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MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

UN Climate Summit in New York

(various news sources)

With less than 11 weeks to the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen, the United Nations Climate Summit was held on 22 September 2009, in a bid to rally international support and action against climate change. As world leaders made their brief speeches at the United Nations, all eyes were on the biggest carbon emitters, China and the United States, on the concrete steps they would take in reducing global carbon emission levels.

President Hu Jintao of China noted that his country would curb its carbon emissions per unit of Gross Domestic Product, a measure also known as carbon intensity, by a 'notable margin' by 2020 from the 2005 level. Former US vice-president and environmental activist Al Gore praised China's 'impressive leadership' as the speech is seen to be a positive step towards achieving an effective post-2012 climate framework. US officials in the current administration, were however, less taken in by the Chinese premier's speech. According to US President Barack Obama's climate change envoy Todd Stern, the notable margin as suggested by China, has yet to be determined.

In his speech, Barack Obama noted the irreversible catastrophe that failure to act to climate change could bring. He also acknowledged that the US has not been able to live up to the global expectations on this matter. Yet, he further pledged to pursue stronger domestic climate bills and also international deals. Despite the lack of clear commitments, both speeches were regarded as positive steps in the upcoming Copenhagen meeting.

Additional Info:

Genuine hope on climate change (The Guardian).

UN climate summit: Leaders take small steps towards action on climate change (The Guardian).

China vows climate change action (BBC News).

UN climate summit puts China, India in spotlight (AP).

China takes first step towards climate deal by committing to carbon target (The Guardian).

Obama addresses U.N. climate summit, warns of 'irreversible catastrophe' (Los Angeles Times).

S Korean president proposes new UN mechanism on climate change (Xinhua).

Ban calls on leaders to unite to combat climate change, humanity's greatest challenge (UNEP News Centre).

HEALTH SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Huang Yanzhong, 'The H1N1 virus: Varied local responses to a global spread', YaleGlobal, 1 September 2009.
- 'Doctors warn on climate failure', *BBC News*, 15 September 2009.

- 'Papua New Guinea: Cholera patients battle stigma', *IRIN*, 22 September 2009.
- 'China begins mass vaccinations for swine flu', *AFP*, 22 September 2009.
- 'Hong Kong swine flu precautions: Chief executive', *AFP*, 22 September 2009.
- 'UN, NGOs to fight HIV mother-to-child transmission', *AFP*, 22 September 2009.
- 'WHO says H1N1 flu virus has not mutated into more serious disease', *Channel News Asia*, 21 September 2009.
- 'Swine flu death rate similar to seasonal flu: Expert', *Reuters*, 16 September 2009.

Papers & Reports

- Peter J. Hotez & Aruna Kamath, 'Neglected Tropical Diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa: Review of Their Prevalence, Distribution, and Disease Burden', *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, vol. 3, no. 8, August 2009.

Conditions such as helminth, hookworm and protozoan infections, schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis, and onchocerciasis are part of a group of diseases called neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), affecting the poorest 500 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on what is currently known of NTDs, it is estimated that the burden of disease in sub-Saharan Africa associated with NTDs may be equivalent to 50 per cent of the region's burden of malaria, and double the region's burden of tuberculosis. These numbers may actually underestimate the total disease burden of NTDs in sub-Saharan Africa, however, because there is little or no data on some protozoan infections.

- 'Donor Funding for Health in Low- & Middle- Income Countries', Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2009.

This Kaiser Family Foundation report tracks the most recently available data on official development assistance from the US, European Community and other donor nations. The report's data reflects decisions made prior to the current global economic crises, which could threaten donor support for sustaining and building on global health efforts. However, the recent US announcement of a new multi-year global health initiative and the Group of Eight's (G-8) reiteration of its health-related commitments at its summit in July 2009 suggest global health remains a key concern for donor nations.

- Webcast of presentation on The H1N1 Pandemic and Global Health Security by Dean Julio Frenk, Harvard School of Public Health, 16 September 2009.

Events & Announcements

- Call for applications for the Yerby Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA, November 2009.
- World Response Conference on Global Outbreak (WRCGO - 2009: H5N1 + H1N1 Flu), Las Vegas, USA, 12th - 13th November 2009.
- International Swine Flu Conference, Toronto, Canada, 23-24 November 2009.
- Call for Abstracts, 3rd Annual Biosecurity Symposium: Global Health Security, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 1 - 2 February 2010.
- Global Biosecurity 2010: Safeguarding Agriculture and the Environment, Brisbane, Australia, 28 February – 3 March 2010.

- 14th International Congress on Infectious Diseases (ICID), The International Society for Infectious Diseases, Miami, USA, 9 – 12 March 2010. (Deadline for abstracts is 1 November 2009).

Latest Publication

- ‘Special focus on HIV/AIDS research’, *Nature Medicine*, vol. 15, no. 8, August 2009.

By various authors.

