



NTS ALERT

Have States heeded the Stern Warning?

This section takes a look at the major global players and their reaction to the Stern Review and their efforts in tackling climate change.

United Kingdom

In light of the Stern Review, there has been increasing pressure on the government from environmental groups – in particular Friends of Earth – and Opposition parties to act on the issue of climate change.

UK's main opposition centre-right party, the Conservatives (commonly known as the Tories) have recently suggested plans for a new carbon tax to replace the existing climate change levy. Introduced in 2001 the carbon levy sets limits to the amount of carbon dioxide that can be emitted by various industries; similar to the EU's emissions trading scheme. Moreover, under this scheme companies that stay below these limits can sell spare carbon credits to firms that have overshot their targets.

Tories note, however, that the key problem with the climate change levy is that the rates paid by businesses on their energy use do not reflect the carbon emissions from that energy. As such, this does not provide the right incentives for businesses to switch to low carbon sources of energy. The Carbon Tax aims to rectify this by taxing fuel used by businesses in order to encourage energy efficiency.

The UK government has since responded by stating its plans to introduce a climate change bill. The main crux of the bill are to:-

Combating



Climate Change

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** Tropical Cyclone Source: International Space Station*



Make the Government's long-term goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050 legal binding. Interim targets will also be considered. Sceptics argue, however, that while ministers have pledged to revise the way greenhouse gas levels are measured and reported, they have resisted pressure to introduce annual targets backed with mandatory corrective action as this would leave the government vulnerable to short-term rises in energy demand or economic growth.

Establish an independent body - ***the Carbon Committee*** - to work with Government to reduce emissions over time and across the economy which will be similar to the independent Monetary Policy Committee that sets interest rates

Create enabling powers to put in place new emissions-reduction measures. These could be used to force companies including supermarkets and organisations into a new domestic emissions trading scheme. They may also target the transport sector.

Anti-nuclear campaigners, however, are worried that the powers are a means to get new nuclear power stations built, by putting a fixed price on carbon pollution.

Set out ***new monitoring and reporting arrangements***, including how Government reports to Parliament

Australia and the United States

While British Prime Minister Tony Blair labeled the Stern Review as the most important report on the future he had ever received as Prime Minister, his Australian counterpart's initial reaction was limited to acknowledgment of global warming as a fact, and telling Parliament that nuclear power must be included in the Australian debate about new and renewable technologies to replace fossil-fuel power generation. The Australian Government was equally unmoved by reports that British Treasurer Gordon Brown would accept the Stern report's primary recommendation for

Stern Review's Suggestions to States

Emissions trading

- Expanding and linking the growing number of emissions trading schemes around the world is a powerful way to promote cost-effective reductions in emissions and to bring forward action in developing countries.
- Strong targets in rich countries could drive flows amounting to tens of billions of dollars each year to support the transition to low-carbon development paths.

Technology co-operation

- Informal co-ordination as well as formal agreements can boost the effectiveness of investments in innovation around the world.
- Globally, support for energy research and development should at least double, and support for the deployment of low-carbon technologies should increase up to five-fold.
- International co-operation on product standards is a powerful way to boost energy efficiency.

Action to reduce deforestation

- The loss of natural forests around the world contributes more to global emissions each year than the transport sector. Curbing deforestation is a cost-effective way to reduce emissions; large-scale international pilot programs to explore the best ways to do this should get underway very quickly, the review advises.

Adaptation

- The poorest countries are most vulnerable to climate change. It is essential that climate change be fully integrated into development policy, and that rich countries honor their pledges to increase support through overseas development assistance.
- International funding should also support improved regional information on climate change impacts, and research into new crop varieties that will be more resilient to drought and flood.

Sources

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the establishment of a global market to trade carbon emissions – an expansion of the European Union's current carbon trading market to include Australia and other countries.

Playing the “blame game” remains apparent in climate change politics. While Australia's greenhouse gas emissions in 2004 were 15.8 per cent higher than Australia had promised under Kyoto, Prime Minister John Howard defended his country by stating that many of the European countries – who are primary advocates of climate change awareness – are themselves falling short of their Kyoto targets. Moreover, Australian officials have described Kyoto as a scheme that encompasses less than half of the world's emissions and will fail dismally to reach the targets without effective participation from developing countries such as China and India in reducing their emission rates. Australia along with the US, the world's biggest polluter, signed the landmark protocol for curbing greenhouse gas emissions, but neither went on to ratify it.

Instead, Australia and the United States have persuaded China, India, Japan and South Korea to join in taking an alternative approach to climate change. The six countries formed the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (AP6) earlier this year "to complement but not replace the Kyoto Protocol". Together, these countries account for half of the world's economy, population, energy use and carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels.

