

eco

JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT PREPCOMM 4 * BALI, INDONESIA * NGO NEWSLETTER

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Wake-Up Call
Issue

G77 — WAKE UP!

The negotiators still don't get it. This process is steaming towards the rocks and they are out on deck sunbathing. Let's be clear, that when the ship goes down you will be held responsible. The impasse within G77 is becoming increasingly clear as progressive national positions become submerged in the unity of the bloc.

Perhaps the most depressing development was Iran acting 'on behalf' of G77 advocating the deletion of the global renewables target in the energy contact group. Is this the developing world or OPEC?

Where are the Latin Americans who told us in the corridors that they wanted a target consistent with their Sao Paulo Declaration? Where is Indonesia, whose Environment Minister publicly criticized progress so far and promised that his negotiators would strengthen their efforts? Only one Indonesian delegate even turned up, and yet stayed silent.

People of Latin America, Africa, Asia, need access to energy services and renewables which can form a major part of the solution. That could not happen if they are operating in political and regulatory environments totally biased towards propping up fossil fuels. They also have the right to require industrialized countries to stop using fossil fuels. Again, renewables are a big part of the answer.

A global renewables target makes sense for both North and South. Their governments know it even Latin American Environment Ministers recently adopted a 10% regional target. So why are their delegations so silent? Why are they allowing OPEC to dictate their positions on energy (and line its pockets with fossil profits in the process)?

We call on like-minded Southern governments to rise to the occasion. Take leadership and listen to the voices of the people inside and outside these halls. Come out of the box you are in right now and help save this process.

Waves of Schizophrenia

The Oceans chapter of the Chairman's text is now locked in trench warfare mode, as the opposing forces slug it out in a contact group.

Hard on the heels of the International Whaling Commission meeting last week, Iceland and Norway have brought the whaling dispute to WSSD and are supported by the uncharacteristically quiet Japan. Maybe the Japanese have read the article in yesterday's Herald Tribune which reported more than 60% of the Japanese population as not eating whale meat. These countries are insisting on the inclusion of the phrase 'sustainable use of living marine resources', a widely recognised euphemism (or code) for 'whaling'. Iceland has raised the stakes, threatening to block consensus on the entire oceans chapter if this issue is not resolved to their satisfaction. For Iceland, who profess to put great emphasis on ocean protection, this is clearly an *unsustainable* position and illustrates a form of national schizophrenia (confusion) of Iceland over this issue where the tourism benefits of whales now vastly outweigh the cultural interest in their lethal consumption.

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Positive Energy Action Slashed Out of Text

Late night targets and tactics produced quite a show in the energy contact group. In the midst of the discussion on renewable energy targets, the European Union introduced a revision to the current negotiating text, and a quite helpful one at that.

The revision calls for the increase of the share of renewables to 15% by 2010. A number of countries welcomed the revision into the text (a 5% target is already present). The Chair, at first, stated it could easily be integrated into the text going to working group tomorrow. However, this was met by strong interventions from Australia, the United States and Saudi Arabia. They argued that a new proposal that had not been discussed, on procedural grounds, was "unacceptable" and therefore, should not be entertained. The Chair then decided NOT

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Championing Corporate Accountability

The G77, Hungary and Norway have secured a great deal of support from NGOs for speaking up on a corporate accountability framework. Hungary, for example, stating that existing text is 'a minimum'.

However, Japan and the US – seemingly doing all multinationals could ask of them – have striven to delete even existing weak text. The US saying that they do not want to discuss a new framework.

We are also disappointed to see that the EU seem still to limit their 'commitments' on corporate accountability to voluntary national level initiatives. Is this misunderstanding or a deliberate ignoring of civil society arguments.

As a response, G77 stated that voluntary initiatives are nowhere near enough. And that it cannot be a problem to discuss a new framework – when we don't have any framework at all.

We call on the G77, Hungary and Norway to stand firm on this matter, and urge other countries to support them.

Voluntary Initiatives Fail to Deliver

Less than two weeks ago, UNEP published an assessment of industry's contribution to sustainable development. It stated: "only a small number of companies are actively striving for sustainability... majority of companies are still doing business as usual."

This is a powerful statement showing voluntary initiatives have failed to deliver sustainable development. Yet many governments seem determined to promote voluntary initiatives as the way of ensuring corporations becoming responsible, accountable and liable of their impacts on communities.

