

THE HARVARD PROJECT ON INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE AGREEMENTS



The goal of the Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements is to help identify key design elements of a scientifically sound, economically rational, and politically pragmatic post-2012 international policy architecture for global climate change. We are drawing upon leading thinkers from academia, private industry, government, and non-governmental organizations from around the world to construct a small set of promising policy frameworks, and then disseminate and discuss the design elements and frameworks with decision makers. For news, research results, and more information, see the Project's website at www.belfercenter.org/climate.

Introduction

The Kyoto Protocol marked the first attempt to curb the greenhouse gas emissions that are changing the Earth's climate. This agreement, though a significant first step, is — by common agreement — not sufficient for the longer-term task ahead. The United States, one of the world's two largest emitters of greenhouse gasses, has not ratified the agreement, and China, India, and other rapidly growing major economies were not required to reduce their emissions. Some observers support the policy approach embodied in Kyoto and would like to see it extended—perhaps with modifications—beyond the first commitment period, which ends in 2012. Others maintain that a fundamentally new approach is required.

In May 2006, the university-wide Harvard Environmental Economics Program hosted a workshop which brought together 27 leading thinkers from around the world from economics, law, political science, business, international relations, and the natural sciences. Together, they developed and refined six policy frameworks, each of which could form the backbone of a new international climate agreement. These range from a stronger version of the Kyoto Protocol to entirely new approaches. The six plans are the subject of a new book, *Architectures for Agreement: Addressing Global Climate Change in the Post-Kyoto World*, which Cambridge University Press published in September 2007. With the six climate proposals as the starting point, the Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements aims to help forge a broad-based consensus on a potential successor to Kyoto. The project is funded primarily by a \$750,000 grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and is a joint effort between the Harvard Environmental Economics Program and the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, both housed in Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

About the Project

The project consists of three stages: (1) Discuss among key domestic and international policy constituencies the proposition that the nations of the world ought to explore options for a successor to Kyoto. (2) Conduct economic modeling and policy analysis to develop a small set of promising policy frameworks and key design elements. (3) Explore the key design principles and alternative international policy architectures with domestic and international audiences, including the new administration and the new Congress, in the spring of 2009.

Stage One (July to Dec. 2007): Establishing the Importance of Considering Alternative Policy Architectures

The first stage features wide-ranging and inclusive discussion of all six proposed alternatives, as well as others not addressed in *Architectures for Agreement*, including meetings with the U.S. Congress and congressional staff, the European Union, news media, business, NGOs, and academics. This leads up to a presentation at the Conference of the Parties of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, Indonesia, December 3-14, 2007. Representatives of every country in the world, including the climate negotiation delegations, will be present in Bali, as well as representatives of major NGOs, trade associations, and businesses.

Stage Two (December 2007 to September 2008): Development of Post-Kyoto Design Principles & Frameworks

The second stage consists of the development of a small menu of promising frameworks and key design principles, based upon analysis by leading academics from a variety of disciplines — including economics, political science, law, and international relations — as well as commentary from leading practitioners from

NGOs, private industry, and government. All proposed architectures will be subject to rigorous economic analysis to determine their potential effects on economies of various countries. Also included will be political analysis of the implications of alternative approaches and legal examinations of the feasibility of respective proposals.

There are no constraints on what may emerge from Stage One or from the analytical and deliberative process of Stage Two. Anything is possible — from highly centralized Kyoto-like architectures for all countries, to proposals that are outside of the context of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as proposals for G8+5 or L20 agreements. This phase of the project will yield a wide range of technical and policy papers by various contributing authors.

Stage Three (Oct. 2008 to June 2009): Discussion and Dissemination of Post-Kyoto Frameworks and Design Principles

The third stage features discussion with domestic and international audiences of the recommendations on key design elements and the most promising international policy architectures. This includes meetings with Congress and congressional staff, the news media, the European Union, the United Nations, developing countries, and NGOs. Following the November 2008 election, the project will seek a forum with the environmental and foreign policy advisors of the President-elect's transition team. These meetings with Congress and the administration are intended as educational; the project and its principals will not engage in any lobbying activities.

This will lead up to a side-event at the 2008 Conference of the Parties of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will take place in Poland. The side-event will feature further exploration of the international climate policy proposals identified through analysis in Stage Two. In the winter and spring of 2009, the project will also consult with the new presidential administration and Congress in the United States regarding international post-Kyoto policy frameworks.

About the Project's Leaders

Robert Stavins is the Albert Pratt Professor of Business and Government and Director of the Harvard Environmental Economics Program, a university-wide initiative housed at the Kennedy School of Government. He has been a Lead Author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Chair of the U.S. EPA's Environmental Economics Advisory Committee. His research has examined post-Kyoto climate strategies, cap-and-trade emissions control systems, carbon sequestration, and technology innovation and diffusion. He directed Project 88 for former Senator Timothy Wirth and the late Senator John Heinz, which recommended market-based environmental policy instruments and helped lay the groundwork for the SO₂ allowance trading program in the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990.

Joseph Aldy is a Fellow at Resources for the Future, a Washington-based environment and energy research group. He served on the staff of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, where he was responsible for environmental and resource issues, primarily climate change policy. He was the lead author of the Clinton Administration's 1998 report on the economics of the Kyoto Protocol and served on delegations to climate policy meetings around the world. His research addresses the design of international climate change policy architectures; the costs, effectiveness, and principles of emissions trading programs and other mitigation policies; and the relationship between economic development and greenhouse gas emissions.

Sponsors

Major funding for the project has been provided by the Climate Change Initiative of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by Christopher P. Kaneb, AB 1990, Harvard College.

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (www.ddcf.org) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties. The goal of the foundation's Climate Change Initiative is to help build a clean energy economy through the pursuit of three strategies: designing optimal pricing policies, including international agreements, for greenhouse gases; identifying policies that accelerate the development and deployment of clean energy technologies; and advancing efforts to assess the likely effects of climate change and lower the impact of those effects on people and the environment.