

eco



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Welcome Ministers! Time to get this show on the road

As Ministers gather for the informal roundtable on the shared vision and the closing plenaries it is time to take stock of what has been achieved so far at Poznan and where we go from here.

Poznan comes at an awkward moment. The talks have been overshadowed by internal EU wrangling about its 2020 climate package. The political transformation in the United States, will only be reflected when President-elect Obama takes up the reins in January, thus leaving Parties here to negotiate with a lame duck US. Disturbingly, a number of developed countries have contributed to the awkwardness by avoiding making any new commitments and inventing ever more elaborate reasons why their “special circumstances” make it especially hard to reduce their emissions. On the level of ambition for overall developed country mitigation targets there has been no progress beyond the language agreed a year ago at Bali. And very few developed countries have made any concrete offers of finance, technology and capacity building support for mitigation actions

by developing countries. This leaves progress on the adaptation fund as perhaps the one tangible outcome of the talks at Poznan – and this is still not decided.

The past ten days have, indeed, delivered little in the way of substantive outcomes but they have reaffirmed the commitment of all parties to reach a deal at Copenhagen and have clarified the process to get us there. Now what we need is a strong message from Ministers that they are ready to move into full negotiating mode and have the vision to translate the economic and climate crisis into an opportunity to invest in a sustainable recovery.

Look beyond Poznan, however, and the signs are more positive. President-elect Obama was elected on a commitment to cut US emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 and to invest \$15 billion per year over the next decade in clean technologies. His unilateral commitment to return US domestic emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 is not enough – but it goes well beyond the Bush
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EU climate package: All eyes on Brussels

Today and tomorrow the European heads of state and government are gathering in Brussels to decide on the EU’s climate change policies up to 2020. Europe’s reputation as the global leader in the fight against climate change is on the line. ECO, together with all the nations at COP 14, is watching to see if EU prime ministers and presidents will match rhetoric with action by adopting a package that will actually protect the climate.

Will the EU unambiguously commit to a binding 30% reduction target by 2020 once an international agreement is reached? It is essential to codify this within the package and require that this commitment deliver the majority of its emission cuts through domestic actions.

Will the EU signal to the rest of the world through the package that its contribution to financing the Bali Action Plan is an urgent priority? This can be achieved by mandating the auctioning of most of the allowances under the Emissions Trading Scheme and subsequently earmarking a significant part of the generated revenue for mitigation and adaptation actions in developing countries.
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Ministers would do well to recall their positions in Bali

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Setting REDD up for failure?

ECO offers the uninitiated a REDD primer for the discussions here in Poznan:

Rights of indigenous peoples and local communities = edited out due to political inconveniences.

Protection of the diversity of organisms and ecological functions that define a forest = a “co-benefit” to “explore”.

Conversion of primary forests to large-scale plantations = just another form of “sustainable forest management.”

Real discussion of forest governance or any of the drivers of deforestation, from industrial agriculture to illegal logging = totally absent.

If you're confused, go ask one of the delegates, because we don't get it either.

The current surreal state of the REDD negotiations, including the (non)conclusions coming out of SBSTA, is not setting up the creation of a mechanism likely to achieve any of the outcomes Parties have so sincerely expressed hopes for. Let's take a closer look at the real world:

It boggles the mind that after decades of efforts to protect the world's forests, Parties still don't understand that indigenous peoples (with an S!) and local communities aren't just another “methodological issue”. Take the Democratic Republic of Congo, 60% of whose inhabitants, some 40 million people, are indigenous or forest-dependent. Anyone who imagines REDD will provide credible, permanent emission reductions without the involvement of these people in a fully inclusive process has been drinking too much Zubrowska.

And without meaningful attention to governance, corruption, and the real drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, Parties will eventually find themselves drowning their sorrows in even more of that fine Polish vodka. The tropical timber industry is one where illegality is routine and mismanagement of its core activity – industrial logging – is standard practice. Hundreds of million of dollars of donor funding to rectify this situ-

ation has thus far failed to make a real dent. Why? Rampant corruption...and vast consumer markets of Europe, the U.S. and other G-8 nations that undermine their own foreign aid by purchasing billions of dollars of undervalued wood, with no questions asked.

