

THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

The **KYOTO PROTOCOL**, a 1997 treaty, also mentioned in the second draft of the COP8 at Delhi, and a major topic of discussion for the COP9, is in doldrums with USA having already refused to sign and Russia backing out at the last moment.

Kyoto protocol is a treaty under which the member countries have agreed to take measures to reduce the percentage of emission of carbon dioxide and other green house gases by atleast 5% by 2012.

The treaty is legally binding only if it is ratified by nations accounting for 55 percent of developed countries' emission of carbon dioxide.

The United States pulled out of the protocol, citing enormous damage to its economy if it were to cut its emissions as required by the treaty. USA on the contrary is predicting that there will be an increase in its emission.

Although the treaty is in doldrums Dr. John Ashe Antigua and Barbados High Commissioner and Ambassador to UN is optimistic about the whole affair and asks people to await the next meeting and see the changes.

Indian minister of environment Mr. T.R. Baalu says that India is committed to the treaty and have already started the process for a climate friendly development, even though India's contribution to total CO₂ emissions is not significant. Mr. Baalu also left for the COP9 meeting on an optimistic note confident of

The treaty in doldrums, USA not agreeing and Russia backed out.

India is committed and hopes to convince Russia too.

Experts hope that Russia will eventually ratify and USA will join too.

Opposing group say the treaty makes them economically poorer.

Some believe treaty a thing of past.

convincing Russia to join the treaty. Although COP 9 had a bad start experts believe that Russia will eventually agree and USA will turn over and join.

The good faith in the treaty by Dr. John Ashe and Mr. Baalu is not reflected by other people in this field who believe that the treaty is now a thing of the past. Andrew C. Kevin reports that the treaty has made an effect though redundant and Russia stalling its involvement for higher bargain from EU and Japan, the major promoters of the treaty. It is expected that emissions from the industrialized world will rise by 17% by 2010. In EU too only Britain and Sweden are capable of bringing down their emission levels. Mr. Myron Ebell, a climate policy analyst with a group, which does not believe in the imposing restrictions on industries, says that whatever climatic problems are there cannot be solved by making ourselves economically poorer.

Sunita Narain, Editor of the Journal Down to Earth says the whole convention is surreal. She takes a real aggressive stand and says only option to save the world is to make the treaty work and force USA to comply by isolating it and putting sanctions on it, but you require guts for that. She also points out that the convention was losing focus discussing minor issues, which is away from reality. She accuses them of hopelessly hoping that the treaty would come into force, not whilst Russia is playing games.

Editors of journals in India criticize the treaty and USA and urge the people to take action against USA.

Say that developed nations should lead.

Russia defends its point of view and points to issues more important than just the treaty.

Says not in a hurry to sign the treaty.

Salman Haider, editor of Wide Angle Journal, sports similar point of view. Says USA trying to aim all international treaties citing it as not in the nation's best interest. It is willing to do it alone and adopt unilateral courses of action making other commitments not sacrosanct. He too points out that the protocol has loopholes by not enforcing greater restraint on the developing nations and they

get away with a lot. He says that the developed nations had the advantage of recklessly using their resources in the developing phase and hence must lead now.

With USA being criticized for its stand Russia also needed to defend its withdrawal at the last moment. Russian President Mr. Vladimir Putin says Russia in no hurry to sign the treaty. Mr. Vyacheslav Nikonov points out that the treaty is not in Russia's favor. He turns our attention to other pressing issues other than this treaty, which are not getting importance. He points out that there have been reports that the global warming is perhaps a cyclic phenomenon and happened before the last ice age too. Other issues such as malnutrition, people without electricity, and excessive use of fuel and massive clearing of the forests daily are more important. Also EU is not supportive of Russia and should give Russia something in return for joining the treaty.

WWF-India as an ENVIS Centre/Node has been keeping a tab on the media activity on environment related issues and carries out analysis on different issues in media.

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