

Climate Change Evolution

by Renata Rubies

June 1972

UN Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm

Considered the need for a common point of view and for common principles to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment.

Creation of UNEP, creation of Stockholm Action Program that was never effectively followed by any country.

Designated 5 June as World Environment Day.

1983

World Commission on Environment and Development

Headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway was set up as an independent body in 1983 by the United Nations.

Our Common Future- Published in 1987

The objective was to re-examine the critical environment, to develop proposals to resolve them, and to make sure that human progress will be sustained through development without destroying the resources of future generations. Emphasize the need for a new approach to economic growth.

In Our Common Future, the Commission says that the time has come for a union of economy and ecology, so that governments and their people can take responsibility for environmental damage and for policies that cause the damage. The time to act is now!

1987

Montreal Protocol

Designed to protect the ozone layer. Because of its broad adoption and implementation it has been called an example of exceptional international cooperation.

June 1992

UNCED- UN Conference on Environment and Development/ Earth Summit Rio de Janeiro- Rio 92

Twenty years after the first global environment conference, the UN wanted to facilitate Governments rethink economic development and find ways to stop the destruction of unique natural resources and pollution of the planet. Influenced all subsequent UN conferences. Resulted in Agenda 21, Rio Declaration, UNFCCC, UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the statement of forest principles.

CSD-Commission on Sustainable Development

Established to ensure follow-up of UNCED, the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. CSDs provided policy guidance to follow-up the Johannesburg plan of implementation (JPOI) from 2002. JPOI reaffirmed that the CSD is the high-level forum for sustainable development in the UN system.

1994

UNFCCC-United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change- Took effect in this date.

1995

Kyoto Protocol

An international agreement, which build on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, sets legally binding targets and timetables for cutting the greenhouse-gas emissions of industrialized countries.

In 1995 governments had begun negotiations on the protocol - an international agreement linked to the existing treaty, but standing on its own. The text of the Kyoto Protocol was adopted unanimously in 1997.

2002

World Summit on Sustainable Development- Johannesburg

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Aug 2003

European Heat wave

One of the hottest summers in Europe. The heat wave led to health crises in several countries and combined with drought to create a crop shortfall in Southern Europe. 35,000 people died in the heat wave. France was one of the most affected countries.

Dec 2004

Tsunami-Thailand

Feb 2005

Kyoto Protocol entered into force.

It has mandatory targets on greenhouse-gas emissions (Carbon dioxide, Methane, Nitrous oxide, Petrofluorocarbons, Hydrofluorocarbons, Sulphur hexafluoride) for the world's leading economies which have accepted it.

36 industrialized countries committed in reducing their overall emissions of such GHG by at least 5 per cent below existing 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008 to 2012."

Future mandatory targets are expected to be established for "commitment periods" after 2012. Two of the largest emitters of GHG United States and China have not signed up and it might be a problem to reach an agreement without these major players.

Aug 2005
Hurricane Katrina

2005
Clinton Global Initiative

Annually brings together world leaders from the private sector, NGOs, academics, media and celebrities with the intention of building cooperation and partnerships.

May 2006
An inconvenient truth- Al Gore

Documentary movie about Climate Change, it brought awareness of the problem to all levels of the societies.

October 2006
Stern Report on the economics of Climate Change

The report discusses the effect of climate change and global warming on the world economy and states that it is cheaper to act now than later.

Jan 2007

Ban Ki-moon succeeds Kofi Annan and states strong views on Global Warming.

Feb 2007

Fourth Assessment of IPCC Report

April 2007

First ever debate in the Security Council about Climate Change

May 2007

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed three Special Envoys to assist him on how he might facilitate progress in the multilateral climate change negotiations within the UN framework. The Special Envoys are: Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and former Chair of the World Commission of Environment and Development, Han Seung-soo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and former President of the 56th session of the UN General Assembly; and Ricardo Lagos Escobar, former President of Chile.

Jul 2007
Thematic Debate of the General Assembly- Climate Change as a Global Challenge

The debate was about the IPCC latest assessment, adaptation to Climate Change, the reduction of carbon emissions, the role of business to achieve solutions, technology, deforestation, and the financial architecture needed such as a Special Climate Change Funding, LDCs fund, and adaptation fund.

Sep 2007
Al Gore - Clinton Global Initiative

He said that President Bush should follow the example of former US president Ronald Reagan, who after an initial delay responded to the 1985 discovery of a hole in the ozone layer by supporting a marked reduction in chlorofluorocarbons.

Sep 2007 Climate Change theme of General Assembly

The British Minister stated at the G.A that Climate change poses the "greatest long-term threat" to global stability and prosperity, issuing a call to industrialized nations to shoulder their burden in dealing with the problem and to also meet their commitments on aid and genuinely reform the international terms of trade.

"At the heart of an agreement must be the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. All countries must take on responsibilities, but these must be equitable distributed, with the greatest action taken by the richest countries. The UK stands ready to play its part."

Sept 2007 DPI NGO Conference

It brought over 500 NGOs from 62 countries and a number of UN officials to discuss "the threat of catastrophe posed by climate change" and wanted to motivate participants to take action. The conference concluded with an agreement to a twelve month "framework for action" which encourages organizations to find solutions for climate change in their communities.

G8 Summit in Heiligendamm

Calls for a work plan and time line for negotiations on a deal by 2009. Japan and EU named a reduction of carbon emissions of 50% by mid-century, EU compromised in reduction of 20% by 2020 but plan to reduce 30% by this date if other countries also follow a plan of reduction.

Ban Ki-moon Sep 07

"Climate Change is the defining issue of our era".

"Bali must advance a negotiating agenda to combat climate change on all fronts, including adaptation, mitigation, clean technologies, deforestation and resource mobilization," said Ban Ki-moon. "Bali must be the political response to the recent scientific reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. All countries must do what they can to reach agreement by 2009, and to have it in force by the expiry of the current Kyoto Protocol commitment period in 2012."

Oct 2007

Nobel Prize goes to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Al Gore as a sign that political action is needed to combat Climate Change.

Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that Canada cannot and will not meet greenhouse-gas emission targets set by the Kyoto protocol.

Dec 2007

Bali, is expected a response from world leaders about the IPCC findings and a negotiation by 2009 about the post Kyoto 2012. It is expected to establish emission reduction targets for industrialized countries, policies and measures to complement.

For developing countries is important more participation especially for countries that in a near future will emit more GHG.

Other topics that will be addressed are deforestation once it contributes to 20% of GHG emissions and the discussion about a funding for adaptation, in particular to LDC's and SIDS.

2008

May 2008

CSD 16- Focal point: Environment, Education, and Sustainable Development

International year of Planet Earth

Brazil declaration in the G.A

The Brazilian President declared that Brazil is going host an international Conference on Bio-fuels to lay the foundations for wide-ranging global cooperation.

2012

Brazil will hold a new conference after 20 years, Rio+20 to review what has been achieved since then and to set a new course of action.

New mandatory targets for GHG emissions needed.