



# CLIMATE – NEWS

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**ICFRE – CLIMATE CHANGE NEWS From the Biodiversity and Climate Change (BCC) Division, Directorate of Research, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, P.O: New Forest, Dehra Dun – 248006**

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## CLIMATE CHANGE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### INDIAN MPs WAKE UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Times News Network, May 10, 2007

Members of Parliament (MPs) of all hues turned their attention on the future of the planet during the half-day debate in Lok Sabha when the government replied to the anxiety and queries of members. Not unexpectedly, MPs came with their homework notes. Almost every member who spoke listed details of possible impact of climate change. Shri Sandeep Dixit raised the ante a bit by demanding an explanation why the government had underplayed the threat in an official document to the PMO.

Shri C K Chandrappan of Communist Party of India (CPI) and former environment minister Shri Suresh Prabhu of Shiv Sena were lucid in explaining why developed countries like US should bear greater economic and moral responsibility of undertaking any mitigation and adaptation programme to blunt the impact of climate change. Shri Prabhu was evidently at home explaining nuances of the international Kyoto Protocol on climate change and pushed for both a hard position against commitments on emission cuts in the international arena as well as stern action against polluting sectors domestically. It became a good excuse to link up more immediate environmental issues. Shri M. A. Kharabela Swain of Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) demanded pricing of utilities to control overuse as well as stricter emission norms for the thermal power sector. Shri Ram Kripal Yadav of Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) spoke of the possible impact of climate change on agriculture and the rural hinterland.

Shri Manvendra Singh of BJP, on the other hand, struck hard on the shifting stand of the government, claiming that by joining the Asia-Pacific partnership on clean air, an initiative backed by the US, India was undercutting the more legislative Kyoto Protocol, which it is party

to. He also raised issues about the Clean Development Mechanism under the protocol, used by developed countries to take credit for cheaper green projects in developing countries like India by paying them some money.

While there was consensus on some measures, like cutting down private vehicles and pushing public transport systems, the members remained divided over whether India should commit to cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions, which studies show could impact its economic growth.

### **CENTRE ADMITS CLIMATE CHANGE A PROBLEM**

The Times of India, New Delhi, May 18, 2007

At a review meeting convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, senior ministers agreed that India needed to chart out a roadmap for itself in the light of the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which made it evident that effects of global warming have already arrived and were no longer a futurist sci-fi scenario.

The meeting felt that given India's current growth rates and an ever-increasing demand for energy, there was a need to frame a response which protected the country's ecology — glaciers, river systems and coastline from drastic change. In the long run, this was essential to protect the very economic growth which some argue will be hurt if India were to introduce technologies that reduce emissions causing global warming.

There was also a presentation by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, now directly under the charge of the PM. While the need for India to tweak its economic model to accommodate "sustainable" development is seen as being separate from any shift in its international position that it was not bound to undertake commitments to reduce emissions, there are clear indications of India now being prepared to consider use of green technologies.

### **HEAT ON HIMALAYAS IN UN CLIMATE DRAFT**

The Times Of India, Monday, April 2, 2007

Achim Steiner, the Head of the UN Environment Programme, talking of the likely impact of rising temperatures, widely blamed green house gases from burning fossil fuels for the global warming. "Even a half meter rise in sea levels would have catastrophic effect on Bangladesh and some island states", he added. "If current warming rates are maintained, Himalayan glaciers could decay at very rapid rates, shrinking from the present 500,000 square kilometers to 100,000 square kilometers by 2030s," according to a draft technical summary.

### **WARMING A THREAT TO NATURAL WONDERS: WWF**

Neelam Raaj, Times of India: April 07, 2007

Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, and Himalayan glaciers are eleven of the world's greatest natural wonders that face destruction if the climate continues to warm at the current rate. Other wonders of nature at risk are the Amazonian rain forests and Australia's Great Barrier Reef, says World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in its latest report titled 'Saving the World's Natural Wonders from Climate Change'.

Released ahead of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC's) Second Working Group Report, the WWF report says most of these wonders have already suffered irreversible damage from climate change. The Himalayas, it says, are threatened due to melting glaciers which are receding at an average rate of 10 to 15 metres per year. Himalayas or the 'Water Towers of Asia' feed seven of Asia's great rivers, including the Ganga, and a meltdown could trigger floods initially and droughts in the future.

