

eco



JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT PREPCOMM 4 * BALI, INDONESIA * NGO NEWSLETTER

BRAVE NEW WORLD - POST JOHANNESBURG

The opening of the ministerial segment is a good moment to step back and have a look at this process with a bit of distance. Ten years ago at Rio, there was almost an air of discovery, an aura of innocence; environment and development issues growing in their own specialised little boxes, emerged rather suddenly into the mainstream of public and political debate. Governments struggled to come up with a strong response, and the result of Rio, while insufficient, showed promise and hope for the future.

Ten years later, where are we? Most environmental indicators are worse than they were ten years ago; most development indicators are worse than they were ten years ago...and an increasingly globalised economy has increased the gap between rich and poor, both internationally, and within countries.

Taken together, these three phenomena paint a picture of a world in serious trouble. The signs were more ambiguous ten years ago, but now they're painted clearly for all to see. Literally billions of poor people living in degraded environments with very little prospect for improvement, struggling for their daily survival (and all too often failing); the inexorable increase of climate change impacts; massive biodiversity losses on land and at sea; permeation of the biosphere with chemical pollution; and increasing social unrest as a combination of political instability and environmental degradation renders more and more parts of our planet uninhabitable.

And what are governments doing about it here in Bali? Well, they're divided, of course, but the main message from the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan and the G-77 as represented by the OPEC bloc is that they're not going to play ball in this multilateral game, and they're going to look out for their own interests first. If there's

any left over, they might throw a few crumbs in Africa's direction. But don't count on it.

To be clear, they can't claim ignorance about the extent and nature of global problems, and their primary culpability. They know. And they're not going to help, except on their terms, and to their benefit.

"The American way of life is not up for negotiation". So said George H.W. Bush at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. In the last 10 years, these chilling words have informed the policy of the US and its allies in international negotiation after negotiation, where anything that would impact on the fundamentally unsustainable American lifestyle was 'off the table'. One is reminded of one of the scenarios in UNEP's Global Outlook, published earlier this year; the Security First scenario, "*a world of striking disparities where inequality and conflict prevail. Socio-economic and environmental stresses give rise to waves of protest and counteraction...the more powerful and wealthy groups focus on self-protection, creating enclaves akin to the present day 'gated communities'...and exclude the disadvantaged mass of outsiders...*"

So, we say to ministers: You liked Bhopal? Rwanda? Narco-terrorism? Chernobyl? Love Canal? Seattle and Genoa and Enron? Keep it up, because that's where you're taking us, and this is only the beginning. You have a choice here in Bali, and a bigger choice in Johannesburg. We hope and expect that you will stand up to the rich and the few to move us in the direction of a sustainable world for all. But if you choose to be complicit in building ever higher and wider dykes from which the rich can watch the rest of the world suffer and drown, most of your constituents will pay the price.

Your choice.

It's World Environment Day Today: A Challenge to World Ministers

Today is World Environment Day. But, in reality, there is very little for us to celebrate regarding the state of the environment. Our planet is in tatters at the moment; climate change is happening now, the remaining ancient forests are vanishing, our eco systems are collapsing, the clock is ticking and urgent action is needed now!

Over the past week, ministers from around the world have converged on Bali to attend the Earth Summit Prepcomm 4 in a bid to pave the way for the Earth Summit in Johannesburg. Again, very little progress has been made so far despite the fast approaching deadlines. However, there is still hope that the future of the environment can still be rescued and preserved.

ECO today challenges you, who are here on behalf of your people and countries, to make it a real World Environment Day. We will be tracking your commitments to our environment, making sure that you are doing the right thing for the survival of our planet.

The World is watching you. Do something right today!

Peaceful Protest Held – Make Corporations Accountable!

We congratulate the authorities involved for allowing some peaceful protest to continue at PrepCom IV. Yesterday, negotiators were greeted with images of corporate abuses from around the world and demonstrators holding banners. The images were to remind negotiators of the real world out there, where corporate accountability is a matter of justice and survival - not just a bracketed text! Corporate accountability is about community rights and ending crimes against people and the planet. Negotiators themselves must start "reclaiming the earth" for the people and stop

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Back to Seattle?

One concern in everybody's mind is *what if Joburg turns into another Seattle?* NGOs have worked constructively, and continue to do so, to avoid Joburg being another failure. But, have governments and the secretariat learnt the key lessons from Seattle? We are not talking about the riots, which all of us condemned. We are talking about backroom politics.

