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JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT PREPCOMM 4 * BALI, INDONESIA * NGO NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

THE CHAIRMAN'S COMMITMENT PROBLEMS

As ECO goes to print, delegates are still talking away in the secret room of the BICC. All this talking seems to be occurring under immense pressure from the Chairman and the host country Indonesia to finalize a deal here in Bali. We have heard much rhetoric about the "Bali Commitment" during our time in Bali, never quite sure what exactly this might be. One thing is clear, though, that if the Chairman and the host country continue to drive hard for a final deal here, they are very likely to cause a "Bali disaster." Ministers sense this and many know that if you force a commitment too soon, the result will be an unsuccessful marriage that dooms the family, or in this case, the planet, for a long time forth. A wiser and more appropriate course may be for Ministers to conclude the more straightforward pieces here, setting forth base from Bali to Johannesburg and send the challenge of the more political and difficult issues forward to Jo'burg. Mr. Chairman, we urge you to leave some key brackets in place for Jo'burg and stop pushing Ministers for a deal before their time. Sometimes the wisest and best way forward is the modest and sound way. We hope the Bali wisdom strikes you so that the Bali disaster is avoided.

Happy World Environment Day!

Australian Prime Minister John Howard used World Environment Day to tell the Parliament that his Government will not ratify the Kyoto Protocol. His sense of timing was only surpassed by the irony in his statement that "signing would facilitate exportation of dirty industries from Australia to developing countries", something that is not in the national interest. On World Environment Day, it's good to get clarity that having dirty, polluting industries is in the national interest. And we bet the aluminium and other heavy industries were delighted to hear themselves described as 'dirty'!

Environment Minister David Kemp, here in Bali for the Ministerial, has been busy running around telling anyone who will listen that Australia has not yet made up its mind on ratification. Reports have it that the colour rapidly drained from Kemp's face when questioned by the press who clearly heard about the Prime Minister's statement before the Minister did. A few of us here in the ECO office would love to be a fly on the wall when Kemp catches up with Howard back in Australia!

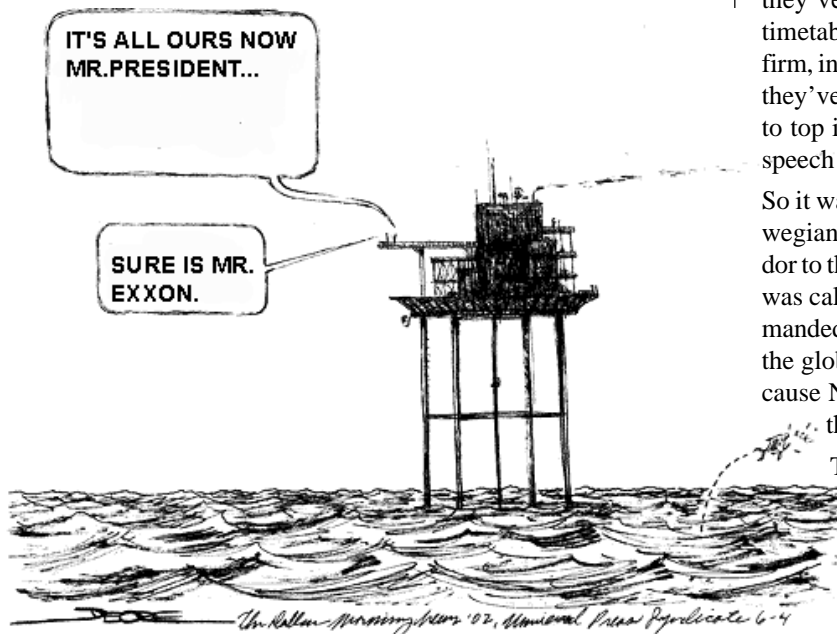
Schoolyard Bully Strikes Again

The Norwegian delegation, particularly the Norwegian Minister, have been quite a positive force during this PrepCom. They've insisted on moving forwards and not backwards from Agenda 21. They've insisted on including civil society in the process; they've been good on gender issues; strong on targets and timetables, insisting that 'partnerships' must wait until there are firm, intergovernmental Type 1 commitments. After a slow start, they've made a positive contribution to the energy debate. And to top it off, Minister Boerge Brende made a positive, stirring speech to plenary yesterday.

