial for solar electricity to move out of the niche market and into mainstream energy production where it belongs. For the expansion of solar power to be successful, commitment from not only the industry but also Governments must play their part in the energy revolution. The industry is ready - where are the Governments?"

In 2005 the total installed capacity of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems around the world passed the landmark figure of 5000MW (= 10 average size coal power plants). Global shipments of PV cells and modules have been growing at an average annual rate of more than 40% for the past few years. Such has been the growth in the solar electricity industry that business only of the European PV industry in 2005 was worth more than EUR 5 billion; on a global scale the industry's turnover was approximately EUR10 billion.

"In 2006 the solar industry will invest well over 1 billion Euros along the whole value chain in new solar factories and R&D in order to increase the economy of scale and to lower the costs for solar photovoltaic systems," said Dr. Winfried Hoffmann, President of the European Photovoltaic Industry Association and member of the managing committee of SCHOTT Solar. "The global photovoltaic industry is ready to invest even more for years to come, but there must be a stable political framework for the next ten years to enable this investment to pay off."

Greenpeace International and the European Photovoltaic Industry Association are urging Governments to secure those investments with support programmes. The most successful scheme is a "feed-in tariff" which guarantees a specific price for each Kilowatt-hour fed into the grid. The "feed-in policy" has already been introduced in 41 countries, states and provinces enabling consumers to operate a solar system on their rooftop economically. In addition legally binding targets for the share of renewable energy in the EU for 2015 and 2020 are urgently needed.

Competition among the major manufacturers has become increasingly intense, with new players entering the market as the potential for PV opens up. The worldwide photovoltaic industry, particularly in Europe and Japan, is investing heavily in new production facilities and technologies. At the same time, political support for the development of solar electricity has led to far-reaching promotion frameworks being put in place in a number of countries, notably Germany, Japan, the US and China.

"The best protection against escalating electricity prices is installing your own solar modules on your roof," said Teske. " 'Distributed energy' from solar panels will save billions of tonnes of CO₂ emissions and guarantee stable electricity prices for families around the world. The day you install a solar generator on your roof, is independence day from your energy bill."

The European Photovoltaic Industry Association (EPIA) and Greenpeace have produced this third edition of Solar Generation to update our understanding of the contribution that solar power can make to the world's energy supply. This joint initiative adopted the title 'SolarGeneration' because it aims

to define the role that solar electricity will play in the lives of a population born today and developing into an important energy consumption group.

The report is available for download on <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/reports/solargen3>.

2.3. Methane bubbles climate trouble

9 September 2006, BBC News

Thawing Siberian bogs are releasing more of the greenhouse gas methane than previously believed, according to new scientific research.

Scientists from Russia and the US measured methane bubbling from a number of thawing lakes.

Writing in the journal *Nature*, they suggest the methane release is hastened by warmer temperatures, positively feeding back into global warming.

Methane's contribution to present-day global warming is second only to CO₂.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that atmospheric concentrations are about two and a half times those seen in pre-industrial times.

"Thaw lakes in north Siberia are known to emit methane, but the magnitude of these emissions remains uncertain," the scientists write.

"We show that methane flux from thaw lakes in our study region may be five times greater than previously estimated."

The lakes are produced in summers when land which is usually permanently frozen - permafrost - melts.

Bubble traps:

The study depended on the systematic deployment of bubble traps on two lakes in the Cherskii region of Siberia, supplemented by ground-based and aerial observations of a further 95 lakes.

Katey Walker from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks and her colleagues calculate that across the region, thaw lakes emit 3.8 teragrams (Tg, million million grams) per year.

The contribution of these lakes is small compared to the IPCC estimate of total global methane production, 600 Tg per year.

More than half of this total comes from human activities, notably farming.

The importance of the Siberian release may lie in the relationship between warming and methane production.

If a high release rate of a greenhouse gas is being triggered by rising temperatures, that will in turn stimulate still higher temperatures - a positive feedback mechanism.

Extra context comes from the age of the emerging gas. Using radiocarbon techniques, the researchers showed that some of the escaping methane molecules had been formed more than 40,000 years ago.

The area of the planet covered by permafrost is projected to shrink as the surface warms.

Boreholes in permafrost in Svalbard, Norway, indicate that ground temperatures rose 0.4C over the past decade, four times faster than they did in the previous century.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

3.1. Global Warming Taking Earth Back to Dinosaur Era

8 September 2006, Planet Ark reuters

Global warming over the coming century could mean a return of temperatures last seen in the age of the dinosaur and lead to the extinction of up to half of all species, a scientist said on Thursday.

Not only will carbon dioxide levels be at the highest levels for 24 million years, but global average temperatures will be higher than for up to 10 million years, said Chris Thomas of the University of York.

Between 10 and 99 percent of species will be faced with atmospheric conditions that last existed before they evolved, and as a result from 10-50 percent of them could disappear.

"We may very well already be on the breaking edge of a wave of mass extinctions," Thomas told the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Scientists predict average global temperatures will rise by between two and six degrees centigrade by 2100, mainly as a result of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide being pumped into the air from burning fossil fuels for transport and power.

"If the most extreme warming predicted takes place we will be going back to global temperatures not seen since the age of the dinosaur," Thomas said.

"We are starting to put these things into a historical perspective. These are conditions not seen for millions of years, so none of the species will have been subjected to them before," he added.

Thomas said scientific observations had already found that -- as predicted by the climate models -- 80 percent of species had already begun moving their traditional territorial ranges in response to the changing climatic conditions.

