

eeco



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Pick up the Pace!

Over the last two weeks negotiations have proceeded at snail's pace, while the growing body of climate science demands nothing less than hare's haste. So how do we pick up the pace on the road to Copenhagen?

The most fundamental step was indeed taken in Poznan – work programmes for both Ad Hoc Working Groups that give the Chairs a clear mandate to move to negotiating text. However, all the text in the world won't make a Copenhagen deal unless negotiators come to the table with a political mandate to craft a binding agreement.

Firstly, country positions have to change. It sounds obvious, but in the year since Bali we've not seen much evidence of real shifts in domestic climate policy and this has been the key obstacle to progress in Poznan. Negotiation is not the same as haggling over details. It's about country positions moving toward each other, preferably in the desired direction – towards an equitable and effective agreement.

The clearest example of parties' entrenched positions is on the target range for emissions reduction by developed countries as a group (25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020). The refusal of Australia, Canada, Russia and Japan to move from their positions in Bali has meant that we have literally lost a year. Developed countries have to bring their commitments to the table, and these must add up to a total that reaches at least the top end of the 25-40 percent range.

Developing countries such as South Africa and South Korea, on the other hand, have been putting forward constructive proposals that take forward the commitment to nationally appropriate mitigation actions. Mexico has pulled ahead of most developed countries

by actually setting itself a long-term target.

REDD and LULUCF, though, have not seen the progress we need to tackle this substantial portion of global greenhouse gas emissions. Developed and developing countries need to close the loopholes that already exist in LULUCF, and work to prevent the same problems from undermining the environmental integrity of REDD support.

In other areas, parties have to start responding constructively to good ideas already on the table. We heard some of that from EU representatives at Thursday's informal roundtable – most notably a willingness to look seriously at the financing proposals of Norway, Mexico and the G77 + China. More engagement of this kind will make the LCA chair's life a lot easier as he prepares the convergence and divergence document for the next meeting in Bonn. If this document turns out to be mostly about divergence it will threaten the prospects for a solid draft negotiating text by June.

Progress on finance and technology is urgently needed and will require some tough decisions. The squabbles and confusion over details of how to get the Adaptation Fund up and running are at odds with the urgent need to respond to the climate impacts described by numerous Ministers and the strong call to action – including “to dramatically increase the financial and technological resources” – made yesterday by the UN Secretary-General. Global solidarity is certainly required, but must be more than spin of a mostly vacuous session.

Ahead of the next UNFCCC meeting in Bonn the EU has an opportunity to restore its leadership on climate change by agreeing a strong package of support for adaptation

and mitigation that sets the bar high for other developed countries. European Heads of Government need to sign this off at the Spring Council in March.

In the US, President-elect Obama has already made a number of encouraging appointments to his climate and energy team and committed to the US being a willing partner in addressing the global climate challenge. This momentum needs to build, so that the US delegation comes to Bonn with a clear and very ambitious mandate for negotiations. Not only can this create a fresh dynamic with developing countries, it will also remove one tired excuse for inaction on the part of Japan, Australia, Canada, Russia and others.

The mood amongst delegations has been dull grey, while the mood amongst the world's top climate scientists is bright red with alarm. The road to Copenhagen demands a new mandate for negotiators – stop stalling, start acting.



Meanwhile in Brussels...

Below 2 degrees for Russia

For the first time ECO has a Russian sister publication called "Below 2 Degrees". The name is a reminder of the IPCC's forecast of irreversible climate change if temperatures rise more than an average 2 degrees C globally compared to pre-industrial temperatures. The aim of Below 2 Degrees is to critique the Russian delegation position from an NGO perspective.

Below 2 Degrees has been critical of Russia, as they have been passive and reluctant to step forward with constructive and cooperative proposals at this COP.

Examples of stories published in Below 2 Degrees include a story on the presentation given by Sergey Tulinov of the Russian Federation on mitigation potentials. The title of the article was "The first week's developments: Russia's out of the game". Below 2 Degrees demanded that the official delegation come up with figures, targets and emission reduction plans.

Another edition stated that "Russia is losing its standing and is no longer being perceived as an important player in the climate change negotiations". The same edition also announced the global collection of signatures, initiated by a number of NGOs, in order to keep nuclear energy out of JI and the CDM.

The question for today is whether the head of the Russian delegation will take the floor at the High Level Segment, or whether

the statement will be made by a less senior delegate. According to information leaked to Below 2 Degrees, the Head is to depart for home before the scheduled presentation. If he does make the presentation, it may mean the story has had an impact on Russia's performance.

Russian delegates were seen reading Below 2 Degrees every morning, surprising the first-time publishers. The publishers continue to hope that Below 2 Degrees will help change Russia's lack of urgency at the negotiations.

Each day the publication also reviews the scarce Russian press coverage of the negotiations. Trying to encourage Russian media to focus more on the Climate negotiations, the bulletins are sent to Russian journalists as well.

In Russia, people are concerned about climate change, but without media analysis they cannot be expected to fully understand the process of international climate change negotiations. Sharing this publication with the Russian people helps them to understand this complex issue and identify with NGO positions.

ECO looks forward to welcoming its comrade Below 2 Degrees at the climate talks next year in Bonn, and at COP-15 in Copenhagen. Russian speakers who may have missed it so far are encouraged to download the four Poznan issues from <http://antiatom.ru/ab/node/610>.

Happy Birthday Senator Kerry

Dear Senator Kerry,
Happy 65th birthday, belatedly. ECO is delighted that you have chosen to spend your birthday here. Apologies for the delay in this celebratory message. While a birthday boy may occasionally wish the world would slow down, or that one could go back in time, we are confident that you won't find this acceptable for climate negotiations!

The world expects a fair and ratifiable agreement on climate change in December 2009. Such an agreement should be the greatest birthday present anybody could receive. Senator Kerry, we welcome the leadership that you promise from the United States. We thank you for the message that an agreement to reduce global warming emissions must not be tardy - unlike this birthday notice.

The world is watching us here in Poznan. We must make sure that global leaders make progress on the most challenging issue of our time. The problem is not going away and the solutions will only become harder the longer we delay. As we all know, nobody is getting any younger!

Mieszko

As baggy-eyed as many an anxious observer, Mieszko nearly spilt his watery coffee over passing dignitaries as he surveyed some text print-outs, when he saw them date Version:10.12.09. Had he lost yet another entire year? Or is there some fiendish plot in the secretariat leadership? After feverish gathering of "intelligence" Mieszko can find no evidence that the typesetters have been enlisted in efforts to re-establish a "realistic" level of ambition.

Many will already have heard of yesterday's drama, in which the Canadian Youth Delegation were forced to tear down graphic photographs of the destruction wrought by massive tar sands developments in Alberta. Apparently it was thought that the pictures might offend Canada's Environment Minister. Mieszko has to ask, was the Minister unaware of the offensive nature of his own tar sands? And he recalls Oscar Wilde "He who is easily offended, deserves to be."

Today's London Guardian contains a reference to these talks, in which developed countries are said to have their fingers in their ears, and to be sitting on their hands. This leads Mieszko has to wonder where their heads could possibly be. He hopes their voices aren't be too muffled.



Can you spot the Umbrellas among the deckchairs?