This issue of *Nature Medicine* discusses promising new developments in the study of HIV pathogenesis, and the contributions science has made to knowledge of the virus. Basic HIV research has, over the past two decades, brought about enormous advances that have transformed a fatal disease into a manageable illness. HIV vaccine research has suffered more setbacks than successes, but a renewed focus on fundamental questions about HIV pathogenesis will provide new glimmers of hope.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Elliot Diringer, ‘Pew posts: Aiming for success in Copenhagen’, Pew Center on Global Climate Change, 16 September 2009.
- Sheila M. Olmstead & Robert N. Stavins, ‘The essential pillars of a new climate pact’, Belfer Center/*Boston Globe*, 20 September 2009.
- ‘Australia’s Copenhagen warning, aims at compromise’, *Channel News Asia*, 21 September 2009.
- Robert N. Stavins, ‘Yes: The transition can be gradual - and affordable’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 September 2009.
- Richard Black, “Millions at risk” as deltas sink’, *BBC News*, 21 September 2009.
- Tony Blair & Nicholas Stern, ‘The real green new deal’, *The Guardian*, 22 September 2009.
- ‘Mobility key to climate change adaptation, say experts’, *IRIN*, 22 September 2009.
- Steven Hill, ‘Obama the impotent’, *The Guardian*, 22 September 2009.

Papers & Reports

- ‘Climate Change and Human Rights: A Rough Guide’, International Council on Human Rights Policy, August 2009.

This report discusses a spectrum of human rights concerns raised by anthropogenic climate change and by the strategies devised to address it. It does not seek to reframe climate change as a ‘human rights issue’ or to buttress the many existing grounds for urgent cuts in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with human rights rationale. Rather, it pinpoints areas where climate change will have direct and indirect human rights impacts, and where human rights principles might sharpen policymaking on climate change, including in the two core policy areas of adaptation (preparing for the unavoidable and foreseeable effects of climate change) and mitigation (reducing GHG emissions in order to curb climate change).

- Sheila M. Olmstead & Robert N. Stavins, 'An Expanded Three-Part Architecture for Post-2012 International Climate Policy', Discussion Paper 09-29, Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, September 2009.

This paper describes the major features of a post-2012 international global climate policy architecture with three essential elements: A means to ensure that key industrialised and developing nations are involved in differentiated but meaningful ways; an emphasis on an extended time path of targets; and inclusion of flexible market-based policy instruments to keep costs down and facilitate international equity.

- Bernice Lee, Ilian Iliev & Felix Preston, 'Who Owns Our Low Carbon Future? Intellectual Property and Energy Technologies', Chatham House Report, September 2009.

This report examines two issues: Patent ownership of climate-friendly technologies, and the rate of technology diffusion. A polarized debate continues between proponents of strengthening intellectual property (IP) rights regimes to encourage innovation of climate technologies on the one hand, and those calling for more IP-related flexibilities to ensure access to key technologies by developing countries on the other.

- Christian Layke, 'Measuring Nature's Benefits: A Preliminary Roadmap for Improving Ecosystem Service Indicators', Working Paper, World Resources Institute, September 2009.

This paper compiles and assesses current ecosystems services indicators in order to inform and advance such efforts.

- 'A Copenhagen Climate Agreement', Pew Center on Global Climate Change, September 2009.

This is one in a series of policy briefs examining post-2012 international climate policy. It argues that interim agreement in Copenhagen should establish the basic legal and institutional architecture of a post-2012 framework within which governments can then negotiate a final agreement containing specific national commitments.

Events & Announcements

- The ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2009 (ACB2009) Biodiversity In Focus: 2010 and Beyond, Singapore, 21 – 23 Oct 2009.

Latest Publications

- 'World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change', The World Bank, September 2009.

The report was released in advance of the December meetings on climate change in Copenhagen, and says that advanced countries, which produced most of the greenhouse gas emissions of the past, must act to shape our climate future. If developed countries act now, a 'climate-smart' world is feasible, and the costs for getting there will be high but still manageable. A key way to do this is by ramping up funding for mitigation in developing countries, where most future growth in emissions will occur.

- 'World Economic & Social Survey (WESS): Promoting Development, Saving the Planet, 2009', UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, 2009.

The WESS provides objective analysis of pressing long-term social and economic development issues, and discusses the positive and negative impact of corresponding policies. The analyses are supported by analytical research and data included in the annex.

FOOD SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'New UN pact aims to boost sharing of climate-related data to fight hunger', *UN News Centre*, 4 September 2009.
- 'ASEAN Multi-Sectoral Framework on climate change and food security ready for endorsement', *ASEAN Bulletin*, 11 September 2009.
- 'Hungry get hungrier as funding for food aid stutters', *World Food Programme News*, 16 September 2009.
- 'World food aid at 20-year low, 1 billion hungry', *Reuters*, 16 September 2009.
- Andrew Martin, 'So much food. So much hunger', *The New York Times*, 19 September 2009.
- 'Philippines: Mindanao food security still a challenge, says WFP', *IRIN*, 22 September 2009.
- 'Pakistan: Will land leases worsen hunger at home?' *IRIN*, 22 September 2009.
- '2050: A third more mouths to feed', *FAO Media Centre*, 23 September 2009.

