

PROGRESS [^]ISSUE

Over the northern summer and in the lead up to the vital UN meeting in Copenhagen this December, Heads of State have made a number of commitments to reduce emissions and prevent dangerous climate change. The July edition of the Kinesis Climate Monitor outlines some of the highlights of this progress.

PROGRESS in the US

The US House of Representatives passed the *American Clean Energy and Security Act* on 26 June by a vote of 219 to 212. This Act, also known as the *Waxman-Markey Bill* aims to reduce the United States' emissions by 17% from 2005 levels by 2020 and by 83% by 2050. The centrepiece of the Act is a cap-and-trade style emissions trading scheme that would cover 80% of US emissions.

The Act also includes a renewable portfolio standard which will require utilities to generate 6% of their capacity from renewable sources or energy efficiency savings by 2012. This will increase by roughly 3% a year until 2021, when utilities would be required to produce 20% of their electricity from renewables and demonstrated energy efficiency.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Tom Friedman explains why, despite some flaws, the *American Clean Energy and Security Act* is a significant step towards reducing US emissions www.nytimes.com
To read an interview with President Obama discussing the progress of the American Clean Energy and Security Act go to www.nytimes.com

PROGRESS at the G8

For the first time the **Group of 8**, which includes the world's eight richest developed economies, agreed to a goal of preventing global average temperatures from rising more than 2°C. To achieve this goal the G8 have committed to a target of reducing total global emissions by 50% by 2050. The declaration also includes a commitment from developed nations to contribute to this target by reducing their emissions by 80% by 2050. With the support of the new US administration the commitment to a firm 2050 emissions reduction target is a significant step forward for the G8 compared to previous meetings.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To see the official G8 declaration go to www.g8italia2009.it In an article which appeared in *The Guardian*, George Monbiot has assessed the implications of these targets and calculated where the burden of responsibility for meeting them will fall.

PROGRESS at the Major Economies Forum

The Major Economies Forum (MEF) was held immediately after the G8 meeting and was chaired by US President Barack Obama. Like the G8, the MEF, which includes major emitters such as India, China and the US, also committed to a goal of preventing global average temperatures from rising by more than 2°C. By chairing this meeting, the US administration has indicated the importance it has placed on securing a global climate change agreement and the progress which has been made since the last administration.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To see the official MEF declaration go to www.whitehouse.gov

PROGRESS in the UK

The UK Government has announced plans to reduce carbon emissions by 34%, as compared with 1990 levels, and source 40% of its electricity from low carbon sources, including nuclear energy, by 2020. The UK *Low Carbon Transition Plan* will also see £3.2bn invested by energy companies to improve the poor energy efficiency in UK homes, smart electricity meters installed in every home by 2020 and support provided for ultra-low carbon cars. The bulk of the cuts in emissions and growth in renewable energy will be met through on-shore and off-shore wind power. New planning regulations will be introduced to make it easier to construct new on-shore wind farms. All new coal fired power plants will be required to have carbon capture and storage technology installed by 2020.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For information on the UK Government's new carbon plan see www.decc.gov.uk

2020 REDUCTION TARGETS

UK
34%
LOCKED IN

USA
17%
PENCILLED IN

AUS
?%
UP FOR GRABS?

kinesis climate monitor



**Restlessness and
discontent are the first
necessities of progress**

THOMAS A. EDISON

‘CLEAN COAL’ CONFUSION

The Rudd Government’s GLOBAL CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE INSTITUTE, which began work in June, was re-announced in a joint press conference with President Obama at the Major Economies Forum. The institute has been lauded internationally as a practical and effective strategy for global CO₂ reduction and seeks ‘to get large scale carbon capture and storage projects done around the world’.

The institute has received backing by 22 founding member countries and a commitment of \$2 billion from the Australian Government. Australia’s 2009-10 Federal Budget also included funding for industrial scale carbon capture and storage demonstration plants.

This announcement comes in the wake of a series of ‘clean coal’ projects worldwide including a plant in Victoria’s Latrobe Valley. This project however does not involve carbon capture and storage but transforms coal into liquid and higher-grade coal. The recognition of the Latrobe Valley plant as a ‘clean coal’ project highlights the different processes to which the ‘clean coal’ label is being attached.

‘Clean coal’ was a term previously used and generally understood to refer to coal which, when combusted, created comparatively lower amounts of particulate and sulphur emissions than regular coal. Standard quantities of CO₂ were nonetheless emitted when ‘clean coal’ was burnt. In recent times, ‘clean coal’ has been used to refer to a variety of processes including: carbon sequestration, coal-to-liquids technology and underground coal gasification. These processes involve a variety of technologies and can result in very different carbon emission outcomes. Some of these processes may actually produce more emissions than standard practices, and are therefore hard to regard as ‘clean’.

A report by the ACCC titled *Carbon Claims and the Trade Practices Act* examines climate change terminology and emphasises the importance of accuracy and transparency when companies make carbon claims. It remains to be seen as to whether projects currently identifying themselves as ‘clean coal’ projects will retain their status if scrutinised by an organisation like the ACCC.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For Budget highlights including an overview of climate change funding go to www.budget.gov.au For details on the Latrobe Valley Clean Coal Plant visit www.trueenergy.com.au For articles on the Carbon Capture and Storage Institute see www.theaustralian.news.com.au

EU-ETS Reduces Greenhouse Emissions

The European Commission has announced that in 2008 greenhouse emissions from organisations and businesses participating in the EU-ETS fell by 3.06% compared to 2007. This drop in emissions has occurred despite GDP growth of 0.8% over the same period. While the global recession did account for some of this drop the Commission has stated that a more robust cap and a strong price signal from the scheme also played significant roles.

In its first phase of EU-ETS authorities gave away all of the emissions permits to polluters. The scheme was plagued by an over allocation of emissions permits which meant that emissions were not reduced. Since 2007, the scheme’s emissions caps have been tightened and some permits were auctioned rather than given away.

This data indicates that a correctly designed emissions trading scheme can reduce actual greenhouse gas emissions.

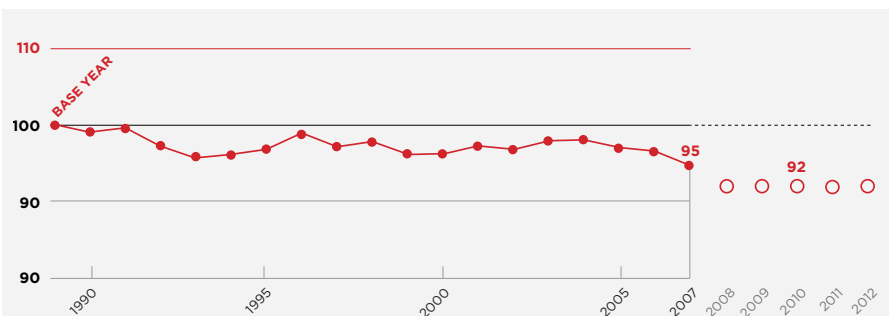
WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To see the European Commission data go to <http://europa.eu>

visit our new website

www.kinesis.org

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EU-15 GHG Emissions Reductions 1990-2007
(excluding LULUCF) compared with the target for 2008-2012