“Bold commitment and bold actors” needed in order to bring real climate action to COP17

Entrenched infrastructure of energy sector will be hard to cure with a quick-fix

inside:

a multi-stakeholder magazine on climate change and sustainable development

outreach.

COP 17 | DAY 3
30 November 2011
The Africa Group would like to declare clear and loud that it will not let African soil be a graveyard for the Kyoto Protocol.”

Enhancing women leadership to address the challenges of climate change

Profile: Ahmed Droighof

How many wake up calls do Governments need?

Don’t count on a good COP

The future is about to be written: young people will have a say in what it will look like

The door is closing but when will we be locked in?

UN Agencies in South Africa share approaches to addressing climate change

Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. Outreach is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena and has been produced at international meetings on the environment, including the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and at COP15 and COP16. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability arena as well as a voice of regional and local governments, women, indigenous peoples, trade unions, industry, youth and NGOs. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

If you are interested in contributing to Outreach, please contact the team (gmacdonald@stakeholderforum.org or Sabrina@sabrinachesterman.com)

You can also follow us on Twitter: Outreach @ COP 17

About Stakeholder Forum
Stakeholder Forum is an international organisation working to advance sustainable development and promote democracy at a global level. Our work aims to enhance open, accountable and participatory international decision-making on sustainable development through enhancing the involvement of stakeholders in intergovernmental processes. For more information, visit: www.stakeholderforum.org

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News from COP17

“The Africa Group would like to declare clear and loud that it will not let African soil be a graveyard for the Kyoto Protocol.”

Megan McCarthy
Canadian Youth Delegation

COP17 was very much alive and buzzing yesterday, and the name that seems to be on everyone’s lips is Canada. Canada, the infamous villain of these negotiations, is doing a good job of instilling confusion into the process for delegates here. Though its actions are not entirely unexpected, that doesn’t make it sting any less.

Since the outset, Canada has been notorious for putting polluters ahead of people at COP, and winning countless fossils of the day. This sort of behaviour deeply affects many of the people here, such as developing countries and youth, who have the most to lose from a lack of action on climate change. YOUNGO was invited to present their concerns today in the form of an intervention in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and in addressing the plenary, the message was clear: Kyoto should be kept alive.

Symbolically, a Canadian youth was the presenter, and she was able to show leadership by stating “We are all in this together. We recognise that certain countries can more easily reduce their emissions without compromising their standards of living than others. We remind this to those nations declining to commit to a second period of the Kyoto Protocol. Common but differentiated responsibility is integral to the Framework Convention on Climate Change.”

This is why the Canadian Youth Delegation, as well as many other civil society participants are here at COP-17 to show leadership where we feel our government is not and to hold them accountable to their actions that are compromising our future.

So where do we go from here? The vibe today has been a mixture of disappointment and hope – disappointment that the only legally binding climate change agreement that we have in place is being undermined; but hope that we will find a way forward.

As Africa stated in the AWG-KP: “The Africa Group would like to declare clear and loud that it will not let African soil be a graveyard for the Kyoto Protocol.” The role of civil society and the major groups is to not only work with their negotiators to secure the best outcome from this process, but to also show them that leadership comes in many shapes and forms.

Leadership can mean standing up for justice and what is right; it means not giving in when times seem tough; and it means keeping sight of the vision of the sustainable future we aspire to and need. In order for any progress to be made at these negotiations, the interests of people must be put before polluters; only then will we get the fair, ambitious and legally binding action we need to avert the climate crisis.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Enhancing women leadership to address the challenges of climate change

Cristina Tirado
Center for Public Health and Climate Change, Institute of Public Health, Oakland, CA

Women serve as agents of social change and development, through their unique roles in family and child care, agricultural labour, food and nutrition security, health and disaster risk reduction. However women are poorly represented in consultation and decision-making processes for the development of climate change adaptation strategies - both at the local, the national and global levels. The promotion of their engagement and leadership is critical to addressing climate change in equitable, healthy, and sustainable ways.

