The International Herald Tribune  
  
  
                      December 15, 2007 Saturday  
  
  
**Conference on climate nears deal on forests;  
Developing nations would receive aid in trade for saving trees**  
BYLINE: Peter Gelling - The New York Times Media Group  
  
SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1  
  
LENGTH: 704 words  
  
DATELINE: NUSA DUA, Indonesia  
  
  
Governments at the United Nations meeting on climate change agreed in principle  
Friday to a system that would compensate developing countries for protecting  
their rain forests, a deal that officials described as a nascent but innovative  
effort to mitigate deforestation and global warming.  
  
The cutting down of forests across the globe contributes a startling 20 percent  
of the world's annual greenhouse pollution through burning, gases released from  
deforested soil and smoldering peat, scientists say. By comparison, the U.S.  
share of greenhouse emissions is 24 percent of the world total.  
  
''It's a landmark in bringing a large group of developing countries into active  
participation in reducing emissions,'' said Philip Clapp, deputy managing  
director of the Pew Environment Group, the conservation arm of the Pew  
charitable trusts in the United States. ''It has the potential for first time to  
generate the kind of investment in forest protection that has been unavailable  
until now.''  
  
The precise ways that countries with large rain forests, like Indonesia and  
Brazil, will be compensated have not been fully worked out.  
  
UN officials said that part of the financing would come from developed countries  
in the form of aid and that other funds will come from carbon credits - part of  
the system of incentives for reducing greenhouse gases mandated by the 1997  
Kyoto Protocol.  
  
  
Officials said that Indonesia, which has the world's third-largest area of rain  
forest after Brazil and Congo, rallied developing countries to support the deal,  
which until now has been held up by disputes over how to assess the usefulness  
of rain forests in moderating global warming.  
  
''This agreement is very important to us and to the world,'' said Nurmasripatin,  
a member of the Indonesian delegation at the conference, which is taking place  
on the resort island of Bali. ''There is consensus that we must limit carbon  
emissions from deforestation. But developing countries are not able to do it on  
their own.''  
  
The World Bank estimates that Indonesia - the world's third-leading emitter of  
greenhouse gases, after China and the United States, mainly because of the  
destruction of its forests - stands, along with other major forested countries,  
to earn billions of dollars if the plan is successful.  
  
The agreement on deforestation, formally known as the Reduced Emissions from  
Deforestation in Developing Countries, is part of the wider discussions here on  
reaching a global agreement on addressing climate change.  
  
The talks, which began Dec. 3 and were nearing their conclusion Friday, are  
aimed at reaching an accord to start two years of negotiations to work out a new  
treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012.  
  
Environmentalists here said the deal on protecting forests was a good start but  
some had reservations about its implementation.  
  
Frances Seymour, director for the Center for International Forestry Research, a  
U.S.-based nonprofit group, voiced concern that the system was vulnerable to  
corruption and could be undermined by a growing demand for biofuels.  
  
Global demand for palm oil, a popular biofuel, has increased dramatically in  
recent years and has led to the widespread clearing of tropical forests to make  
way for palm plantations.  
  
Seymour also said she worried that the benefits of the UN plan would not reach  
indigenous people who derive their homes and livelihoods from the forests and  
could even displace them as companies buy up the land in order to receive the  
compensation.  
  
  
''We have to make sure those who are not as well connected have their interests  
recognized as well,'' Seymour said.  
  
The World Bank, together with the Nature Conservancy, another U.S.-based  
environmental group, announced this week the establishment of several pilot  
projects to further the aims of the UN plan.  
  
A $100 million Readiness Fund would provide developing countries with technical  
and financial assistance to measure carbon stored in its forests and devise  
strategies to reduce deforestation. It would also finance research on measuring  
reductions in emissions though sustaining forests.  
  
A $200 million Carbon Fund will test the financial mechanisms in the UN plan,  
such as the trade of carbon credits, that could lead to less deforestation.

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**Evidence of progress emerges at Bali talks;  
Next step for climate: Negotiations to limit greenhouse gases**  
  
BYLINE: Thomas Fuller and Peter Gelling - The New York Times Media Group  
  
SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1  
  
LENGTH: 1311 words  
  
DATELINE: NUSA DUA, Indonesia  
  
Countries represented at a United Nations conference on climate change looked to  
be heading for a landmark agreement on a time frame for negotiations to combat  
global warming, officials said Friday.  
  
After a weeklong deadlock between the United States and the European Union,  
diplomats reported that agreements were falling into place, with Germany's  
environment minister, Sigmar Gabriel, joking that the ''climate in the climate  
convention has changed.''  
  
