

COP15 Blog Day 2 08 December 2009-12-08

These observations of the NFF delegation to COP 15 are intended to provide a preliminary update for NFF, CCA, MLA and do not represent a policy position of any of the members of the delegation.

Recap on Day 1

Australia's voice at Copenhagen

Australia spoke for the Umbrella Group (Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, United States) at COP plenary. In the opening statements we supported a limit of 2C on global temperature rise and a 50% reduction in global emissions by 2050. Australia said all Umbrella Group members are prepared to propose individual reduction targets that will substantially reduce their emissions by 2020, with their actions being subjected to robust monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV). We supported "quick, substantial and high-impact financing to assist the most vulnerable developing countries," particularly Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. We also noted the emerging consensus that a core element of the Copenhagen accord should be to mobilise US\$10 billion a year by 2012 to support adaptation and mitigation in developing countries. We suggested that the aim in Copenhagen was to forge a political vision that will guide global actions and lead to a new legally-binding treaty – the Copenhagen accord – as soon as possible. Later Australia for the Umbrella Group, noting the need for rules on markets and LULUCF, called for broad and effective participants of all parties under a single new legally-binding agreement. That is, rather than have the Convention track (developing and developed countries) and Kyoto Protocol track she was encouraging a single agreement.

Preliminary notes on Day 2

Global Alliance for agricultural R&D investment

Prior to Copenhagen, New Zealand instigated a Global Alliance on agricultural R&D to ensure that global climate change mitigation and adaptation research is coordinated. This Global Alliance has been strongly supported by 20 countries, including Australia, who are each looking to commit to a statement of intent of their support. No funding commitments are required at this stage yet it is expected that this will change as the Global Alliance gains momentum.

The Global Alliance will be officially launched by the US Undersecretary for Agriculture, Thomas Vilsack on 16 December in Copenhagen.

Of note is the fact that the Australian CPRS Bill has a provision for \$50 million in addition R&D funding that explicitly lists the Global Alliance as a benefactor of some of this funding. With the CPRS Bill being overturned in the Senate, Australia is not in a position to commit finances to the Global Alliance at this time.

IFAP at SBSTA Plenary (SBSTA = Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice)

IFAP (as an NGO) was allowed to make a 2 minute statement during the SBSTA Plenary. At IFAP's request, the NFF delegates assisted in preparing the statement. Key points were:

- A program of work be established to take into account the specific complexities faced by the agricultural sector in relation to GHG mitigation.
- Among other issues, the statement pointed to the need for increased R&D, a revised Measurement, Reporting and Verification methodology for the sector, maintaining productivity growth in the face of global food security and reward for carbon sequestration.
- The need for global technology transfer between farmers to contribute to carbon mitigation and adaptation.

REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation)

At the SBSTA plenary there was a strong focus on REDD particularly from the developing countries. The Australian delegation confirmed that SBSTA recognised the strong support for progressing action on REDD.

Australian Delegation Briefing

Almost 100 people crowded into the small briefing room to hear an update on negotiations.

In addition to attending these daily briefings, the Australian delegates are attending daily IFAP briefings and informal discussions with the Australian negotiators, the Danish Agriculture and Food Council and today had discussions with the US Farm Bureau.

IFAP Briefing

Today's IFAP briefing allowed the various farm group delegations to provide their insights into the negotiations. Of interest during the discussions were insights from the US farm delegation who provided their views on the US domestic climate change policy developments and their interest in the Kyoto discussions (bearing in mind that the US has not ratified the Protocol and therefore is not bound by its accounting rules).

The view in the US is that the Kerry Boxer ETS legislation will go through significant amendments before it will be voted on by the Senate and that the reworked Bill will have significant additional concessions for the farm sector.

They also stated the farm sector's concerns that natural gas (and not nuclear) was being touted as the optimal, low carbon energy solution. The concern from the farm sector is that by increasing demand for natural gas, this will increase the price of natural gas based farm inputs such as fertilisers.

The US farmers interest in attending the Copenhagen negotiations appeared to be largely based on defensive elements and staying across key international policy issues. Indeed, the feedback is that the US negotiators have demonstrated very little engagement in the issues surrounding the international carbon accounting rules and see it as an insignificant part of the negotiations for the US (despite their domestic ETS being underpinned by largely non-Kyoto compliant offsets).

And – just to let you know that the issues are the same here as at home:
Justin and friends



Appendix

Summary of some country positions

The following notes on significant country positions from the Wall Street Journal do not include Australia. In this context it is interesting that there were several questions to the delegates on the recent political changes in Australia and interest in the fact that changes in government were driven by ETS legislation.