Current climate change policies and strategies tend to inadequately address the needs of women and children, particularly in the contexts of nutrition, food security and health. Integrating women’s empowerment as well as food and nutrition security and health in adaptation strategies, as well as resilient development is urgently needed to ensure the well-being of communities under a changing climate. Yet the issues of climate change adaptation, global health, women’s empowerment, nutrition and food security continue to be addressed in siloed approaches.

Recognising that these issues should be addressed in an integrated way, the Center for Public Health and Climate Change at the Public Health Institute (PHI), the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) and Action Against Hunger (ACF) have prepared a document on “Enhancing women leadership to address the challenges of climate change on nutrition security and health”.

Successful strategies for addressing the challenges that climate change poses to nutrition security and health, and to promote women’s engagement and leadership in adaptation planning and decision-making have been identified. The aim is to ensure that these are gender, as well as nutrition and health sensitive.

These include the following key messages to enhance women leadership in addressing the challenges of climate change on nutrition and health:
People, perhaps even nations, may be at the heart of climate change decision-making, but women's role is critical.

Protection and enhancement of health is an essential pillar of sustainable development, and of the response to climate change. Promoting health access and healthy environments through investing in health care systems, clean energy access, water and sanitation, all address significant climate change impacts on health. Policies and investments to mitigate and adapt to climate change have great potential for improving health.

Protection and promotion of nutrition and health are essential components of climate-resilient and sustainable development. Women can be instrumental in addressing climate change, nutrition and health in an integrated way. Promoting women's leadership on these issues requires an integrated approach focusing on both immediate and long-term actions. These include creating mechanisms to promote and protect women's rights, empowering women, and enhancing their capacity to address the challenges of climate change for nutrition and health. Promoting women's leadership will have a positive and significant effect on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, and ultimately, on the health and well-being of the societies of which they are members. This can only be achieved if women are at the centre of adaptation and development planning processed at community national and international level.

Empowering women is a cornerstone of fostering adaptation and addressing the impacts of climate change on health and nutrition. Through drawing on women's knowledge and experiences based on their unique social, economic and resource management roles, climate change adaptation planners can significantly reduce communities' vulnerability to climate change.

Women's capacity to address health and nutrition risks resulting from climate change must be enhanced through greater gender equity. This involves improved access to education, information, land, technologies, credit and social protection, as well as increased participation in climate change decision-making.

Facilitating access to maternal, child care and nutrition services reduces hunger and malnutrition among women and children in the face of climate-related hazards and climate change impacts. This includes direct nutrition interventions, promotion of good nutrition and feeding practices such as breastfeeding, complementary feeding for infants and improved hygiene practices among others.

Strengthening women's role in promoting sustainable and diverse diets, resilient livelihoods, local food systems and climate-smart agriculture, including the production and consumption of nutrient-rich crops, is critical for ensuring food and nutrition security under a changing climate.

What is your aim within your role for 2012?
To keep the biodiversity agenda at the forefront of environmental discussions and maintaining the Nagoya spirit alive. 2012 will coincide with the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the CBD as well as COP11 to be held in Hyderabad, India. These two major events offer an opportunity to enhance the implementation at national level of the Nagoya biodiversity compact. Including the early entry into force of the two Nagoya protocols.

considerations, deliberations and issues, as well as evaluations of the magnitude of the potential impacts it will have in present and future generations have to be taken into account. This is no rushing matter as there are many stakeholders involved in the process. On the other hand, prompt action is necessary; therefore, more than assigning a specific time line to the negotiations, I believe Parties should be able to quickly strain what are the important debates and issues to cover, rather than dwell on less relevant discussions.

What do you think the priorities for action should be emerging from COP 17?
I believe action needs to be taken at all levels. From governmental consensus and implementation of actions and regulations that will lead to the achievement of the Aichi Targets and the overall UN Millennium Development Goals, to the global civil community with increased awareness raising campaigns, voicing their concerns and demands to their governments for action.

What timeline is reasonable for an international agreement to be achieved? And what should this look like?
It is difficult to assign an exact timeline for an international agreement to be achieved. Many
Workers around the world are deeply concerned at the loss of momentum on climate change. The usually conservative International Energy Agency says we are 5 years from a point of no return on CO₂ emissions. Brazil’s chief negotiator, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo, has warned America and other industrialised countries that they could prompt the collapse of the Durban climate talks if they try to escape their commitments to a $100bn climate aid fund.

