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*Southern Africa*  
REPORT  
**INFOCUS**

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# **COP17** China is the key – as Pretoria nudges 20 000 delegates towards a Durban Accord

**S**UCCESS AT THE COP17 climate change negotiations in Durban starting on Monday, 28 November 2011, will ultimately rest on China's diplomatic skills.

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trial pollution. A meaningful outcome will depend on the extent to which its negotiators can use this to entice the industrialised West to add momentum to the painfully cautious process of slowing, and ultimately reversing, the production of destructive industrial gas pollution.

## International climate change processes

2010	<b>COP16, Cancún</b> The agreement on a Green Climate Fund and a Climate Technology Centre represents a step towards a post-Kyoto Protocol commitment.
2009	<b>COP15, Copenhagen</b> No binding agreement for long-term climate change action is reached, although a "political accord" is adopted by 25 parties (including the US and China), which includes for the first time a collective commitment by developed countries to provide additional resources totalling nearly US\$30-billion by 2012 to mitigate against climate change.
2008	<b>COP14, Poznań</b>
2007	<b>COP13, Bali</b> The Bali Roadmap is adopted, charting a new course for a negotiating process to be concluded by 2009, for a post-2012 international agreement on climate change.
2004-2006	<b>COP10 to COP12: Buenos Aires, Montreal &amp; Nairobi</b> Further progress around technical solutions, including a new emphasis on "adaptation" (that is, strategies for surviving global warming), and the start of informal discussions about post-2012 when the Kyoto Protocol agreement expires. Some important milestones for a forthcoming agreement are set.
2002-2003	<b>COP8 (New Delhi) &amp; COP9 (Milan)</b> The Kyoto Protocol's CDM becomes fully operational, although an EU push for an agreement on further initiatives to limit climate change fail. Further technical clarifications are achieved on some of the outstanding issues from Marrakesh 2001, especially CDM activities.
2002	<b>Johannesburg Summit: Rio +10</b> A decade after the 1991 Rio Conference, the UN holds a World Summit on Sustainable Development to assess progress in implementing international agreements made in 1992 in Rio and 1972 at the Stockholm Conference.
2001	<b>COP6 (Bonn) &amp; COP7 (Marrakesh)</b> The extra COP meeting in Bonn is to resuscitate the process after the 2001 negotiations collapse. 170 countries agree on the Marrakesh Accords, which signify a new phase of action and implementation, although with no teeth. Industrialised countries are prohibited from banking CO <sub>2</sub> credits to meet future commitment periods, and developing countries can initiate their own CDM project and sell credits to industrialised countries.
2000	<b>COP6, The Hague</b> Talks fail miserably, primarily because of an impasse between the EU and the US. The US withdraws entirely from the Kyoto Protocol, maintaining it is not in its economic interest.

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Beijing will rely heavily on the support of climate change's major victims – Africa and the **Small Island Developing States** (Sids), whose members are literally sinking under the weight of climate change.

Having recently overtaken the US as the world's leading contributor to the problem COP17 is attempting to address, China is also the most aggressive promoter of the solution: the problem is industrial emissions polluting the atmosphere, provoking climate change; the solution is "green energy" development – wind-power, hydropower and other alternatives to fossil fuels.

While most other heavily industrialised economies come to Durban seeking concessions on the limited progress made in the last two decades on lowering industrial pollution emissions (known as greenhouse gas or GHG), China has a far more flexible hand to play. It has already signalled a willingness to accept changes to the current agreement (dating from 1997) under which only 41 industrialised countries are obliged to slow their GHG production.

China has yet to make its stance explicit, but is expected to accept a "cap" (remember the term for when the final declaration is released on Tuesday, 6 December) on its GHG emissions. If it does so this will be the centrepiece of any compromise achieved in Durban, which could include:

- Increasing the number of countries subject to restrictions;
- Setting tougher targets than those agreed at Kyoto, Japan, in 1997; and
- Compelling polluting nations to put real money into programmes to undo the damage climate change has inflicted on much of the developing world.

COP17 and GHG are just two of the myriad of acronyms beloved of environmental bureaucrats to further obscure the already-complex and contested climate-change terrain – to say nothing of the multitude of city names used as shorthand for the content of thick, eye-glazingly detailed documents that appear to be an unavoidable by-product of climate change negotiations.

COP17 is enviro-speak for the 17th annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC), the first international environmental treaty, signed in 1992, aimed at stabilising and ultimately diminishing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent interference with the climate system.

UNFCCC is pronounced by enviro-initiates, with startling solemnity, as "unfuck".

Mind-numbingly, COP17 is also **CMP7** – bureaucrat-speak for the seventh **Conference of the Parties serving**

as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (Kyoto being the venue for COP3 in 1997 at which agreement was reached on who would have to restrict GHG emissions and by how much).

