
Climate

A tale of two cities: Kyoto and Montreal

IT WAS the best of meetings and it was the worst of meetings. The 11th Conference of Parties (COP 11) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Montreal and the first Meeting of Parties (MOP 1) to the now-ratified Kyoto Protocol broke up on 10 December having adopted 40 decisions. Arguably the greatest achievement of the 12-day meeting was to keep the door open for further talks despite the best efforts of the US and Saudi Arabia.

As feared, the meeting failed to achieve any firm commitments from the world's biggest emitter, the US, or from the world's fastest-growing emitters, China and India, to cut their existing or limit their future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, all parties to the UNFCCC, including the US, resolved "to engage in a dialogue without prejudice ... to exchange experiences and analyse strategic approaches for long-term co-operative action", including:

- Advancing development goals in a sustainable way;
- Addressing action on adaptation;
- Realising the full potential of technology; and
- Realising the full potential of market-based opportunities.

It was stressed that this will be non-binding and will not open any negotiations leading to new commitments to cut GHG emissions.

MOP 1 put a lot more flesh on the bones of the Kyoto mechanics by formally adopting the Marrakech Accords, which were originally drafted in 2001. The Kyoto Annex B countries have agreed legally binding targets to reduce GHG emissions by at least 5% compared with 1990 levels, between 2008 and 2012. The adoption of the Accords specifies how GHG inventories will be mea-

sured and converts this percentage target into tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent for each country.

Countries that fail to achieve the GHG cuts they have promised must make up shortfall in the second commitment period, with an additional 30% penalty and will have their eligibility to sell under the international emissions trading suspended. At MOP 1, the 20-member Kyoto Compliance Committee's enforcement and facilitative branches were elected to decide how these sanctions will be applied in practice.

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), one of Kyoto's two project-based tools, was strengthened with additional funding of \$13m in 2006-2007 and by simplification of CDM mechanical methodologies, notably for small-scale forestation and reforestation projects. The other project-based scheme, Joint Implementation, moved forward with the establishment of a Supervisory Committee.

Despite pessimism before the meeting, a process for commitments beyond 2012 was started. An "open-ended *ad hoc*" working group on developed country commitments beyond 2012 was established, which will start work in May 2006 and will report in time to ensure that there will be no gap between the end of the first commitment period in 2012 and next phase. □