A special IPCC report on Extreme Events confirms that emissions from human activities are increasing the frequency of extreme events: we will face many more heatwaves, droughts and changes in rainfall patterns. Of course, fatality rates and economic losses as a proportion of GDP are higher in developing countries.

These reports are windows into the future if our political response doesn’t change quickly. The ITUC’s 200-strong delegation to Durban will be urging governments to “step out of their comfort zones” and take decisions based on responsibility towards the world’s citizens and the next generation.

Workers & Climate Change, the ITUC’s statement to COP 17 argues: “Every day, workers and their families face the consequences of inaction on climate change. Hundreds of examples exist. Just to mention one, in October 2011 when millions were affected by floods in Thailand, almost all major industrial sites near Bangkok were evacuated and hundreds of thousands of workers lost their livelihoods. This shows that climate change is not only posing risks to sectors which depend on natural resources, like agriculture.”

So, in Durban, to help drive home the urgency of action not words, the ITUC is lining up a major two week programme which includes daily delegation meeting, public events and open debates as well as lobbying governments at its flagship World of Work (WOW) Pavilion.

COSATU, the South African trade union confederation, issued its own call jointly with civil society organisations. COSATU’s campaign calls for a legally binding agreement for emissions reduction, for a just transition, and for “all of us to be inside the conference” working for a new deal.

ITUC’s Durban demands

Workers & Climate Change sets out three practical and powerful demands for a new global climate deal:

1. Mitigation & the legal outcome
   - Developed countries must commit to an emission reduction target of at least 25% to 40% by 2020.
   - Major emitters in developing countries and emerging countries should take actions to develop below business as usual – through renewable energy, efficient technologies and public transport.
   - A “high ambition” KP2: to avoid a gap in emission reduction commitments and preserve the legally-binding Kyoto Protocol, the KP should be renewed from 2012, with the highest emission target already ‘pledged’ or more.

2. Climate finance
   - Durban should deliver a roadmap ensuring the $100 billion agreed in Cancun will be directed through the Fund, detailing the public sources, and incorporating innovative sources of finance such as the Financial Transactions Tax.

3. The ILO and a Just Transition
   - A Just Transition – to create green and decent jobs, and a framework for national dialogue between unions, governments, business and communities in every country.
   - Incorporate labour and social protection issues in workstreams under the LCA – like social protection in the work of the Adaptation Committee and skills development in the work of the Technology Centres.
   - Mandate the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to work on the implementation of Just Transition and decent work.

RELATED EVENTS

Details of the WOW programme at the University of Kwazulu Natal are available at http://www.ituc-csi.org/ww.
Don’t count on a good COP.

SustainAbility’s Chairman, Geoff Lye argues that it is time to shift the leadership focus from policy makers to market shapers.

Durban will briefly be in the climate spotlight just months before the 20th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit. Few of us at Rio in 1992 would have believed that so little progress would be made in the intervening years. At that time, I had four children of school age. Frankly, the UN process has served neither them, nor my four grandchildren, well since. Climate procrastination has put future generations (with over two billion ‘climate innocents’ to be born by 2050) at severe risk of increasingly dangerous climate disruptions. We have seen how national and international governments and institutions responded to the 2008 financial crisis in just two crucial days, but also how, in two crucial decades, they have achieved very little on the much deeper climate crisis. Nature neither defers decisions nor haggles; nor, as widely observed after the financial crisis, does nature do bailouts.

2012 is also the 25th anniversary of the Brundtland Commission’s report on Sustainable Development. On the issue of climate change, the report says: “The key question is: How much certainty should governments require before agreeing to take action? If they wait until significant climate change is demonstrated, it may be too late for any countermeasures to be effective against the inertia by then stored in this massive global system. The very long time lags involved in negotiating international agreement on complex issues involving all nations have led some experts to conclude that it is already late.” In its call to action: “Nations urgently need to formulate and agree upon management policies for all environmentally reactive chemicals released into the atmosphere by human activities, particularly those that can influence the radiation balance on earth.”

