

A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP 15 and COP/MOP 5)

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Events convened on Tuesday, 8 December 2009

IPCC Information and Activities and Their Relevance for the UNFCCC Process

Presented by the WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)



Responding to a question from the audience, IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri stressed that there is “no question over any of the science in the IPCC AR4.”

This event summarized the highlights from the IPCC 4th Assessment Report (AR4) and provided an outlook for AR5.

IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri opened the event by outlining the “robust, transparent and objective” procedures employed by the IPCC in compiling AR4. Regarding the illegal breach of personal emails from University of East Anglia scientists, he said the IPCC will not conduct an “investigation,” stressing that the IPCC is convinced of the integrity of AR4 and that no piece of peer-reviewed literature was excluded from the Panel’s review.

Thomas Stocker, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group I (WGI), outlined key AR4 findings, including that “warming in the climate system is unequivocal.” He highlighted key observations and predictions to be addressed in AR5, including the widespread melting of ice on the margins of Greenland and Antarctica.

Chris Field, Co-Chair of IPCC WG II, underscored his group’s most important finding from AR4, namely that scientists are now able to scale the level of climate impact with the level of climate change that occurs. He concluded by discussing the focal areas for AR5, including to look at the relationship between climate change and development, and improving the treatment of regional threats.

Vicente Barros, Co-Chair of IPCC WG II, discussed the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation. He said the Report will address the intersection between: frequency, intensity and duration of extreme events; disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; and vulnerability.

Youba Sokona, Co-Chair of IPCC WG III, highlighted main findings of AR4, including that: small increases in income can result in large increases in emissions; all sectors and regions have mitigation potential; and effective carbon-price signals could realize significant mitigation potential. He concluded by noting the forthcoming IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy, which will provide a comprehensive technologically-specific assessment. Participants discussed, inter alia: the role of the IPCC in advocating urgent action; AR5’s projected treatment of ocean acidification; future plans for modeling tipping points; and the projected emphasis of short- versus long-term time scales in AR5.

More information:

<http://www.wmo.int>
<https://www.ipcc.ch>
<http://www.ipcc-wg1.unibe.ch>
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Biofuels and Climate Change Mitigation

Presented by Brazil

Lisa Jackson, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), noted her country's commitment to a strong domestic biofuels sector, and to protecting public health and the environment. She said the EPA is in the final stages of drafting new renewable fuel standards. Martin Larsson, Sweden, outlined national strategies to achieve fossil fuel independence in the transport sector by 2030, including by increasing fuel efficiency and biofuel use.

André Amado, Brazil, argued that developing nations cannot achieve the Millennium Development Goals without energy, and that while biofuels are not a "silver bullet," they can be a "driving force" for sustainable development. Luiz Fernando do Amaral, Sugarcane Industry Association (UNICA), said emission models from indirect land use are too uncertain to inform legislation, and suggested that deforestation be addressed in international forums and not through biofuels policy.

Fernanda Viana de Carvalho, The Nature Conservancy, said enforcement of political measures, such as Brazil's 1965 forest code, can help to ensure biofuels sustainability. Liz Bates, Project Gaia, outlined the potential health and carbon reduction benefits of ethanol-based fuels for household energy production.

José Miguez, Brazil, noted that two main challenges for the Global Bioenergy Partnership are to determine whether biofuel production results in land-use change, and how biofuel emissions compare with life-cycle emissions from fossil fuels. Thelma Krug, Brazil, said Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) can be used to facilitate increased renewable energy use.

Eduardo Caudero Mallmann, Usinas Sociais Inteligentes, discussed decentralized energy production projects, including micro-distilleries and bioethanol electric generators. Ricardo de Gusmão Dornelles, Brazil, concluded that while biofuels development is often caught up in politics, it is important to move forward with their development.



André Corrêa do Lago, Brazil, encouraged developing countries to share experiences with producing electricity from bagasse.