As the EU Commission noted in its recent communication on REDD, “Illegal logging is one of the direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, and strengthening forest law enforcement, governance and institutions at local and national level as well as tackling the trade in and consumption of illegally harvested timber are necessary for any effective policy response.”

One final concept for our primer: A REDD mechanism without strong requirements for good governance, transparency and complementary demand-side driver policies, without respect for the rights and interests of forest-dependent peoples, or without a reality-based definition of what a forest and its degradation really are = a failure.

Youth to UN: “Survival is non-negotiable”

Youth are demanding that the President's summary on the ministerial roundtable be anchored by a fundamental principle: any global climate treaty must safeguard the survival of all countries and peoples.

International youth have created a Survival Pledge, requesting countries to sign their commitment to safeguarding the survival of all countries and peoples.

After a conference characterized by a lack of strong advances, the inclusion of a “safe-guard for survival” statement could represent at least one critical stake in the ground around which negotiating texts and shared vision could be developed in early 2009.

Youth – along with many others – came to this conference calling for transformational change. They have worked hard to push leaders to commit to strong climate targets based on science. As the conference has evolved they have repositioned. Instead of having the option to champion the pinnacle of ambition, they are now digging in to seek commitment on a moral imperative.

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Fossil of the Year

The World Bank came to Poznan carrying bags full of leaflets decorated with pretty pictures of rainforests and renewables, portraying itself as the “Climate Bank”. However, last week word leaked out that the World Bank has agreed “in principle” to provide up to \$5 billion of public funds to support Eskom, the largest electricity utility in Africa (SA), to build as many as six additional coal plants.

If approved, this would be both the largest World Bank Group loan on record and the single most carbon intensive project ever undertaken!

The loan to Eskom appears, at this stage, to be a blank check to support primarily the

mining industry. Eskom's published plans for expansion include more than 12,000 MW of coal capacity, which means resurrecting three coal plants and building three new ones.

The World Bank is spinning a fine line on climate in Poznan, continuing to position itself to control the potentially huge sums of money necessary to help developing countries adapt to climate change and transition to a low-carbon economy. The reality, and the audacity, of World Bank energy lending continues to amaze and undercut any stated concern for the climate. Last year Bank financing for fossil fuels increased 94 percent overall, and the gap between funding for renewables and fossils continues to grow.

Tar Sands: World's Dirtiest Oil

Environment Minister Rob Renner of the Canadian province of Alberta describes himself as a “key supporter of international climate change efforts”. However, his presence at the climate negotiations is undoubtedly to defend and promote Alberta's tar sands, Canada's fastest growing source of GHG emissions.

Tar sands generate 3-5 times as much greenhouse gas as conventional oil due to the massive amounts of energy needed for extraction and upgrading. There are severe impacts on fresh water, boreal forest, wildlife and air quality. There is also growing opposition from indigenous people whose communities

are most at risk from tar sands development.

The Canadian and Alberta governments promote CCS as a solution to the runaway emissions produced by tar sands. However, a secret Canadian government-briefing note, recently obtained under freedom-of-information legislation, states that “only a small percentage” of carbon dioxide from tar sands production can be captured.

Canada would be smart to leave well enough alone instead of putting one bad idea on top of another. To protect the climate, leave tar sands in the ground and look for energy elsewhere.

CCS in the CDM: caution required

Borrowing loosely from William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, "To include CCS in the CDM or not to include CCS in the CDM. That is the question."

A string of countries such as Norway, US, EU, Qatar, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Australia have lined up to support the inclusion of CCS in the **Clean** Development Mechanism (emphasis added). Others, including AOSIS, Brazil, Venezuela and India, have voiced concerns about including it under the CDM framework.

In light of the requirement that technologies in the CDM be environmentally "safe and sound" (as detailed in the Marrakech Accords), this latter position is absolutely right. Many concerns surround CCS, i.e. leakage, liability and monitoring, and unless such issues are resolved, inclusion in the CDM is not appropriate.

Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol states that the purpose of the CDM shall be to assist Parties not included in Annex I in achieving sustainable development. The CDM should provide an important opportunity to help developing countries "leapfrog" an unsustainable fossil fuel economy.

