

CLIMATE DIALOGUE AT POCANTICO
ADVANCING THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

SESSION III
FEBRUARY 23-25, 2005

REPORT OF THE CO-CHAIRS

This is a report by Co-Chairs Eileen Claussen and Ged Davis of the third session of the Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, held February 23-25, 2005, at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in Tarrytown, New York.¹

The dialogue brings together senior policymakers and stakeholders from 15 countries for a series of discussions exploring options for advancing the international climate effort. In this session, participants received new assessments of the “strawman” options carried over from Session II and began considering more closely the potential nature and content of a dialogue outcome.

Through the course of discussion, participants narrowed the range of options under consideration, established the broad outlines of a potential dialogue outcome, and identified issues for further examination and discussion. It was agreed that the final dialogue session, originally scheduled for May, would be rescheduled later in the year.

New Participants

Two new participants joined the dialogue at Session III: Ged Davis of the World Economic Forum, succeeding José María Figueres as Co-Chair; and Ambassador Raúl Estrada-Oyuela of Argentina, who was unable to participate earlier because of the pressing demands of COP 10.

Updates from Participants

At the outset of the meeting, participants shared updates on: the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 10), held in December in Buenos Aires; climate-related activities of the World Economic Forum, including discussions at the annual Davos meeting in January; and preparations by the UK government for its presidency of the G-8.

Strawman Assessment and Modeling

At Session II, participants considered a broad set of possible approaches to future climate efforts, in the form of strawman “elements,” and narrowed the range of options for further consideration.

The Climate Dialogue at Pocantico is sponsored by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the United Nations Foundation, the Wallace Global Fund, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

¹ This note represents the co-chairs’ views and not necessarily the views of individual dialogue participants, or of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund or other supporting organizations.

The two principal inputs to Session III were a paper refining and assessing the remaining options, using a set of qualitative criteria developed in earlier sessions; and the results of preliminary computer modeling of selected options.

Strawman Elements: An Assessment presents the 15 options carried over from Session II. As in earlier material developed for the dialogue, the elements were drawn both to highlight distinct approaches and as building blocks for conceptualizing possible frameworks incorporating multiple approaches. The assessment criteria applied included: environmental effectiveness; economic feasibility; equity; breadth of participation; robustness over time; stimulation of technological change; complementarity with the existing regime; flexibility for different national circumstances; and compatibility with other national priorities.

Jae Edmonds of the Battelle Memorial Institute presented modeling results for eight options, including projected global and regional costs, emission reductions, and shifts in fuel and technology mixes, through 2095. Among the broad findings: the availability of advanced technologies, in particular carbon capture-and-storage, dramatically reduces potential mitigation costs; policies are needed to ensure that, once available, technologies are deployed; and economy-wide approaches are generally more cost-effective than sectoral approaches.

Potential Dialogue Outcome

The central issues discussed in Session III concerned the specific nature and content of a potential dialogue outcome. Participants generally agreed that a favorable outcome would be one outlining “credible” or “plausible” approaches that can engage key global players, both governments and businesses, and produce significant advances in emission reduction, technology development and diffusion, and adaptation.

There was general support for an outcome that: 1) identifies approaches that could be pursued singly or in combination, and 2) identifies one or more ways they could be combined, provided particulars can be agreed. Options identified for further consideration included: an aspirational long-term goal; targets and trading; sectoral approaches; development-focused approaches; technology agreements; and adaptation measures. Cross-cutting issues discussed included: the relationship of any envisioned approach to the established international regime; the appropriate balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches; the importance and nature of flexibility and differentiation in future efforts; the nature of review and/or compliance; the role of the private sector; and the importance of identifying approaches capable of achieving substantial long-term emission reductions. The broad outlines of a potential outcome were developed, with particulars to be further developed in consultation with participants for consideration at Session IV.