



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the United Nations Climate Change Conference - Poznań

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Online at <http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop14/enbots/>



Issue #9 | UN Climate Change Conference | 1-12 December 2008 | Poznań, Poland | Friday, 12 December 2008

Events convened on Thursday, 11 December 2008

Acting on Climate Change: The UN Delivering as One

Presented by the United Nations

This event presented efforts in coordinating UN agencies' response to climate change.

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, noted that any agreement reached in Copenhagen in 2009 will need to be implemented effectively on the ground and said that the "UN System Delivering as One" initiative can make an enormous contribution to strong implementation and enhanced public awareness.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN, highlighted that the Chief Executive Board's purpose is to that the UN thinks, speaks and delivers as one, and championed the idea to earmark a certain portion of stimulus bailout to climate change investments.

Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, underscored the importance of investment in weather monitoring networks, and said that World Climate Conference-3 will contribute to the success of global initiatives aimed at improving society's resilience to climate risks. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, described the work of UN-Energy partners on the issues of energy efficiency, energy access and renewables. He stated that UN objectivity, independence and science can overcome short-term interests and restore trust.

Kandeh Yumkella, Director General, UN Industrial Development Organization, stressed that the UN plays a catalytic role in establishing market mechanisms, building capacity to access these markets, and facilitating technology transfer. Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that climate change is a sustainable development issue and that technology transfer is a cross-cutting issue that receives priority under the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN Agency for Human Settlements Providing Adequate Shelter for All (UN-HABITAT), noted that UN-HABITAT is confronted with both climate change and population growth, and advocated the empowerment of communities so that they can solve their own problems. Katherine Sierra, Vice-President for Sustainable Development, World Bank, stressed the importance of incentive frameworks, the need to change financial behavior and the critical role of the private sector in addressing climate change.

Participants discussed: reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation; land degradation; information and communication technologies; adaptation and risk reduction; climate change and food security; tourism and green jobs; and lack of coherence within the UN system.



Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the UN, called for bold and decisive action by all countries and UN agencies on the issue of climate change.

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This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin on the Side* (ENBOTS) © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Claudio Chiarolla, Kelly Levin, and Peter Wood. The Digital Editor is Dan Birchall. The Editor is Soledad Aguilar <soledad@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development - DFID), the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission (DG-ENV), and the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2008 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Australia, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute - GISPRI), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF). Funding for the translation of the *Bulletin* into Spanish has been provided by the Ministry of Environment of Spain. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11A, New York, NY 10022, USA. The ENBOTS team at the *United Nations Climate Change Conference - Poznań* can be contacted by e-mail at <peterw@iisd.org>.

New Stoves to Capture Carbon, Reduce Deforestation and Improve Soil Fertility

Presented by the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification

This event advanced the concept of mobilizing rural households to help reduce emissions from inefficient biomass burning stoves and halt soil degradation by using biochar, a by-product of high-efficiency stoves.

Barney Dickson, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), noted that most attention to date has been on sequestration and storage in forests, but argued that carbon storage in drylands is also important. He stressed that land degradation leads to increased emissions through loss of biomass and soil erosion, and that addressing this issue by changing land management practices can promote carbon sequestration and contributes to combating desertification and climate change. He described various management practices to improve carbon sequestration, including: erosion control; afforestation; no-till farming; manure management. He noted that weak institutions, limited infrastructure, and resource-poor agricultural systems limit the capacity to undertake action.

Debbie Reed, International Biochar Initiative, explained that biochar is a charcoal-like substance produced from the incomplete combustion of biomass in an oxygen-limited environment, which improves soils and has multiple environmental benefits. She said that the production of biochar is an ancient practice which captures carbon from the burning of biomass during cooking. She noted that biochar production systems are scalable and have appropriate developed and developing country applications.

Robert Flanagan, Charion, presented on third-generation domestic stoves, which have been made carbon negative through small changes in engineering. He highlighted that more than two billion people rely on solid fuel for cooking and that biochar from improved stoves has the potential to improve plant growth in the form of soil health restoration and reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers. He stressed the need to work on combustion and carbon-fixing technologies, as well as to address cultural needs and cooking methods, which are critical to success. He added that the cost of third generation stoves may range from US\$4-20, and that they can be produced locally.

Participants discussed: concerns for desertification due to the removal of biomass from forests; the need to increase research into different soil applications; issues regarding technology diffusion in developing countries; the need for training and awareness raising; and transitioning to a low-carbon economy while meeting the objectives of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).



Robert Flanagan, Charion, said that up to half of the carbon contained in biomass can be captured by third-generation stoves.



Barney Dickson, UNEP, highlighted the significant sequestration potential of restoring degraded dryland soils.



L-R: Barney Dickson, UNEP; Robert Flanagan, Charion; Moderator Gregoire De Kalbermatten; Debbie Reed, International Biochar Initiative; Sergio Zelaya, UNCCD Secretariat.