Yvo de Boer, the head of the UN climate change agency that helped broker the  
talks on the island of Bali, said negotiations here had been particularly  
fraught because the issue of global warming goes ''to the core not only of  
climate change but of economic policy.''  
  
''These past two weeks have been unique in that we are about to embark on  
something that for many years countries have been unwilling to embark on,'' de  
Boer said.  
  
An agreement in Bali offers the possibility that the world, including the United  
States, will spend the next two years negotiating a treaty that limits  
greenhouse gas emissions and ultimately slows the warming of the planet.  
  
Yet the difficulty of simply agreeing to these negotiations portends an  
acrimonious two years of actually deciding who carries the burden of reducing  
greenhouse pollution.  
  
The differences in philosophy at the meeting were striking and fundamental. EU  
negotiators said they favored specific government-imposed caps on emissions and  
wanted industrial countries to lead the way. The United States favors relying on  
the market - its delegates said that higher oil, natural gas and coal prices  
will drive consumers away from fossil fuels - as well as technology to reduce  
greenhouse gas emissions.  
  
Developing countries, a vaguely defined group that includes members as diverse  
as China and Costa Rica, refer to the historical responsibility of countries  
that became rich with the convenience of burning coal and oil for energy - a  
luxury that developing countries may not have.  
  
''The developed countries have had 200 years to follow a carbon-rich path to  
industrialization,'' said Munir Akram, the permanent representative of Pakistan  
at the UN and the spokesman at the conference here for the G-77 plus China, the  
bloc of developing countries represented here.  
  
''We cannot afford to allow our development to be stalled or reversed,'' he  
said. ''The levels of poverty in the developing world are so high that we need  
to grow and we need to grow rapidly.''  
  
Developing countries, including fast-growing China, insist that rich countries  
be subject to emissions limits. But emissions cuts by developing countries, they  
say, should be voluntary.  
  
There appears to be little disagreement on the timetable for a new agreement:  
2009 is widely cited as the deadline for a global deal to replace the Kyoto  
Protocol, the agreement to limit emissions that all major wealthy countries  
follow except the United States.  
  
But even supporters say negotiating the deal in two years will be tight.  
  
''It's very ambitious timetable, and it will certainly not be achieved if we  
keep the same kind of method of work as we have done over the last years,'' said  
Artur Runge-Metzger, the head of climate change issues at the European  
Commission. The EU would like to ''at least double the number of negotiating  
sessions over the coming two years,'' he said.  
  
Delegates here say that by Thursday night the meeting had moved swiftly away  
from the gloomy stalemate that had prevailed for the previous week. The United  
States, which had been widely blamed for creating an impasse, had become ''more  
flexible,'' said Gabriel, the German minister.  
  
Coincidentally or not, the change in tenor at the meeting came after Al Gore,  
fresh from accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway for helping raise awareness  
about climate change, gave a rousing speech to the Bali delegates.  
  
Gore told them they could accept a minimalist outcome in Bali because the Bush  
administration would be out of office by the time the substance of the climate  
change agreement was negotiated.  
  
''Over the next two years the United States is going to be somewhere it is not  
now,'' Gore said. ''You must anticipate that.''  
  
Among the hundreds of speeches given at the two-week conference, Gore's was  
probably the most talked about.  
  
''My sense is that people were incredibly impressed by the presentation he  
made,'' said de Boer, the head of the UN climate change agency. ''It was a very  
important moment.''  
  
Among the highlights of the climate change conference was an agreement to  
compensate developing countries for protecting their rain forests, a plan that  
environmentalists described as an innovative effort to mitigate global warming.  
  
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of the world's annual greenhouse pollution through burning, gases released from  
deforested soil and smoldering peat, scientists say. By comparison, the U.S.  
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time to generate the kind of investment in forest protection that has been  
unavailable until now.''  
  
Doug Boucher, the director of the tropical forest and climate initiative of the  
Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit U.S. group, called the plan a major  
breakthrough in helping combat global warming.  
  
  
''Up until now we have left deforestation out of our attempts to address climate  
change,'' Boucher said.  
  
He said cutting down forests contributed more to global warming annually than  
all types of transportation combined.  
  
The precise ways that countries with large rain forests, like Indonesia and  
Brazil, would be compensated have not been fully worked out. UN officials said  
that part of the financing would come from developed countries via aid and that  
other funds would come from carbon credits - part of the system of incentives  
for reducing greenhouse gases mandated by the Kyoto Protocol.  
  
Norway has pledged nearly $2.8 billion over five years to developing countries  
that preserve their forests.  
  
Officials said Indonesia, which has the third-largest area of rain forest after  
Brazil and Congo, rallied developing countries to support the plan, which had  
been held up for years in part by disputes over how to measure the reduction in  
greenhouse gases from preserving forests.  
  
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