So it was with some concern that ECO learned what many Norwegians already know. On Monday, the Norwegian Ambassador to the US, Knut Vollebaek, himself a former foreign minister, was called in to the State Department in Washington, and reprimanded for not being 'more constructive' at PrepCom IV. Given the global news headlines of late, it must have been in part because Norway has been trying to insert stronger language into the Kyoto Protocol section of the Chairman's text.

The US should know that this is not the way to approach Norwegians. Nothing puts their back up more than schoolyard bully-boy tactics. The Minister's response to the US intimidation tactics was, "It is very rare that a

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Renewable Energy – No Dam Way!

Rumors at PrepCom IV are that a number of countries are redefining renewable energy to include large hydroelectric dams. This would be hypocrisy of the first order. Large hydropower is neither renewable nor sustainable. The WSSD must not endorse large hydro-power stations as a renewable technology.

Hydropower is not renewable because dams emit vast quantities of greenhouse gases in their construction and due to rotting of flooded vegetation. Dams are not forever. Their reservoirs become silted and old concrete collapses. Very few clapped out dams are economically viable for restoration once their 30 to 100 year lifespan expires.

Hydropower is not ecologically sustainable either. In addition to direct habitat loss, dams destroy native fish populations by blocking migration, cold-water pollution and eliminating small floods needed for breeding. These fish are a major source of food for the world's poor. Dams change the natural rise and fall in water levels downstream, destroying floodplain and estuary habitats, and traditional agricultural systems.

Dams also displace vast numbers of people. An estimated 30-60

Indonesian Civil Society Denied A Voice

Another attempt by Indonesian civil society groups to exercise their democratic right of free speech and assembly was again thwarted yesterday. About 400 people gathered in front of the Chandra Loka Amphitheatre, intending to stage a peaceful rally to the BICC. They wanted to highlight a range of issues from indigenous people's rights through to opposition to globalisation. The rally was well behaved and non-violent. Despite that, they had covered only 100 metres when they were again stopped by a combination of local militia and police. ECO condemns the denial of democratic rights and the use of unofficial militias to intimidate civil society.

Global Forum At Jo'burg: A Call For Support

In 79 days time, the world will descend upon Johannesburg. Parallel to the official event in affluent Sandton, civil society will have an additional opportunity to converge at the Global Forum 20 kms south of Jo'burg at NASREC.

A substantive civil society presence especially from the South and in particular from Africa is imperative. To date, however, governments in the North have been reticent to give their support to civil society preparations in South Africa via the WSSD Secretariat. Time is of the essence and a great deal of logistical and organizational tasks have to be performed.

We, therefore, call upon governments in the North especially, as well as international donors, to support the Secretariat and assist in ensuring the full participation of environmental and development NGOs from the South to be present at Jo'burg in full force. This will allow them to take their rightful place at the WSSD and in particular, at the Global Forum.

We all look forward to an open and warm welcome from our hosts, the South African government, and encourage their continued support to ensuring the success of the Global Forum.

Thursday, 6 June 2002

million people have already been displaced by large dams worldwide and an additional two millions are displaced every year.

Further, hydropower developments globally have been associated with massive corruption, exaggerated assessments of benefits, and cost and time over-runs. Dam promoters usually sell dams as proving a multitude of mutually exclusive benefits, such as irrigation water, power and flood control. Guess what? You can't generate power if the dam is half empty in order to catch the next flood. You also can't generate power if you have to store water for irrigation.