### **EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE TALLIED UP**

Michael Hopkin, news@nature.com, April 6, 2007

Climate change is very likely having an impact now on our planet and its life, according to the latest report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Further, the future problems caused by rising seas, growing deserts and more frequent droughts, all look set to affect the developing world more than rich countries.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE TO AFFECT DEVELOPING ASIAN COUNTRIES**

www.outlookindia.com, New York, April 7, 2007 (PTI)

Climate change due to global warming could impinge on sustainable development of most developing countries in Asia, leading to fresh water shortages and decreasing crop yield in most parts of the region, a United Nations report says. The report also said that the risk of hunger is projected to remain "very high" in several countries. The inter-governmental report on climate change, released in Brussels yesterday, projects that the crops yields could increase up to 20 per cent in east and southeast Asia while recording a decrease of up to 30 per cent in Central and South Asia by mid-21st century.

### **CLIMATE TAKES AIM**

Michael Hopkin, news@nature.com, April 10, 2007

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) delivered a sobering message on 6 April in Brussels, that billions of the world's poorest citizens are at risk of hardship and disease as a result of climate change. The IPCC's report implies that all six billion plus people on the planet should be concerned. The people most vulnerable will be those who live at or near sea level, often crowded into cities along the coast. But drought, disease and extreme weather events will also become more frequent around the world, threatening the lives and livelihoods of countless more. The report states that many of the effects of climate change are already evident in physical and biological systems. Regional climate changes are affecting natural systems on every continent, with the Arctic, sub-Saharan, Africa, and Asian mega-deltas among the worst affected.

### **GLOBAL WARMING MAY PUT U.S. IN HOT WATER**

Seth Borenstein, www.starttribune.net, April 18, 2007

As the world warms, water either too little, or too much of it, is going to be the major problem for the United States, according to scientists and military experts. It will be a domestic problem, with States clashing over controls of rivers, and a national security problem as water shortages and floods worsen conflicts and terrorism elsewhere in the world, they said. In the

Southwest, regions will need to find new sources of drinking water, the Great Lakes will shrink, fish and other species will be left high and dry, and coastal areas will on occasion be inundated because of sea-level rises and souped-up storms, U.S. scientists said.

The scientists released a 67-page chapter on North American climate effects, which is part of an international report on climate change impact.

### **POLAR OCEAN 'SOAKING UP LESS CO<sub>2</sub>'**

Paul Rincon, BBC News, May 17, 2007

Antarctica, one of Earth's most important absorbers of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is failing to soak up as much of the greenhouse gas as it was expected to, scientists say. The decline of Antarctica's Southern Ocean carbon sink or reservoir means that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels may be higher in future than predicted. These carbon sinks are vital as they mop up excess CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere, slowing down global warming.

This effect had been predicted by climate scientists, and is taken into account - to some extent - by climate models. But it appears to be happening 40 years ahead of schedule.

### **SCHWARZENEGGER ACCUSES GOVERNMENT ON WARMING**

Reuters, May 21, 2007

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and fellow Republican Governor Jodi Rell of Connecticut accused the U.S. government of "inaction and denial" on global warming. "It's bad enough that the federal government has yet to take the threat of global warming seriously, but it borders on malfeasance for it to block the efforts of States such as California and Connecticut that are trying to protect the public's health and welfare," the governors wrote in The Washington Post.

These two States and 10 others have approved plans for tougher standards than those imposed by the government to limit vehicle emissions of the greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change. But the States can't put the new standards into practice without a waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency, which has not yet granted one, 16 months after California first requested it.

### **GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS DECLINE**

H. Josef Hebert, Associated Press Writer, May 23, 2007

A mild winter, followed by a cool summer caused U.S. carbon dioxide emissions to decline last year, according to the Energy Department. The results were hailed by the White House as support for its global warming policies.

The department's Energy Information Administration said that preliminary data shows a 1.3 percent decline in the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide released in 2006 from energy-related sources, the first decline in 11 years and the biggest decline since 1990.

## **CHINA TO CUT GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS BY 950 MILLION TONS**

Ying Lou and Dune Lawrence, [www.bloomberg.com](http://www.bloomberg.com), June 4, 2007

China plans to use hydropower, nuclear energy, biomass fuels and gas to help cut 950 million metric tons of so-called greenhouse gas output by 2010 as the country closes in on the U.S. as the biggest producer of harmful emissions. The government of the world's fastest-growing economy set out the steps in a 62-page National Climate Change Program. Ma Kai, chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission, its top economic planning body, presented the plan in Beijing today.

