



# WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT



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## *In Copenhagen*

### **ANDERSON'S NOTEBOOK: It's Down to the Final Hours**

**C**OPENHAGEN—Officially, the outcome of two intense weeks of negotiations is far from settled.

Some delegates issue statements, very gloomy statements, about how they are nowhere near a deal and cannot conclude one today, the last day of the conference. But from the beginning there have been hopeful signs.

It is hard to tell in the ebb and flow of last-minute developments, but optimism seems to me to be at a high point. Yesterday's announcement by Secretary Clinton that the United States will join with developed nations in raising \$100 billion per year starting in 2020 to help the poorest countries cope with climate change recharged the COP's failing batteries, just in time. Her admonition that nations like China and India must accept international inspection and verification leaves an important issue hanging for today's final negotiations, but those, it seems, are on the way to resolution.

The Secretary had few specifics on the funding mechanism for the significant commitment, but indications are that funding might come from a combination of public and private financing and might include a fee levied on emission allowance auctions already contemplated by the House's Waxman-Markey bill and Kerry-Boxer in the Senate. The offers for fast start funding of more than \$20 billion for the first three years of aid remain undisturbed.

Last evening I had the good fortune to spend a moment with David Sandalow of the Energy Department and Todd Stern, U.S. special climate envoy, as they saw off Secretary Clinton to an emergency meeting of the Group of 20 nations that French President Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown managed to arrange.

Imagine such countries as Australia, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Columbia, Ethiopia, the EU Commission, Germany, France, Granada, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lesotho, Maldives, Mexico, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, United Kingdom, United States and Denmark, all gathering to identify persuasive arguments to swing or entice wavering nations and try to put the disparate elements of a general accord in place. What can the President add at this point? Reports are that he has no additional commitments to make. Whether he will remain in Copenhagen through the day and even into the night to try to bring recalcitrant nations into the final agreement is unclear.

**Encouraging Signals From China.** Encouraging signals continue to emerge from the Chinese delegation, despite China's resistance to international oversight on its own behalf and of other rapidly-developing nations.

What happens today in further exchanges with China may prove in retrospect to have been crucial. For example, Secretary Clinton sent signals that "the poorest and most vulnerable among us" should get the money, which perhaps implied that China would not be eligible itself, and as Stern has indicated, developing countries like China should be donors and enablers, not recipients, of climate finance.

It helps the U.S. position that China has basically made the same point throughout the two weeks: the poorest of the poor nations should be the primary recipients of the "fast start" international funds (see Monday's Notebook entry (See Monday's Notebook entry) that, together with the outlines of a system for funding efforts to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (See Thursday's Notebook entry) seem the least controversial of the emerging elements of an agreement.

Keep in mind also that the European Union, Australia, Canada, and Japan hope to move beyond Kyoto and build its elements into new treaty, but that many others, especially China, and also India and other G-77 nations, have consistently maintained throughout the week that they want the strictures of the Kyoto Protocol in a new

commitment period. Yet the many Kyoto signatories cannot agree on what exactly the next commitments and schedule should be. And of course the United States stands outside this debate because it has not signed the Kyoto Protocol.

**Hard to Know What Final Day Will Bring.** It's hard to know where things will stand in twenty-four hours.

It is hard enough to learn the whereabouts of key delegations, as positions are modified hour by hour. For now, despite cautions from the United States, the European Union, the island states, the so-called BASIC group of China, India, South Africa, Indonesia, and Brazil, not to mention the deep frustrations expressed by African nations threatened with some of the worst potential effects of global warming, I continue to hold the same optimistic view with which I opened my Notebook on Monday.

The dynamic of international posturing then last-minute coalescence still is at work. It would be unfortunate that, as the year ends, the hopes and fears of so many for at least a strong aspirational commitment to proceed to hammer out a binding agreement within a year fails after all that has gone before this week.

By FREDERICK R. ANDERSON

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