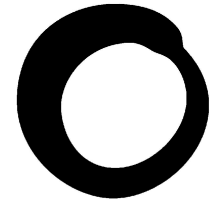


Media Briefing



**Friends of
the Earth**

UN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE - OCT 29th - NOV 9th 2001 (COP 7)

From 29th October till 9th November, Governments will be meeting in Marrakech, Morocco, for the 7th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP7). The purpose of the meeting is to agree legal text covering outstanding technical aspects of the political agreement reached in Bonn in July on how to implement the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol is the only international treaty aimed at reducing emissions of the greenhouse gases that lead to climate change.

The Bonn deal was a watered-down version of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, itself only the first step towards the large scale cuts in emissions required to tackle climate change in the long term. The deal contains many loopholes introduced during negotiations largely to meet the demands of the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, Russia and OPEC countries.

Estimates suggest that as a result of the Bonn agreement, the Kyoto Protocol will result in emissions from industrialised countries at least being stabilised. This is an improvement on what would happen without the Protocol - the 'business as usual' scenario under which emissions from many rich countries would continue to grow - but it is still woefully inadequate. The risk at COP7 is that countries may seek to further undermine their commitments by introducing further loopholes in areas such as:

- monitoring and verification,
- compliance and enforcement,
- eligibility criteria for participation in carbon trading mechanisms, and
- use of carbon-absorbing land use and forestry projects ('sinks').

The Bonn agreement was a major political success and is worth saving. When President Bush abandoned the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, the system of international rule making on climate change was expected to collapse. A second failure, following the collapse of the talks in The Hague last November, could have been fatal to the Kyoto Protocol.

Despite its best efforts to exert pressure on key countries, the United States has been largely isolated on the issue. Ministers from around the world made speeches in Bonn focussing on the triumph of multilateralism over unilateral action. Nonetheless, a US delegation will be present at COP7. In the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11th,

the need for multilateral action and international cooperation to strengthen global security and protect the environment is greater than ever. Friends of the Earth International hopes that the Bush Administration will now reconsider the dangerous and short-sighted rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and re-engage in the only process that exists to tackle man-made climate change.

It has been shown that a warmer world will result in increased environmental stress and that the impacts of climate change will fall most heavily on those least responsible for creating the problem, increasing global inequality and threatening to worsen political conflict between North and South. Existing regional conflicts may also be made worse, for instance in the Middle East where water resources are already a factor in border disputes. Climate change will result in new flows of environmental refugees as people flee rising sea levels, floods and drought.

Friends of the Earth International wants Governments to:

- commit to immediate ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and entry into force before the World Summit on Sustainable Development (September 2002);
- keep the Bonn agreement intact and complete the process of adopting detailed rules to implement the package, including legally binding consequences for non-compliance
- provide a clear mandate to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to draw up tough rules on the use of "sinks" (for example forests, which may absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere) to meet Kyoto targets. These rules should prevent the negative social and environmental impacts of sink projects, such as the development of "monoculture" plantation forests
- set out a way forward for future discussions that includes an acceleration of target-setting for the second commitment period and consideration of how best to reach more equitable per capita entitlements in the longer term;
- request that the World Summit on Sustainable Development commit governments to the recommendations of the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force, including the termination of all domestic and international fossil fuel subsidies.

Friends of the Earth International experts will be in Marrakech throughout COP7.

Contact: Kate Hampton (FOEI International Climate Coordinator)
(in Marrakech 26th October -11 November)
Helen Burley (FOEI Press)
(In Marrakech 5th -11th November)

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