

eco



Eco has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at major international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. This issue is produced co-operatively by CAN groups attending the climate negotiations in Bonn, June 2009.

Cooking The Climate Books

While it's great to have the US back in the kitchen, its negotiators apparently need to brush up on their cooking technique – and basic climate policy. The US has begun to argue that financing in the form of private purchases of international offsets should be considered as part of the international financing menu provided by the US to undernourished developing countries.

But the chief cook and bottle washer for the US wants to count those offsets towards meeting the US domestic mitigation target.

In our kitchen that's called cooking the books.

And, ECO would like to go on record that this type of double-counting is not acceptable.

When the number of offsets in proposed US climate soufflé rose to gargantuan heights earlier this year, one of the main ingredients used was offsets, used to make US action on climate change cheaper (i.e. for 'cost containment').

Little did we know that the US was planning to serve these offsets on developing countries' climate action plate.

Developing countries need money to

implement emissions reductions that are additional to those done in developed countries – not instead of those done in developed countries. And to be clear, none of the international offsets would provide any value towards the adaptation needs in developing countries. If and when (and we hope this is a when), there is a banquet in which the US target is much higher than needed, offsets could count towards a financial obligations dessert without compromising environmental integrity.

Sadly, thus far the US Congress has only weakened the target, making offsets that count towards finance indigestible.

Of course, it occurs to us that maybe we're wrong about the US doing this kind of cooking. Maybe the US delegation realized that if its offsets are treated as finance, they really shouldn't be counted towards meeting the domestic mitigation target at all. That would reduce the US mitigation ambition at home rather dramatically, to something like 15% or so above 1990 levels. Without mentioning that new target to anyone.

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How old will you be in 2050?

Some of the delegates here may recall a fabulous T-shirt campaign that was run by the international youth delegation at Bonn 1 – 'How Old Will You Be in 2050?'

The campaign had the intention of reminding us all that the negotiations that we engage in here are fundamentally about rising above our self-focused, nationally-focused and short-term-focused interests, and instead beginning to think in the longer term, and act for the interests of today's youth – our children – and all future generations.

Considering that the 400 T-shirts that the youth provided at Bonn 1 sold out in remarkably short order, and that many delegates missed out, you will be excited to learn that 1000 new T-shirts are arriving at the conference centre today. What's more, at request of the Executive Secretary and the LCA chair, they are now available up to 'XXL' sizes. And at the request of the many delegates with children, we also have a limited number of children's sizes available.

The T-shirts are made of organic cotton and are made with 100% renewable energy – at a 90% lower carbon footprint than the average T-shirt – proof that the youth delegation is into 'being the change that they wish to see in the world'.

You can receive a T-shirt by making a donation of €10 or more at the youth stall near the main plenary. The funds raised will first go towards covering costs of T-shirt production – as it would set a bad precedent at these negotiations to leave future generations in debt – and then further funds raised will go towards a 'youth equity fund', to enable developing-country youth to attend COP-15 in Copenhagen as part of the youth delegation.

Parties would do well to learn from their example, when considering repayment of their historical ecological debt and future commitments to the adaptation fund!



US climate negotiators at work

Rejoice, the Translated Texts Are In!

ECO wishes to join the chorus in praising the Secretariat for translating the key AWG/LCA negotiation text [three days after the beginning of the negotiations]. Delegates from the Congo Basin, Latin America, the Middle-East and elsewhere are looking forward to consulting stakeholders at home, including their own governments. One night to analyze the text and offer comments should be sufficient.

While ECO fully recognizes the tremendous effort made by the Secretariat in putting together the negotiation text, the failure to commit the necessary resources slows down these negotiations just when every day mat-

ters. ECO wishes to join Cape Verde, Cameroun, the Czech Republic, Nicaragua and others, who so expressed their strong dissatisfaction.

As the delegate of Cameroun put it: "*On ne peut pas continuer comme ça*" [for translation consult the Secretariat]. We agree. These negotiations are crucial for all parties, especially for those most impacted by climate change who, it so happens, use a diversity of languages other than English, yet have the fewest resources to contend with negotiations conducted in an alien language. On the Road to Copenhagen, the Secretariat should plan for participation by all.

Zero Sense

The current LULUCF negotiations caused ECO to reflect on a question asked by some Parties with all seriousness: should a country be excused from accounting LULUCF debits from its national forest as long as it remains a sink? Isn't it wrong to penalize a country as long as its forest is still removing CO₂ from the atmosphere, and therefore helping to mitigate climate change? Should we only assign LULUCF debits from forest management after the value of the forests sink becomes zero and it becomes a net source of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere? The answer to these questions must be NO.

The issue is not whether a national forest is removing CO₂ from the atmosphere, but how much. Forests currently represent a large global sink, helping reduce the impact of other emissions. A decline in the size of that sink would be of great concern.

ECO did an analysis¹: what would be the effect if all Annex 1 Parties were allowed to reduce their forest sink to zero without accruing any LULUCF debits? The result speaks for itself: 2.4 billion tons of CO_{2e}² in lost sequestration without even a blip in any Party's account; 2.4 billion tons of CO_{2e} that represent a net emission if not compensated by greater emission reductions elsewhere; 2.4 billion tons of CO_{2e} in lost sequestration that would be hidden behind a newly proposed LULUCF accounting rule called "the band from zero to the bar."

¹Using convention reporting data for all Annex 1 Parties from 1990 – 2006. 1990 was used as the default bar and 2002-2006 was used as a hypothetical commitment period.

²This corresponds to roughly 4% of total emission allowances for the first commitment period



Endangered species have now decided to take lobbying into their own hands

Hot Air Nightmare

Yesterday, an ECO contributor woke up sweating in the middle of the night and decided to write this article. And no, it wasn't hot air of his hotel room: it was hot air of a different kind.

Did you know that Annex I countries could set themselves an aggregate target that seems to be tougher by four full percentage points than the one they actually need to achieve? This is because under the Kyoto Protocol, even post-2012 they will still be allowed to use left-over "hot air" emission allowances (AAUs) from Russia and Eastern Europe to pad out their commitments.

Most negotiators (except Russia and Belarus) seem to have remained silent on this issue. Is this because the US would like a target that would be a lot easier to achieve thanks to a nice post-Cold War? And is the EU's 'package' actually 16% rather than 20%?

ECO understands the potential hot air surplus is around 7.4 billion AAUs over the period 2008-2012. This isn't one of New Zealand's proverbial gaseous cows in the room, it's a gaseous elephant - or possibly even a whale.

If a Copenhagen Treaty agrees on aggregate Annex 1 reductions at the lower limit of the much-discussed range of 25% to 40%, and if this loophole is allowed to remain, real reductions would be even lower, perhaps 21% or less. There goes the Greenland iceshelf. OK, back to sleep now, maybe it was just a bad dream.

—Cooking the Books, from front page

But we doubt that's their thinking: it seems more likely they're trying to have their cake and eat it too.

But you can't do that. It's definitely not okay to say "Let them eat cake!" to the most vulnerable people in the world.

LUDWIG

Ludwig didn't have much to do yesterday, but he did wander into the AWG-KP meeting on targets, where the subject was intended to be the scale of emission reductions. Curiously, a number of Parties, most notably Japan, Australia and Canada insisted that discussion not take place on the scale of emission reductions, but preferred to talk about something far more interesting – rules...

Ludwig suggests we expand on this – in future meetings on the KP or LCA text, the one subject that must not be discussed would be... text.