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The Amazon Fund: Framework for Cooperation in REDD

Presented by the Government of Brazil

This event introduced the Brazilian National Plan for Climate Change and the Amazon Fund, which aims to raise funds to be used in combating deforestation and promoting the conservation and sustainable use of forests in the Brazilian Amazon.

Suzana Kahn Ribeiro, State Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Brazil, described the Brazilian National Plan for Climate Change and outlined the Plan's objectives related to: low-carbon development; renewable energy; biofuels; deforestation; forest cover; vulnerability and adaptation; and research and development.

Tasso Rezende de Azevedo, Director-General, Ministry of the Environment, Brazil, described the Amazon Fund, which will invest in actions undertaken by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). He said the fund hoped to attract contributors, such as governments, NGOs, and multilateral organizations.

Paulo Todescan Mattos, Brazilian Development Bank, described the Bank's activities pertaining to the environment and its role as the financial manager of the Amazon Fund. He announced the opening of a subsidiary in London, which aims to attract more investments into the Fund, and an international marketing campaign, which will provide clarification regarding the Fund's management.

Luiz Machado, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action, highlighted the engagement of developing countries, and specifically Brazil, in climate change action, and said that the emission reduction activities funded through the Amazon Fund will be additional to industrialized countries' efforts.

Lord Nicholas Stern, London School of Economics and Political Science, commended Brazil on its leadership, especially with regard to biofuel technologies. He called for a commitment to a low-carbon economy and said that he hoped Brazil would lead in carbon capture and storage from biomass. He underscored the need to support development and fight poverty.

Eric Solheim, Minister of Environment and of International Development, Norway, described Norway's US\$100 million annual contribution to the Amazon Fund, which could continue until 2015. He noted the potential for collaboration with the UN system, as well as the need to recognize indigenous peoples' needs.

Carlos Minc, Minister of the Environment, Brazil, concluded the session and noted that the country will be implementing projects in June 2009. He said that the Plan would reduce emissions from deforestation by 70% in the next decade, representing 4.8 billion tons of carbon dioxide. He also described efforts on biofuels, ethanol, illegal logging, monitoring, public contracts with wood exporters, and elimination of kilns that are transforming the Amazon through their use of nonrenewable charcoal for the steel industry. He said that the Amazon Fund should guarantee full rights for indigenous and local peoples, and protect biological diversity. He clarified that the Fund is not intended to generate emission credits for those that donate to it.



Tasso Rezende de Azevedo, Director-General, Ministry of the Environment, Brazil, stated that 20% of the Fund could be dedicated to technology transfer and experience sharing.



Carlos Minc, Minister of Environment, Brazil, likened the current progress on climate change to being "on a plane leaking fuel," and said that those who are making the smallest "holes" cannot continue to point out who is making the biggest "hole."



Paulo Todescan Mattos, Brazilian Development Bank; Lord Nicholas Stern, The London School of Economics and Political Science; Carlos Minc, Environment Minister, Ministry of the Environment, Brazil; Jaroslaw Szeptycki, translator; Luiz Machado, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action.

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Transition to Renewables

Presented by the Centre for Science and Environment

Sunita Narain, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), emphasized that greenhouse gases are linked to economic growth, that an equitable climate change agreement must distribute this growth with developing countries, and that a climate agreement should take into consideration historical emissions. She lamented that renewable energy sources generate only one percent of the world's energy supply, and that most of this contribution is in the form of biomass used in cookstoves of the poor. She highlighted that the poor of the South are being asked to introduce renewables and highly energy-efficient technologies, which the wealthy Northern countries have not been able to do themselves. She urged the creation of a climate agreement based on per capita emission rights, and that creates incentives for investment in renewable energy sources and decentralized solutions.

Surya Sethi, Planning Commission of India, discussed the policy implications of "leapfrogging" older technologies and cautioned that, while beneficial, these activities also bypass the accompanying human capital and technological development. He also noted that not all technology will be applicable in the developing world, and illustrated this with the example of wind turbines maladapted to the Indian wind regime. He stressed that new technology will have to take into account existing infrastructure for technology in the country.

Hans-Josef Fell, Member of German Parliament, said there is no shortage of energy sources, but noted that fossil fuels are expected to decline by three percent per year. He noted that one third more coal would be needed to power carbon capture and storage per unit of energy produced. He also highlighted the importance of remembering that activities fueled by coal, oil and gas are responsible for 80% of all greenhouse gases, and that real climate protection must end the use of these. He said the removal of fossil fuels subsidies would make renewables immediately competitive.

Yu Jie, HBF China, said the Chinese wind industry is booming, with domestic production of turbines doubling in the last five years. She emphasized that related activities have benefited small communities located near manufacturing facilities and near the wind farms. She noted that the wind industry has been supported by a pro-wind policy framework, including laws that determine prices. She said that China is looking to triple its generation of renewable energy by 2020.

Stefan Gsänger, World Wind Energy Association, acknowledged that China is a wind power success story, but noted that that Africa and Latin America generated less than one percent of global wind power, and recommended the extension of supportive policies in other countries. He stressed that local people must benefit from wind farms if the wind industry is to gain support.