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International Bunker Fuels

Presented by ICAO and IMO

The event constituted two separate sections, the first presented by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the second by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Miguel Palomares, IMO, opened the IMO section of the event, stating that shipping operates in a global environment and thus requires international regulation. He announced that the IMO has an emission reduction package ready for enactment and awaits guidance from the UNFCCC.

Karin Sjölin-Frudd, IMO, presented the IMO's vision for climate change mitigation. She outlined the findings of the Second Greenhouse Gas Study, undertaken in 2009, which sets out that the sector must reduce its emissions and favors market-based instruments to do so.

A number of issues were raised in the discussion, including the IMO's partnership with ICAO, the practical complexity of regulating the shipping industry, and how revenues from a market-based instrument should be used.

Robert Kobeh Gonzalez, President of ICAO Council, chaired a panel discussing ICAO's efforts to regulate civil aviation's emission reductions. He stated that ICAO has adopted a global strategy on climate change, and looks to the COP to assist ICAO in coordinating the sectoral effort. Other panelists outlined the recent ICAO-hosted high-level meeting on aviation and climate change that, among other things, endorsed an international programme on aviation and climate change, and led to recommendations on alternative fuels. One panelist underscored that while alternative fuels offer significant medium-term emission reductions, they must be socially and environmentally sustainable. To achieve emission reductions, panelists preferred market-based approaches in tandem with scientifically-backed mitigation efforts.



Yap Ong Heng, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, outlined the outcomes of the ICAO-hosted high-level meeting on aviation and climate change.

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Lessons Learned from Existing Global Climate Financing Mechanisms

Presented by Sweden and Maldives

Johan Schaar, Sweden, speaking in a non-governmental capacity, explained that the event would summarize existing climate financing mechanisms and report on lessons learned in various countries. Richard Klein, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), summarized existing mechanisms and asked participants to consider whether fragmentation is problematic.

Representatives from various financing institutions then shared their experiences. Amb. Jan Cedergren (Sweden), Chair of the Adaptation Fund Board, highlighted three unique features of the Fund, namely, developing country governance, devolution of access, and financing through the carbon market. Josué Tanaka, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, stressed that centralization of finance limits implementation capacity. Amal-Lee Amin, Inter-American Development Bank, discussed the World Bank-administered Climate Investment Funds, highlighting that six multilateral development banks serve as implementation agencies. Bonnie Biagini, Global Environment Facility (GEF), underscored the historically important role the GEF has played in climate finance.

Various country representatives then reflected on their experiences accessing climate finance. Natalie Kushko, Ukraine, noted a project currently under review at the Eastern European Development Bank. Angelo Reyes, Philippines, highlighted a recent project in his country funded by the Asian Development Bank to replace 13 million incandescent bulbs. Mohamed Shareef, Maldives, lamented his country's experience in receiving finance following the 2004 tsunami, noting that funding was not allocated in line with his country's priorities. Fernando Tudela, Mexico, emphasized that building upon and transforming existing institutions is a necessity and noted that his country's economic transformation was largely domestically financed. Participants discussed a wide variety of issues related to climate finance, including devolution of decision making to the country level and measuring effectiveness of adaptation financing.



Mohamed Shareef, Maldives, noted that his country is still gaining experience with climate financing, but the post-tsunami funding model is not one to be replicated.

More information:

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China and the World: Solving Climate Change Through Practical, On-the-Ground Collaboration

Presented by Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

This event addressed the significance of China's energy and carbon intensity targets, progress towards achieving them and future challenges and opportunities. Mark Levine, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, highlighted that between 1980 and 2000, China's gross domestic product increased sixfold but energy use only doubled, thus demonstrating that economic growth and energy use can be decoupled. He emphasized that, judged against other developing country targets, China's goal to reduce carbon intensity between 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2020 is significant.

Lu Xuedu, China Meteorological Administration, said China is close to achieving its goal of reducing energy intensity by 20% between 2006-2010. He noted that the Chinese government adopted the most ambitious carbon intensity targets recommended by academic institutions.

