UN climate talks: more carbon trade, no emission reduction

The UN climate talks concluded their second session of 2011 in Bonn in June without addressing the key issue of reducing climate pollution and without discussing how emissions of gases that are the main cause of climate change are going to be cut further, who is going to do it or who is going to pay for it. Climate justice groups have expressed their increasing concern at the failure by rich industrialised countries to take real action to tackle climate change as:

- Their current promises of reductions at just 3 gigatonnes remains dangerously low, quite far from a reduction level that keeps the temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius, (the maximum level assessed by UNEP to avoid global climate catastrophe though considered dangerously high by some concerned groups). Their pledges are in a form that provides no accountability for countries internationally and risk 5 degrees of warming which will mean decimation of life as we know it. Rich countries could even increase their emissions by 2020.

- They are attempting to avoid the already weak agreed international system that enforces emission cuts (the Kyoto Protocol). Canada announced its intention to join Russia and Japan in dishonouring its legal obligation to a second commitment period. These countries are joining the United States in proposing that emission cut proposals are pledges rather than targets.

- Proposals for false solutions as carbon markets have advanced in, as the United States refused to discuss sources of finance for longterm commitments. Papua New Guinea proposed the consideration of new potential markets which they called Blue Carbon. This is supposed to include mangroves but also, potentially, the ocean itself into so called carbon credits. The focus on the expansion of market mechanisms to new sectors is a dangerous distraction from the real focus of climate negotiations: reducing emissions.

The real answer is deep emission cuts now, not more false solutions that create profit for some but do nothing to tackle climate change.

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