

differing mechanisms.

POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPING COUNTRY COMMITMENTS: Canadian objectives entering the session were mainly to ensure that space would be created at the Buenos Aires conference for an initial discussion on two tracks: (a) possible track for voluntary commitments in the short-term (first commitment period beginning 2008) and (b) initial steps to launching a process for the possible inclusion of developing country commitments in the longer term (second commitment period to begin 2012). Objectives were met, but climate for meaningful engagement remains poor.

(a) Voluntary commitments: Item to cover voluntary commitments as proposed by Argentina remains on the agenda, but largely only because the Bonn meeting did not have the authority to remove it. This authority rests with the Executive Secretary of the convention in consultation with the host country and hence is likely to go through. Divisions were acute in the discussions of this item. Several countries clarified that commitments sought would be targets under business-as-usual projections, and there was general agreement that the Annex I expert group should examine possible criteria for "pledges". Ways to accommodate voluntary commitments in the absence of a provision in the protocol was identified as another set of issues requiring further examination amongst Annex I.

(b) Broader track: Hook was provided for discussions of a possible broader track by an agenda item requesting a review of the adequacy of commitments contained in Article 4.2 (a) and (b) of the Convention (Annex I commitments prior to the launch of the Berlin Mandate/Kyoto process). Review was mandated by the convention by the end of 1998, but of course has been rendered somewhat redundant by the conclusion of the Protocol with new commitments for 2008-2012. Nonetheless, agreement was reached early that commitments were inadequate and a working group was convened under Zimbabwe and Canada to negotiate an outcome for transmittal to Buenos Aires. As might be predicted, developed countries argued that the provisions themselves were inadequate, because without action by a broader range of Parties, the environmental objectives of the convention would not be met. Developing Countries on the other hand, argued that the commitments under the Articles were inadequate because developed countries were not implementing their existing commitments seriously and did not agree to any further actions until after 2008. Group also laid clear marker "that Cop 4 must not be distracted from carrying out the review mandated by the Convention through the introduction of extraneous matters such as the consideration of new commitments for Parties not included in Annex I". Canada and Zimbabwe co-chairs made best (and largely appreciated) efforts to facilitate a decision that would build on (albeit limited) common ground. Effort came remarkably close, but outcome was transformed into a set of conclusions which basically summarizes areas of convergence and divergence. Nonetheless, it ensures the potential for further engagement at Buenos Aires, to be facilitated both by the agreed conclusions and by a compilation of Parties' submissions to be received by the secretariat by mid-