The WTO 99 ministerial conference collapsed essentially because of the lack of transparency of the WTO's so-called *green room* practice, whereby a few rich countries strike deals behind closed doors that affect the rest of the world. Deals imposed on developing countries in "*take it or leave it*" mode. In Seattle, the developing countries got fed up with the *green room* and left.

The WTO pledges to have put an end to the *green room* (though we saw in Doha that the changes were largely cosmetic). But Tuesday it looked as if the *green room* had been brought to Bali. A *green room* filled by a mix of developed, OPEC and developing countries making deals behind closed doors *a la Seattle*.

While Plenary continued to be postponed all day long, at 11:00am the secretariat distributed document A/CONF.199/PC/L.5, "*Revisions to A/CONF.199/PC/L.5*", described by the secretariat as "the result of further informal consultations" without any other explanation or accountability.

Take paragraph 12, for example, on unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. The "original" document of 2nd June (though it is increasingly difficult to depict what is original anywhere) contained a square bracketed time-frame (by 2004) to develop a 10-year work programme for improving resource efficiency. But in the new document the target date has disappeared.

Who is accountable for the "omission"? No-one really knows! And those who know cannot provide any evidence anyhow!

"*I have never felt so disenfranchised*", commented Mariam Mayet, a South African food safety activist. More than in Seattle? "*Well, I was only in the streets, in Seattle, and I wonder if this is not where I should return?*", said Mayet. Peacefully, of course.



*-Peaceful Protest...
from page 1*

letting "big business" rule the world – and the negotiations. Heads of State and Government should affirm the Bhopal Principles at Johannesburg. These are a set of principles designed to ensure that corporations protect human rights, food sovereignty and promote clean and sustainable development.

Yesterday's activities generated much interest. ECO was pleased to see our friends from the International Chamber of Commerce at the "corporate crimes" press conference. We noted they were particularly interested in the launch of the Greenwash Academy's Green Oscars, the premier awards for corporations "acting" green.

Meanwhile, we welcome the G77s continued attempts to keep the door open for future discussions and negotiations on corporate accountability. But we must insist that nothing less than a binding framework that ensures corporate accountability and liability will be sufficient to begin addressing the corporate atrocities that were on display yesterday.

Wednesday, 5 June 2002

The Kyoto Protocol Club: Canada and Russia - Join the EU and Japan!!

As negotiators dither in Bali over business-as-usual text, there is real action happening around the world. Real action, in fact, that includes commitments to binding targets and timetables as well as real means of implementation. In spite of many obstacles, countries are ratifying the Kyoto Protocol. In fact, just yesterday, Japan, host of the famous 1997 Kyoto Protocol meeting, deposited its instrument of ratification in New York. This follows a trip by a number of EU ministers last Friday to New York to deposit their instruments of ratification personally to the UN, and Norway's ratification last week. This means that the Kyoto Protocol is well on its way to enter into force this year. Many developing countries have already ratified as well.

In order for Kyoto to enter into force, countries whose emissions make up 55% of industrialized country emissions must ratify the Protocol. If you add up the EU, Japan, Russia and Canada or Poland you reach that mark. Will this happen by Johannesburg, as many countries have promised? Or will those countries that have not yet ratified be shamed while we continue to wait for entry into force? That depends on Russia and Canada of course. On April 11th the Russian Cabinet supported ratification – now onto the Duma. In September of last year, Prime Minister Chretien of Canada stated his goal of having Canada ratify this year. What better time for both countries to have ratified then when the G8 Heads of State make their way to Canada in late June? Wouldn't it be lovely if the world could celebrate Kyoto entry into force in Jo'burg instead of pointing the fingers at those who are holding back action? It would be a shame if the lack of Canadian and Russian ratification overshadowed the Summit. So come on you two – choose the lovely option and join the ever-growing Kyoto Club.

In the meantime, back here in Bali everyone needs to follow Norway's lead and strengthen the Kyoto paragraph in the text!!!

Can I Make You an Offer You Can't Refuse?

What to make of these type 2 partnership initiatives? Is a Heads of State Summit really needed just to announce or launch a series of these types of partnerships – be they innovative or not. Aren't they happening anyway?

There is a growing movement by some governments (I wonder who they might be?) to use partnerships to overtake the Summit outputs, while the government-negotiated commitments become increasingly watered down. Although partnerships can be useful delivery mechanisms, they are not – and cannot be – a substitute for strong government commitments and action plans on critical issues like clean water, clean energy, and biodiversity.