U.S. President George W. Bush on May 31 called for talks with rapidly growing nations such as India and China to establish a new framework for when the Kyoto Protocol treaty on emissions expires in 2012. Bush is expected push his agenda this week at the meeting of the Group of Eight industrial countries – the U.S., Japan, Germany, France, the U.K., Canada, Italy and Russia – in Heiligendamm, Germany. Chinese President Hu Jintao will also attend.

## **MESSY G8 'DEAL' ON CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE**

Martin Khor, <http://thestar.com.my>, June 11, 2007

Last week's G8 Summit produced a messy compromise on climate change. It allowed the United States to escape from a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and confirms the United Nations as the main venue for future talks, but also opens the road to a US initiative to push developing countries into new obligations.

The leaders of the developed countries signed a declaration that gives a target for reducing the global level of greenhouse gas emissions, which cause global warming, by at least half by 2050. But it mentions only the European Union, Japan and Canada as accepting this target. The United States and Russia will only “seriously consider” it. This will allow enough “wiggle room” for the US government not to commit itself to a timetable (or at least the same timetable) for emission reduction. However, Europe, Canada and Japan have for the first time signalled a self-set target to cut their emissions.

## **G8 DOCUMENT REENERGIZES MULTILATERAL CLIMATE CHANGE PROCESS UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS**

UNFCCC Press Release, June 11, 2007

According to Yvo de Boer, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Thursday's agreement on climate change clinched at the G8 summit in Heiligendamm has paved the way for negotiations in Bali in December and given climate talks under the auspices of the UN a considerable boost. “The multilateral climate change process under the United Nations has been reenergised,” he said. “This is a breakthrough in terms of making progress towards an enhanced future climate change regime and will send important signals to developing countries on the readiness of industrialised nations and emerging economies to act,” he added.

## **WORLD BANK BIOCARBON FUND FOR LULUCF PROJECTS**

<http://carbonfinance.org/>

WB carbon finance has opened Tranche Two of BioCarbon Fund from March 2007.

The World Bank carbon finance manages about 1 billion dollars to purchase credits of GHG emission reduction from projects that are expected to be registered for CDM. It also advances funds for preparation of documentation needed for CDM project activity. The BioCarbon Fund aims to finance land based LULUCF sequestration projects. Further details please are available at <http://carbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=BioCF>

## **CHINA OVERTAKES U.S. AS TOP CO<sub>2</sub> EMITTER**

<http://www.theconservativevoice.com>, June 20, 2007

China has overtaken the United States as the world's top producer of carbon dioxide emissions – the biggest man-made contributor to global warming – based on the latest widely accepted energy consumption data, a Dutch research group says. According to a report released Tuesday by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, China overtook the U.S. in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> by about 7.5 percent in 2006. While China was 2 percent below the United States in 2005, voracious coal consumption and increased cement production caused the numbers to rise rapidly, the group said.

The study said China, which relies on coal for two-thirds of its energy needs and makes 44 percent of the world's cement, produced 6.23 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2006. In comparison, the U.S., which gets half its electricity from coal, produced 5.8 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

## ICFRE NEWS

### PARTICIPATION BY DG – ICFRE AND HEAD, BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE DIVISION, ICFRE IN 26<sup>TH</sup> SBSTA / SBI MEETINGS OF THE UNFCCC

7 - 18 May 2007, Bonn, Germany

Shri Jagdish Kishwan, DG – ICFRE and Shri Sandeep Tripathi, Head, BCC Division, ICFRE participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> SBSTA / SBI Meetings organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 7 – 18 May 2007 at Bonn, Germany on nomination by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.

During SBSTA among other issues, the following important issues related to LULUCF were deliberated at length: i) Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in developing countries (REDD), ii) Demonstrating the eligibility of land for CDM A&R Projects and iii) increasing the limit for small scale CDM A&R Projects. As an outcome, CDM EB in its 31<sup>st</sup> meeting has again decided to call for public input on issue of demonstrating land eligibility for CDM A&R projects. ICFRE has made its submission as observer organization to UNFCCC and also through Government of India. Regarding, increasing the limits of small scale CDM A&R projects, India has a position not to increase the limit at present.

