

Bali - The Big Deal?

Confused about Kyoto? Oxfam SW's **Roger James** brings you the beginner's guide to climate change as a global challenge

● Because climate change affects the entire globe, developed and developing countries are working together to find solutions to climate change. G8 nations have been responsible for much of the past greenhouse gas emissions, and rich country governments must show leadership in cutting their greenhouse gas emissions and assisting developing nations to meet the challenges of adaptation. Climate change must be dealt with on a global level - and the need to act is urgent. The key agreement is the Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012, so the coming year is a critical period during which to agree a new climate change treaty. So how might this happen - and who are the major players?

First, there are the scientists... The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was formed by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) in 1987, 'to assess the available scientific, technical and socio-economic information in the field of climate change'. The IPCC reports and findings have become the definitive statements on the state of climate science. The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize went to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Al Gore.

Then come the politicians... who set up the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNFCCC is an international treaty formed in 1992 at the Second Earth Summit in Rio, Brazil to consider what can be done to reduce global warming and cope with whatever temperature increases are inevitable. The Kyoto Protocol is part of this UNFCCC framework and is an international agreement forged in Kyoto, Japan in Dec 1997 to limit world greenhouse gas emissions. It was generally agreed that the responsibility falls upon the developed nations to lead the fight against climate change, as they are largely responsible for the current concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The Protocol finally entered into force on 16 Feb 2005 after ratification by Russia in Nov 2004. The treaty sets out legally binding targets and timetables for the rich 36 industrial nations ('Annex 1 countries', the main carbon emitters) to cut back emissions of the six main greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride), reducing them from 1990 levels by 5.2% by 2012 (emissions from aviation and shipping are omitted). This would reduce anthropogenic (human-induced) emissions from around 7.2 billion tonnes per year to about 6.8 billion tonnes per year. This agreement falls woefully short of measures needed to head off global warming, as most scientists are calling for emissions reductions of at least 50% on 1990 levels. The Kyoto Protocol is only a tiny first step in the right direction.

Then there are lots of international meetings... The COPS and the MOPS! The UNFCCC COPS refers to the 189 governments which are party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), who have met once every year since the treaty entered into force in 1994. This annual meeting is known as the Conference of the Parties or 'COP'. The Kyoto Protocol MOPS refers to the 175 countries which have ratified the Kyoto Protocol. They also meet annually, concurrently with the COP, in what's known as the Meeting of the Parties or 'MOP'. Then, once a year, they get together for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference.

In Dec 2007, Bali hosts the 13th COP and the second MOP, to replace the first Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012, with a second Kyoto commitment period set for 2013-2017. The 2007 G8 Summit agreed to global emissions cuts of 50% by 2050. But the global climate-change regime is suffering because the US, the largest producer of greenhouse gases (GHG), is not a party to the Kyoto Protocol, and large developing countries like China (the second largest



UN Climate Change Conference 2007
Bali - Indonesia

emitter), India and Brazil are exempt from its obligations.

The European Union states that it wants to reduce its emissions by 20% from 1990 levels before 2020 and is prepared to deepen emission cuts to 30% if a global agreement is reached. It's critical that richer countries agree to emissions cuts (mitigation) and that poorer countries are assisted with funds for adaptation, for it's they who will suffer the first and the most. It's reckoned that \$50bn in extra aid per annum will be needed.

And finally, there's us... And this is the challenge: the politicians will not act unless we do!

Efi: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): www.ipcc.ch **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** www.unfccc.int/2860.php

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