25 years on, SustainAbility recently interviewed the report’s chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland. Looking back, she sees as ‘sensational’ the progress made in securing agreement to the Climate Convention at the Rio Earth Summit, but recognises that national pressures on governments continue to impede real progress by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. She calls on all parts of society and especially business to help drive and lobby for positive change by policymakers.

So just how is the Climate Convention progressing?

At COP 13 in Bali, I observed at close quarters how the conference worked through the night after the official closing time to get final agreement to the Bali Action Plan. The mood in the room at that point was euphoric: by COP 15 in Copenhagen we would surely have a new binding treaty aligned to holding global warming below the critical 2°C. As I flew home from COP 13, I wrote a blog which suggested ‘Bali will be judged a real milestone in the history of climate solutions’ but also ‘expect COP 15 to be another rollercoaster’. In the event, COP 15 was indeed a rollercoaster, spectacularly careering off track in its final days - another deep disappointment, a shameful failure by world leaders to meet their responsibilities to current and future generations.

It is hard to conclude, therefore, that global policymakers will show the necessary leadership on climate, now or in coming years, to avoid catastrophic weather pattern disruptions. The latest extreme weather events report from the IPCC leaves little room for doubt that we are on an irreversible track for weather pattern shifts which will overwhelm our adaptive capacity. All rational responses and principles of precautionary action have been betrayed by narrow self-interest and refusal to see that the greater global good should prevail.
While we must hope – and all push for – substantive progress in Durban, one thing is certain: the very best we might anticipate from COP 17 will be inadequate to meet the 2°C challenge. The most likely longer term outcome of this multilateral process will be the adoption of the lowest common climate denominators; a welcome but inadequate response.

So who will be the key players in climate leadership if not governments and policymakers?

After the failure of COP 15 in Copenhagen, SustainAbility called for unilateral action by a range of players from countries to cities, from corporations to communities. In advance of COP 16, we called specifically for business leaders to acknowledge and to leverage their unique ability to lessen the carbon intensity of their entire value chains. The moral imperative for businesses to act increases, we argued, in proportion to the deepening policy vacuum. Beyond that, there are also powerful business imperatives to act now: these include avoiding market and supply chain disruptions; protecting physical assets; and anticipating the inevitable increases in carbon emission and energy costs.

Fortunately, the most progressive companies have already demonstrated what is possible. A current leader in corporate sustainability ambition is Unilever with its Sustainable Living Plan. Their commitment is to de-couple the environmental impacts of their products from revenue growth. Climate is a key focus: by 2020 Unilever ‘aims to halve the greenhouse gas impact of our products across the lifecycle – from the sourcing of raw materials, through to consumer use and disposal’. Walmart too, is doing its part to lead other companies to a low-carbon future using its purchasing power to drive emissions reductions through its supply chain. Cisco is working on multiple fronts, through both its Carbon to Collaboration initiative and its partnership with the Connected Urban Development (CUD) group, which aims to minimise the impact of urban infrastructure. These companies have set the standard by which all others must now assess their ambitions.

Increasingly, however, both civil society and businesses are recognising that the best of individual NGO or corporate actions on climate and other environmental and social issues are proving inadequate in the face of dysfunctional systemic and market challenges. Future leadership must therefore make a shift from organisational to systems change. Business attitudes to collaborative as opposed to competitive advantage and to open as opposed to closed solutions sourcing and innovation will need a fundamental re-alignment of business models around positive social and environmental outcomes.

Nike, Puma and adidas recently announced that they will work with Greenpeace to drive policy making and business value chains to achieve an outcome of zero toxic discharges. We at SustainAbility have been working with Nike, the broader apparel industry and Greenpeace to frame this new order with encouraging results. The essential components will be making the elimination of harmful environmental impacts a pre-competitive issue; sharing learning and solutions on a transparent and open-source basis; and recruiting the whole value chain to clear time-defined outcomes. The next goal could - and should - be systems collaboration around ‘Zero GHGs’. The implications are profound: not easy, but essential for fundamental as opposed to more incremental change.

