



Backgrounder on the Asia Pacific Partnership

The Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (APP), previously known as AP6, was announced in July 2005 by its six member countries: the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China and India. Stephen Harper recently used his appearance at the UN high level meeting on climate change in New York to announce Canada's intention to join APP, and simultaneously failed to support, or even mention, the crucial UN negotiations set to take place in Bali, in December.

The APP does not aim to achieve absolute greenhouse gas reductions or deal with the impacts of climate change. In fact, it lacks any specific emission reduction targets¹.

Instead, the main goals of the APP are to promote economic ties and technology transfer. But if Canada were serious about transferring technology in order to encourage clean development, it could do so effectively through the Kyoto Protocol's mechanisms. By joining the APP, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is further distancing himself from leading nations on climate change, and from the Canadian public that overwhelmingly supports the Kyoto Protocol. Joining APP risks distracting attention from the real progress and concrete efforts of the Kyoto Protocol, and from negotiations to secure a second phase of the Protocol after 2012.

U.S. President George Bush launched APP at a time when he was facing increased pressure from leading nations on climate change in the run up to the G8 meeting at Gleneagles. The APP takes the approach to climate change long advocated by the fossil fuel industry: it is a non-binding "compact" that does not create any legal obligations. Members have pledged to work together to *"be better able to meet our increased energy needs and associated challenges including those related to air pollution, energy security and greenhouse gas intensity."*²

Rather than encouraging a transition away from fossil fuels towards cleaner energy sources and absolute reductions in greenhouse gases, APP instead focuses on reducing emissions intensity, allowing an overall rise in emissions. The established "work plan" focuses on power generation and distribution, and key industry sectors of partner economies. Eight public-private sector Task Forces were established covering (1) cleaner fossil energy; (2) renewable energy and distributed generation; (3) power generation and

¹ Communique for the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate

² Communique for the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate;
<http://www.asiapacificpartnership.org/Communique.pdf>

transmission; (4) steel; (5) aluminum; (6) cement; (7) coal mining; and (8) buildings and appliances.³

Distinctions between APP and the UNFCCC process⁴

Some participating countries, such as India and China, have insisted that APP is consistent with the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and is complementary to the Kyoto Protocol.

However, the APP lacks the key components necessary for reducing greenhouse gas emissions which are part of the Kyoto Protocol. Unlike Kyoto, the APP:

- Does not create carbon markets.
- Does not seek to address adaptation, an integral part of UNFCCC.
- Ignores developed countries' historical responsibility in contributing to the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Has voluntary, non-legally binding objectives.
- Does not have fixed targets, making it difficult to measure success or hold governments accountable.
- APP members emit 50% of world emissions. Kyoto comprises 75% of global emissions⁵.

Because of these weaknesses, the APP cannot **in any way** be considered as an acceptable substitute for commitments under the UNFCCC or Kyoto. Like many of Bush's initiatives on climate change, the APP process could be used to distract from the crucial Kyoto Protocol negotiations taking place in Bali, Indonesia in December.

The UNFCCC creates a global framework that requires nations to avoid dangerous climate change. Under the umbrella of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol creates legally-binding targets for developed countries which apply in the 2008-2012 period, and details compliance mechanisms for reaching those targets.

APP: Real results or wastefully redundant?

APP seeks to promote cleaner development, however the Kyoto Protocol's flexible mechanisms have already produced millions of dollars in investment in clean technologies which are expected to make significant emissions reductions.

The UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol each stipulate provisions for technology transfer. Under the UNFCCC, the developed country Parties have committed to take steps to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and know-how to other Parties, particularly to developing countries to enable them to implement the provisions of the Convention (Article 4.5). This commitment is echoed in similar provisions under the Kyoto Protocol (Article 10 c). Parties have taken decisions to

³ Communique for the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean development and Climate; <http://www.asiapacificpartnership.org/Communique.pdf>

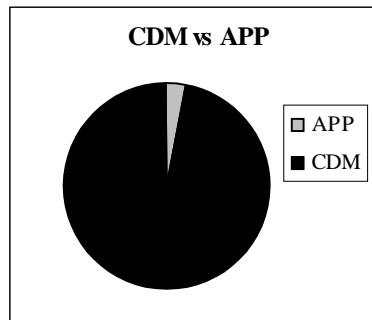
⁴ Asselt, Harro Van, *From UN-ity to Diversity? The UNFCCC, the Asia-Pacific Partnership, and the Future of International Law on Climate Change*, 2007

⁵ Draft CEEM discussion paper – Australian Climate Policy and the Asia-Pacific Partnership, February 2006

⁷ Climate Action Network Australia, "Climate Change Myths", 2007

promote the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies at each session of the Conference of the Parties, and the expectation is that more measures will be adopted as part of Kyoto's second phase.

The Clean Development Mechanism, which Prime Minister Harper rejected with the abandonment of Canada's Kyoto compliance, has proven success at deploying low-emission technology in developing countries. Since 2002, US\$2.7 billion in credits from clean energy investments (renewable energy and methane recovery, fuel switching and energy efficiency) have been contracted through the CDM, leveraging an estimated US\$16 billion in investment in those areas⁷. The UNFCCC currently has 803 registered CDM projects, and it is estimated that over the five-year time period of the Kyoto protocol, the CDM will achieve 2 200 megatonnes in emissions reductions⁸. In comparison, the only committed funding for the APP is AUD\$100 million from Australia over five years, and US\$52 million from the US. This amounts to less than 5% of the funds that the CDM has generated. Furthermore, a large proportion of APP's funding is being spent on administration, rather than specific projects⁹.



⁸ UNFCCC; <http://cdm.unfccc.int/Statistics/index.html>

⁹ Climate Action Network Australia, "Climate Change Myths", 2007