

EDITORIAL

Whenever I write an Editorial, I am almost never able to do so without reference to the United States. This time I have to mention:

- *The Waxman-Markey climate bill, calling for a 17 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2020 which passed the US House of Representatives in July;*
- *The Boxer-Kerry US Senate bill on climate change, submitted in September; which proposes a 20 percent reduction over the same time period;*
- *Recent statements by the US Administration and China vowing action on climate but noting specific needs;*
- *The fact that, up till now, leading industrialised nations – aside from the US – have offered to reduce their GHG emissions by 16–24 percent by 2020.*

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Regarding a new international climate agreement, one welcome surprise is that the President and Premier of China have assured the UN Secretary-General that “China wants to seal a deal in Copenhagen in December and that China will play an active and constructive role in the negotiations to achieve this end”.

In the days leading up to Copenhagen, an African Union meeting to reach a common position on climate change agreed to seek reparations from developed countries (approximately \$US 67 billion) because Africa “produces less than 4% of green house gases while their effect on the climate could mortgage the future of the continent.”

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Since its inception, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has evoked fears that it was going to become a purely “aid-dependent” treaty. The success of the Convention has become evermore imperative with 200 million people projected to become environmentally-induced migrants by 2050. In this connection, a report on the outcomes of the 9th Conference of the Parties to UNCCD will appear in the next issue.

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I was caught aback by a recent headline in the Süddeutsche Zeitung: “If everybody ate like the Europeans, then we would require three planets to feed humanity”. Europe’s rash consumption of marine life plays a major role in this issue.

While the current world population is close to reaching 7 billion and is projected to be over 9 billion in 40 years, Europe’s population is decreasing. Nonetheless, the worldwide increase will exert extreme pressure, especially on already dwindling commercial fish stocks and arable soil.

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