

## TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSIONS OF THE UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES & SESSIONS OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUPS: 2-13 JUNE 2008

From 2-13 June, several meetings are taking place in Bonn, Germany, as part of ongoing negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol. The twenty-eighth sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) of the UNFCCC will be held from 4-13 June. In addition, the second session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 2), and the resumed fifth session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 5) will be held from 2-12 June.

These meetings are part of ongoing discussions to enhance international cooperation on climate change, including for the period after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol's first "commitment period" expires. At AWG-LCA 2, three workshops will be held to help delegates address key issues such as adaptation, finance, and technology. The AWG-KP will include a roundtable on means for Annex I countries to reach emission reduction targets and a workshop on methodological issues. SBI will consider such issues as capacity building, technology transfer and preparations for the second review of the Protocol under Article 9, while SBSTA's agenda includes items on technology and reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFCCC AND KYOTO PROTOCOL

Climate change is considered one of the most serious threats to sustainable development, with adverse impacts expected on the environment, human health, food security, economic activity, natural resources and physical infrastructure. Scientists agree that rising concentrations of anthropogenic greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are leading to changes in the climate. The Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), completed in November 2007, finds with more than 90% probability that human action has contributed to recent climate change and emphasizes the already observed and projected impacts of climate change.

The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the UNFCCC in 1992. The UNFCCC sets out a framework for action aimed at stabilizing atmospheric

concentrations of greenhouse gases to avoid "dangerous anthropogenic interference" with the climate system. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994, and now has 192 parties. These parties continue to adopt decisions, review progress and consider further action through meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is usually held annually. Since 1995, the COP has been supported in its work by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

**KYOTO PROTOCOL:** In December 1997, delegates at COP 3 in Kyoto, Japan, agreed to a Protocol to the UNFCCC that commits developed countries and countries in transition to a market economy to achieve emission reduction targets. These countries, known under the UNFCCC as Annex I parties, agreed to reduce their overall emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels between 2008-2012 (the first commitment period), with specific targets varying from country to country.

Following COP 3, parties began negotiating many of the rules and operational details governing how countries will reduce emissions and measure their emission reductions. The process was finalized in November 2001 at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, when delegates reached agreement on the Marrakesh Accords, which establish detailed rules on the Protocol's three flexible mechanisms, reporting, methodologies, and other elements of the treaty. The Kyoto Protocol entered into force on 16 February 2005, and now has 180 parties.

**COP 11 AND COP/MOP 1:** COP 11 and the first Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 1) took place in Montreal, Canada, from 28 November to 10 December 2005. At COP/MOP 1, parties took decisions on the outstanding operational details of the Kyoto Protocol, including formally adopting the Marrakesh Accords.

Delegates in Montreal also engaged in negotiations on long-term international cooperation on climate change, including possible processes to consider the post-2012 period. These negotiations resulted in a COP/MOP 1 decision to establish a new subsidiary body, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP). In addition, COP 11 agreed to consider long-term cooperation also under the UNFCCC "without prejudice to any future negotiations, commitments, process, framework or mandate under the Convention" through a series of four workshops constituting a "Dialogue" that would continue until COP 13.

**AWG-KP AND CONVENTION DIALOGUE:** Between COP 11 and COP 13 in December 2007, the newly-established AWG-KP and Convention Dialogue each convened four times. The AWG-KP focused on finalizing its work programme and analyzing mitigation potential and ranges of emission reductions. At its meeting in Vienna, Austria, in August 2007, the AWG-KP focused on possible ranges of emission reductions for Annex I parties. Parties adopted conclusions referring to some of the key findings of IPCC Working Group III, including that global greenhouse gas emissions need to peak in the next 10-15 years and then be reduced to well below half of 2000 levels by the middle of the 21st century in order to stabilize atmospheric concentrations to the lowest level assessed by the IPCC. The AWG-KP's conclusions recognized that to achieve this level, Annex I parties as a group would be required to reduce emissions by a range of 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

During its four workshops, the Convention Dialogue focused on development goals, adaptation, technology, and market-based opportunities. At the final workshop, held in Vienna in August 2007, delegates focused on bringing together ideas from the previous workshops and addressing overarching and cross-cutting issues, including financing. Parties also considered next steps after COP 13, with parties expressing a willingness to continue discussions under the Convention "track" beyond COP 13.

In addition to the AWG-KP and Convention Dialogue, post-2012 issues were also considered under the first review of the Protocol under Article 9, held at COP/MOP 2 in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2006, and in discussions on a proposal by the Russian Federation on procedures to approve voluntary commitments for developing countries.