There has been some progress from this alternative alliance. Firstly, it has said to endorse nearly 100 individual projects for meeting energy and environmental goals. A recent international gathering in Ohio that brought together 100 power industry executives and engineers from member states of the Asia-Pacific Partnership focused on ways to improve the efficiency of coal-fired generation and activities to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and air pollutants. Moreover, US officials announced its decision to fund \$450 million over 10 years to suppose US tests to advance carbon

sequestration technologies to make the process safe and economical.

This alternative approach to tackling climate change allows Australia the ability to not protect its coal and fossil fuel industries, but advance its profits on other sources of power, in particular Nuclear energy. Howard has been a strong advocate of the need to use nuclear power rather than solar and wind power as a substantial alternative to fossil fuels. This is not surprising given the fact that Australia's exports of nuclear energy. And given the increased demand for it since the Energy Outlook Report that supported the idea of nuclear as a viable alternative source.

Europe

Reactions in Europe to the report -- which calls for carbon pricing and major support for the development of low-carbon technologies -- were more positive, with the European Union and individual member nations endorsing its findings. Italy's Ecology Minister Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio noted that, apart from the poor developing countries, it was important that “the most recalcitrant governments” share the brunt of climate change's socio-economic impact. France also backed the Stern findings and announced that ministers will meet in the coming days to decide on a raft of new measures in favor of sustainable development. It has also appealed to major polluters such as the United States, India and China to cut their greenhouse emissions.

But the most significant European nation to react positively to climate change action was Germany, which is to be advised by two climate change experts during its term as the

European Union and Group of Eight presidencies. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, the head of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, an interdisciplinary research institute, and Lars Goeran Josefsson, the president of Swedish energy giant Vattenfall, will advise German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her staff.

What is Carbon Sequestration?

Carbon Sequestration is a carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture-and-storage process that can help take the excess, human-generated greenhouse gas CO₂ – a significant driver of climate change – out of the atmosphere.





Two German scientists have also demonstrated their research in the potential of solar energy power, in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Dr Gerhard Knies and Dr Franz Trieb calculate that covering just 0.5% of the world's hot deserts with a technology called concentrated solar power (CSP) would provide the world's entire electricity needs, with the technology also providing desalinated water to desert regions as a valuable by product, as well as air conditioning for nearby cities.

Germany owns significant technological know-how on various forms of renewable energy sources – solar energy, wind energy and biomass – that needs to be transferred to developing countries so as to effectively harness climate change.

China

Germany has agreed to help China with environmental protection efforts and hopes China's latest quest for clean energy sources results in increased market share for Germany's renewable energy companies. The two countries have agreed on bilateral initiatives aimed at reducing the effects of chemical waste spills, and would cooperate in numerous other environment- and energy-related issues, such as renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and reactor security.

China is an essential partner for global environmental protection as its rapid industrial ascent (the economy grew by nearly 11 percent in the first half of 2006) has worried climate change experts all over the world. With its 1.3 billion citizens, China has become the world's second-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and is expected to overtake the United States as the biggest emitter. A new coal-fired power plant opens roughly every two weeks, billions of tons of waste water are pumped into Chinese rivers every year, and the capital Beijing is regularly clouded by a fog of hazardous smog that delays air traffic and shuts down entire highways.

Recently, China has embarked on an ambitious quest to boost renewable energy sources. In 2005, it spent some \$6 billion in connection with renewable energy, making it one of the biggest green energy investors in the world. Earlier this year, it passed initiatives to double the use of alternative energy sources -- by 2020, 15 percent of China's energy should come from renewables. The reasons for this change in policy are

quite pragmatic: Faced with a rapidly growing hunger for energy, the Chinese government wants to reduce fossil-fuel dependence in the wake of rising oil prices

<u>Top Ten Countries tackling Climate Change.</u>	
1	Sweden
2	UK
3	Denmark
4	Malta
5	Germany
6	Argentina
7	Hungary
8	Brazil
9	India
10	Switzerland.

<u>Bottom Ten Countries Tackling Climate Change</u>	
47	Australia
48	South Korea
49	Iran
50	Thailand
51	Canada
52	Kazakhstan
53	USA
54	China
55	Malaysia
56	Saudi Arabia

- 🌐 Sweden is ranked top because it takes a quarter of its energy from renewable sources.
- 🌐 America, responsible for 21 per cent of global emissions is 53rd on the list. China's booming economy puts it at 54th.
- 🌐 Malaysia and oil exporter Saudi Arabia are ranked the lowest in tackling climate change. The table is based on countries' emission trends and policies.