"That is an amazingly high correlation. It is a clear signature of climate change," he said.

Not only had the animals, birds and insects started to react, but there was evidence vegetation was also on the move.

For example, climate-triggered fungal pathogen outbreaks had already led to the extinction of more than one percent of the planet's amphibian species, Thomas said.

Not only would some species simply find no suitable space to live anymore, but there would be confrontations with invasive species being forced to move their territory. This would produce not just wipe-outs but species' mixtures never seen before.

And the changes would all happen at a faster rate than ever before in evolution.

"In geological terms 100 years is effectively instantaneous," Thomas noted.

3.2. Alpine Glaciers May Disappear within the Coming Decades

Science for Environment Policy

During the past 150 years, many mountain regions around the world have lost a significant proportion of their glaciers as a consequence of ongoing climate change. The shrinking of the mountain glaciers is indeed considered by scientists as one of the best natural indicators of climate change and they therefore monitor them closely.

A recent study carried out under the EU-funded research project ALP-IMP1 has assessed past, present and potential future glacier cover in the entire European Alps using, for the first time, an integrated approach that combines in-situ measurements, remote sensing techniques and numerical modelling.

The researchers noted that Alpine glaciers lost 35% of their total area between 1850 and the 1970s, and almost 50% by 2000. In the extraordinarily hot year of 2003 alone, the volume of the remaining ice decreased by 5-10%.

The estimations of this study indicate that the European Alps could lose some 80% of their glacier cover by the end of this century if summer air temperatures rise by 3°C and become almost completely ice-free by 2100, in the case of a temperature increase of 5°C. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an increase in summer air temperature of 1 to 5 °C is a plausible scenario.

Overall, the results show that under such scenarios, the majority of the alpine glaciers may disappear within the coming decades. The European Alps are densely populated and it is therefore important to consider this possible future and its effects on the water cycle, tourism, water management and the prediction of natural hazards.

1ALP-IMP project: "Multi-centennial climate variability in the Alps based on Instrumental data, Model simulations and Proxy data" (<http://www.zamg.ac.at/ALP-IMP/>), supported by the European Commission under the 5th Framework Programme and contributing to the implementation of the Key Action 2: Global Change, Climate and Biodiversity within the Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development Programme.

Source: Michael Zemp, Wilfried Haeberli, Martin Hoelzle and Frank Paul (2006) « Alpine glaciers to disappear within decades? », *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 33(13), doi: 10.1029/2006GL026319.

Contact: mzemp@geo.unizh.ch

CONFERENCES

4.1. Austrian JI/CDM Workshop

25-26 January 2007 in Vienna

This well established workshop, is a get together of project developers, investors, validators and governmental authorities and aims to provide participants with an update about recent developments and future perspectives right after the COP/MOP in Nairobi.

This Workshop for companies and institutions is a perfect setting to exchange hands on experience and professional know-how from practitioners about technologies, methodologies and country specifics in the JI/CDM market.

The workshop will update and inform about new trends in JI and CDM, project opportunities in various host countries, as well as being a platform for sharing information between institutions and project developers.

For further information please contact to Mr. Peter Koegler (p.koegler@kommunalkredit.at) or Ms. Sabine Schoeller (s.schoeller@kommunalkredit.at).

4.2. International Conference Make Markets Work for Climate

16-17 October 2006 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Registration Deadline 1 October 2006

Make Markets Work for Climate has a new site - www.makemarketswork.com - on which the first public draft version of the conference document has been placed and opened for comments from interested parties. Your opinion of and contribution to the document is welcome. Those received by 7 September will be taken into consideration prior to the finalisation of the document, though continued reaction to is always welcome.

Further information/registration see www.makemarketswork.com or mail to: mmw@minvrom.nl.

PUBLICATIONS

5.1. Just one planet. Poverty, justice and climate change

New book published by Practical Action.

The impacts of climate change are being felt all around the world and as they become more damaging and widespread, it is the 2.7 billion people in the world who live in less than US\$2 a day who will be hit first and hardest.

The carbon emissions fuelling the lifestyles of people in the North are causing changes in the patterns of the seasons. Rainfall, flooding and drought are threatening to make the gap between rich and poor in the world are wider and the UN Millennium Development Goals unattainable.

Based on analysis of the evidence for climate change and the vulnerability of poor people, this book develops a framework for action and makes clear the link between consumer and political choices in the North, and impacts in the South on the most vulnerable people in the planet.

Just one planet provides an indispensable reference for NGOs, government, policy advisers, researchers, students and specialists in the area of development, climate change and environmental studies.

Practical Action, formerly known as ITDG Intermediate Development Technology Group, is an international development agency with headquarters in the UK and offices in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Practical Action works in partnership with poor communities to design, choose and use technology to overcome poverty.

D. Mark Smith has a PhD in Ecology and worked as a researcher for Practical Action to prepare this report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

6.1. Energy Green Paper consultation

The Green Paper on a European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy is a consultation document designed to stimulate ideas on what should be done to deal with practical challenges and problems. One of the biggest challenges is how to ensure that Europe will be able to enjoy reliable, affordable and adequate energy supplies in the future, while minimizing environmental impacts which come from some energy production and use. On the basis of the response to this Green Paper, the Commission would like to develop more concrete ideas on a number of energy issues.

The consultation period will end on 24 September 2006.

For more information have a look at the consultation at: <http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=energygreenpaper&lang=en>.

