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MEETINGS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE 20 - 30 OCTOBER 1997

The seventh sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI-7) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA-7) will open on Monday, 20 October 1997 at the Beethovenhalle in Bonn, Germany. The eighth session of the *Ad Hoc* Group on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM-8) will open on Wednesday, 22 October.

MEETINGS SINCE AGBM-7

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE

CHANGE: US President Bill Clinton convened a White House Conference on Climate Change on 6 October 1997 at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. The conference, which was simulcast to universities and colleges across the country, consisted of opening speeches, panel discussions on the science of global warming and climate change, the role of technology and economic impacts. Local panel discussions were held at each participating university. The conference was part of a White House effort to build domestic support for a treaty to set legally binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions. Clinton said the US will ask for 'meaningful but equitable commitments' from all nations, but did not spell out in detail what the US position would be in Kyoto. He said his administration was divided. Some economic advisers doubted new technologies could adequately soften the economic blow of strict reductions of pollution. Clinton also said he was convinced that the science of climate change is real, as scientists at the conference said broad patterns of high temperatures over the last several years were consistent with computer predictions of global warming.

Many speakers supported the idea that the US and other countries must fight global warming, but economists differed on how swift and drastic action should be. The panel of economists offered widely differing views on how best to fight global warming. One recommended a carbon tax to cut emissions, as long as it came with offsetting tax cuts and market incentives such as emissions trading credits and credits for energy-saving projects in developing countries, while another said boosting energy prices could produce a recession like that in the oil-shocked 1970s. Another said Clinton's decision should be based on taking enough time for an "economic transition" that helps workers through changes. For more information contact: the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; tel: +1 (202) 395-7347.

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS: The Union of Concerned Scientists met on 30 September 1997 in Washington, DC. Nearly 1,500 scientists from 60 countries urged immediate action to curb man-made climate changes. The scientists, including 98 Nobel laureates, urged world leaders to adopt a strong treaty to fight emissions of carbon from burning fossil fuels that are changing the climate. Without swift action, they said the world faces a future of rising sea levels, more intense storms and droughts, food shortages, spreading diseases and vanishing wildlife. The Declaration issued by the scientists states that the world's political leaders can demonstrate a new commitment to the protection of the environment, and they should augment the Convention's voluntary measures with legally binding commitments to reduce industrial nations' emissions of heat-trapping gases significantly below 1990 levels in accordance with a near-term timetable. The Declaration also specifies that over time, developing nations must also be engaged in limiting their emissions. Developed and developing nations must cooperate to mitigate climatic disruption. The scientists encouraged other scientists and citizens around the world to hold their leaders accountable for addressing the global warming threat.

The Declaration also outlines linkages and further damage. It notes, *inter alia*, that destructive logging and deforestation for agriculture continue to wreak havoc on the world's remaining tropical forests. Fossil-fueled energy use is climbing, both in industrial nations and in the developing world, adding to atmospheric carbon. Efforts to enhance energy conservation and improve efficiency are much hindered by low energy costs and by perverse incentives that encourage waste. The Declaration also notes that the insurance industry has recognized the risks posed by climate change. The Declaration discusses water scarcity and food security, noting that humanity now uses over one-half of the total accessible freshwater runoff. Freshwater is the scarcest resource in the Middle East and in North Africa. Efforts to husband freshwater are not succeeding there, in East Asia, or in the Pacific.

Global food production now appears to be outpaced by growth in consumption and population. There is broad agreement that food demand will double by 2030. Climate change is likely to exacerbate these food problems by adversely affecting water supplies, soil conditions, temperature tolerances, and growing seasons. According to the Declaration, climate change will accelerate the appalling pace at which species are now being liquidated, especially in vulnerable ecosystems. For more information contact the Union of Concerned Scientists; e-mail: ucs@ucsdusa.org.

CLEAN ENERGY SYMPOSIUM FOR ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION: This symposium, held from 22 - 26 September in Szentendre, Hungary and organized by the Renewable Energy and

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Efficiency Training Institute (REETI), brought together over 125 corporate, financial, governmental and non-governmental officials to discuss energy efficiency and renewable energy project development opportunities for the Central and Southeast European countries currently undergoing economic transformation. The programme was developed in collaboration with the US Country Studies Program (CSP) and the Regional Southeast European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) to support their clean energy programs. Participants noted that the meeting assisted these countries in transforming their policy initiatives into market realities by supporting the development of investments in emerging clean energy market segments and facilitating several projects. The Symposium was sponsored by, *inter alia*, the Hungarian Ministry of Industry and Trade, the CSP, the World Bank Group and the Government of the Netherlands. For more information contact the REETI; tel: +1 (202) 496-1417; +1 (202) 496-1494; e-mail: rhsellers@aol.com.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CARBON DIOXIDE

