

NACAA Report #4 from COP-17
December 8, 2011

The NACAA Delegation (Larry Greene, Co-Chair, Global Warming Committee, and Misti Duvall, Staff Associate) started our third day of the COP on Wednesday morning. There is an amazing diversity of people, dress and languages on display during these meetings, and it's been wonderful to hear the many different perspectives from people we've met during the week. Today we'll start with a brief review of what's happening with the negotiations, then share our experiences from the exhibits and events we attended. We'll be sending lots of pictures, so stay tuned!

While ministers and country representatives continued to address delegates in the high level segments, negotiations on a number of issues, including developed country emissions reductions, amendments to the Kyoto Protocol, finance, technology transfer and legal options, continued throughout the day as negotiators reviewed a new draft text. Reports indicate that four legal options have emerged in discussions: 1) develop a legally-binding agreement to take effect in 2015 and include all major emitters; 2) continue the Bali Action Plan, with voluntary developing country emissions reductions, 3) focus only on operationalization of the Cancun Agreements and 4) delay decisions on a legally-binding agreement for one year. While the EU continues to support option 1, the US, China and India are reportedly supporting other options, with the US in favor of option 3 and China and India, along with Brazil, in favor of option 2. Once again, negotiations continued into the night.

In the morning, we visited the dozens of exhibit booths set up by countries, businesses, NGOs and other organizations from around the world. The exhibits ranged from entire pavilions set up with interactive displays on topics such as climate change education in Indonesia, mitigation activities in China and the impacts of climate change in countries across Africa, to booths containing information on individual country, business and/or organization actions. Here are some examples.

The countries of Indonesia and Bangladesh, which will be heavily affected by increasing sea level rise, each provided information on their country's actions to respond to climate change. In Indonesia these include transportation strategies to reduce emissions, such as improving public transportation, using city and land use planning to encourage cycling and walking, and revitalizing railways. In Bangladesh, an example of the country's efforts to respond to climate change is the Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change Project, in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which "seeks to build community-level adaptive capacity, reducing the risks faced by climate change, and in turn influencing the policy and institutional areas to promote sustainable management of natural resources to counter likely climate change impacts." The project focuses on Bangladesh's southern coastal belt, which is especially prone to sea level rise and where drought, lack of fresh water and severe fisheries decline are already increasing.

For further information, visit http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/4th-regional-est-forum/Presentations/08_BS2_Indonesia.pdf and http://www.undp-adaptation.org/projects/websites/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=210&sub=1.

We also visited the booth of the World Health Organization (WHO), which provided information on health risks from climate change. We picked up a 2009 WHO report on this issue, entitled “Protecting Health from Climate Change: Connecting Science, Policy, and People,” which evaluates health risks from climate change and proposes recommendations for action. The report is available online at <http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/reports/9789241598880/en/index.html>.

Trees and forests are a recurring theme in booth after booth in the COP-17 display hall. One reason is that many conversations, whether you talk about sustainable communities, carbon capture, water management, ecosystem health or sustainable forest industries, lead to a discussion of the health of trees and forests. We are all familiar with US groups that promote tree planting and forests, such as the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and local groups like Tree Davis and the Sacramento Tree Foundation in Larry’s home town. The booths at the COP provide an opportunity to learn about other organizations and to share that information. Here are links to some of the interesting organizations we identified at the COP.

- Trees for Climate Justice. “Stop Talking, Start Planting” is their theme. They also have an excellent program to engage youth around the world and to explain the importance of trees. For information visit www.plant-for-the-planet.org.
- Rainforest Alliance. Focused on sustainable agriculture, forests and tourism. For information visit www.rainforest-alliance.org.
- Global Canopy Programme. An alliance of worldwide scientific institutions connected to face challenges of understanding and implementing programs to support rainforests. For information visit www.gobalcanopy.org.
- Center for International Forest Research. Focused on the use and management of forests in less developed countries. For information visit www.cifor.org.

During the last few days, we’ve heard a lot about Canada’s reported intention to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol by the end of this year, so we were very interested in the perspectives of the Canadian provinces on the issue of climate change. On Wednesday afternoon we were able to attend a panel discussion with officials from most of the provinces and hear firsthand the actions that they are taking on both climate change mitigation and adaptation. It was an extremely interesting and informative discussion, the highlights of which we’ve provided below.

The panel session, hosted by the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), was entitled “Working to Bridge the Gap: Canadian Mitigation Actions at the Provincial Level.” The panel included representatives from the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as IETA and IISD.

