

The G8 Way to Climate Chaos

The Summit

facts about the G8 governments

The Façade

"This is a serious issue and it is going to get worse... because every year we are piling more green house gases in to the atmosphere... There are whole communities that are going to be affected. The time to act is now - Tony Blair*."

The Reality:

The UK government has failed to deliver on its promise of a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions, way below the 60% reduction proposed by the InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Whilst claiming to the world to have set the agenda for solutions on climate change, this government is pursuing a somewhat divergent policy. Confused?

Airport Expansion

Increased airport expansion plans to cater for cheap flights (from 25 million passengers annually to 82 million by 2030), with 12 new runways across Britain despite air travel being a major contributor to climate change globally. Fossil fuel taxes are now lower than in 1997 while aviation fuel remains tax free regardless of government promises to tax polluting industries. (For ways to join in and take action see www.airportwatch.org.uk, www.blairportfiles.org.uk www.airportpledge.org.uk)

More Roads

Over 200 new roads are under construction in a £5.5 billion road building programme, the biggest in 2 decades, despite the government's promise to lower CO2 emissions from transport and a decade of public opposition to road building. This goes hand in hand with an increase in distances travelled from a total of 400 billion kms in 1990 to almost 500 billion kms in 2003. (A diversity of action and protest against this is already happening. If you'd like to get involved, check out www.roadalert.org.uk, www.roadblock.org.uk)

Publicly Funding Climate Chaos

The UK and other state governments have subsidised the fossil fuel industry with taxpayer's money via the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to the tune of \$1.8 billion since 1993. Together with the World Bank's \$11 billion since '92 gives lifetime CO2 emissions of 60 billion tonnes.

Export Credit Guarantee Department

The ECGD promotes exports through loan guarantees and insurance using public money. It has approved £500 million of public money for export guarantees to the oil and gas sector per year for each of the last three years. This accounts for 14% of its overall business.

Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline

BP's socially and ecologically disastrous Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline will produce 160 million tonnes of CO2 per year, equivalent to 30% of the UK's annual emissions, which is ten times the amount projected to be saved by the government's renewable energy programme. 14% of the total building cost (\$500million) is coming from the World Bank and EBRD. This was approved by the Department for International Development (DfID) and underwritten with public money by the UK ECGD.

Other climate-destroying projects

Projects the UK are involved in like the Sakhalin Oil and Gas Project, and other Fossil Fuel exploration, transportation, refining and burning are all of huge destructive consequence to the global climate, local ecology and indigenous communities who are displaced and murdered for the carbon economy. (For further information and what you can do about it see www.baku.org www.nonewoil.org www.thecornerhouse.org.uk www.platformlondon.org)

Food Freight

28% of road freight in the UK is food. 1.6 billion tons are carried 149 billion ton kilometers a year. £2.1 billion a year could be saved and invested on environmental projects if food was locally sourced. The subsequent reduction in the burning of diesel fuel would have a real effect on UK CO2 emissions. For example, the UK exports and imports 400,000 tons of milk a year - what's that all about? We import food from all over the world. Flying products like peas from Kenya and baby sweetcorn from Thailand is clearly detrimental to the environment and economically unjust.

Nuclear Energy

The UK government is likely to back nuclear energy as a 'green' substitute for CO2-belching power stations. Martin O'Neill, the chairman of the Energy Select Committee says the Labour Party is planning to publish a White Paper that would pave the way for the construction of new nuclear power stations**. A scenario triggering greater toxic radiation in the environment, serious health hazards and a higher risk of accidents from reactors, waste transportation and disposal. All in all, quite a devastating cocktail. Plus, it would give many more targets to those not best pleased with this nation. Which would you prefer, nuclear catastrophe or climate chaos? Or both? Do you really believe all that 'saved oil' won't be burnt? (For news and action on nuclear energy see www.corecumbria.co.uk)

It's not just the climate

Without a doubt, an increasingly inhospitable climate will destroy large numbers of plant and animal species. For human beings there will be reduced land space for living and food production, creating a global increase in people fleeing the devastation and ensuing conflict and repression. A grim future indeed.

However, the fossil fuel industry has always had - and still has - a dire effect on those people who stand in its way. The oil extraction business removes indigenous peoples from their land, destroys and pollutes the environment in which they sustained themselves, pays millions into the pockets

of oppressive regimes who murder and mutilate all who stand in the way of development. In Indonesia, West Papua, Russia, Nigeria, Colombia, Alaska - in fact, wherever they operate, the perpetrators of climate change wreak havoc before the climatic consequences of burning fossil fuels takes effect.

For more information and ways to take action in solidarity with indigenous communities see www.oilwatch.org.ec www.amazonwatch.org www.unii.net/confeniae www.ecuanex.net.ec/fda www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk www.jatam.org alaskaactioncenter.org www.baku.org.uk www.khrp.org www.platformlondon.org

*http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3654042.stm **<http://money.telegraph.co.uk/money/main.jhtml?xml=/money/2005/01/30/cnnuke30.xml>

Kyoto

Whilst the Kyoto Agreement is a small step towards global CO2 reductions, in reality the step is too small. The reduction targets are ridiculously low - the average reduction on 1990 levels is 5.2%. Australia, Norway and Iceland even negotiated increases (8,10 and 1% respectively). The IPCC scientists say global emissions need to be reduced by at least 60% on 1990 levels simply to stabilise atmospheric concentrations. And this is for a global average, so given that the rich world is responsible for most of the carbon dioxide, we're going to have to cut emissions by up to 90%. 5.2% is a pretty pathetic start even without the loopholes.