One government delegate was overheard saying, "It doesn't matter as there are few new dams being built". Time to check the figures folks! Globally there are around 45,000 big dams in operation around the world and a further 1,700 are planned. If dams are included, the integrity of the 'renewables' target will be totally undermined and its value as a driver of investment in new renewables greatly reduced.

Further, someone forgot to tell Africa's governments that big dam building is over. The much lauded New Partnership for Africa's Development energy objective is "to exploit and develop the hydropower potential of river basins of Africa". This is very concerning as river fisheries contribute to 21% of protein consumed by the African people. Any undermining of this resource will greatly compromise food security.

So what is the solution? Sound investment in small-scale energy production from solar, wind, woodlots and biogas, that can be maintained by local peoples, foster small businesses and helps both people and the planet.

Commitments without Action

At the Indonesian Peoples Forum, NGO coalitions from Costa Rica, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Thailand and the USA presented Alternative Country Reports (ACRs) under the title, "Commitments without Action." Each NGO coalition had prepared a detailed critique of their governments official report to the WSSD. Apart from Denmark, all other reports concluded that their governments had failed their people in advancing commitments made at Rio. The lack of political will for sustainable development, seen over the last decade, is being witnessed in Bali. The ACRs are designed to shame our respective governments into action.

NGOs that have prepared ACRs and are interested in presenting them in Johannesburg should email Friends of the Earth Middle East at: info@foeme.org under the subject ACR. At the Global Forum in Johannesburg, ACR reports will be presented every day.

*-Schoolyard Bully Strikes Again
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country is approached in such a manner". Typical Norwegian understatement.

Back in Norway, however, reactions were more vocal. Norwegian State radio held a poll where respondents were asked to respond by SMS 'text messaging', a popular form of communication in Norway. The question: "Is the United States the worst enemy of the environment?". The response was a resounding 'Yes'.

ECO encourages Norway to keep up the good fight.

The Great Extinction

“Clearly we are in the midst of one of the great extinction spasms of geological history” (E.O. Wilson)

E.O. Wilson in his widely read book *The Diversity of Life* was referring primarily to the extinction of terrestrial life associated with the destruction of tropical rainforests and island ecosystems. However, recent scientific assessments of trends in the marine environment suggest that the threat to marine biodiversity may be comparable to the mass extinction currently underway in terrestrial ecosystems.

In a paper published in *Science* in July of last year, Jackson et al reviewed paleoecological, archaeological and historical data on the exploitation and collapse of coastal ecosystems over the past 125,000 years. They concluded that the massive overharvesting of large marine animals including numerous species of fish, dugongs, sea cows, sea turtles, whales and other marine mammals has led to major structural and functional changes in coastal ecosystems. These often leading to the wholesale collapse of ecological communities and weakening systems' ability to withstand the deleterious effects of other human impacts such as nutrient runoff or global climate change. The authors conclude that the collapse of marine ecosystems may take decades or centuries to occur after the initial onslaught of overfishing, raising the specter that many more marine ecosystems may yet collapse as a result of the technological intensification and globalization of large scale industrial fishing within the past 50 years.

The scale of the loss of biodiversity is almost incomprehensible. Areas of high biodiversity such as ancient forests, coastal wetlands and coral reefs continue to be destroyed by clear cutting,

pollution, sedimentation, over fishing and climate change. In the oceans, industrial scale trawl fleets are now opening up a new assault in one of the last 'pristine' areas of the world high in biodiversity – the deep sea.

Most evolutionary biologists believe that the planet is currently living through a mass extinction event – only the sixth in the history of the Earth since the evolutionary explosion of life (the “Cambrian explosion”) approximately 550 million years ago. Unlike the previous five mass extinction events – the last of which, 65 million years ago, ended the age of the dinosaurs - this one is being driven by the unsustainable exploitation, consumption and destruction of the world's biodiversity by a single species – us, humankind.