However, if CCS – a risky and potentially expensive technology – were to be included in the CDM, it could divert much needed investments from renewables and energy efficiency as well as the many long-term benefits that accompany these energy strategies. In this context, CCS could easily

serve as a dangerous distraction in efforts to deploy sustainable solutions that protect our climate.

Many, if not most CDM projects are non-additional, business-as-usual projects. This is a problem fundamental to the CDM's current structure. Until there is substantial restructuring of the mechanism, effectively controlling the credits generated from non-additional projects, the CDM must not be expanded.

The CDM should certainly not be used as a "pilot phase" to gain "practical experience" with CCS as suggested by the EU in these negotiations. Countries advocating for CCS should seek to gain practical experience in their own countries before exporting it.

Further, ECO believes that requirements needed to assure proper site selection, operating practices to guarantee permanent retention of injected carbon dioxide, monitoring, measurement and verification provisions, and responsibility for leakage of injected gas should be developed before any decision is taken on whether CCS should be a part of the CDM.

Given all of the above, ECO thinks it wisest that at this time, borrowing again (very loosely) from our friend Shakespeare that 'tis nobler in the mind to honor the 'precautionary principle' rather than risk suffering the slings and arrows of a technology that could compromise the sustainable development objectives of the CDM.



Scaling up a CCS micro-project

The Arab World – Not Just the Saudis!

You ask any negotiator about the Saudis and almost all either roll their eyes or giggle. This is hardly surprising, as we know that Saudi Arabia never misses an opportunity to attempt to hinder, block or derail the negotiations. Yes... Saudi Arabia is not here to fight climate change but rather to protect its oil business. It has succeeded in causing damage in the past, for example hindering progress on the adaptation fund by constantly calling for 'response measures' to its decreased oil sales in a lower-carbon world; or blocking progress on REDD to push CCS under the CDM as we have seen this week.

Given that they have no interest in striking a deal, Saudi Arabia – for whom "no agreement" is the preferred outcome – has been able to have a disproportionately high impact on the negotiations, not only by formally blocking text, but by slowing down

progress, and souring the atmosphere, often on daily basis.

So the question is, why do other Arab countries not stand up to the Saudis, especially those that would benefit from serious action on climate change? Why does a country like Qatar, for example, support the Saudis on all issues, even though its reserves consist mainly of natural gas, and it would make economic gains from a shift from more CO₂ intensive fuels such as coal and oil? And where is Lebanon, which has suffered from increased forest fires in the past decade? What about Egypt, that stands to lose 20% of the Nile delta – the base of its economy – to sea level rise?

There are two reasons for all this. First, many Arab countries do not have the capacity to follow the negotiations, and are just happy to follow the lead of Saudi Arabia.

To give an idea, the Lebanese delegation consists of just two individuals, while the Saudis can field a team of more than thirty, able to track all the small details. Second, climate change, historically, has not been an issue in most Arab countries, especially in civil society.

Nevertheless, at these negotiations we are seeing Arab civil society coming in much more strongly. Even some Arab governments, particularly Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, have started to feel left out of the process. These countries came together yesterday and agreed that they need to play a bigger role. Perhaps it is too late for this round, but ECO will be tracking their progress.

As for Saudi Arabia, here is a message from Arab civil society – consider: if the world fries, you fry with it.

Россия: Shooting Blanks

In the world of climate change actors, Russia ranks near the bottom. The Climate Change Performance Index 2009, compiled by Germanwatch and CAN Europe and launched yesterday in Poznan, ranks Russia 54th out of 60 climate change players. The country's mitigation policy, emissions levels and trading receive marks ranging from "poor" to "very poor".

Add to that Russia's "actively passive" behaviour in Poznan (the country hasn't come up with any figures, targets, or emission reduction plans), which is being strongly criticized by the Russian and international NGOs represented. Another worrying issue for the Russian NGOs is the possible inclusion of nuclear energy mechanisms in JI and CDM, which was the main incentive for the Wednesday anti-nuclear rally in front of the COP 14 conference entrance.

