Climate Slamdown

Justice or Just Us?

Day by day accounts of the Copenhagen Climate Talks

Day 1
Dec 7

So, two and a half years after Copenhagen was announced as the venue, 15 years since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (to stabilise atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases that would avoid dangerous climate change), and 50 years after Charles Keeling proved carbon dioxide levels were climbing, here we are. As the Guardian, among 56 papers in 20 languages puts it ""Climate change has been caused over centuries, has consequences that will endure for all time and our prospects of taming it will be determined in the next 14 days." No pressure then...
Week one is largely about refining the text of a draft treaty (which won't be signed here- mabye in Bonn in June of 2010. The second week is when ministers and heads of state/government turn up and the real schmooing gets going.

mitigation

Developed world countries are upping their various pledges. Yvo De Boer, head of the UNFCCC, said "Russia dramatically increased its target, Japan enormously increased its target, Europe has said it ahas flexibiity to do more, so has Australia." Meanwhile, someone without a vested interest in declaring the whole thing a succes - "Martin Khor, director of the South Centre, an intergovernmental thinktank of developing countries - said "The pledges are so far depressingly low, adding up to only 12-19% by 2020. This is still far below the 40% cut that developing countires say is needed and below the 25-40% figures quoted by the IPCC.

illegal grapple of the day:

The head of the Grenadan delegation said that the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) would "consider their options" if a legally-binding treaty didn't emerge. (Most folks think that's not a goer before June 2010). Meanwhile, the African Union threatened to walk out of the talks if there isn't a lot more money ponied up by the industrialised countries for the transition to 'cleaner' economies.

2 C or not 2 C

AOSIS, and many African countries, want a 1.5 degree above pre-Industrial global average temperature rise, not the current 2 degree target. A 1.5 degree target implies astonishingly (impossibly?) high emissions reductions by the developed world.

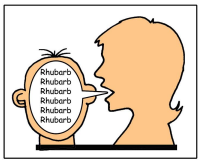
adaptation

A British bid of $10bn fast tracked has been getting US/and Japanese support. The money would start from 2012. The G77 group (of 132 developing countries" dismissed this as "peanuts". Friends of the Earth international and Third World Network said that the carbon trading that would be providing the bulk of this promised money "threatened to be ineffective and might only result in enriching banks while posing new [financial] risks."

Reasons to be "cheerful"

By a sheer coincidence, on the day the Summit starts, the US Environmental Protection Agency (established under President... Nixon) has decided that the dangers of greenhouse gases allow it toregulate C02 emissions, even if the US Senate doesn't pass the Climate Bill. This somewhat strengthens Team Obama's hand.

quotes of the day



"The level of trust is definitely shaken, especially now that we are about to conclude an agreement that... is going to mean sacrifices for our economies"
Mohammed alSabbban, the chief negotiator for Saudi Arabia, using the pretest of the stolen emails from the Climate Research Unit at East Anglia in exactly the manner you'd expect.
"This is our chance. If we miss it, it could take yers before we got a new and better one. If we ever do."
Connie Hedegaard, conference president, former Danish climate minister and soon to be European Commissioner for CC.

On this day in History

1928- Noam Chomsky born
1941- Pearl Harbour
1975- invasion of East Timor, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths.

www.climateslamdown.wordpress.com
climateslamdown@googlemail.com

Further Reading

www.ft.com/climatechange
www.iisd.ca.cop15
www.bbc.co.uk

MANCHESTER CLIMATE FORTNIGHTLY
www.manchesterclimatefortnightly.info

New Internationalist

"Climate Slamdown originally appeared in New Internationalist Magazine, although these updates are by Marc Roberts and Marc Hudson alone.