Papers & Reports

- 'Global agriculture towards 2050', *FAO Issue Brief*, Food and Agriculture Organization, 23 September 2009.

This paper discusses the multiple challenges faced by agriculture in the 21st century. Specifically, it highlights the need to increase food production in light of increasing world population which will rise from 6.8 billion today to 9.1 billion in 2050.

- Surabhi Mittal & Deepti Sethi, 'Food Security in South Asia: Issues and Opportunities', Working Paper No. 240, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, September 2009.

Conducted in collaboration with think-tanks from South Asian countries, this working paper aims to identify issues relating to food security, the policy initiatives taken to tackle these issues, evaluate these policies and suggest measures to overcome identified constraints in order to improve the food security situation in the region.

- Jesper Stage, Jorn Stage & Gordon McGranahan, 'Is Urbanization Contributing to Higher Food Prices?' *International Institute of the Environment and Development*, September 2009.

This paper examines some of the links through which urbanization is considered to be contributing to higher food prices and concludes that in most cases urbanization is being conflated with other long-term processes.

- Marc Cohen & James L. Garrett, 'The Food Price Crisis and Urban Food (In)security', *International Institute of the Environment and Development*, September 2009.

Rapid increases in food prices in 2007 and 2008 attracted high-level policy attention. This paper argues that the disproportionate attention that policy solutions to the food price crisis given to rural dwellers is likely misplaced.

Events & Announcements

- High-Level Expert Forum, Rome, Italy, 12-13 October 2009.
- Committee on World Food Security Meeting, Rome, Italy, 14, 15 & 17 October 2009.
- World Food Day, 16 October 2009.
- Regional Consultative Workshop: Best Practices for Supporting and Improving Livelihoods of Small-scale Fisheries and Aquaculture Households, Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission, Manila, Philippines, 13-15 October 2009.

ENERGY SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Jessica Cheam, 'Electrifying S'pore with new forms of energy', *The Straits Times*, 18 September 2009.
- Nanchanok Wongsamuth, 'Rocky road ahead to "Green Opec"', *Bangkok Post*, 21 September 2009.
- 'Australia sees higher Asian thermal coal imports', *Reuters*, 22 September 2009.
- 'Thailand: Nuclear power plant study to be ready by mid-2010', *Thai News Service*, 23 September 2009.
- Stephen Leahy, 'Energy: Trees – Out of the forest and into the oven', *IPS*, 24 September 2009.
- 'China seeks energy security, sustainable sources - Xinhua', *Silobreaker*, 25 September 2009.
- 'Masada partners with Robert H.J. Lee to lead green energy in China', *Asia Pulse*, 5 October 2009.

Papers & Reports

- Vlado Vivoda, 'Resource Nationalism, Bargaining and International Oil Companies: Challenges and Change in the New Millennium', The Australian Institute of Energy, 2009.

This paper examines the balance of power in the oil industry in the current decade, which, unlike the previous two cooperative decades, can be characterised as 'conflictual'. In this decade, due to their relative weak bargaining power, the international oil companies (IOCs) have generally been unsuccessful in bargaining with oil-exporting countries and national oil companies (NOCs). As a result, we are witnessing the return of the obsolescing bargain. Various factors endow oil-exporting countries and their NOCs with increased bargaining power vis-à-vis the major IOCs. High oil prices, increased industry competition, the lack of alternative investment options for IOCs and an increasingly hostile political climate in many oil-exporting states, translate to weaker bargaining power and unfavourable outcomes for IOCs. Their future as viable business entities is further compromised by the changing policy and regulatory environment in response to global climate change.

- Michael B. McElroy, Xi Lu, Chris P. Nielsen and Yuxuan Wang, 'Potential for Wind-Generated Electricity in China', *Science Magazine*, vol. 325, no. 5946, 11 September 2009.

In this report, the authors argue that wind offers an important alternative to coal as an energy source for power generation in China. They also add that this clean energy source could derive from it potentially substantial reductions in China's carbon emissions. The report utilizes assimilated meteorological data to assess the potential for wind-generated electricity development in China, with the assumption of a guaranteed price of 0.516 RMB (approximately 7.6 US cents) per kilowatt-hour for the delivery of electrical power to the national grid over an initial average of 10 years. The authors conclude in their findings that wind power could well accommodate all of the electricity demand projected for 2030, which is about twice that of the current consumption levels. They further conclude that electricity derived from wind power would also be sufficient to supplant 23 per cent of coal-generated electricity.

Events & Announcements

- Oil & Gas Outlook Asia 2009, Grand Hyatt, Singapore, 2-5 November 2009.
- LNG Markets & Short-term Opportunities Training Course, Singapore, 9-12 November 2009.
- Carbon Capture and Storage Forum, Le Meridien Picadilly, London, United Kingdom, 25 November 2009.

About Us

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies is a research centre of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

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