As host nation, South Africa has engaged in months of energetic shuttle diplomacy to entice the many sides in the debate towards formal agreement. It has caucused in forums as diverse as the **Socialist International**, **SADC**, the **African Union**, **Ibsa** (the India-Brazil-South Africa political alliance) and, more latterly, **Brics**, the counter-weight to the US-EU axis that brings the Ibsa countries together with China and Russia.

There has been some collateral damage from Pretoria's high-intensity pre-COP17 activity. The most obvious victim regionally has been Zimbabwe – South Africa, designated by SADC to facilitate resolution of Harare's chronic political crisis, has not given it attention it needs (see *From carrot to stick in the current issue – Vol 29 No 28 – of Southern Africa Report*). Ironically the **Dalai Lama**, Tibet's exiled feudal overlord and a strong enviro-advocate, is another example: invited to attend a birthday party for retired cleric **Desmond Tutu** precisely as Pretoria was engaging Beijing on possible COP17 compromises, South Africa effectively denied him a visa.

In Durban South Africa will continue its facilitation role, shuttling among the 20 000 delegates and between 194 participating countries' representatives. It will not only be the main voice for the main victims of climate change – the people of Africa, of the Sids and of other **Least Developed Countries** (LDCs) - but also attempt to play a central role in operationalising the labyrinth of agreements signed and accepted since 1992 but still awaiting meaningful implementation or resourcing. A central characteristic of the entire COP-UNFCCC process is the abundance of agreements and mechanisms awaiting translation from "good idea" to functioning programme.

Pretoria's priorities include:

- Eliciting from developed economies contributions to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) set up under the Cancún Agreement (COP16-CMP6 in Cancún, Mexico, last year). The GCF is a UN mechanism to support programmes in developing countries to mitigate and eventually reverse the damage of climate change. Its financing arrangements were never fully agreed and its coffers remain empty;
- Persuading the countries whose greenhouse gas pollution is currently restricted under the Kyoto Protocol (which set emission levels for the top 41 polluters for the 2005-20120 period) to accept a second, more rigorous phase of GHG restrictions.

The countries are referred in enviro-speak as **Annex I** countries (see page 5). The second phase of restrictions is based on a non-binding agreement drafted in 2007 at COP13-CMP3 in Bali, Indonesia (thus the **Bali Roadmap**). In addition to lobbying the Annex I nations, Pretoria will be central to persuading countries not yet included in Annex I to subject themselves to GHG restrictions. This will be where China, not part of Annex I, comes into its own. The Annex I countries are, almost without exception, those most affected by the post-2008 global economic crisis: simply keeping their economies afloat completely dominates front-of-mind thinking right now, to the exclu-

<b>COP5, Bonn</b>	1999
<b>COP4, Buenos Aires</b>	1998
<b>COP3, Kyoto</b>	1997
Initially 38 developed countries agree to reduce their emissions of six key greenhouse gases by at least 5% below 1990 levels by 2012, but industrialising countries with constrained resources (including China and India) are set no binding targets. Developing countries are given no obligations. By 2007, 175 countries had ratified the agreement, including Japan (2002) and Russia (2004). The US never has. The Protocol, which came into effect in 2005, also established emissions trading, joint implementations, and clean development mechanisms to encourage cooperative emission reduction projects between developed and developing countries. It is the only legally binding global agreement on climate change, and expires in 2012.	
<b>COP2, Geneva</b>	1996
<b>COP1, Berlin</b>	1995
"Conference of the Parties" (COP) agree to reduce worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases. Over 170 nations ratify the UNFCCC, and the COP commits to meeting annually.	
<b>UNFCCC, Rio de Janeiro</b>	1992
Adopted by 154 countries as the central platform to combat global warming at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in 1994. Today there are 194 signatories.	
<b>International Panel on Climate Change</b>	1988
The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is formed to provide comprehensive scientific, technical and socio-economic information about the risks associated with climate change.	
<b>Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer</b>	1985
Held in Vienna, the Convention occurs in the same year that the Antarctica ozone-layer hole is first identified. The European Community and 21 other countries create a general obligation on all countries to take measures to protect the ozone layer.	
<b>Greenhouse Effect, Geneva</b>	1979
This World Climate Conference concludes that the "greenhouse effect", resulting from a build-up of CO <sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, warrants urgent international action.	
<b>Conference on Human Environment, Stockholm</b>	1972
First global recognition that the environment is endangered by human activity, most notably by industrial development and associated carbon emissions. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is created and most countries undertake to monitor environmental indicators.	