The US and certain other northern countries seem intent on using these voluntary initiatives to buy off developing country support for weak type 1 agreements. This is, of course, the big business agenda. Once again they are about to get another green light to open up markets, make profits, and give little in return. Deals are being brokered and alliances forged, leaving potentially progressive countries in the dust. But only a handful of countries will be the recipients of these deals, leaving other developing countries – many of which are amongst the least developed countries – with nothing.

The Summit outputs must result in an agreement strong on commitment and implementation - with the partnerships used to help achieve progress on the ground. Otherwise, the house of cards will come tumbling down, leaving Jo'burg to deal with a big pile of rubble.

New Paradigm or Wild Goose Chase: “The Millennium Challenge Account”

Earlier this week, ECO challenged negotiators with the call, “Take Your Brackets to Johannesburg,” highlighting the need to continue to seek meaningful commitments – through to Jo’burg if necessary — rather than hollow agreements for the sake of a deal. No deal better than a bad deal.

And yet, as Ministers arrive, countries are exhibiting a palpable and curious eagerness to cut a deal, to cave in to mediocrity, and to accept without protest the suggestion voiced by Canada in the Trade and Finance Contact Group: “We have no mandate to change what our negotiators said in Doha.” (Right, as if the mandate of the WSSD was to re-write history!).

As ever, the usual questions arise: Why are we here? Do any of the negotiators remember the mandate WSSD was given by the UN? But a more significant question troubles ECO today: Is the drive to cut a deal the natural result of conference fatigue and the desire of delegations to find closure before Life After Bali? Or does it result from a deliberate (and apparently successful?) strategy to proceed post-Jo’burg with business as usual?

Bush’s “Millennium Challenge Account” has given ECO pause to reflect on this. The U.S. Government Briefing for Civil Society and Business Groups on the same topic yesterday (1:30 – 2:30 PM, Nusa Dua Beach Hotel, “Players” Room) may be the occasion for other interested parties to do the same. What’s it all about?

Bali PrepCom participants may recall the shocking news two months back that the U.S. had announced an increase in aid. They may or may not recall that the “Monterrey Consensus” also was handily sewn-up at the last PrepCom before the UN Conference on Finance for Development, largely because of U.S. promises of a forthcoming increase in aid. The Millennium Challenge Account – hailed by the Bush administration as the third greatest development assistance initiative after Truman’s Marshall Plan and Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress (anyone notice the U.S. quoting F.D.R. earlier this week?) – was delivery on the promise.

The Account promises up to \$10 billion in additional development assistance by 2006 and then \$5 billion annually thereafter, targeted mostly at a select group of “performing” countries. Performance will be assessed in relation to developing country progress towards good governance (do we need to explain?), investment in people (schools and healthcare) and “economic freedom” (entrepreneurship, market liberalisation, etc. a la Cato Institute / Heritage Foundation – two organisations providing intellectual insight for the Administration’s plan).

The scheme is inspired by the Bush Administration’s visions of “growth and opportunity”. Two existing initiatives may provide some sense of how this might play out in practice. One, the USAID Global Development Alliance, centers on partnerships such as the U.S. Energy Assistance Partnership Program, accelerating the restructuring and commercialisation of state-owned utilities in developing countries, and the Chevron-led Western Africa Gas Pipeline. The other, the World Bank’s private sector development strategy, is designed to accelerate private and NGO provision of basic services including healthcare, education and water provision.

At least four aspects of this new initiative trouble ECO:

1. The MCA’s presumption that European-style budgetary support and old-school development assistance has failed.
2. Tied aid – at the core of Bush’s proposal – is a discredited system already abandoned by the European Union. It also runs counter to developing country ownership of poverty reduction and environmental goals and strategies.

3. Emphasis on services. Trouble with water and sanitation? How about a U.S. funded partnership? Access to energy services for the poor? How about Enron?
4. The centrality of “favourable business and investment climate” in target countries to the success of the plan (guess who will be pushing for investment discussions under the Doha Development Agenda next).

The Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus are core reference materials for negotiators in the Contact Group on Trade and Finance, where the U.S. leads the charge in asserting that WSSD cannot prejudice or duplicate these parallel processes. The fact is, the US is already ‘prejudging’ the outcome of Johannesburg in line with its agenda at Doha and Monterrey. Will you let the US make this agenda the global agenda for ‘sustainable’ development?

Reference: Nancy Alexander, “The U.S. Millennium Challenge Account: New Paradigm for Development Assistance,” forthcoming in “News & Notices for IMF and World Bank Watchers” (Summer 2002).