**BALI CLIMATE CONFERENCE:** COP 13 and COP/MOP 3 took place from 3-15 December 2007, in Bali, Indonesia, alongside the resumed fourth session of the AWG-KP. The focus of the Bali conference was on post-2012 issues, and negotiators spent much of their time seeking agreement on a two-year process, or "Bali roadmap," to finalize a post-2012 regime by COP 15 in December 2009. This roadmap sets out "tracks" under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

Under the Convention, negotiations on the follow up to the Convention Dialogue resulted in agreement on a Bali Action Plan that establishes the AWG-LCA, with a view to launching a comprehensive process on long-term cooperative action, to be completed in 2009. The Bali Action Plan identifies four key elements: mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. The Plan also contains a non-exhaustive list of issues to be considered under each of these areas and calls for addressing a "shared vision for long-term cooperative action."

Under the Kyoto Protocol, the AWG-KP agreed in Bali on a detailed plan for its activities and meetings for 2008-2009. In addition, COP/MOP 3 considered preparations for a second review of the Protocol under Article 9, which will take place at COP/MOP 4 in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008. Delegates identified a number of issues to be addressed during this review, including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), IPCC AR4, adaptation, effectiveness, implementation and compliance.

**AWG-LCA 1 AND AWG-KP 5:** The first session of the AWG-LCA and fifth session of the AWG-KP took place from 31 March to 4 April 2008 in Bangkok, Thailand. The main focus of AWG-LCA 1 was on developing its work programme for 2008. The work programme, adopted at the end of the meeting, aims to further discussions on all elements of the Bali Action Plan at every session of the AWG-LCA in a "coherent, integrated and

transparent manner." It establishes a detailed work programme, including a timetable for eight in-session workshops to be held during 2008.

The AWG-KP convened an in-session workshop on analyzing the means for Annex I parties to reach their emission reduction targets. In its conclusions, AWG-KP 5 indicated that the flexible mechanisms under the Protocol should continue in the post-2012 period, and be supplemental to domestic actions in Annex I countries.

### INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**IPCC-28:** The 28th session of the IPCC was held from 9-10 April 2008, in Budapest, Hungary. Discussions centered on the future of the IPCC, including key aspects of its work programme. The IPCC plenary agreed to prepare a Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) and to retain the current structure of its Working Groups. In order to enable significant use of new scenarios in the AR5, the Panel requested the Bureau of the Fifth Assessment cycle to ensure delivery of the Working Group I report by early 2013 and complete the other Working Group reports and the Synthesis Report at the earliest feasible date in 2014. The Panel also agreed to the preparation of a Special Report on Renewable Energy to be completed by 2010.

**MAJOR ECONOMIES MEETING:** A third "Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change" was held in Paris, France, from 17-18 April 2008. The latest round of talks focused on the value of sectoral approaches, long-term and medium-term goals, new technologies, financing, forestry, adaptation and national planning. Delegates also commented on a new announcement by US President Bush on 16 April, setting a target of stabilizing US greenhouse gas emissions by 2025.

**G8 MINISTERIAL MEETINGS:** Two recent ministerial-level meetings of the G8 addressed global climate change issues. From 5-6 April 2008, G8 ministers responsible for development cooperation met in Tokyo, Japan, with participants highlighting the urgent need to assist developing countries in their adaptation efforts.

G8 environment ministers met in Kobe, Japan, from 24-26 May 2008. Ministers expressed "strong political will" that G8 leaders attending the Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July 2008 should go beyond a previous 2007 agreement to "seriously consider reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by at least half by 2050."

**UNFCCC MEETINGS:** A number of UNFCCC workshops and other events have taken place since April. From 28-29 April, a workshop on preparations for the second review of the Kyoto Protocol pursuant to Article 9 took place in Bonn. The meeting considered parties' submissions, and the issue will be taken up again by SBI 28.

Other recent UNFCCC events include: an expert meeting on technologies for adaptation (5 April, Bangkok); an informal meeting on activities under the Nairobi Work Programme (7-9 April, Bangkok); the thirteenth meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (14-16 April, Sana'a, Yemen); fourth meeting of the Compliance Committee's Enforcement Branch (16-17 April, Bonn); 39th meeting of the CDM Executive Board (14-16 May, Bonn); a pre-session meeting of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (29-30 May, Bonn); and another pre-session meeting on progress regarding the implementation of decision 1/CP.10 (Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures).

In addition to these UNFCCC meetings, a wide range of UN-related events and activities have taken place in recent weeks. For more information, visit: <http://www.climate-l.org/>