



# UJAE Unions for Jobs And the Environment

Address: PO Box 56173, Washington, DC 20040-6173 Voice and Fax: 301-585-5828 Email: [ujae@rcn.net](mailto:ujae@rcn.net) Website: [www.ujae.org](http://www.ujae.org)

## Newsletter

December 2007

### Member Unions

Brotherhood of Locomotive  
Engineers

International Brotherhood  
of Boilermakers,  
Iron Ship Builders,  
Blacksmiths, Forgers  
and Helpers

International Brotherhood  
of Electrical Workers

International Brotherhood  
of Teamsters

Marine Engineers Beneficial  
Association

Sheet Metal Workers  
International Association

Transportation • Communications  
International Union

United Association of  
Journeymen and Apprentices  
In the Plumbing and Pipefitting  
Industry

United Food and Commercial  
Workers International Union

United Mine Workers  
of America

United Transportation Union

Utility Workers Union  
of America

### President

Bill Cunningham

## The Bali Roadmap to a New Global Climate Plan

By Gene Trisko\*

Representatives of the AFL-CIO, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, and the United Mine Workers attended the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) in Bali, Indonesia, from December 7 to 14. We joined more than 60 international labor representatives organized through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), constituting the largest labor delegation ever to attend the UN climate talks.

As a result of ITUC and our efforts over the last several years, trade unions are now recognized as a separate NGO constituency within the UN climate process. This gives us formal access to participate in the meetings through public statements and other means of communication.

The Bali meetings produced a last-minute “Bali Action Plan” that sets the stage for an ambitious two-year process of negotiations among all nations to develop a climate plan to replace the Kyoto Protocol. Discussions will commence next June in Bonn, Germany, and will continue at COP-14 in Poland in December 2008. The negotiations are scheduled to conclude in Copenhagen in 2009. Given the complexity of the task ahead, additional negotiating sessions may be needed.

### The Bali Action Plan

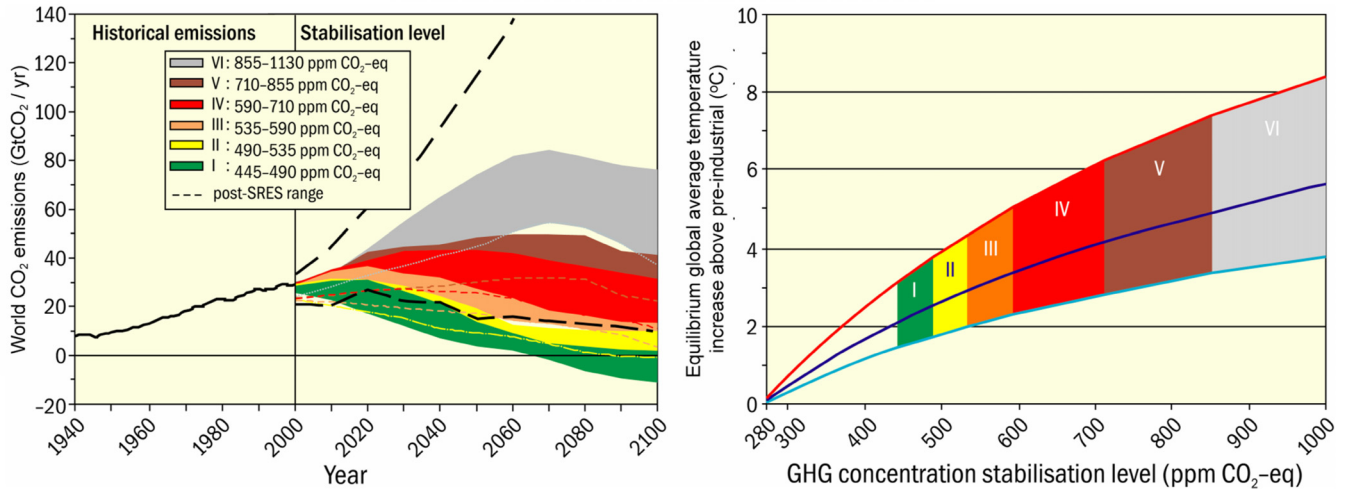
The Bali meeting departed from its key agenda item - negotiations for a second round of commitments for the European Union and other nations subject to the Kyoto Protocol - and produced an open-ended call for a new global climate treaty involving industrial and developing nations. The new agreement could entail emission reduction commitments by industrial countries as early as 2013.

