

Kyoto

Whilst the Kyoto Agreement is a small step towards global CO2 reductions, in reality the step is too small. The reduction targets are ridiculously low - the average reduction on 1990 levels is 5.2%. Australia, Norway and Iceland even negotiated increases (8,10 and 1% respectively). The IPCC scientists say global emissions need to be reduced by at least 60% on 1990 levels simply to stabilise atmospheric concentrations. And this is for a global average, so given that the rich world is responsible for most of the carbon dioxide, we're going to have to cut emissions by up to 90%. 5.2% is a pretty pathetic start even without the loopholes.

The loopholes: Carbon Sinks and Emissions Trading

These loopholes include market-based mechanisms such as emissions trading and carbon sinks, which allow countries and companies to escape their responsibilities to reduce their own emissions. Countries can meet 100% of Kyoto reduction commitments through purchasing credits in the market rather than reducing emissions at source. Carbon sinks and 'clean development mechanisms' allow countries to further get away

with environmentally and socially destructive industries such as eucalyptus plantations, nuclear power and hydro-electric dams. For local and indigenous peoples this means an oil refinery or pipeline versus a monoculture forestry or a dam. Neither of these are justifiable when the result is the destruction of indigenous (human, animal and plant) lives, land and livelihoods. (For more info see www.carbontradewatch.org www.tni.org/ct www.sinkswatch.org www.cdmwatch.org www.carbonweb.org)

If countries exploit these loopholes fully the actual emissions reduction will be under 2%. If implemented - a big 'if' - the actual reduction in emissions achieved over 20 years will be less than the increase in US emissions in just 1999 and 2000. Furthermore, the protocol ignores the third world, which is rapidly increasing its output and being encouraged to develop the fossil fuel industry rather than renewables.

Shipping and air travel don't get a mention despite the fact that they alone account for a pretty massive chunk of climate changing emissions.

G8 Climate Criminals

G8 countries are the major shareholders of the World Bank (and the EBRD). 97% of the World Bank's energy budget goes to fossil fuel projects with only 5% of these contracts outside of G8-based companies, and this after the bank also rejected its own 'Extractive Industries Review', which concluded that investments in oil, mining and gas were not alleviating poverty or promoting sustainable development.

The G8 Renewable Taskforce is run by Mark Moody-Stuart, former chairman of Shell. Hardly impartial.

USA: The US produces 24% of global CO2 emissions and has refused to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol. ExxonMobil virtually is the government and both have denied that climate change is happening. The US is responsible for the clandestine installation of repressive regimes to gain control over oil resources and for instigating wars for oil under the guise of public protection and national security.

Canada: The Canadian government promotes oil and gas exploration with £7bn in corporate subsidies each year.

Russia: Has an abysmal environmental track record. Pipelines from the 3 major Russian oil companies (including Lukoil) that run throughout the country lose between 3 and 10 million tons of oil per year from leakages. The Sakhalin oil and gas project is the biggest of its kind in the world, co-financed by Japan's banks and Export Credit Agency and Shell Oil. The construction and operation area is huge, dumps massive amounts of waste into the sea and seriously disturbs the last western grey whale's breeding habitat; (there are only 150 left). It is also subject to frequent seismic activity - 'Exxon Valdez - The Sequel' is a real horror story waiting to happen. (www.pacificenvironment.org)

France: TotalFinaElf part finance and are therefore complicit in the environmental and human rights abuses of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline (www.baku.org.uk). Has vested interests in both oil and nuclear industries.

Japan: Japan refuses to sign the (deeply flawed) Kyoto protocol. Has also bankrolled the Sakhalin Oil and Gas Project, endangering its own shores, the habitats of several species and livelihoods of Sakhalin inhabitants.

Italy: Government-controlled Agip Oil collaborates with the Nigerian government in acts of oppression and genocide in local and indigenous communities around its oil facilities as well as covering up major spills and pollution (www.eration.org).

Germany: BMW pays lip service to 'clean' energy cars in public whilst funding climate sceptics behind the scenes.

UK: Instead of reducing CO2 levels, in 2004 the UK government sought a 3% increase in the amount it would be allowed to emit, threatening to sue the European Commission if it didn't get its way.#

The UK government, and those masters of oily deception and greenwash BP, collaborate in PR campaigns in which the public sees oil companies as upholders of British cultural institutions and the arts.

With the UK getting it so wrong, the US denying its very existence, and the biggest industrialised nations responsible for 47% of CO2 emissions* as well as funding the fossil fuel industry, how exactly are they in a position to preach solutions to the rest of the world?

Why is it important to take action at the G8?

Because climate change is one of the main topics of the G8 Summit this year and yet the UK and other G8 countries, despite signing up to the Kyoto Protocol, are still pushing policies which counteract any potential attempts to stop climate change. The global economic system is fuelled by an industry which is devastating the planet's people, its ecology and its climate. All the institutions which make up this system continue to fund and profit from that industry. In this respect the summit is a massive PR stunt designed to pull the wool over the world's eyes while the planet's richest work out how they can further profit from pseudo-solutions to climate chaos behind closed doors.

(<http://www.reuters.co.uk/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=672330§ion=news&src=rss/uk/topNews>)

* quoted Tony Blair UK Prime Minister www.g8.gov.uk

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Rising Tide
Taking action on the root causes of climate change
Supporting the grassroots movement against climate change