Source: Britain Leads G8 on Climate Change, *Sunday Mirror*, 14 November 2006

Typhoon Durian

Hardly a month since Typhoon Cimaron, yet another and even deadlier typhoon has caused havoc in Southeast Asia. While several countries have been hit such as Vietnam and Malaysia, the bulk of the damage was felt by the Philippines.

Typhoon Durian produced 466 millimeters of rainfall, the highest in 40 years, and winds of up to 265 kilometers per hour (kph). Philippine President Gloria Arroyo has declared a national calamity following devastating mudslides which have left hundreds of people dead or missing. The mudslides, triggered by the heavy rains of Typhoon Durian, struck near the Mayon volcano south-east of Manila and engulfed several villages. The Filipino government has released 1 billion pesos (US\$20m) and mobilized all available government resources for reconstruction work and vowed further efforts to find survivors.

However, the progress of the relief effort is slow, with soldiers having to walk for hours to reach affected areas. Many Filipinos have resorted to using their bare hands to pull bodies from the thick sludge. About 100 miners have arrived to help with rescue efforts and army commanders have asked for dog teams to help with the search. In a bid to stem any possible spread of disease, some victims were buried in a mass grave.

For many of the survivors, they have lost their homes as well as their livelihoods after fruit trees and rice paddies were destroyed. Officials say more than 40,000 people have been displaced. Schools and churches are overcrowded with survivors, as a means of temporary shelter.

Disaster agencies say there is an urgent need for fresh water, food and medicine for the survivors, and more body bags. Several foreign bodies have pledged support. Canada has pledged more than US\$800,000 to help the relief effort and Japan says it will give more than \$170,000.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia has noted that it is vital that governments put more efforts in averting or mitigating the catastrophic impacts and increasing occurrence of extreme weather events, which are likely to be the result of climate change. A recently released Greenpeace report, "Crisis or Opportunity: Climate Change impacts and the Philippines" noted the increase of tropical cyclones from 1975 to 2002 coincided with higher global temperatures. Moreover, these cyclones, at their worst, caused damage worth as much as 1.17% of GDP and resulted in a decline of agricultural output by 4.21%.

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and gradually depleting reserves.

Germany's renewable energy company, Solar Millennium, is to collaborate with two Chinese firms to build solar-thermal plants in China with a combined capacity of up to 1,000 Megawatt. One giant plant will even have a capacity of 100 Megawatt, making it the biggest in the world.

The company has realistic hopes that the plants will be realized. The project has received substantial backing from both governments, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao presided over the signing of the cooperation agreement earlier this year.

India

According to the Kyoto Protocol, reached in 1997, 35 industrialised nations were to increase their investment in projects to cut greenhouse gas emission in developing countries under a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

Yet, Prodipto Ghosh from the ministry of forests and environment in India expressed his disappointment at the lack of foreign technology promised to India under the agreement. Speaking at a two-day international conference on adaptation to climate change in New Delhi, where officials from the European Commission, World Bank and Britain's Department for International Development were to discuss strategies, Ghosh said, "We had hoped for much larger foreign direct investment".

Ghosh added that the Indian government had set up an adaptation fund and made improvements in energy efficiency in key sectors such as power, steel and cement to avert climate change. Such initiatives however, require "tens of billions of dollars a year", thus emphasizing the mandatory participation of industrialized countries

India, along with China, signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, but are not included in targeted emission cuts.

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This was evident between 1991 to 1995, when the Philippines experienced a total of 13 typhoon. The Greenpeace report also concluded similar findings to the Stern Review – that the impacts of climate change would be most catastrophic to countries that are least able to cope.

Other South East Asian states have also been alarmed by the effects of Typhoon Durian. In the central and southern regions of Vietnam, almost 100 people were either dead or missing while more than 1000 others were wounded. Flying tin roofs, fallen trees and collapsed buildings caused most of the deaths. The typhoon's effects off the coast were just as disastrous, sinking almost 1000 fishing boats.

The disaster also threatened to disrupt the fishing industry and livelihood of hundreds of fishermen along the coast of Kelantan, Malaysia. The dangerous conditions at sea due to severe thunderstorms caused fishermen to retreat back to the shore. Malaysia's Meteorological Department has since issued a warning on strong winds and rough seas of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

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NTS Alert Team

Mely Caballero Anthony
 Sofiah Jamil
 Sujoyini Mandal

www.idss-nts.org



NTS Asia Secretary General

Amitav Acharya

NTS-Asia Coordinator

Mely Caballero Anthony

Research Analyst / Webmaster

Sofiah Jamil