The first phase of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol commences in 2008 and ends in 2012. The first phase of Kyoto requires an average 5% emission reduction below 1990 levels by 2008. The European Union, Japan, Canada and other industrial nations that have ratified Kyoto need to agree on reductions for the post-2012 era. The EU has offered to reduce its greenhouse emissions by 20% from 1990 levels by 2020, with a 30% reduction if “other parties” such as the U.S. agree to join. With the U.S. now engaged in the Bali process, and potentially subject to the terms of a new “Copenhagen Protocol,” it is essential that Congress enact legislation defining our climate commitments well before the Copenhagen meetings commence in 2009.

The U.S. insisted in Bali that the new plan for global action should not reference the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) recent recommendations for a 25% to 40% reduction of emissions by industrial nations by 2020. The Bali Action Plan instead refers generally to the recent IPCC scientific assessment report, and calls for the negotiation of a new treaty that will fulfill the FCCC’s ultimate objective for stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a level to prevent “dangerous” manmade interference with climate.

The EU and environmental interests are pressing for a limit of 2 degrees Celsius for future temperature rise, consistent with a global CO2 concentration target of ~450 ppm to 490 ppm. The current global CO2 concentration is ~380 ppm, or 100 ppm above the pre-industrial level of 280 ppm. If agreement were reached on a 2 degree target, industrial nations would need to accelerate the reductions required by Kyoto, while developing nations would need to begin to reduce their overall emissions not later than 2025 (see the chart below for illustrative pathways to achieve alternative global CO2 and temperature targets.)

**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and equilibrium temperature increases for a range of stabilisation levels**



Source: IPCC 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report, SYR Summary for Policy Makers (2007).

### Complex Variables and an Indeterminate Equation

The Bali Action Plan sets different standards of compliance for developed and developing nations, greatly complicating the measurement of progress toward any target for greenhouse gas emissions or concentrations, such as the IPCC pathways illustrated above.

Industrial nations must agree to “measurable, reportable and verifiable” commitments, “including quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives,” similar to the national emission caps quantified in the Kyoto Protocol. Presumably, U.S. climate legislation could supply the specific commitments that the U.S. would bring to the table in Copenhagen. Developing nations, on the other hand, agreed to pursue “measurable, reportable and verifiable nationally appropriate mitigation actions ... in the context of sustainable development, supported by technology and enabled by financing and capacity-building.”

Because developing countries will not be subject to “quantified emission limitations and reduction objectives,” which apply only to industrial countries, the Bali Action Plan essentially creates an indeterminate equation, since it will be impossible to forecast the level of reductions that may – or may not - be achieved by developing nations. With a standard for compliance tied to “sustainable development,” any set of actions reducing emissions below future baseline emissions may qualify as “measurable, reportable and verifiable.” Compliance for developing nations, in short, will be in the eye of the beholder.

### **Promises of Technology and Financial Assistance for Developing Countries**

Through the Bali agreement, rapidly-growing developing countries like China and India hope to receive their long-sought access to climate-friendly technology and direct financial assistance from industrial nations. The promise of technology transfer and financial aid induced the G-77 and China – the key bloc of developing nations that negotiates in the FCCC process – to abandon their long-standing opposition to any new commitments. Faced with increasing scientific evidence of the need for global action to reduce emissions, and international public pressure, the G-77 and China calculated that Bali represented their best chance to secure financial and technological assistance to help reduce their future carbon footprints. The price tag for these promises is yet to be determined.

### **Labor Input Essential**

Labor’s expanded presence at the Bali meetings needs to carry forward at all UN negotiating sessions leading to Copenhagen. With our newly-established recognition as a separate UN FCCC constituency, we must press for appropriate recognition of labor interests in the Copenhagen agreement. Our allies at the ITUC will be instrumental in working with governments in the EU, Japan, Australia, Canada and developing nations to ensure that the Copenhagen agreement explicitly recognizes labor’s vital contributions to emission mitigation and adaptation, and the need for appropriate transition assistance and incentives for new “green jobs.”

Here in the U.S., unions should redouble efforts to secure enactment of balanced national climate legislation, such as the bipartisan Bingaman-Specter bill (S. 1766). The uncertainties of the open-ended Bali Action Plan are simply too great to allow U.S. emission reduction obligations to be determined through a UN negotiation. As with Kyoto, millions of jobs hang in the balance of future Congressional determinations on climate change. We must ensure that the next Administration carries job- and technology-friendly climate legislation to Copenhagen as the centerpiece of any future U.S. commitments under the Bali Action Plan.

\* Gene Trisko is an attorney in Berkeley Springs, WV, and General Counsel of UJAE. He attended the Bali meetings as an NGO on behalf of the United Mine Workers of America.

--- Please visit our website at <http://www.ujae.org> ---