Biodiversity is not a 'sectoral' issue. It is the foundation of the natural resource base upon which we, and all life, depend. All of the negotiation around cross cutting issues such as trade, poverty alleviation, finance and governance are crucial to halting the decline in biodiversity provided, of course, the negotiators get it right. Where biodiversity does appear in the draft plan of implementation, it is essential that negotiators reaffirm, at a minimum, the commitments made in the context of the CBD, including the target of 2010 for comprehensive action to halt the decline.

Future generations will judge us extraordinarily harshly unless we begin to turn the tide. If not, the WSSD may well be remembered as a milestone if only for the fact that the global leadership, more cognizant than ever of the threats facing the planet, firmly stuck its head in the sand (and went the way of the dodo) pretending that some sort of non-binding, non-collective commitment could save the planet.

EU, We Are Watching You

The EU has shown pitifully little resolve to deliver on the agenda it has promoted. Negotiators have been seen to insert progressive text, only to subsequently remove it, apparently without having encountered any significant opposition. We see them acquiesce meekly as other negotiating blocks demand the deletion of key text in one paragraph, on the grounds that it is reiterated in another – only to discover that, even where this duplication does indeed occur, the alternative version is far weaker. And we see them capitulate on paragraphs that they have identified as being of key importance, as subtle insertions by the opposition neuter them.

When challenged, they frequently attribute this – remarkably – to simple mistakes. Even given the gravity of the issues they are negotiating, we can forgive them the odd mistake. It is surprising that they admit them so easily, that they seem to do so little to try to correct them. But everybody makes mistakes, right? Perhaps. Or perhaps not. The frequency with which these mistakes have been made should give pause for concern.

Abject incompetence, or spin? Could it be that the EU bullishly broadcasts their ambitious negotiating position, knowing that they can retreat to a compromise close to the one taken by their New World colleagues, scot-free? A compromise which, at the end of the day, the EU finds rather more palatable than the position they publicly espouse? Cynical spin that comes from knowing that they themselves will never be the lowest common denominator? We believe this is the case. We are building a dossier of such 'mistakes'. And it's getting longer.

We want your help. Send us chapter and verse of the ones you have documented. Those brackets that were subtly withdrawn even though nobody was really objecting at that stage; the progressive negotiating agenda that is frittered away without so

much as a thrown punch, let alone an all-out fight (ecoedinbali@yahoo.com).

EU, we have watched you in action. And we are unimpressed. Do not imagine that our preoccupation with the impoverished agenda of your US colleagues blinds us to your own spineless horse-trading. Put your money where your mouths are, or be called to account to deliver on this agenda in the EU's own Sustainable Development Strategy.

Some examples to start you off:

The EU inserted a paragraph supportive of the ILO's World Commission, and then sat mutely as, the next day, the US argued that this paragraph was reiterated later in the text. They watched silently as it was deleted from the Chairman's suggested compromise text in the contact group on globalisation. But the paragraph cited as duplication relates to environment assessments. It has nothing to do with the ILO's World Commission. Nor, so far as we can see, did any other paragraph anywhere in the Plan of Implementation.

The EU inserted a clause in the draft means of implementation text requiring that facilitated increases in investment flows to developing countries should be supportive of sustainable development. Two days later they removed it, without any exchange on this issue.

Reproductive rights. The EU watched silently as G77 gutted a text they had explicitly said they were wedded to. They didn't realise the implications of the amendments, they said.

Multiple references to sustainability assessments were gradually whittled away, despite the frustration of their negotiating partners on this issue. Don't worry, they said: there's a single instance for which they would fight exhaustively. Really? We cannot confirm this; the final instance was never negotiated in public.

Bali Hai

So the G77 caved in on corporate accountability. In exchange for what, exactly? Bali Hai would love to know the going price today of a framework...

