

## MEDIAWATCH: Did the Poznan climate talks produce more than a lot of hot air?

16 Dec 2008 18:12:00 GMT

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Delegates walk past a polar bear dummy with a sign that reads "Tired of no progress" at the main hall of the U.N. climate change conference in Poznan, Poland.

REUTERS/Kacper Pempel

The general verdict on this month's U.N. climate change talks in Poland is that they made little concrete progress towards a new international pact to fight global warming. But some media assessments detected notes of optimism amid the gloom.

The [Chicago Tribune](#) newspaper says the talks demonstrated a growing global consensus on the need for measures to help the world's most vulnerable nations adapt to a changing climate, and on mechanisms to ensure that new emission-cutting technologies are shared with developing countries.

"If one message has emerged from the long and often tortuous hours of climate negotiations in recent years, it is this: In the end, progress is being made," the paper says.

It's a great cause for optimism that even the bitterest opponents of the process - like U.S. businesses - are now getting on board, the paper says.

Britain's [Daily Telegraph](#) newspaper, however, says this year's talks in the western Polish city of Poznan were defined by acrimony rather than consensus.

How to run an adaptation fund to help poorer nations climate proof infrastructure, build flood defences and improve agriculture was one of the greatest sticking points during the talks, the paper says.

Though governments finally agreed to launch the fund next year, the question of how to boost its resources remains undecided, according to the Telegraph, with rich countries rejecting suggestions the money should come from higher taxation on greenhouse gas-emitting businesses through carbon markets at a time of global recession.

India's [Business Day](#) says the only notable change for developing countries is that they will now, in theory, be able to put in applications to the U.N.'s Adaptation Fund.

While India plans to do this, it is concerned that the small amount of money available (the fund could reach \$300 million per year by 2012) means grants are likely to go to smaller developing nations, the paper says.

The [New Scientist](#) magazine, meanwhile, argues that the talks reveal how little policy makers appreciate the urgency of tackling climate change.

"The politicians just don't seem to get the seriousness of the global warming crisis. Scientists attending the recent U.N. climate conference in Poznan, Poland, complained that the gap between political rhetoric and scientific reality on climate change is growing," the magazine writes.

The view that the talks may even have taken some steps backwards is shared by Australia's [Canberra Times](#).

"After two weeks spent in frantic negotiations over commas and semi-colons, the climate negotiations at Poznan have taken only the barest shuffle towards Copenhagen, and on some crucial issues like targets for developed countries have actually retreated from Bali," the paper says.

The talks also demonstrated the widening gap between rich and poor countries on some issues. While rich countries like Canada and Russia have refused to commit to reducing their emissions, developing countries are now showing the way, it says.

"Increasingly we are seeing leadership from developing countries. Mexico announced a target to reduce emissions by 50 percent by 2050, and South Africa made a presentation on its climate change plan to reduce its emissions. Developing countries are being proactive, and putting submissions on the table. At home they are putting their climate change plans into practice.

"This leadership is welcome but it throws into sharp contrast the lack of leadership from the developed countries - the ones with the historic and economic responsibility to lead," the paper says.

Meanwhile, Bjorn Lomborg, author of the "Sceptical Environmentalist" writes in the business magazine, [Forbes](#), that rather than wasting money on meetings to decide global agreements which will inevitably be ignored, the world's poorest would be better served by improvements to their living conditions now.

"Interventions like improving malnutrition and child health in the Third World deserve a much higher priority than carbon cuts to battle climate change," he says. More should be invested in research and development of low-carbon energy sources in conjunction with helping lift the poorest out of poverty, argues Lomborg.

Nonetheless, there is optimism in some quarters over what the forthcoming transition to a U.S. administration led by President-elect Barack Obama means for the prospects of a new global pact, scheduled to be concluded in Denmark at the end of next year.

Expected changes in global leadership, rather than progress at the talks themselves, spurred more positive coverage from Britain's [Independent](#) newspaper and the U.S.'s [TIME](#) magazine.

"Obama can out-green Poznan," says the Independent, adding that the world wasn't really prepared to commit to anything at this year's talks while waiting for the inauguration of the new U.S. president.

"The big question is whether an effective deal can be reached at Copenhagen in 12 months' time. And that depends, more than anything else, on the new U.S. administration."

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