

CLIMATE DIALOGUE AT POCANTICO
ADVANCING THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

SESSION II
OCTOBER 6-9, 2004

REPORT OF THE CO-CHAIRS

This is a report by Co-Chairs Eileen Claussen and José María Figueres of the second session of the Climate Dialogue at Pocantico, held October 6-9, 2004, 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 began to review “strawman” options; agreed on provisional criteria for assessing the options; and began to consider what type of dialogue outcome would best contribute to the advancement of international climate efforts. Participants also discussed developments within the climate negotiations and related efforts, and the potential contribution of informal processes such as the Pocantico dialogue to the formal process.

The principal outcome of this session was a revised set of strawman “elements” to be further elaborated and analyzed for consideration at the third session in February. In addition, the co-chairs proposed that the dialogue be extended to a fourth session.

Updates from Participants

At the outset of the meeting, participants shared updates on: Russia’s pending ratification of the Kyoto Protocol; preparatory consultations for the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (December 6-17 in Buenos Aires); informal consultations convened by the governments of Japan and Brazil; and preparations by the British government for its presidency of the G-8.

Participants also reported on their contacts with colleagues regarding the dialogue and its potential contribution to further climate action. The general view was that with Russian ratification now likely, there is growing interest within formal fora in ideas and approaches that can further advance climate efforts, and that if successful, the dialogue could make an important contribution.

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.

Assessment Criteria

Participants reviewed a proposed set of criteria to guide the development and assessment of the various approaches under consideration. The criteria integrated a set of broad framing points accepted by participants at Session I (see Report of the Co-Chairs for Session I) with other political and policy criteria drawn from participants' input at Session I and from previous work by the Pew Center. In discussion, it was noted that: it is difficult to "objectively" apply some of the criteria; they may need to be more fully elaborated; and there may be no approach that satisfies all criteria.

Participants offered a number of suggestions for improving the criteria. It was agreed they would serve as provisional criteria pending further revision.

Strawman Proposals

The key input to Session II was a paper presenting a preliminary set of strawman "elements." These elements were drawn both to highlight distinct approaches to advancing international climate efforts and as building blocks for the development of hybrid "strawman" proposals. The initial set was organized into seven families, each with two or more variants or illustrations.

The initial aim for this session was to consider different combinations of elements and create a set of hybrid proposals for further elaboration and analysis. It became evident in breakout group discussions that participants favored more time to examine the discrete elements before considering possible combinations. In extensive discussion in breakout groups and the full group, the set of elements was reviewed and revised. Several of the original ideas were dropped and a number of new ones added (see list below). It was agreed that the strawman paper would be revised accordingly and made available outside the dialogue.

Issues raised during the participants' review of the strawman elements included: the importance of stimulating technology development and diffusion; the value of some form of long-term climate goal; the potential benefits and challenges of a sectoral approach; the feasibility of a "key players" or "major emitters" approach; and the strong preference among many parties that the UNFCCC remain the principal forum for multilateral climate efforts.

The revised set of elements will be elaborated and analyzed as a basis for further consideration at the next session. Participants with pertinent expertise will be consulted on an ongoing basis in the elaboration of the elements. The analysis will be both qualitative (applying the provisional assessment criteria) and quantitative (modeling the potential emissions and economic impact of different elements).

Potential Dialogue Outcome

Throughout the meeting, participants discussed how the dialogue could best contribute, analytically and politically, to advancement of the international climate effort. Much of the discussion focused on the possible, or preferred, form of any outcome to emerge from the dialogue. The general view was that the group should not aim for a single, unified set of

recommendations, but rather a range of options deserving consideration by the broader policy community. Different views were offered as to whether the options should be closer in form to the strawman elements or comprehensive hybrids.

The co-chairs indicated that their goal would be an outcome supported by all participants, but if that were not possible, the alternative could be a report of conclusions by the co-chairs.

Revised Strawman Elements

- Long-term goal
 - Bottom-up aspirational temperature or concentration goal
 - Zero-emission sectoral goal(s)
- Targets and Trading
 - Emission targets with differentiation/graduation criteria
 - Emission targets with safety valve
- Development
 - Development policies and measures
 - Programmatic crediting mechanism
 - National “seed” banks (through MDBs) for technology, adaptation
- Sectoral
 - Voluntary or binding standards, targets and/or policies for:
 - Automotive sector
 - Power sector
 - Agriculture/forestry
- Technology
 - Coordinated technology R&D initiatives
- Bottom-up
 - Pledge and review
 - Linked emissions trading
- Adaptation
 - Mainstreaming
 - Insurance