In a similar spirit, Unilever has shown real leadership in this space, with CEO Paul Polman calling for business model change at the launch of their Sustainable Living Plan: “We will all have to work together - Pepsi will have to work with Coke, the US will have to work with China and Greenpeace will have to work with WWF”.

So as Durban gets under way, we at SustainAbility are calling for a coalition of the brave: companies willing - in the face of regulatory and market uncertainty - to make bold commitments and take bold actions; to work collaboratively through value chains and with competitors; and to co-create and mobilise innovative solutions with civil society. If we can pull all of these levers simultaneously and at scale, continuing failure by policymakers may then be judged by history as a sign of political incompetence but not sufficient a hurdle to stop the rest of society resolving the climate crisis. This will be in spite of, rather than driven by, those politicians tasked two decades ago to deliver global policies which should by now be being implemented rather than debated.

Rio is one of Durban’s twinned cities. Let’s hope for better and more fundamental outcomes in South Africa than from that summit in Brazil. But don’t count on it.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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The future is about to be written: young people will have a say in what it will look like

Kirsty Schneeberger
Senior Policy Officer at Stakeholder Forum

During the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio a 12 year old Severn Suzuki stood on the stage to share her perspective and encourage her negotiators to think about the long-term impacts that their decisions would have on the environment and her future. The Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were two of the significant outcomes of the UNCED and since then, young people have been actively involved as participants in a range of multi-lateral environmental conferences. Their journey makes for an inspirational story about courage, determination, vision and leadership.

In June 2009 a group of ‘international youth’ decided to formalise the process by which young people have a say in their future by applying for constituency status in the UNFCCC; and on Sunday 27 November, the eve of COP 17, it was announced that the provisional status of the Youth – YOUNGO – had been formally approved after a two year probationary period. The successful application for constituency status us the UNFCCC (which was already secured for the CBD) marks a positive shift in attitudes towards young people that is not just confined to the negotiating halls – but can be seen and felt elsewhere in the world.

National government initiatives to support the youth and integrate them in the democratic decision-making processes are wide ranging and the support shown has helped to propel forward the youth movement. The governments of Norway, Maldives, Zambia, Belgium, Philippines, Mauritania and Benin all include a youth representative in their delegation; the Dutch government offered generous financial support to the YOUNGO for Copenhagen and Cancun activities; the UK government has set up a climate change Youth Advisory Panel; and both Bolivia and Ecuador have enshrined the rights of nature in their constitutions so that young and future generations can grow up in a healthy, safe and flourishing environment.

In addition to these positive and successful initiatives, stories of those young people who are setting up and running projects on the ground in their hometowns abound: young people aren’t waiting around for those ‘in charge’ to catch up with what is really needed to ensure that present generations meet their own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (as the Brundtland report stated). By stepping up to the challenge the youth across the world are demonstrating that the practical solutions to developing sustainably are feasible and they are ready to put the hard work in to make it happen. Just before this COP began, the youth caravan that had travelled from Nairobi for over two weeks, meeting people who are already suffering from the impacts of climate change and sharing experiences from groups across the continent, arrived in Durban. And of course, young people are showing leadership through the Occupy movements that are seeking to question and challenge the status quo, and business as usual practices, that are leaving them with the raw deal – high levels of student debt; highest unemployment rates since records began, and ecological debt that if not paid back soon will have severe negative impacts on their generation.

Many people ask what the outcome of Durban will be; what are the key deliverables of the COP and how can they be agreed to. This is a crucial element of the process and legally binding commitments, built on trust, mutual respect and support, and many of the key Rio Principles (such as common but differentiated responsibility, the precautionary principle and public participation in the process) are essential to global cooperative action. But there is another layer to all of this. And that layer is the story that is being told in the corridors, in the exhibition centre, during the creative actions and at the negotiating table. Almost without exception the keynote speeches on Monday’s opening ceremony spoke of showing leadership for generations to come; or to think about our legacy for young and future generations. Whether it is translated into action is of course a different matter, and the next two weeks will tell.