ICFRE delegation put forcefully its input and intervention on the issue of REDD. On this hotly debated issue of REDD, the Indian concept of “Compensated Reduction” got wide support during SBSTA – 26. US also supported India’s stand by asserting that a “*range of actions*” to reduce emissions from deforestation needed to be considered which according to US included “Forest Conservation and Stabilization” efforts also. EU considered using the phrase “*range of actions*” as a compromise formula because of Brazil’s opposition to the Indian proposal. Congo Basin countries lead by Cameroon/Gabon stressed on including ‘stabilization of forest’ as the policy approach suitable to countries in their region with low rate of deforestation. Since stabilization is an outcome of the process of conservation, India has been supportive of Congo Basin approach. Many countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Singapore expressed support in their interventions for ‘forest conservation’.

Highpoint of the process was isolation of Brazil in the forum of G-77 and China on the issue of REDD as well as open support to Indian position by China, Singapore, and strong indirect support by Coalition of Rainforest Nations, US and Congo Basin Countries.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **UNFCCC DIALOGUE AND KYOTO PROTOCOL AWG 4**

27 - 31 August 2007, Vienna, Austria.

The fourth workshop of the 'Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention' and the fourth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG), are expected to take place from 27-31 August 2007, in Vienna, Austria. For more information contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND DESERTIFICATION: MONITORING, MODELLING AND FORECASTING**

10 - 13 September 2007, Wengen, Switzerland

This meeting will review (1) where we were and what we have learned about desertification processes over the last three decades, (2) the current state of the art in this and related fields (monitoring, modelling, integration of natural and social sciences, historical background, etc), and (3) where we are heading, given the high likelihood of significant climate changes in the coming decades. For more information contact: Organizing Committee; tel: +39-33278-5567; fax: +39-33278-9960; e-mail: [wengen@jrc.it](mailto:wengen@jrc.it); Internet: <http://www.unige.ch/climate/Workshops/wengen07.html>

### **NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL**

17 - 21 September 2007, Montreal, Canada

MOP-19 is tentatively scheduled to take place in September 2007 in Montreal, Canada. It is likely to be preceded by the 39th meeting of the Implementation Committee. For more information contact: Ozone Secretariat; tel: +254-20-762-3850/1; fax: +254-20-762-4691; e-mail: [ozoneinfo@unep.org](mailto:ozoneinfo@unep.org); Internet: <http://ozone.unep.org/Events/meetings2006and2007.asp>

### **CLIMATE CHANGE: SCIENCE, POLITICS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY**

17 - 23 September 2007, Merton College, Oxford, United Kingdom.

This conference will address the linkages of science and politics, within a context of uncertainty, and the difficulties of making policies to address the problems of global warming. The conference will review lessons learned in recent years, from the Kyoto Protocol to initiatives at the level of state governments, cities and communities. It will attempt to define what approach or combination of approaches is most likely to bring the best ecological, social and economic outcomes. For more information contact: e-mail: [trust@21stcenturytrust.org](mailto:trust@21stcenturytrust.org); Internet: <http://www.21stcenturytrust.org/2007.html#1>



## **RECENT STUDIES**

### **TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS PREDICTED TO COOL EARTH**

Jim Giles, news@nature.com, April 10, 2007

Large-scale deforestation long fingered as a contributing factor in climate change could cool Earth, say the researchers behind one of the first attempts to model the phenomenon at a global scale.

Logging is often attacked because living trees help to mop up carbon dioxide, thereby buffering rises in greenhouse gases. But deforestation has different effects in different parts of the world. In high latitudes, for example, removing the forests could help to cool these regions. This is because the trees, which absorb sunlight, would be replaced by snow-covered fields in winter that reflect the light. But in tropical regions, cutting back on forests would mean that less water is transferred from soils into the atmosphere, meaning fewer clouds and a warmer planet. However, majority of researchers say that the modelling study is not based on sound parameters and is no excuse for deforestation.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEFORESTATION WILL LEAD TO DECLINES IN GLOBAL BIRD DIVERSITY, STUDY WARNS**

University of California, San Diego, www.sciencedaily.com, June 5, 2007

Global warming and the destruction of natural habitats will lead to significant declines and extinctions in the world's 8,750 terrestrial bird species over the next century, according to a study conducted by biologists at the University of California, San Diego and Princeton University. Their study, the first global assessment of how climate change and habitat destruction may interact to impact the distribution of a large group of vertebrates over the next century, appeared in the June 5 issue of the journal PLoS Biology.

The scientists warn in their study that, even under the most optimistic scenarios of controlling climate change and protecting habitats, at least 400 bird species are projected to become imperiled by the year 2050 due to reductions in their geographic ranges of greater than 50 percent. All estimates in the study are based on the assumption that birds will not dramatically shift their geographic ranges in response to a changing climate.

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