

Observations

The written word in the UN process is paramount and considerable time is spent discussing and drafting text for reports. This session saw the arrival of "non-notes of non-chairmen" to bring closure to particularly acrimonious discussions on interpreting the Kyoto Protocol, developing agenda for future meetings and proposing work programs to determine how and by when the actual work to flesh out the flexibility mechanisms will be carried out. With no hard deadlines in the process at the moment, the pressure to get on with the business at hand is low. At the close of the Bonn sessions, it was clear that EU and G-77 were not going to allow progress to occur too quickly on key issues.

Canada and other countries with similar interests wanted to see their priorities move forward expeditiously. This established combative situations with other groups of Parties with different priorities and interests. At one point in the discussions, it became clear that the European Union (EU) would maintain its opposition to IET and to the CDM even though they had been agreed to in Kyoto. Canada, the US, Australia and others were asking for thoughtful debate of the "flex-mecs" (flexibility mechanisms) in order to hear good ideas and fully explore the issues and understand the concerns. The debate did not occur in the plenary sessions or in the open contact group meetings.

However, there was a semblance of an exchange of views with G-77 and EU in the many workshops held parallel to the meetings. The G-77 wants CDM early and wants the rules to be set in their favour. Both the CDM and EIT mechanisms are seen by a few powerful EU countries as nothing more than loopholes to allow the US and others to avoid reducing their domestic emissions. While this is the official stance of the EU, individual countries indicated privately that they support IET and CDM but cannot say so until EU ministers formally approve a new position. In the meantime, their strategy is one of the lowest common denominator.

The EU ministers of the Environment were scheduled to meet the week after the Bonn meetings to discuss a new proposal for allocating burden sharing among members of the EU bubble. This meant that because of the scheduling of the meetings of their ministers, the EU negotiators arrived in Bonn the way they arrived in Kyoto and numerous meetings before that, without up-dated negotiating instructions. Progress is blocked or frustrated by the EU keeping all options open and never closing of issues just in case EU ministers need room to fit their decision into the negotiations.

The G-77 plus China are under pressure to eventually take on reduction commitments and to take on voluntary commitments soon. Developing countries appeared to not want to be subjected to the Kyoto Protocol's precedent to allocating emission reduction