

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune

AP Interview: UN climate chief wants Bali conference to set deadline for emissions talks

The Associated Press

Thursday, October 4, 2007

BRUSSELS, Belgium: Participants at a climate treaty conference — meant to launch negotiations for an emission-reduction agreement — must set a deadline for those talks to avoid a protracted, WTO-style process, the U.N. climate chief said Thursday.

The annual U.N. climate treaty conference, being held in December in Bali, Indonesia, should set an agenda for deciding how to replace the Kyoto Protocol when its first phase expires in 2012.

Debate on individual emission-reduction targets should be left until the end of the talks, said Yvo de Boer, head of the U.N. climate treaty secretariat.

"I really hope Bali will set an end-date when work needs to be done, preferably 2009, because you need time for ratification and entry into force of whatever is agreed, so there is urgency," de Boer told The Associated Press.

Talks on a pact to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol must not emulate the global trade negotiations that have stalled repeatedly since they started in 2001.

The Kyoto Protocol, which the United States rejects, requires 36 industrial nations to reduce carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases — emitted by power plants and other industrial, agricultural and transportation sources — by an average 5 percent by 2012.

A series of reports this year by a U.N. scientific network have warned of a drastically changed planet from rising seas, drought and other factors by 2100, unless nations rein in greenhouse gases.

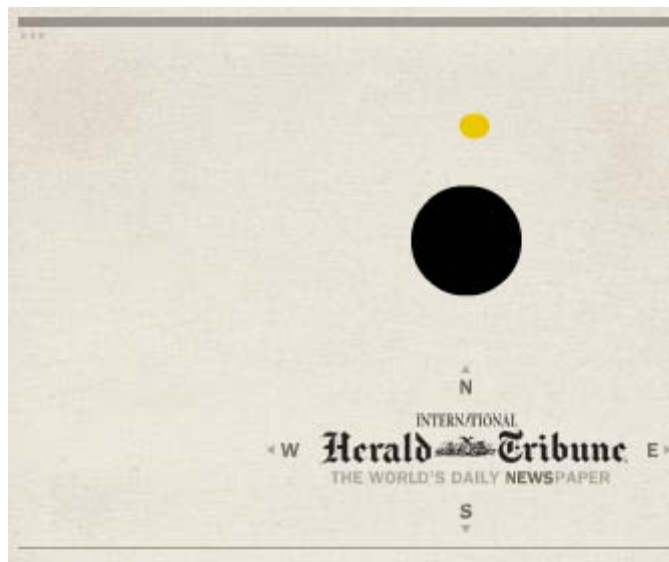
Speaking after a conference on climate change at the European Parliament, de Boer said the new regime must re-engage the United States and Australia, and more strongly engage major developing nations, such as China, India and Brazil.

"Their emissions will, over time, overtake those of all major industrial countries," he said.

De Boer predicted it would "take time" to convince the Americans to join the future regime, and said talks on a basic approach should precede discussions on concrete targets.

The U.S. administration of President George W. Bush has opposed internationally mandated targets under a binding treaty, arguing that such targets would damage the U.S. economy. It also has said that developing nations should also be held to similar mandates.

"I honestly believe a target is something you set at the end of the process, not at the beginning. You



need to know whether others are going to be making comparable efforts," de Boer said.

Chinese negotiator Ronglai Zhong told the Brussels conference that developing countries should reduce emission "to the best of their ability and in keeping with their particular conditions." But he said China needed more financial aid from richer countries to be able to adapt its industry to the new requirements.

"China may be a huge economic power, but it is still a very poor country. They're willing go as far as they can in terms of what's economically viable, but if you want them to go the extra mile, they do need international assistance," de Boer said.

De Boer called for ship and aviation emissions to be brought into the future regime, but called for a global approach.

"They represent huge and growing emissions and you need to get them under control, but ... it has to be a comprehensive plan," he said.

The European Union wants commercial airlines to abide by its carbon dioxide caps, a plan opposed by the United States, China and other countries as well as the airline industry.

The United States prefers a voluntary agreement among nations.

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