I first turned up to these negotiations four years ago when in Poznan the ‘international youth movement’ found it really rather difficult to find ways to have their perspectives included in the processes (let alone the interests of future generations) without the support of a sympathetic Chair, stretching the rules (ever so slightly), and really working hard to make the case to have an intervention. This week, YOUNGO was officially endorsed, the many key speeches and interventions reference youth and the future and no doubt over the coming days of COP and the build up to Rio +20 we will hear even more about intergenerational equity – and negotiators and leaders will really think about their responsibility to their posterity and their legacy that will echo through eternity.

So onwards! Let us learn from the courage and zeal of the youth (as Principle 21 of the Rio Declaration outlines) and be encouraged and inspired by the journey they have been making for the past twenty years. Now, together, let us focus on the many exciting, innovative and meaningful ways that we can make not only history, but safeguard the future for generations to come.
The energy sector and the 2 degrees target

The door is closing, but when will we be “locked-in”?


Laura Cozzi
Deputy Head: Office of the Chief Economist, International Energy Agency

The energy sector accounts for the bulk of human induced green-house gas emissions, but the average lifetime of its infrastructure renders difficult to implement the quick and deep abatements that would be required to put the world onto a 2 degrees trajectory.

In its latest World Energy Outlook 2011, the International Energy Agency estimated that 80% of the total permissible CO2 emissions under a 2 degrees scenario (the so-called 450 Scenario) is already “locked-in” by capital stock (power plants, buildings, factories, etc.) existing or currently under construction, leaving little additional room for manoeuvre.

If internationally coordinated action is not implemented by 2017, the International Energy Agency projects that all permissible CO2 emissions in the 450 Scenario will come from the infrastructure then existing, so that all new infrastructure from then until 2035 would need to be zero-carbon or early retirement would be needed to make headroom for new carbon investment. This would theoretically be possible at very high cost, but probably not practicable in political terms.

Global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions reached 30.4 Gt in 2010, 5.3% above 2009, representing almost unprecedented annual growth. In the New Policies Scenario, a scenario that considers all policies under discussion by mid-2011 and includes the pledges made by countries in the Cancun agreements, CO2 emissions continue to increase, reaching 34.4 Gt in 2020 and 36.4 Gt in 2035. This path would lead to a green-house gas emissions trajectory consistent with a global temperature increase of more than 3.5°C by the end of this century.

In the 450 Scenario, global energy-related CO2 emissions peak before 2020 and then decline to 21.6 Gt by 2035. This scenario assumes strong policy action to have a 50% probability of limiting temperature increase to 2°C Celsius – the globally agreed goal under the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change – which would require the long-term atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to be limited to 450 parts per million of CO2 equivalent. Global demand for both coal and oil peak before 2020, and
then decline by 30% and 8% respectively by 2035, relative to their 2009 level. Natural gas demand grows by 26%. The 450 Scenario requires additional cumulative investment of $15.2 trillion but delivers offsetting benefits, such as lower fossil fuel import bills, reduced pollution and health benefits.

Achieving this “energy revolution” will require a massive shift in investment towards low carbon technologies and energy efficiency. This change can be enabled only by strong policy signals – including carbon pricing for the power and industry sectors in all OECD countries by 2020 and in large economies (like China, Russia, Brazil and South Africa) by 2035. It would also require the implementation of very strict emissions or fuel economy standards for passenger light duty vehicles.

The power sector is instrumental in achieving the 450 Scenario, its emissions declining by 60% from 2009 levels to reach 4.8 Gt in 2035. The 450 Scenario reflects a strong policy push towards low-carbon technologies in power generation, resulting in their share of global electricity generation increasing from one third in 2009 to three quarters in 2035. The long lifetime of capital stock in the power sector means that the sector accounts for half of the emissions locked-in to 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is a key abatement option, accounting for 18% of emissions savings in the 450 Scenario, relative to the New Policies Scenario, but it faces regulatory, policy and technical barriers that make its deployment uncertain. It is crucial in achieving decarbonisation in the two largest emitters – China and the US. In the Delayed CCS 450 Case, adoption is delayed by ten years, compared to the 450 Scenario, meaning it is widely deployed only after 2030. This increases the cost of the 450 Scenario by $1.1 trillion (8%) and puts unprecedented pressure on other low-carbon technologies; supporting the economic case to invest now in CCS.