Speaking for British Columbia, Hon. Terry Lake, Minister of Environment, shared the provinces’ recent targets and actions regarding climate change. British Columbia launched its Climate Action Plan in 2008. The Plan set provincial emission reduction targets of 33% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2007 levels by 2050. Pillars of the plan include establishing

a carbon neutral government, instituting a tax on carbon, and preparing long term adaptation strategies. The carbon neutral government policy works by reducing emissions in the province, counting what emissions remain from core government operations and then making a payment into the Pacific Carbon Trust for any remaining emissions. The carbon tax was introduced in 2008 and rises 5 Canadian dollars (CD\$) per year, which will make the price CD\$30 per ton beginning in 2012. The Province is also working closely with the Western Climate Initiative, in partnership with California and Quebec, on instituting a cap and trade program. The reporting period for cap and trade is slated to begin in 2012, with full implementation in 2013. British Columbia has also adopted vehicle GHG emissions standards, modeled on those established by California.

Representing Alberta was Hon. Diana McQueen, Minister of Environment. She reported that Alberta has made a commitment to support 4 carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects in the province, 2 of which are for coal and 2 for oil sands. Companies involved in the projects are required to share information learned as they move forward, for use in Canada and elsewhere. It is estimated that the projects will result in 50 million tons per year reductions in GHG emissions. Alberta has required reporting of GHG emissions from large emitters since 2003, and, under its Carbon Cap and Technology Fund, has so far leveraged CD\$1 billion for green energy projects.

Daniel McInnis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Climate Change, presented experiences from Manitoba. The province has a low emissions profile due to its use of low carbon electricity – with 98% coming from hydropower – and has committed to reducing its GHG emissions. Manitoba established a Climate Change Plan in 2008, which contained 67 action plans for the province. These include phasing out the use of coal, which the province accomplished by shutting down its single coal-fired plant, and introducing a coal tax, which requires users of coal to pay CD\$10 per ton of emissions for the use of coal. In 2014 Manitoba will have in place a ban on coal for water and space heating. The Plan also includes a biodiesel mandate of 2% and an ethanol mandate of 8.5%. The Province has also deployed 238 megawatts of wind power and worked to remove all pre-1995 vehicles from its roads. Manitoba has now implemented 63 of the 67 actions and met its goal of reducing 2010 emissions to levels lower than 2000 emissions. A second goal of lowering emissions to 6% below 1990 levels by 2012 will not be met, but will be discussed as future action plans are developed.

From Ontario, Adam Redish, Director, Air Policy and Climate Change, outlined the province's 2008 Climate Plan, which includes emissions reduction targets of 6% below 1990 levels by 2014, 50% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Ontario is currently phasing out coal-fired electricity and plans to end its use in the province by the end of 2014. Instead it is promoting the use of wind power, smart meters and strong demand-side management programs. Activities also include land use planning and development of public transit. Ontario has also begun adaptation planning.

Charles Larochelle, Assistant Deputy Minister, Environment & Parks, reviewed actions in Quebec. Ninety-eight percent of its electricity is currently produced by renewables, while the industrial sector has reduced emissions by 25% from 1990 levels. A main challenge in Quebec is transportation, as 43% of its GHG emissions are from the transportation section. Under a Climate Action Plan adopted in 2006, the province set emissions reduction targets of 6% below

1990 levels by 2012. The plan includes 26 measures, 25 of which have now been implemented. These include the adoption of emissions standards for vehicles, following the California standards; the establishment of a carbon tax; and the development of policies on energy efficiency and renewables, public transit, green energy and waste management. Quebec's 2011 Action Plan on Electric Vehicles sets a target of 25% electric vehicles by 2020. The province is also working with the Western Climate Initiative to implement a cap and trade plan and is moving toward finalizing its first adaptation strategy. Finally, Quebec is currently designing its 2013 to 2020 Climate Action Plan, which will include a target of reducing emissions 20% below 1990 levels.

Representing Newfoundland and Labrador, Gerald Crane, Director, Climate, Efficiency and Trading, discussed the province's efforts to build capacity in the areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Newfoundland and Labrador is currently seeing more ice and warm water coming from Arctic current, as well as warmer water coming from the Gulf Stream from the south. The province now relies on 90% hydroelectricity and plans to replace almost all thermoelectricity over the next 10 years. It is expected that this will reduce emissions by 10% from today's levels, but emissions will likely still grow due to increasing emissions from iron ore and offshore oil and gas. As a result, the province's emissions reduction target will likely be difficult to meet.

Finally, Dave Sawyer, IISD Director of Climate Change, reviewed the organization's recent publication entitled "Mind the Gap." The purpose of the paper is review climate change mitigation actions in Canada below the federal level and measure the gap between national and subnational programs for emissions reductions and Canada's target to reduce emissions 17% below 2005 levels by 2020. There is currently a gap of 26%. "Mind the Gap" is available at <http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?id=1503>.

We ended the day by attending a panel debate, "Cities of the Future," hosted by Climate Action. The panel included representatives from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, City of Rio de Janeiro, World Green Building Council, Construction Industry Development Board, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, Schneider Electric and Wind Energy South Africa. The panelists discussed ways of creating partnerships for developing and sustaining green cities, reducing GHG emissions and retaining standards of livability as the populations of cities across the globe continue to grow.

For information about Climate Action visit www.climateactionprogramme.org.