

It seems increasingly likely that reaching agreement on the appropriate target and timetable will take up almost all of the Ministers' time in Kyoto, and that other important issues could be shuffled to the side, with only the barest outline of how they would fit into the overall scheme. Thus, key issues for Canada such as comprehensiveness, emissions trading and joint implementation would either have to be the subject of further negotiation post Kyoto, or could be agreed in principle but with so few details that there would be no assurance that they will provide the real flexibility that Canada needs. Even with respect to developing country commitments, a key bottom line for the United States, it is difficult to say whether a "Kyoto Mandate" can be agreed that will set a framework and deadline for negotiating appropriate commitments for these countries.

While UN negotiations are known for the seeming intransigence of many positions and the resort to last-minute pressure tactics, the prospect of actually reaching agreement in Kyoto appears as difficult as ever.