From Wall Street Journal:

U.S.

The U.S.'s failure to pass climate-change legislation has meant a delay in a deal at Copenhagen. But pending bills in Congress and the Obama administration's authority to regulate emissions give the country credibility—and negotiating leverage toward an eventual agreement. The U.S. may still pledge to cut emissions about 17% by 2020, while offering funding of low-carbon initiatives for poorer countries to draw them to an agreement. The U.S. also wants other countries, mainly China and India, to commit on when their greenhouse-gas emissions will peak, and will demand stringent standards for reporting, monitoring and verification of emissions and reductions.

China

China has pledged to curb carbon emissions as a percentage of gross domestic product by 40% to 45% by 2020. These would be voluntary cuts and therefore unlikely to be part of a binding climate-change pact. But it signals China's interest in an agreement at Copenhagen. Such a deal could bring the country benefits: more funding and technology transfers from developed nations, and as an exporter of solar-power and wind-power equipment, increased demand for its products. What China dreads most is the end of Kyoto provisions that grant tradable credits for reducing emissions; China has been the top receiver for the credits, getting 59% of the total.

India

India, which has long resisted the imposition of carbon-emission caps, says it is ready to cut emissions intensity 20% to 25% by 2020, but won't accept legally binding targets. It argues that it needs development and economic growth before it should consider fixed emission caps and that the developed world has a historic responsibility to take more restrictive measures because it caused decades of atmospheric damage. India also favors financing and technology transfer to boost green energy solutions.

Russia

Climate change isn't high on Russia's agenda; its attention is on the massive investments it needs to make its aging Soviet-era industrial infrastructure more energy-efficient—with a goal of a 40% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020. Diplomats say the country is willing to reduce emissions between 20% and 25% from 1990 levels. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says Russia will join a post-Kyoto agreement only if other countries sign up for it and if Russian forests' contribution to reducing global carbon dioxide is taken into account.

Brazil

Brazil's government will aim to cut greenhouse-gas emissions between 36% and 39% by reducing deforestation in the Amazon rain forest and increasing the use of fuel-efficient cars and trucks that use biofuels as well as gasoline. But the emissions target is voluntary and depends on the government obtaining financing for the aggressive goals, indicating that Brazil isn't willing to stifle industrial output in Latin America's largest economy. And efforts to reduce deforestation in the Amazon could be stymied by lawlessness in the poverty-stricken region.

European Union

The 27-member European Union aims to speak with one voice in Copenhagen. Its goal: taking action that would limit global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). The EU intends to cut CO₂ emissions 20% by 2020 from 1990 levels and is willing to raise

that target to 30% if other countries commit to do their part. It is also ready to help developing countries financially, but it hasn't committed to specific figures. Some Western European countries advocate generosity, but some newer members from Eastern Europe are much less willing to pay.

Poland

Poland and other Eastern European nations want a deal that isn't too economically burdensome. The issue is how financial support for developing countries should be shared by EU members. Wealthy members propose making contributions proportional to a country's emissions. But because Eastern members' energy sectors rely heavily on coal, they would pay disproportionately more than if shares were based on their economic output. Poland also wants to be able to continue selling certain carbon credits after the Kyoto protocol expires in 2012. Because Poland has reduced CO₂ emissions by 30% over the past 20 years, it can sell credits worth billions of euros.

Africa

African countries blame developed countries for greenhouse-gas emissions and want to be compensated for the impact of global warming. But they disagree on priorities. The African Union wants billions of dollars (leaders won't say exactly how much) to adapt to climate change, which is blamed for record droughts in East Africa and flooding in other regions. Oil-producing nations, such as Nigeria, want compensation for the lost revenues that could result from expected declines in oil consumption by industrialized nations.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, the world's No. 3 carbon-dioxide emitter (after China and the U.S.), much of the emissions result from deforestation. It probably will ask for international technology and funds for forest conservation. Also, it favors self-monitoring in future programs that give credits for reducing emissions from deforestation, and hints it will oppose efforts to create an international monitoring body. The nation pledges to cut emissions 26% by 2020 from "business-as-usual" levels, but officials say Indonesia will raise its target to 41% if it receives the international funding and technology support it needs.

Ecuador

Ecuador, an oil producer, will come to Copenhagen with a novel idea: get rich countries to pay \$3.5 billion to keep 850 million barrels of its crude in the ground. The oil is located in a natural reserve of the Amazonian forest whose protection will be a cornerstone of the talks. A delegation of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Ecuador gets the group's presidency next year) has visited to look at the project. The government, which has renamed its oil ministry the "ministry of non-renewable resources," has pitched the idea to some European governments.