The crucial failings of voluntary initiatives surround the lack of enforcement and empowerment. There are no serious penalties for failing to abide by the Global Compact. There are no mechanisms in industry codes of conduct empowering citizens to challenge the big businesses affecting their wellbeing. Still, there are less rules to establish rights for citizens to protect their resources, say 'no' to corporations damaging their communities, and hold them to account legally.

In practice, corporations ignore voluntary initiatives at will (they are, after all, voluntary). For example, when asked by UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to report on their social and environmental impact, only a small proportion of the UK's largest corporations complied. Voluntary mechanisms, in short, are no alternative to robust binding accountability, which empowers citizens and enforces action.

Sail Against the Tide: Do-Your-Banner Workshop On Board Greenpeace Ship

NGOs and other concerned public interest groups attending Prepcom are all on the same boat.

A boat called *Common Sense*, which is sailing against a current called "el Gringo" that originated in the United States, and against two converging hurricanes from Canada and Australia.

The Indonesian Meteorological Institute also issued a warning, regarding a possible imminent typhoon brought from Japan by Northerly winds.

European seas are so calm that all European vessels have gone on automatic pilot. Captains are reportedly all sleeping in their cabins. And thirteen European flagships are reportedly drifting or lost at sea, with great danger of running on a reef. There is apparently still someone on the bridge of two European vessels only, but these are running out of distress flares!

Meanwhile, a fleet of 77 vessels that were expected to arrive in Bali this week has been stranded in Monterrey.

The Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise*, which is in Bali for the duration of the Prepcom, will nevertheless continue its mission, amid this choppy political environment, acting as a platform for all NGOs and concerned public interest organisations.

NGOs and activists wishing to see their own banner or flag flying on board the Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise* are thus invited to come to the boat this Friday, May the 31st at Benoa Harbour (twenty minutes from the BICC by taxi) to bring or make them. Come and be creative—Activists, artists, everyone is welcome!

Greenpeace campaigned for many years against the dumping of wastes at sea (a practice that was banned in 1993, one year after Rio, by amendments to the London Convention—you see, governments do listen when we are persistent!). So, banners saying "*Dump the Chairman's Text*" wont be suitable. But we welcome alternative wordings...to the same effect!

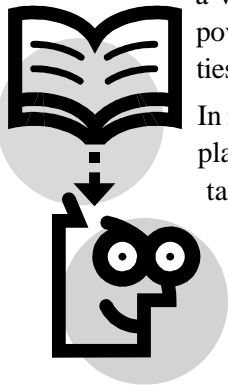
Some banner-making materials will be available on the deck of the Greenpeace ship but you are encouraged to bring your own materials.



Put Education in Front, Please

It is worrying that UN General Secretary Kofi Annan and Chairman Salim have neglected the importance of education as one of the most important issues at the WSSD agenda. Education must be a vital element of a comprehensive action plan in Johannesburg. It is an issue where decision-makers could potentially reach agreement in order to meet the international development goals for education - Education for All, before 2015.

Quality education is key to ensuring a common sustainable future for all. Education enhances public health, combats HIV/Aids, strengthens gender equity and reduces child mortality. Education is key to achieving economic growth, institutional capacity building and a higher degree of income distribution. It is the foundation of poor peoples' struggle for empowerment, democracy and influence over social and political processes. In other words, education plays



a vital role in breaking the cycle of poverty and increasing the opportunities of the poor in a 'globalized' world.

In industrialized countries, education plays a key role in ensuring more sustainable consumption patterns that promotes sustainable development.

This comprises the integration of sustainable development dimensions in formal education at all levels (from primary schools to universities) and in non-formal education.

This way, education works as an "agent for change" in both rich and poor countries.

We support the proposal for a 'Decade of Education for Sustainable Development' which was put forward by several governments. This proposal, however, needs to be backed up by binding commitments and clear timeframes in order to result in real action.

It is impossible to reach sustainable development as long as one in six people of the world is illiterate. The sustainability issue challenges the conventional notion of education as a purely economic and technical matter. The direct link between education and a sustainable development must be central in Johannesburg.

Put education in front, please!

*-Waves of Schizophrenia
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In a similar vein, the Japanese delegation is vehemently opposing references to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean – the new agreement fully supported by the range states in the Pacific, who happen to have 90% of the catch coming from their waters.