Calling Asia and Africa – Time to Support Renewables!!!

The lines are drawn in the G77 & China and the future of sustainable development is indeed at risk. The stakes are high – will other G77 countries let Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar determine their path to energy development or will they choose for themselves, and state that choice? Yesterday’s energy discussion in the G77 was THE opportunity for all countries to clarify whether they really want clean and affordable energy. It was THE chance to bring those national renewable targets into the discussion. What happened?

Brazil once again presented the Latin American and Caribbean 10% renewables target in the G77, demonstrating the region’s seriousness and leadership on this issue. This time they did receive support from a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries as well as Samoa. They did not, however, receive support from any of the numerous delegations who have been whispering in the hallways since last week that they really did support a renewables target.

Where was Indonesia who so proudly unveiled and announced a national renewables target this week? An announcement alone is not enough. We need you and your ASEAN neighbors to publicly support a target within the G77! Where are India and China who are already pioneering renewable energy on the ground? We need you as well to rally behind the GRULAC position.

How about other Asian or African nations? Numerous studies have documented that clean and affordable energy is a deliverable strategy for bringing energy services to the poor. Targets and timetables on renewables will send a clear signal to the markets that renewables are here to stay and will play a major role in energy markets in the future. This should obviously be coupled with finance, industrial capacity building and removing harmful subsidies.

The time is now – speak up for clean and affordable energy dear Ministers! For your people and for the planet.

Bali Hai

Quotes

"The WSSD must come out with concrete targets and deadlines," Margot Wallstrom, EU Environment Minister.

"Theatre." US delegation co-head Jonathan Margolis on talk of concrete targets and deadlines.

"There is a need for a peer mandate for a programme of action... a need for a global target of renewable energy," The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett, the UK's Secretary of State for environment and agriculture.

"Doha is the economic equivalent of Jenin! Doha and the WTO are going to reduce us to rubble, with our mother, our sister, our child inside our houses." Martin Khor of Third World Network.

Bush gets hotter - official

Dark clouds are appearing over George W. Bush's "Clear Skies" initiative – the President's ridiculous attempt to deny global warming and get out of tackling fossil fuels. Or, indeed, the momentum behind Kyoto, as the European Union, Japan and many others have ratified.

The clouds, strangely, are generated by Bush's own administration. The US last week sent its required climate report to the UN; it admits that "human actions" are responsible for global warming and says that substantial changes to the environment of the US are "very likely" as a result.

The changes Americans will very likely see include the disruption of water supply, more heat waves and the loss of Rocky Mountain meadows and coastal marshes. The report puts "substantial distance between the administration and the energy industry", says the New York Times. Car manufacturers with aggressive lobbying campaigns that question the validity of global warming science will be particularly embarrassed, says the Times.

But the "US Climate Action Report 2002" recommends... inaction. And this is the face-saver for Bush. It concludes that there's damn-all to be done about greenhouse-gas emissions, and that America should just get ready for the worst.

Pringles in Bali

Did you ever wonder just who were the "civil society organisations" who've come to Bali as part of the official US delegation? Questioned yesterday, co-head of delegation Jonathan Margolis boasted of a "number of NGOs". Turns out there is just one American NGO on the delegation, the World Young Women's Christian Association.

Other US delegation civil society reps? The quasi-governmental National Academy of Sciences and two businessmen

– one from Eastman Chemicals, the other from GMO-friendly multi-national Procter & Gamble. Dianne Dillon-Ridgley is the redoubtable WYWCA representative, a veteran of summits back to Rio '92. Her one-word verdict on the Bali process – "Painful".

Save the dandelions!

A timely special report on the business agenda for the Jo'burg summit appeared in yesterday's International Herald Tribune. In it Robert U Ayres, professor emeritus at INSEAD, Europe's most prestigious business school, shoots from the hip. He suggests there's no point trying to save low-lying islands threatened by global warming. Then he offers some scary new thinking on bio-diversity.

"Do we really need the dandelion?" he asks. "There is no clear need to preserve all the 10 to 20 million species that are known or expected to exist." Prof Ayres has also got his sights on the anopheles mosquito – a more popular candidate for extinction, perhaps.

But the dandelion! Please! Does the eminent Prof not realise that for millions of children lying around in summer meadows the dandelion's seed head is the cheap and renewable alternative to a clock...?



Suddenly, George W. realizes that he's "part of the problem".

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