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Bonn: Third Time Lucky?

In the last two meetings in Bonn, delegates produced two hundred pages of untidy and repetitive legal text. But on the two 'make or break' issues of these negotiations – Annex I mid-term mitigation targets and Annex I financing for developing countries – there is a long way to go before we get the strong, fair Copenhagen deal we need. For the sake of the planet and the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people on it, ECO hopes that in this 'informal' meeting we might get lucky and find the answers that have so far eluded the negotiators.

In the interim, some green shoots have poked through the littered negotiating landscape. For the first time, leaders at the G8 and MEF meetings acknowledged the scientific imperative to keep global warming below 2°C, and agreed that developed countries would reduce emissions reductions by 80% or more by 2050. Meanwhile, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown became the first rich country leader to offer a specific figure on the scale of funding required to meet adaptation needs and invest

in low carbon development. The US\$100bn he advocated was publicly supported by EU neighbour The Netherlands. While the G8 failed to pick up the financing baton, it is high on the agenda of the G20, which may give the issue some much-needed momentum.

Promising signs, but with only four months to go to reach a legally binding comprehensive international agreement in Copenhagen, ECO sounds a note of caution to delegates: you cannot afford to allow another Bonn negotiating session slip by without progress on the unwieldy legal text of the agreement itself.

This time around there are few distractions, and fewer excuses not to make inroads into the endless reams. ECO is reliably informed that the hounds of the international press pack number a mighty 'one' at this session. NGOs have been forbidden their usual array of booths, stunts and side-events. And in many countries, the political masters of the negotiators in Bonn are enjoying summer holidays. Delegates can

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Hitting Rock Bottom?

For lawyers and wannabes, the Legal Architecture Seminar hosted by Australia on Friday was as close to heaven as the UNFCCC negotiations get. For mere mortals, the outcome is a bit more mixed. ECO's concern is that the bottom-up proposals being put forward by Australia and the United States are strikingly similar to the "pledge and review" concept originally advanced by the European Union in the Kyoto negotiations. While there seemed to be convergence around these proposals, ECO suspects that this could be because not all interests were represented at the seminar. Certain non-Annex I countries were noticeable by their absence.

A schedule, an appendix, call it what you will, a bottom-up approach allows individual countries to set their own level of mitigation by referencing domestic programs. Certainly a bottom-up approach to NAMAs for non-

industrialized countries makes sense, but not for industrialized countries. Here's why.

If industrialized countries are going to merely tie their international obligations to their domestic climate efforts, why would we need an international agreement? Why not just send all the negotiators home to work on domestic policy and save countless tonnes of CO₂ emissions in the process? If this is the price of getting the USA into the international climate effort and it falls far short of the action necessary to avoid 2 degrees of warming – is it worth it?

If national commitments are expressed in terms of domestic programs, it will be much more difficult to assess the comparability of effort across countries since they will not necessarily be expressed in common terms or metrics.

Additionally, a bottom-up approach is likely
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It's on the Cards

If you are a government delegate here in Bonn, in the next few days you may find yourself the lucky recipient of a postcard from Copenhagen. Not just any postcard, but one that is larger-than-life and hand-delivered by a youth climate activist.

These postcards represent the voices of hundreds of thousands of global citizens who have signed a petition calling on global leaders to attend COP-15 and sign a global climate deal that is Ambitious, Fair, and Binding. (Or perhaps that should be Fair, Ambitious and Binding – a 'FAB' treaty!)

You can make sure their plea is heard by delivering the Copenhagen postcard into the hands of your nation's leader.

A Copenhagen deal is set to be one of the most significant decisions to be made in history – it needs political attention commensurate with the importance of the issue. Heads of state need to be personally engaged.

And if you think these postcards are big, a much larger version of one of the postcards was handed to Gordon Brown during the G8 meeting in l'Aquila. Brown was delighted to meet youth from the climate movement and accepted the giant postcard with pleasure. The youth movement have postcards addressed to every leader, and would like each leader to see theirs in person – and attend Copenhagen.

The clock is tick tick tck-ing...



Gordon Brown getting the message in l'Aquila

This Season's Adaptation Essentials

ECO was delighted to see fashion-conscious Parties dedicating sixty-five pages in the LCA catalogue to adaptation – it is a key building block of any comprehensive climate ensemble and an essential – regardless of the season – for ensuring the most vulnerable people cope with the impacts of climate change. Advancing the negotiations on adaptation will mean slimming down the plethora of proposals whilst ensuring that priorities identified by the most vulnerable developing countries remain core to the adaptation chapter.

ECO's wardrobe advisors indicate that this autumn, five 'adaptation basics' are in vogue. For all those professing to be concerned about the people already being hit hard by the impacts of climate change, the following elements are an absolute must in the adaptation wardrobe.