Our oceans are a vital part of global biodiversity and food security, but face threats on many fronts – climate change, over-exploitation and land-based sources of pollution are just a few. The biodiversity of the high seas currently has little protection, despite the fact that we know so little about it and new species are being discovered every week in some waters. 70% of global fish stocks are fully or over-exploited.

WSSD is a perfect opportunity for the world's governments to make a clear statement and introduce meaningful initiatives to protect the oceans and ensure humanity can continue to seek food from them. The intransigence and obstinence of a few must not undermine this opportunity.

*-Positive Energy Action
from page 1*

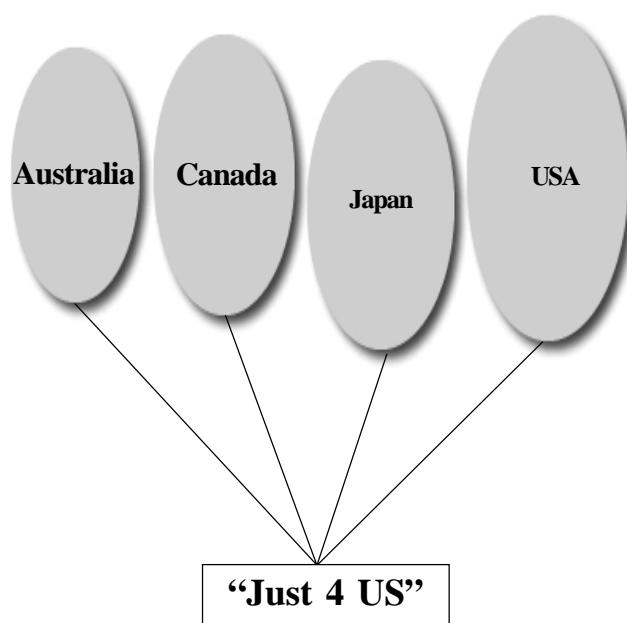
to include the revision. So it's, time for the countries in the G77 who support targets to stand up. Unfortunately, the extremely silent majority lives on – no words out of Brazil or Indonesia. ECO is beginning to wonder what this Latin American action programme is all about if Brazil cannot even rise to the occasion in the midst of an open debate to defend the only target in the whole regional programme.

So, now on to the floor debate. Bring that 15% back in EU and hopefully, some day, those governments that support you silently will do so vocally and the chair will rule fairly and not on incorrect procedural grounds. Otherwise, the farce of these negotiations will continue and the poor will suffer further as the text includes further increases in the share of fossil fuels and buries all hope for a cleaner, safer and more sustainable future.

Bali Hai

Bali Hai had a wild night last night! After a long and tiring day of negotiations, Bali Hai attended a rollicking limbo contest with a bunch of PrepCom 4 delegates. The common refrain was heard throughout the night: “**how low, how low, how low can you go....**” Bali Hai can still hear the crowd cheering for a few exceptionally flexible delegates, who shimmied so low, that they were almost parallel to the floor! The US delegate in particular – after indicating that he didn’t understand the meaning of “fair trade” but what he did understand, he didn’t like – contorted his body into a pretzel and won the limbo contest.

A hearty congratulations to the flexible (if nothing else) US delegate!!!



What Course Left?

We face what should be the second week of this PrepCom, but seriously did the process ever stop after PrepCom 3? No one seems to be willing to champion legitimate sustainable development and environmental protection.

No-one knows exactly how much taxpayers’ money has been spent on this PrepCom but even the most naïve and optimistic must be starting to question the cost of return. When do you draw the line?

The Indonesian Minister’s courageous statements reported by the *Jakarta Post* Wednesday, reflected the need to improve the Chairman’s text. This may have been well motivated by his concern that it will be hard for him, when the conference closes next Friday, to explain why so much hope was lost.

For ten years, governments have asked us to be patient with the implementation of the Rio agreement. Then, they promised us, with the UNGA resolution of 20 December 2000, that the WSSD would accelerate implementation. But, the Chairman’s text contains virtually no targets, and certainly no new time-bound commitments.

We at ECO do not like protests for the sake of protesting. Our organisations have been participating in good faith.

But it is becoming increasingly difficult for us not to protest.

Here in Bali, and in Johannesburg.

It’s Time!

Eco-Equity is a publication of Consumers International, the Danish 92 Group, Friends of the Earth International, Fundacion Natura, Greenpeace International, Indonesian People’s Forum, Northern Alliance for Sustainability, Oxfam International, Pelangi, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

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