The loopholes: Carbon Sinks and Emissions Trading

These loopholes include market-based mechanisms such as emissions trading and carbon sinks, which allow countries and companies to escape their responsibilities to reduce their own emissions. Countries can meet 100% of Kyoto reduction commitments through purchasing credits in the market rather than reducing emissions at source. Carbon sinks and 'clean development mechanisms' allow countries to further get away

with environmentally and socially destructive industries such as eucalyptus plantations, nuclear power and hydro-electric dams. For local and indigenous peoples this means an oil refinery or pipeline versus a monoculture forestry or a dam. Neither of these are justifiable when the result is the destruction of indigenous (human, animal and plant) lives, land and livelihoods. (For more info see www.carbontradewatch.org www.tni.org/ct www.sinkswatch.org www.cdmwatch.org www.carbonweb.org)

If countries exploit these loopholes fully the actual emissions reduction will be under 2%. If implemented - a big 'if' - the actual reduction in emissions achieved over 20 years will be less than the increase in US emissions in just 1999 and 2000. Furthermore, the protocol ignores the third world, which is rapidly increasing its output and being encouraged to develop the fossil fuel industry rather than renewables.

Shipping and air travel don't get a mention despite the fact that they alone account for a pretty massive chunk of climate changing emissions.

G8 Climate Criminals

G8 countries are the major shareholders of the World Bank (and the EBRD). 97% of the World Bank's energy budget goes to fossil fuel projects with only 5% of these contracts outside of G8-based companies, and this after the bank also rejected its own 'Extractive Industries Review', which concluded that investments in oil, mining and gas were not alleviating poverty or promoting sustainable development.

The G8 Renewable Taskforce is run by Mark Moody-Stuart, former chairman of Shell. Hardly impartial.

USA: The US produces 24% of global CO2 emissions and has refused to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol. ExxonMobil virtually is the government and both have denied that climate change is happening. The US is responsible for the clandestine installation of repressive regimes to gain control over oil resources and for instigating wars for oil under the guise of public protection and national security.

Canada: The Canadian government promotes oil and gas exploration with £7bn in corporate subsidies each year.

Russia: Has an abysmal environmental track record. Pipelines from the 3 major Russian oil companies (including Lukoil) that run throughout the country lose between 3 and 10 million tons of oil per year from leakages. The Sakhalin oil and gas project is the biggest of its kind in the world, co-financed by Japan's banks and Export Credit Agency and Shell Oil. The construction and operation area is huge, dumps massive amounts of waste into the sea and seriously disturbs the last western grey whale's breeding habitat; (there are only 150 left). It is also subject to frequent seismic activity - 'Exxon Valdez - The Sequel' is a real horror story waiting to happen. (www.pacificenvironment.org)

France: TotalFinaElf part finance and are therefore complicit in the environmental and human rights abuses of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline (www.baku.org.uk). Has vested interests in both oil and nuclear industries.

Japan: Japan refuses to sign the (deeply flawed) Kyoto protocol. Has also bankrolled the Sakhalin Oil and Gas Project, endangering its own shores, the habitats of several species and livelihoods of Sakhalin inhabitants.

Italy: Government-controlled Agip Oil collaborates with the Nigerian government in acts of oppression and genocide in local and indigenous communities around its oil facilities as well as covering up major spills and pollution (www.eration.org).

Germany: BMW pays lip service to 'clean' energy cars in public whilst funding climate sceptics behind the scenes.

UK: Instead of reducing CO2 levels, in 2004 the UK government sought a 3% increase in the amount it would be allowed to emit, threatening to sue the European Commission if it didn't get its way. #

The UK government, and those masters of oily deception and greenwash BP, collaborate in PR campaigns in which the public sees oil companies as upholders of British cultural institutions and the arts.

With the UK getting it so wrong, the US denying its very existence, and the biggest industrialised nations responsible for 47% of CO2 emissions* as well as funding the fossil fuel industry, how exactly are they in a position to preach solutions to the rest of the world?

Why is it important to take action at the G8?

Because climate change is one of the main topics of the G8 Summit this year and yet the UK and other G8 countries, despite signing up to the Kyoto Protocol, are still pushing policies which counteract any potential attempts to stop climate change. The global economic system is fuelled by an industry which is devastating the planet's people, its ecology and its climate. All the institutions which make up this system continue to fund and profit from that industry. In this respect the summit is a massive PR stunt designed to pull the wool over the world's eyes while the planet's richest work out how they can further profit from pseudo-solutions to climate chaos behind closed doors.

(#<http://www.reuters.co.uk/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=672330§ion=news&src=rss/uk/topNews>)

* quoted Tony Blair UK Prime Minister www.g8.gov.uk

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Rising Tide
Taking action on the root causes of climate change
Supporting the grassroots movement against climate change