

Few people realise that the first UN conference on the environment took place at Lake Success in New York in 1949. Scientists from 50 countries discussed for two weeks problems related to the conservation and utilisation of resources, including wind power, solar power, water power, improved building design, forest conservation, and much more. But to no avail. This was the McCarthy era: the UN was discredited, staff were fired, and the conference effectively buried. (1)

The vested interests behind the Copenhagen fiasco (Lord Hannay, Spring issue of *New World*, was more polite: we should not "delude ourselves that the outcome was really quite good") were different, but the results were, in effect, much the same. Emissions continue to rise, there is no agreement on what should be done, and the clock ticks on...

A major problem is that most people seem to assume that we should stick with basically the same approach that has been followed since the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, whereas we now have the chance to think anew. Indeed, the distinguished American climate scientist James Hansen said he would welcome a failure at Copenhagen because that would provide just such an opportunity.

There are now at least a dozen alternative approaches that have been proposed, and these have been critically analysed in an 18 page document "After Copenhagen – a radical rethink", issued by the Kyoto2 Support Group in January 2010 (2). This has been well received abroad, and indeed the President and CEO of the prestigious American "Climate Institute" has called it "an intellectually coherent approach preferable to alternatives in play."

The main conclusion of the review is that the proposals in "Kyoto2– how to manage the global greenhouse" (Oliver Tickell, Zed Books, 2008) or something like them, provide a sound basis for a worldwide system to control emissions of greenhouse gases. There must be a global cap for emissions of industrial gases within the next few decades, determined by science, not negotiation, and these should be controlled 'upstream', at or close to their origins. There should be a global auction of permits to extract coal, oil or gas from the ground, and these may be traded. Moneys from the sale of permits, which could amount to around \$1 trillion annually, should be invested in a fund to be used to address the causes and consequences of climate change, with emphasis on meeting the needs of the poor and most vulnerable. Emissions from non-industrial sources (such as deforestation) could be controlled by a combination of regulations and funding from the Climate Change Fund.

Although it would be ideal to establish a global system in one step, that may not be practicable, and a group of countries could adopt an upstream system as an interim measure. For example, if upstream controls were introduced in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme that would eliminate many of the problems with which the system is beset, and it could become the foundation for a global system. This idea is examined in detail in a later paper (3).

This idea is consistent with Lord Hannay's suggestion (Briefing, Spring issue, page 14) that smaller groups of countries might be more efficient in hammering out details than the 192-country framework, and Gro Harlem Brundtland and Yvo de Boer both favour dual-track negotiations.

Both Oliver Tickell and Yvo de Boer, former head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, spoke at UNA London & South-East Region's climate conference in April last year. In response to a question about Tickell's book de Boer said he hadn't read it all but it seemed interesting though possibly premature – perhaps this view should be revised in the light of Copenhagen.

In effect, this is what **After Copenhagen** does.

(1) Linda Melvern, *The Ultimate Crime*, Alison & Busby, 1995 (page 60)

(2) [www.mng.org.uk/ac](http://www.mng.org.uk/ac)

(3) [www.mng.org.uk/euets](http://www.mng.org.uk/euets)