Small steps are being taken towards a global climate agreement when a heroic leap is needed to set the world on an emissions trajectory compatible with the stated long-term target of limiting the average global temperature increase to 2°C. Delegates in Durban have the big opportunity to send the right signal to investors (and the society) to avoid locking out the energy sector from the deep transformation it needs.

The long lifetime of capital stock in the power sector means that the sector accounts for half of the emissions locked-in to 2035. Delaying action until 2015 would call for early retirement or retrofitting of plants emitting 5.7 Gt in 2035.
UN Agencies in South Africa share approaches to addressing climate change

Innovative ‘out of the box’ approaches are needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to promote the effective and efficient use of otherwise scarce resources.

This is according to the United Nations (UN) agencies in South Africa, who are working on various aspects of climate change initiatives that could inevitably produce promising results to contribute to the global discourse.

The event brought together UN agencies in South Africa and opened up a platform for coherent and collective engagement on climate change. Francois D’Adesky, Representative for South Africa and Director, Regional Office for Southern Africa, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) discussed the reduction of carbon footprints in South Africa and the transitioning to a low-carbon economy. “The government of South Africa has taken several steps to promote renewable energy programmes. In addition to the Renewable Energy White Paper, the government has also launched the first National Energy Efficiency Strategy, published in 2005.”

“We cannot respond effectively to climate change without taking into account population dynamics”, asserted Mark Schreiner, Deputy Representative for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), reflecting on the world population 7 Billion milestone and impact on the environment. UNFPA shared best practices of partnering with the Government of South Africa and academia since 2005 in an innovative training programme for government leaders and policy makers on the inter-linkages of population, environment and development.

Dr. Erick Ventura, Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration, touched on the organisation’s simple yet innovative response to climate change through keyhole gardens – an intervention addressing both food insecurity and HIV vulnerability in migration affected communities.

Mpho Nenweli, Environment and Energy Manager, United Nations Development Programme in South Africa (UNDP) and Khathutshelo Neluheni, National Coordinator for the GEF Small Grants Programme, presented the Heiveld initiative, a collective of co-operative Rooibos tea farmers.

The project has increased its production of Rooibos from 20 tons in 2001, to 71 tons in 2008, as well as expanded its markets to four continents, including Africa, Europe, North America and Australia. Its socio-economic impact has been felt in the community. Importantly, it has raised the quality of life for 54 farmers and their dependants.

“We are the future generation, we are the people who this global warming is going to affect. We are the future scientists; we are the future doctors who are going to have to deal with diseases in our lives because of global warming,” said a young representative from the United Nations Children’s Fund.

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The project has increased its production of Rooibos from 20 tons in 2001, to 71 tons in 2008, as well as expanded its markets to four continents, including Africa, Europe, North America and Australia. Its socio-economic impact has been felt in the community. Importantly, it has raised the quality of life for 54 farmers and their dependants.

“We are the future generation, we are the people who this global warming is going to affect. We are the future scientists; we are the future doctors who are going to have to deal with diseases in our lives because of global warming,” said a young representative from the United Nations Children’s Fund.

“The session showcased trailblazing work on mitigation approaches and technology innovations which have implications for improving the plight of those most affected by the impacts of climate change, as well as community level adaptation endeavours which have up-scaling potential,” said Dr Agostinho Zacarias, Resident Representative of UNDP and Resident Coordinator for the UNCT of South Africa.

Speakers also highlighted the vulnerabilities and how to optimise contributions to the climate change solution by specific groups, such as the gender dimensions of climate change, and the impacts on migrants and indigenous peoples. “It is important to harness the potential of stakeholder groups through innovative information, education and communication approaches, as well as science and technology to address climate change impacts and sources,” he added.

Zacarias concluded that the information gleaned all feeds into the future work of UN country teams, to help programme countries come up with climate change responses in a more coordinated and systematic manner.

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