



# WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT



December 14, 2009

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## *In Copenhagen*

### **ANDERSON'S NOTEBOOK: Optimistic Going Into Second Week of Climate Talks**

**W**ith one week down and one to go in Copenhagen, what can be said about where things stand today?

I arrived amidst confusion—it is Copenhagen's largest conference ever—as well as dissension and dismay over the major differences between half-dozen or more draft “final agreements” that emerged late last week at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

First the leaked Danish draft, then the draft of tiny Tuvalu, next the draft Copenhagen Protocol of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), then Friday the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) draft. And with the so-called BASIC text (from China, Brazil, South Africa, India) for a Copenhagen Accord and the AWG-Kyoto Protocol extension drafts long in the wings, it is a dizzying array, with little time to reconcile them.

Still, I have to be optimistic. After days and days of posturing (usual), and with a push from (latest count today) 130 heads of state arriving beginning tomorrow (unusual), the frazzled delegates will probably hammer out some key issues today and will climax a hectic week with a last-minute, late-night “politically binding” agreement.

I arrived in Copenhagen Sunday from Paris, the City of Light, with Nobuo Tanaka, the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency. He refused to view the coming week darkly. Nor do the other seasoned COPpers with whom I have spoken, and nor do I. It's the logic of the situation. For those less inclined to parse the details of the messy ending last week, they conclude that with all those heads of state about to de-

scend on Copenhagen, something must be brewing besides Carlsberg and Tuborg.

This will not be the binding legal accord many wanted. But what a political agreement would do for global aspirations for effective climate action, and for the chances for a binding agreement as soon as next year, should not be underestimated, for two reasons:

First, it can no longer be said that the major greenhouse gas emitters are not seriously engaged. The United States and the European Union, of course, and many stalwarts from Kyoto and COP-13 in Bali, Indonesia are hard at work, but China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia are at the table in a major way for the first time. Indeed, China and the small island state of Tuvalu were the standouts last week, with China's negotiators on full display with their pungent remarks, jokes, and overtures to the group of 77 developing nations (G-77).

No, China's commitment to a carbon intensity reduction of 40 percent to 45 percent below 2005 levels leaves plenty of room for improvement, but it's a start. Remember that China has already shut down many emitters; strictly regulated others; imposed very tough fuel economy standards; and used its one-child population policy, the ultimate climate strategy, to keep 400 million fewer Chinese from being born and carbon dioxide emissions almost two billion tons per year lower than would otherwise have occurred.

Think of China's current posture as a form of grandfathering. Last week, China indicated a willingness to submit externally financed national mitigation actions to measurement and verification. Not a great step one might say, but Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei Friday did say China's internal process would produce domestic monitoring and guarantees that China is “also willing to increase transparency by publicly announcing the results of our actions coming out of China. We'll certainly do it ...” but just not in the more enforcement-oriented fashion demanded of the developed nations under Kyoto.

In other words, China is now part of the dickering, even while favoring a double standard—Kyoto for de-

veloped signatories and something less and different for the BASIC group and the G-77. But it is on the slippery slope toward commitment to measurable, reportable, and finally verifiable emissions requirements in the near future. That is progress.

Second, and I will say more later in the week, the developing nations are energetically engaged. They have blocked meetings between the United States and the European Union; submitted competing drafts (Tuvalu, AOSIS) that caused their would-be ally China much heartburn; and they stand a good chance of securing major commitments of “fast-start” short-term funding of \$10 billion for adaptation, technology development, and forest carbon sequestration, with tens of billions to follow. Still, a word of caution: there remains a risk that the north-south, rich-poor, wet-dry divisions that appeared in earlier COPs and in the World Trade Organization might derail the entire week.

The question is, will the debate over the large commitments of fast-start funding that appear likely at present degenerate into talk of reparations, penalties,

and retribution, or will the focus be on an unparalleled opportunity for global green cooperation and development and a new vision of prosperity?

This seems right now a greater risk than that the conference will come apart over what the developed, OECD nations will agree to vis-a-vis what China, Brazil, South African, and India will accept. Mr. Su Wei, China’s chief climate negotiator put it well: “we need to strengthen our confidence, consolidate our consensus, increase our cooperation, and enhance our actions.”

BY FREDERICK R. ANDERSON

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