Russia has a unique potential for emission reduction. Surprisingly, Russia's presentation at COP 14 on its mitigation potentials forecast energy consumption still growing by 40-80%. However, a Russia-wide NGO-organised "Energy Patrol" revealed some other reasons for the present enormous levels of energy guzzling: neglect of the issue by Russia's government, mismanagement and a lack of energy efficiency policies.

CAN acknowledges that Russia's delegation in Poznan has it difficult. Due to inter-ministerial disputes and a recent government reshuffle, Russia's delegates keep a low profile and apparently have almost no mandate to negotiate at all. But with its chicken-hearted negotiation tactics, Russia risks losing its last bit of prestige in the UNFCCC process. Rumors from other delegations suggest the country is close to no longer being perceived as a serious negotiation partner.

If the Russian leadership wants the country to be recognised as a re-born world power, it must contribute significantly to solving the climate crisis. By actively committing itself to meaningful cuts in greenhouse gas emission, Russia would demonstrate its willingness and ability to be among those countries at the forefront. With one of the lowest energy efficiency rates worldwide, its vast potential for renewable energies and the political will to diversify the economy, Russia is in an almost dreamlike position to step up and lead.

The country doesn't lack a favourable climate or the techniques for making use of its huge potential for energy savings and renewables. What Russia's government really lacks is vision.

Public Supports Action on Climate

European leaders who cite economic fears as justification for avoiding strong climate commitments may want to go looking for a new excuse. In a YouGov poll commissioned by Avaaz.org last week and released today, large majorities of Germans (86%), Italians (86%) and Poles (72%) said that a strong, ambitious response to climate change would be more likely to either help an economic recovery or would neither help nor hinder it. Only 6% of Germans, 23% of Poles, and 9% of Italians said they thought it would hinder an economic recovery.

Further, 85% of Germans agreed that "Germany should show leadership in securing a strong climate agreement for the EU despite the economic downturn". Asked the same question about their own countries, 74% of Poles and 87% of Italians agreed that their governments should show climate leadership.

The polls were conducted by YouGov from 5th – 9th December 2008 with random samples of 1001 Polish and Italian adults, and 1003 German adults. More details are available at avaaz.org/poll

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It is only in this manner that the EU can preserve its reputation and its Member States prove that they are still worthy of the title "climate leaders". An agreement on a strong climate package will also set the stage for UNFCCC negotiations next year and energise the process in the countdown to Copenhagen.

With that in mind, ECO sends a message from Poznan to Brussels: Europe, the world is watching you!



Russian performance indicators are down

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Administration's target (peaking US emissions by 2025) and represents a starting point for negotiations, not a final offer. China continues to show strong leadership on climate change and recently announced a stimulus package equivalent to 7% of GDP, including major investment in energy efficiency and renewables. The US and EU are also finalising stimulus packages which, while smaller than China's, can help lay the foundations for a "green new deal".

The EU's climate package has been watered down by the lobbying of energy intensive industries and other vested interests. But there is still hope that leaders will see the light and rise above this to adopt an ambitious package at the European Council today or tomorrow and from subsequent action by the European Parliament. Throughout Europe – and more widely – the public wants politicians to lead on climate change. We have seen examples of that here at Poznan – for example from youth delegations, mobilising people across universities and in the public around the world. They need to keep up the pressure in the run-up to the elections to the European Parliament next May and make sure that climate is a top priority for the next European Commission.

So what do these rays of hope mean for Poznan? The world is watching, waiting and increasingly fearful of the cost of failure in Copenhagen. Your task in the next two days Ministers is to send the political signal that you and your governments are fully and totally committed to rising to the historic task ahead in 2009 to conclude an Agreement in Copenhagen that can truly set us on the path of preventing catastrophic climate change.

Mieszko

Mieszko is delighted that so many hard-working and well-remunerated delegates are paying attention to text in such great detail. This afternoon some of them were able to devote one and a half hours to the question of punctuation, and were able, finally and triumphantly, to transform a semi-colon into a comma. Until now, Mieszko had no idea that so many of them were devotees of Surrealism.

Mieszko has himself been paying close attention to detail, and has spotted a typing error in the heading of the REDD document which refers to "approaches to stimulating action", clearly the first "t" in "stimulating" is superfluous.