CONFERENCE: This conference was held in Cairns, Australia from 8 - 12 September 1997. Over 200 delegates from 25 countries discussed the latest in research on the global carbon cycle. The program was organized around half-hour presentations of the most topical results with other papers presented in a series of poster sessions both during the day and into the evenings. The conference was organized into sessions that covered papers under the general topics of oceans, atmosphere and the terrestrial biosphere. The oceans sessions covered topics as diverse as iron fertilization experiments, the rate of CO₂ uptake by the oceans, and modeling the oceanic carbon cycle. The atmosphere sessions covered a range of attempts to model atmospheric CO₂ variations on a variety of temporal scales and topics such as the oxygen content of the atmosphere and the isotopic composition of atmospheric CO₂. Papers on the terrestrial biosphere also focused heavily on attempts to model the terrestrial carbon cycle, and presented the latest results on the likelihood of a CO₂ fertilization effect, and on the magnitude of current land-use changes.

Much discussion in many sessions focused on the 'missing CO₂ sink', and while there appears to be general agreement that the sink lies in the terrestrial biosphere, it became apparent that there is a long way to go before there is agreement on exactly where the sink is located. One camp still favors the high latitude forests as the sink, based on inverse modeling of the global distribution of isotopic anomalies in the atmospheric CO₂. An emerging alternative is that the sink is actually located in the tropical forests, with evidence in support of this hypothesis coming from eddy covariance experiments in the Amazon Basin, and global physiological models of carbon uptake by the terrestrial biota. Further background to the meeting and its organization can be found in summary form at http://www.dar.csiro.au/pub/events/co2_conf/index.html

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CARBON DIOXIDE UTILIZATION (ICCDU-IV): This conference was held from 7 - 11 September in Kyoto, Japan and was attended by 280 participants from 21 countries. Participants heard lectures from 13 invited speakers and 123 general papers were presented. The catalytic conversion of CO₂ in flue gases and biochemical conversion of CO₂ in the atmosphere were two major topics, comprising nearly 70% of all presentations. Other topics included photochemical, electrochemical, and organometallic fixa-

tion of CO₂. Participants also heard presentations concerning general subjects on CO₂ utilization, such as Japan's basic strategy concerning counter-measures to mitigate climate change and the International Energy Agency's actions on climate change. The proceedings will be published from Elsevier Science Publishers in February 1998. For more information contact Professor Tomoyuki Inui, Kyoto University; tel: +81 75 753 5682; fax; +81 75 771 7285; e-mail: inui@scl.kyo-to-u.ac.jp.

SPREP MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE: The Third South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Meeting on Climate Change and Sea Level Rise was held in Noumea, New Caledonia from 18-22 August 1997. The Chairs for the meeting were the Government Representatives and Administrators of American Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu. The Chair's "Summary of Findings and Future Needs" states, *inter alia*, that a review of scientific information and understanding in the Pacific regarding climate change and sea level rise draws on information from a range of sources. They show that temperatures have been increasing by 0.10C per decade in the region and sea levels by 2mm/yr. There is also evidence that climate phenomena such as El Niño and Southern Oscillation (ENSO) will have major influences in the impact of CC&SLR. It is also recognized that the Pacific region plays an important role in understanding global climate change.

Vulnerability assessments have shown Pacific Island countries to be highly vulnerable to CC&SLR with a low capacity to respond. This response capability needs to be strengthened through regional and international cooperation and education, training and awareness raising. The Summary also discussed the impact on human health and states that regional, national and international communities should focus on adapting to present natural variability and prepare for extreme events. Participants also noted that the IPCC assessment of the social and economic dimensions of climate change has little reference to Pacific Island countries. They noted that the IPCC report uses models that are mainly for developed economies and that all islands are treated as if they are the same. Most Pacific Island governments are aware of climate change, but they wish to know what they have to do to address the problem. The cultural dimension involves the environmental influence on both people and culture. The response options for the region include migration, resettlement and decentralisation. All these need planning as they have policy implications. Thus, the future direction will have to be researched so that some response strategies will be planned and recommended for the future adaptations. For more information contact: South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), P.O. Box 240, APIA, Western Samoa; tel: (685) 21 929; fax: (685) 20 231, e-mail: sprep@pactok.peg.apc.org.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

SBI: SBI will meet at 10:00 am and consider national communications

SBSTA: SBSTA will meet at 3:00 pm and consider non-Annex I communications, activities implemented jointly and technology transfer.