Sunita Narain, CSE, said that climate change is fundamentally political with equity and justice issues at its core.



Hans-Josef Fell, Member of German Parliament, said the removal of fossil fuels subsidies would make renewables immediately competitive.



L-R: Sunita Narain, Centre for Science and Environment; Yu Jie, HBF China; Surya Sethi, Planning Commission of India; Hans-Josef Fell, Member of German Parliament.

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Valuing Opportunity Costs for Mitigation in High Forest Cover, Low Deforestation Rate Countries

Presented by the Government of Guyana

This event was devoted to creating incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), especially in high forest cover, low deforestation rate countries.

Robert Pasaud, Minister of Agriculture, Guyana, introduced the panel, and said that the world's economy values extractive forest-related activities but not the ecological services that forests provide.

Shyam Nokta, Chairman of the National Climate Committee, Guyana, outlined three principles that will guarantee success of REDD measures, including: providing incentives to all rainforest countries; ensuring that incentives are of sufficient scale, with compensation provided at more than the value that can be generated through deforestation; and involving the public in framing the solution. He said that looking towards historical baselines of deforestation as a predictor of future deforestation rates, while appropriate for some countries, may not be well suited for Guyana, given that the country could enter into a development phase that could raise deforestation rates.

Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana, introduced a document entitled, "Creating Incentives to Avoid Deforestation," based on an analysis by McKinsey and Company, which focuses on measures to avoid deforestation in Guyana. This national-scale pilot assessment explores the value of avoided deforestation, which was estimated to be US\$580 million per year, equivalent to US\$4 per ton of carbon. He said that the country was prepared to invite international supervision to demonstrate to the world that their avoided deforestation actions are legitimate.

President Jagdeo also discussed adjustment costs and said that countries do not have to sacrifice prosperity when practicing sustainable forestry. In conclusion, he urged collaboration on forests and called for new thinking. He said that if commitments are deep enough, Annex I countries will seriously address the issues within their own countries and also buy credits from abatement measures being carried out in the rest of the world.

Participants discussed: the treatment of indigenous peoples, especially with regard to land rights claims; selective logging; and the timescale of payments. At the end of the event, participants watched a video showcasing Guyana's rainforest ecosystem and biodiversity.



Robert Pasaud, Minister of Agriculture, Guyana, stressed the need to align economic incentives and interests.



Shyam Nokta, Chairman of the National Climate Committee, discussed avoided deforestation opportunities in high forest cover, low deforestation rate countries.



Robert Pasaud, Minister of Agriculture, Guyana; Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana; Shyam Nokta, Chairman of the National Climate Committee; Kevin Hogan, Advisor to the President.

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Transforming the Wood Trade to support REDD

Presented by the Environmental Investigation Agency

This panel-led discussion addressed illegal logging and the potential for new legislation in the US to curb the imports of resultant wood products.

Andrea Johnson, Environmental Investigation Agency, gave an overview of recent amendments to the US Lacey Act, which make it the first law in the world to ban the import of illegal logs. She highlighted the need to consider the drivers of deforestation, adding that illegal logging is an indicator of overall governance failure. She noted that logging is a trillion dollar industry, and that up to 15% of logging is illegal. She highlighted the profitability of illegal logging, noting that the costs are one-third of those of legal logging, and presented a short film describing the potential of the Lacey Act to address trade in illegally sourced timber products.

Patrick Alley, Global Witness, said that Africa receives six times more in natural resource revenues than it receives in aid, and said the way out of poverty for many developing countries lies in the legal and sustainable management of its resources and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from such activities. He noted that illegal logging activities by many EU logging companies, such as the Danzer Group, are backed by financing from major banks, and said that the timber trade must be kept out of activities recognized by the reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) policy framework. He emphasized that intact primary forests lose most of their stored carbon once they have been logged.

Peter Murtha, International Network of Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, said that although very little pro-environment legislation has been passed during the Bush administration, the recent amendment to the Lacey Act is a very positive development. He said that the Act, amended in June 2008, will serve as a deterrent to the importation of illegally sourced wood products. He added that the Act is backed by credible threats of imprisonment, large fines and forfeiture of cargo. He noted challenges that the Act will face, including in regions where legality is ambiguous, and emphasized the need for individual accountability. He underscored that in many countries forest governance is just beginning to mature and said that law enforcement capacity must be built prior to the introduction of REDD.

Participants discussed: the role of forest certification in the Lacey Act and establishing due diligence; "conflict carbon markets"; trade declaration requirements and chain of custody; and how REDD will fail without credible monitoring and verification.



Andrea Johnson, Environmental Investigation Agency, said that recent amendments to the US Lacey Act have made it a helpful tool in addressing illegal logging, but cautioned that it is not necessarily a panacea.



Patrick Alley, Global Witness, said that while REDD presents one of the best chances forest campaigners have ever had to save forests, it carries with it the same magnitude of risk if executed poorly.



L-R: Andrea Johnson, Environmental Investigation Agency; Peter Murtha, International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement; Patrick Alley, Global Witness.

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