



**Second public hearing of the Temporary Committee on Climate Change (CLIM),  
European Parliament, Brussels, 4 October 2007**

**Address by Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Honourable Members of the Temporary Committee on Climate Change, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to address you on climate change action post-2012. This year has seen a remarkable build-up of political awareness for what the Secretary-General of the UN has termed “the defining issue of our era”.

***Climate change science***

In response to the three assessment reports released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) earlier this year, there has been an overall acknowledgement that there is a need for a more comprehensive international climate change deal post-2012. The IPCC found that climate change is unequivocal and is caused largely by human activities that release greenhouse gases. Between 1970 and 2004, emissions of greenhouse gases have increased by 70% - 24% since 1990. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased by about 80% - 28% since 1990. The average global temperature has risen by 0.74C during the last century, the largest and fastest warming trend in the history of the Earth that scientists have been able to discern.

Without concerted global action, greenhouse gas emissions are projected to increase by 25% - 90% by 2030 relative to 2000. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Earth could warm by about 3C. The urgency of the situation is clarified by the IPCC's projected effects of a 1C - 2.5C temperature increase, which include reduced crop yields in tropical areas, increasing the risk of hunger and an increased risk of extinction of 20% - 30% of all plant and animal species. By 2020, up to 250 million people in Africa could be exposed to increased risk of water stress. The poorest and most vulnerable will be the hardest hit by climate change impacts, given their limited resources to cope and to adapt.

***Political signals during the course of 2007***

Speedy and concerted international action can still avoid some of the most catastrophic projections of the IPCC. This means that political answers commensurate with the IPCC's findings have to be urgently provided. There have been encouraging signals as to growing political momentum over the past year.

Moving backwards through 2007, I will name a few:

As announced by President Bush at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm, the Major Economies Meeting on Climate Change and Energy Security was convened on 27 and

28 September 2007. It intends to make a detailed contribution to the multilateral climate change process under the UNFCCC. While it is encouraging that the US is engaging in the climate change process with renewed vigour, the yardstick to measure the success of this initiative will be whether it delivers on established principles under the UNFCCC, including:

- o It would need to be inclusive and global in its reach.
- o It would need to be embedded in sustainable development.
- o It would need to ensure that industrialised countries continue to take the lead in reducing emissions.
- o And it would need to accord equal importance to adaptation and mitigation.

An important political signal was provided by the Secretary-General's High Level Event on Climate Change, held on 24 September 2007. The event concluded with a clear call from 80 Heads of State and Government for a breakthrough at the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Bali in December this year. World leaders called for a comprehensive and inclusive process on the future to be launched in Bali and for a new framework to be in place by 2009.

The Communiqué of the G8 Summit at Heiligendamm constitutes another important political signal. G8 leaders called for an ambitious work-plan and tight time-line for negotiations on a future climate change deal to conclude by 2009. The means to address climate change, particularly the carbon market and its role in creating economic incentives for developing countries, were especially highlighted. Furthermore, Japan and the EU called for emission reductions of 50% by mid-century and the EU committed to emission reductions of 20% by 2020 and indicated a willingness to reduce emissions by 30% by 2020, if other countries follow suit.

Earlier this year, climate change was discussed in the General Assembly and the Security Council held a special one-day event to discuss the security implications of climate change impacts.

### ***The future: looking to the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali and beyond***

The UN Climate Change Conference to be held in December in Bali has to constitute the starting point for the appropriate political response to the IPCC's findings. In order to avoid a gap between the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 and the entry into force of a new framework, negotiations need to conclude in 2009 to allow enough time for ratification. The conference will thus have to set in motion the negotiating agenda for the next two years.

Two processes on future climate change action post-2012 were launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Montreal in 2005. The first process, launched under the Convention, was the *Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing the implementation of the Convention*. The last of a series of workshops under this track was held in August 2007. The Dialogue process did not involve negotiations, but rather constituted a forum for Parties to freely express their views and concerns. A final report on the Dialogue will be presented at Bali and is likely to be the main input to the discussions on the process for developing a comprehensive post-2012 framework.

The Dialogue identified **four key building blocks** of a future climate change regime:

- o **adaptation** and **mitigation**, which need to be accorded equal importance; **technology**, which needs to be at the heart of the solution, and
- o **a financial architecture** to enable sustained action.

The needed outcome of the Bali conference is the much referred to “**Bali Roadmap**”, which will need to set in motion negotiations and establish the two-year process to work on the identified building blocks. This work will need to take inter-linkages among the building blocks into account and ensure that the synergies between the building-blocks are tapped, in order to ensure an enhanced and effective response to climate change post-2012.

The second track that was launched in Montreal is the *Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties* (industrialised countries) under the Kyoto Protocol. At the first part of its fourth session, held in Vienna in August 2008, Parties to the Kyoto Protocol agreed that a range of 25% - 40% below 1990 provides useful initial parameter for the overall level of ambition for further emission reductions by Annex I Parties. This reflects the best scientific information available from the IPCC, which, in addition, requires emissions to peak in the next 10 - 15 years and to decline by 50% over 2000 levels by 2050.

In Bali, the AWG is expected to seek agreement on a time-table and date to conclude work to avoid the gap between the end of the first commitment period and a new regime in 2012. Such an agreement may end up as part of an overall package on the future. In 2008, the AWG plans to work on the means of implementation, including the flexible mechanisms.

The Major Economies Meeting may constitute an additional initiative on future climate change action. Identified areas of work under this initiative include opportunities for action in key sectors, including through work on technologies, as well as work on a long-term goal for greenhouse gas emission reductions, which should be aspirational and not be used as a basis for burden-sharing. The next meeting under this initiative will be held after the Bali conference. The present US Administration is unlikely to back off its position opposing mandatory emission caps. The negotiation process to be initiated in Bali will have to take account of this fact.

### ***The major issues in the debate***

In conclusion, the major issues in the debate can be summarised as follows:

- o The nature of the emission reduction targets for industrialized countries, which must continue taking the lead:
  - medium-term targets
  - long-term target
  - binding versus non-binding
  - policies and measures as an alternative or complimentary approach.
- o Developing countries' further engagement, especially by those whose emissions already, or will in the near future, contribute significantly to atmospheric concentrations, will be needed, but they will require incentives for this.

- o Deforestation: Deforestation contributes up to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Rates of tropical deforestation urgently need to be stemmed.
- o Sufficient and sustained funding for adaptation: Developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will need assistance with large-scale adaptation. They will be the most affected by climate change impacts.

As the legislative body of the European Union, you have an important contribution to make: to ensure that the objectives set by the Council are followed through by legislative action.

Your active involvement is thus needed.

Thank you.

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