Base adaptation action on four principles:

- Prioritise the poorest and most vulnerable people and countries

- Rights- and community-based approaches
- Transparent, participatory, and inclusive decision-making at all levels
- Environmentally sound adaptation, recognising the value and importance of healthy ecosystems

Ensure support is predictable, reliable and results in regular and adequate flows of finance, comprising:

- Binding financing commitments
- Periodic installments
- Include a review process to adjust amounts, starting with at least US\$50 billion a year
- Financing that is additional to existing Official Development Assistance targets

Allow priorities for adaptation to be defined in countries, not globally, based on:

- Subsidiarity principle: countries and local communities decide what's needed, not developed countries or multilateral agencies
- Funding available for all types of adaptation actions identified at the country level

Provide support for an international climate risk insurance mechanism:

- Establish an international climate risk insurance mechanism, which in particular delivers rapid payouts for countries struck by very severe weather events and which is financed by developed countries

Recognise the need to address loss and damage from unavoidable impacts:

- Inclusion of provisions for how, and where to address such issues

We expect that these basics will form the core of next season's catwalk collection in Copenhagen, and they are essential to keep in the text. However, there is one thing that is essential to remove: ECO believes the impacts of so-called 'response measures' must not be included in an adaptation framework agreed in Copenhagen. Whatever the Gulf between different viewpoints, this is just plain ugly. Countries must seek to remove it from the adaptation debate definitively.

Pathetic NZ Target Expected Today

New Zealand is today expected to announce its mid-term target. Rumours suggest an unconditional target of 5% below 1990 levels and a conditional target of 15% below 1990 levels.

So what's ECO expecting by way of justification from New Zealand today? Don't hold your breath for anything other than a lot of pathetic bleating about 'national circumstances', a killingly weak target and finger pointing at the most vulnerable.

While Tuvalu intends to be carbon neutral by 2020, NZ seems intent on literally drowning this ambition (and a number of its Pacific Island neighbours).

Which brings ECO onto the killingly

weak target. The Global Humanitarian Forum found that climate change is already killing 300,000 people a year with only 0.8°C of warming. Current developed country emissions pledges imply warming well over 3 degrees. How many more people will be condemned by their own special 'national circumstances' – vulnerability to droughts, floods and other disasters?

ECO has a question for all developed countries. If the current pathetic level of Annex I ambition is the most they can do, who is going to save the planet and keep warming below 2 degrees? Given what's been announced to date, it certainly won't be Annex I!

–Hitting Rock Bottom, from front page to lead to a series of linked domestic trading systems with a lack of coordination and oversight to ensure the integrity of the market and to prevent the types of market manipulation that contributed to the current economic collapse.

Ultimately, the bottom-up approach is likely to become "a race to the bottom," where the least common denominator controls the level of ambition of industrialized countries. The US has made it clear it is limited by its current domestic political dynamic. But many countries feel the same way.

A direct result of this dynamic is to shift the burden of climate change from mitigation to adaptation, with a disproportionate burden falling on the most vulnerable countries.

Some proposals suggest that a review mechanism could result in the gradual tightening of emissions limits in response to developments in scientific understanding. That is small comfort given the current gap between the level of ambition evidenced by

Annex I country national programs to date and the required levels of Annex I emission reductions as derived from our current understanding of the science.

Friday's seminar did have several positive aspects. Detailed consideration and open dialogue on legal architecture is long overdue and is absolutely necessary to ensure a political outcome in Copenhagen can be expressed in legal language. ECO applauds the inclusion of non-parties in the format of the seminar. As evidenced by the draft treaty presented by NGOs, country delegations do not have a monopoly on creative and constructive thinking on legal architecture issues. Finally, ECO notes that the word "compliance" was mentioned by several delegates. No international climate agreement is complete without serious consideration of how its provisions will be enforced. As suggested by one delegate, some pain must be built into the system to ensure the pleasure of beginning to solve the climate crisis.

LUDWIG

Ludwig has just returned from New Zealand, where he witnessed the Environment Minister tell the Parliament that it is "a lot easier for [Pacific Island] countries to call for very large reductions when they are not proposing any binding commitments for reductions themselves".

Ludwig would like to point out that NZ's (and other Annex I countries') current proposed targets are likely to result in extremely binding commitments for many island states – unless the Minister imagines they have a fiendish plan to generate massive emissions from beneath the sea.

–Third Time Lucky, from front page and must embark on five days of unrelenting focus to reduce the length of text to more manageable proportions, and increase the ambition of its substance in line with what science says is needed.

Acknowledging the need to keep warming below 2°C counts for nothing so long as the mitigation pledges made by Annex I countries would fail to achieve this. Current Annex I pledges amount to an aggregate target of no more than 10-16% below 1990 levels by 2020 – this is un-ambitious, and far short of the 40% minimum cut required.

And on financing, we are still waiting for the concrete offers of new and additional financing of, at the very least, US\$150bn per year by 2020 that will deliver the scale of adaptation and mitigation needed for a fair and safe deal in Copenhagen.

With only four months to go to Copenhagen, ECO urges delegates to make these five days count.