



Cover design by Karen Moore

Nature Reports Climate Change

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Editor: Olive Heffernan
Assistant Editor/Copy Editor: Anna Barnett
Production Editor: Alexandra Hardy
Art Editor: Karen Moore
Web Production: Dennis Chu

MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Managing Director: Steven Inchcoombe
Publishing Director: David Swinbanks
Publisher: Jason Wilde
Editor in Chief, Nature Publications: Philip Campbell
Marketing Manager: Katy Dunningham
Managing Production Editor: Donald McDonald
Senior Production Editor: Derna Simpson
Senior Copy Editor: Jane Morris
Associate Publisher: Emma Green
Advertising Manager, Physical Sciences: Simon Allardice

The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan St
London N1 9XW, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7833 4000
e-mail: nature@nature.com

VISIT NATURE REPORTS
CLIMATE CHANGE ONLINE
World Wide Web
<http://www.nature.com/reports/climatechange>

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES
For UK/Europe (excluding Japan):
Nature Publishing Group, Subscriptions, Brunel Road,
Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 6XS, UK.
Tel: +44 (0) 1256 329242.
Subscriptions and customer services for
Americas – including Canada, Latin America and the
Caribbean: Nature Publishing Group,
Subscription Department, PO Box 5161, Brentwood,
TN 37024-5161.
Tel: (800) 524 2688 (US) or 615 850 5315
(outside the US).



nature publishing group

nature REPORTS climate change

the news behind the science, the science behind the news

AILING ADAPTATION

Few remain convinced that political will or technological developments will 'solve' global warming, least of all the inhabitants of those nations already affected. Even if we were to slash emissions by 80 per cent from 1990 levels by 2050 — seen by many as a politically troublesome target — the damage caused would still be considerable (see pages 68–70 of this issue).

And though much harm could be avoided by investing in adaptation now, the sums required are in the region of tens of billions for developing nations alone, rising to an estimated US\$28–67 billion per year by 2030. This is money that developing countries simply don't have, and that by all rights they shouldn't have to pay to clean up a mess created as a legacy of industrialization in the West.

Despite a history of paltry adaptation aid from the world's major emitters — some US\$67 million to date — the establishment of a bigger, better adaptation fund at the UN conference on climate change in Bali last December provided a glimmer of hope that the West would come good and begin shouldering the financial burden of the developing world's adaptation to climate change.

But in what can only be seen as a renegeing of this commitment, the United Kingdom — a leader at the UN talks — has now announced that its £800 million 'environmental transformation fund' to pay for developing-world adaptation will be given almost entirely in the form of loans with interest, rather than grants (*The Guardian*, 17 May 2008; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/may/16/climatechange.internationalaidanddevelopment>).

The UK, which is allegedly seeking the support of other G8 nations for this approach, plans to launch the fund — still earmarked as 'aid' — as the showpiece contribution to developing nations at the G8's annual summit to be held Hokkaido, Japan, in July.

Given that the fund was used as a bartering tool in Bali, where it was well-received internationally as a measure that would deliver support to those already experiencing the impacts of warming, such as drought, crop failure and sea level rise, it seems especially unjust that the UK will now instead use it to make developing countries pay for a problem caused by the developed world.

The decision to route the money through a multilateral fund managed by the World Bank, rather than through the United Nations, is also curious. In addition to having a poor reputation among loan recipients for excessively controlling how received money is spent, the World Bank has also come under fire recently for continuing to finance the oil and gas industries, to the tune of US\$1.5 billion between 2005 and 2007 alone.

The decision to loan adaptation 'aid' not only represents a shirking by the UK of its moral obligation to help developing nations adapt to climate change, it also undermines the UN process assigned to this very task, instead handing the job to a major funder of greenhouse gas emissions.

OLIVE HEFFERNAN, EDITOR

Published online: 3 June 2008
doi:10.1038/climate.2008.54

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

64 Mitigation
You emit what you eat
Olive Heffernan

Earth science
Out with the old
Anna Armstrong

Extreme events
Volcanic impacts
Anna Barnett

Technology
Radical redesign
Alicia Newton

65 Ocean science
Oxygen-poor oceans
Olive Heffernan

Cryosphere
Overheating Antarctica
Alicia Newton

NEWS

66 They say they want a revolution
Olive Heffernan

COMMENTARY

68 Squaring up to reality
Martin Parry, Jean Palutikof,
Clair Hanson and
Jason Lowe

FEATURE

72 The population problem
Kerri Smith

BOOKS & ARTS

75 Trading technologies
Roger A. Pielke, Jr

76 Snapshot: Siberian symbols
Anna Barnett

NEWS & VIEWS

77 Attributing cause and effect
Francis Zwiers and
Gabriele Hegerl

POLICY WATCH

79 Accounting for climate ills
Brian Hoyle