

Delegation Report
AGBM 7
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Five negotiating days remain before the Berlin Mandate expires October 31, 1997. Whatever agreement has been achieved by the end of the Eighth session of the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM) will then move forward to the Third Conference of the Parties meeting scheduled for Kyoto, Japan December 1 to 10, 1997.

Two possible outcomes are emerging and neither appear as if they will lead to real climate protection.

Scenario one:

Various U.S. constituencies, including members of Congress, succeed in preventing any agreement at AGBM 8, the Berlin Mandate expires and negotiations begin again in Kyoto on a Kyoto Mandate. Those supporting this scenario believe they will succeed in bringing into the negotiations commitments for developing countries long considered a key failure in the Berlin Mandate negotiated at the First Conference of the Parties in April 1995.

Such an outcome would be a severe blow to the Convention itself and a tragedy for the atmosphere. The likely result of such a scenario is collapse of the climate talks which would take years to repair. If developed (Annex I) Parties are serious about negotiating greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments for developing countries, these same Parties must show they are serious about meeting their current commitments. At this time, only three Annex 1 Parties (the U.K., Germany and Switzerland) are on track for meeting their year 2000 commitments, only five Parties had submitted their national action plans by the April 15, 1997 deadline, and by AGBM 7, only 13 Parties (of 36 due) had submitted their communications, initial analysis by the Convention Secretariat showed that most Parties had not followed the guidelines for reporting, particularly on policies and measures. In addition, since Parties signed on to the Convention in 1992, many have DECREASED spending on research and development, scientific assessment, monitoring and observation, etc., - key commitments in Article 4.1, the very article developed Parties are trying to, strengthen as a means of increasing the commitments of developing countries.

Negotiations aimed at securing emission reduction commitments for developing countries will involve give and take on both sides. In addition to technology transfer and financial resources, developing countries will demand that any further commitments to emissions reductions on their part be tied to full compliance by developed Parties, both with respect to the general provisions of the Convention and to meeting current and future legally binding emission reduction targets.

Scenario two:

Even if negotiations continue to move forward, there is a risk that so many "elements of flexibility" will be included in the protocol that real emissions reductions will not be achieved? Or it will be impossible to determine whether a target has actually been met.