Does the sluggish progress of the Bali process have a simple explanation? Bali Hai thinks it does: the Sheraton coffee, on sale across the BICC at an amazing \$2 or \$2.50 a cup. Yesterday one charming Balinese waiter was apologising for the cost – and the watery brew is indeed far too pricey for anyone but the richest delegations to guzzle enough to fuel an all-nighter.

A little research sheds some light. Starwood Hotels, one of the world's biggest chains, owns the Sheraton group. The American company was making more than a million dollars a day a year ago, but after September 11 bookings collapsed. Starwood made a loss last quarter - the share price slumped. And so, delegates are offered the most expensive coffee in

East Asia – and how do you get a Commitment without coffee?

A little more research. The farmgate price of raw coffee for a small-scale Indonesian producer? 6,500 rupiah a kilo, at the moment...about 75 US cents, less than half what it was a year ago.

Bali Hai offers a free cup of coffee – just one – for the first person to work out what the BICC/Sheraton's mark-up is.

Quote of the day

"We have not been able to move from words to deeds in the 10 years [since Rio]. We're not even able to say we will provide clean water and energy for the world's poorest... We have seen a lot of window-dressing, different countries bringing in their hobby-horses...Is this giving the results that were promised?" Margöt Wallström, European Environment Commissioner

Type 2 Should Implement NOT Replace Type 1 Agreements

The WSSD is making a major shift to so-called "Type 2" agreements as THE outcome from Johannesburg. The discussions around Type 2 voluntary agreements are a blatant abdication by governments of their responsibility to protect the environment and the poor; that part of society which has no voice of its own.

The outcome of WSSD MUST be governments taking control of the sustainable development agenda; not relinquishing this power to corporations. So, ANY Type 2 agreements must follow the establishment of mandatory, clear targets, timetables and monitoring of commitments made in all areas agreed at WSSD.

So – bearing in mind that type 2 voluntary or partnership agreements will be a major outcome – what is clear is the need for mandatory criteria, against which these agreements can be measured.

ECO does not endorse the Type Two idea as currently formulated: much more discussion with ALL parties is needed. Here are our initial thoughts on some of the criteria that will have to be laid down

Links with globally agreed outcomes:

Partnerships/voluntary agreements are not a substitute for Type I outcomes and be consistent with Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Rather they should flow from, and serve as a mechanism for, their implementation, producing action on the ground. They must meet the draft action plan agreed at WSSD following the goals of the Rio Declaration and Millennium Declaration.

Satisfy the '3 pillars' of sustainable development:

From the 'cradle to the grave' of any partnership, the full integration of the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development should be integrated, consistent with the sustainable development strategies of communities, countries and regions.

Involvement of all interested parties;

Everyone involved or impacted by a proposal should be fully involved. This should include any combination of partners – communities, regional groups, NGOs, local authorities, international institutions – the entire process should be inclusive, not exclusive. This should not be seen as a way to ensure that the project goes ahead but include the

question of whether or not it proceeds, as well as satisfying the needs of sustainable development.

Transparency and accountability

Partnerships should be open and transparent - commercial confidentiality should not be an information barrier. Monitoring and review agreements should be specified and, based on consensus, facilitate the cancellation of projects if necessary. Continuous monitoring of compliance must be a part of the process.

Real outcomes measured against sustainable development:

Partnerships should define its benefits measured against the goals of sustainable development. Specific, clear objectives, measurable targets and timeframes for their achievement are needed.

Financing not further debt:

Funding arrangements should be appropriate and affordable and not add to the increasing burden of developing world debt.

Added value

Partnerships, developed under criteria established through the WSSD process should be new and give added value. They do not apply to current projects or their modification.

Reporting

Partnerships should be mandated to report to a focal point established for monitoring.

Type Twos cannot be a substitute for Type One agreements, though they may be one means among many of implementing the action plan.

**International NGO
Press Conference
Today at 11:00 AM
BICC Media Center**
Where Do We Go From Here???
Speakers from:
Consumers International
Oxfam International
Greenpeace International
Friends of the Earth International

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