Robert Earley, Innovation Center for Energy and Transportation, highlighted the Low Carbon Fuel Standards Policy Project, which is developing a standard national evaluation methodology for life cycle GHG emissions for five low-carbon fuels in the transport sector. Addressing the building sector, Kevin Mo, NRDC, noted the difficulty of achieving energy efficiency goals for retrofitted buildings. He noted the potential of a building energy rating and labeling system.

Jingjing Qian, NRDC, said carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) will be an important part of any plan to reduce emissions in China, and emphasized the need for early cooperation in financing CCS and in developing regulations and policies. Addressing the issue of environmental governance, Alex Wang, NRDC, highlighted the uniqueness and importance of China's official performance reviews that reward government officials for achieving energy and carbon intensity targets.



Lu Xuedu, China Meteorological Administration, said China's carbon intensity targets are measurable and verifiable, but stressed that China has its own system to carry out these tasks.

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Yes, He Can!

Presented by Greenpeace International

This event examined the US climate change negotiating positions at Copenhagen and proposed alternative options for emissions targets and leadership strategies by US President Obama. Steven Herz, Greenpeace International, observed that the scientific consensus of the IPCC provides an undisputed external benchmark for success in climate negotiations. He said routes are available under existing law that would allow the US to achieve aggressive mitigation.

Kyle Ash, Greenpeace USA, described US emissions targets within the recent Waxman-Markey bill. He outlined the positive achievements of the bill, including an economy-wide target, but lamented that the mid-term targets of 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 translated to only 3% below 1990 levels. Ash argued that the targets were undermined as they would not allow state cap-and-trade programmes between 2012-2017, and temporary “term offset credits” would undermine the permanence of emissions credits.

Kassie Siegel, Center for Biological Diversity, said delayed action on climate change has resulted from false assumptions that President Obama’s hands are tied by the need for Congressional action and that a new climate bill is needed before the US can agree to targets.

Marcelo Furtado, Greenpeace Brazil, recounted the history of slavery abolition in Brazil, noting that abolition was initially seen as economically detrimental, but in retrospect was found to be economically beneficial. He suggested that emission reductions would reveal a similar trajectory. Participants discussed, *inter alia*: emission reduction actions by the EPA; grassroots efforts to engage American citizens; long-term implications of Executive Agreements; the recent endangerment finding of the EPA; and the possibility of designating greenhouse gases as “criteria pollutants.”



Kassie Siegel, Center for Biological Diversity, argued that President Obama has all the legal authority needed to guarantee emission reductions under the Clean Air Act and the 1987 Global Climate Protection Act, and that the barriers are political rather than legal.

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The Economics of Boldness

Presented by Energeia

The event focused on whether middle income countries should act boldly or instead minimize their engagement in climate change mitigation activities.

Jose Alberto Garibaldi, Energeia, presented a recent report, “The Economics of Boldness,” which focuses on mitigation in middle income countries, arguing that middle income countries are best placed if they engage in mitigation activities. Garibaldi illustrated that engaging in “bold and early” activities can reduce the costs of mitigation and, in some instances, can result in a net gain. Alvaro Umaña, Costa Rica, demonstrated that middle income countries often have low-cost mitigation options, and suggested that other countries should also exploit those opportunities.

Eduardo Durand López-Hurtado, Peru, explained how his country's population is vulnerable to the effects of climate change and argued that more engagement with mitigation will lead to less need for future adaptation. Andrea García Guerrero, Colombia, highlighted that although middle income countries contribute less than 0.5% of global total GHG emissions, they are ready to act. Accordingly, she called on the COP to provide a means for middle income countries to engage in mitigation.

Catherine Potvin, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, explained how Central American countries have focused on adaptation but are now moving to consider mitigation as a driver of sustainable development. Rae-Kwon Chung, Republic of Korea, welcomed Energeia's report, and explained how his country has been pursuing “green growth” towards sustainable job creation.

In the discussion, participants questioned the report's assessment of the gains REDD will provide to middle income countries, and suggested that “boldness” is required by all countries.



Alvaro Umaña, Costa Rica, urged middle income countries to engage in mitigation activities but avoid taking on debt to pay for it.

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