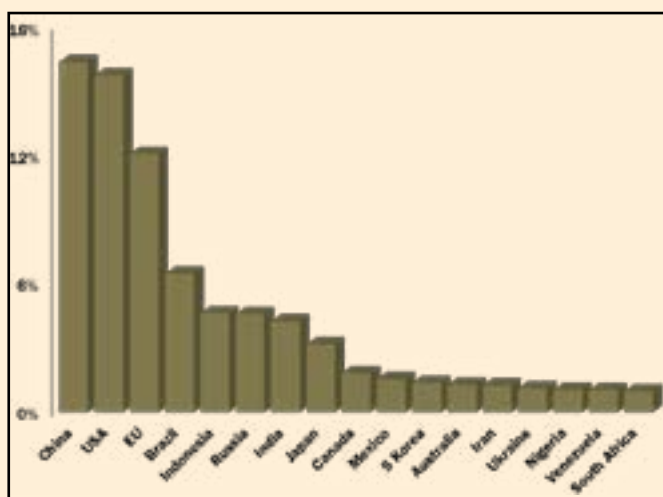


Todd Stern, US's chief negotiator

**Top 10 GHG emissions countries**

Based of 2005 figures

Rank	Country	CO <sub>2</sub> e in megatons	% of global GHG emissions
1	China	7 217,70	16,36%
2	USA	6 948,20	15,74%
3	European Union (27)	5 332,90	12,08%
4	Brazil	2 856,20	6,47%
5	Indonesia	2 045,30	4,63%
6	Russian Federation	2 020,70	4,58%
7	India	1 876,60	4,25%
8	Japan	1 397,40	3,17%
9	Germany	1 002,70	2,27%
10	Canada	808,20	1,83%



Percentage total global GHG emissions by country

sion of long-term concerns for the future of the planet. Many are in Durban looking for reasons not to sign up for another round of binding restrictions.

China, which, since the Annex I list was written in 1997 has surged past the top 41 to contribute most to GHG emissions, will weaken their case if it volunteers, as seems likely, to moderate its emissions. So too will new polluters-on-the-block, Russia and India – and possibly even Brazil.

South Africa, the only outstanding Brics member, is a junior-league polluter, even in the CO<sub>2</sub>-per-capita listings (see page 6), which allow for more reasonably realistic comparisons. It is unlikely to be expected to cap or otherwise restrict its GHG emissions.

The high-level South African team under International Relations Minister **Maite Nkoana-Mashabane** will be the central platform for a common African message to COP17. The African position was formulated by the **African Ministerial Conference on the Environment** (Amcen) in September, and is based on the reality that, while Africa contributes least to GHG pollution, it is the continent worst affected by consequent climate change.

Key African messages in Durban will be:

- The negative impact of climate change – demonstrated most graphically by the East African famine earlier this year – is significantly hampering African countries’ ability to meet their development goals, among them the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ;
- UNFCCC is the only legal framework for engagement on climate change (a necessary insistence given the tendency for polluting countries to attempt to engage in side deals);
- The “developed world” (Annex I plus) must honour its existing agreement to a “second commitment period” to further restrict GHG emissions and, separately, to finance the Green Climate Fund and make additional finance and technology available to developing countries to “adapt to the impact of climate change”.

Africa is pushing for two distinct outcomes from COP17:

- Expansion of the original emission restriction agreement in Kyoto by developed countries to a second “commitment period” from 2013-2017, during which Africa will push for a 31% cut from the UNFCCC’s 1990 baseline. By 2020 it is pushing for a 40% cut and by 2050 a cut of between 85-90%. It also argues for an inflexible distinction between legally binding emission cuts by developed countries and voluntary commitments by developing countries;
- A programme of financial and technology support to developing countries most affected by climate change equivalent to 1,5% of the gross domestic product of the developing countries responsible for climate change. With much of the West attempting to shift a major share of responsibility for supporting “adaptation measures” (actions to counter the impact of climate change) to the private sector, Africa is insisting that public financing should be the main source of funding.

African delegates will also push for the operationalisation of broad existing agreements to transfer to developing countries affected by climate change technology to contribution to “adaptation”. On this it is pushing hard for “identification and removal of all barriers preventing access to climate-related technologies and the appropriate treatment of intellectual property rights, including the re-

moval of patents on climate-related technologies”.

And it wants these processes to be overseen by “effective and accountable institutions” rather than being undertaken at the initiative of developed countries.

Despite major inhibiting factors, South African negotiators remain optimistic about COP17’s outcome. They predict real, if modest, progress.

They expect the gathering to agree on an ambitious political framework – unbinding and unenforceable, but setting what one official referred to as “the right mood music”: a cooperative and encouraging tone, against which the practical compromises will be hammered out.

They are confident that the existing commitments will be confirmed and expanded, although they recognise that the format emission restrictions (Kyoto Protocol) will take may be revised in Durban, with new targets and rules.

They are even more confident that developed-country for “adaptation” may be realised and that the Cancún Agreement on the Green Climate Fund and technology transfer will be fully operationalised. ♦

## Key players

**USA:** Arrives in Durban with little on offer besides its now-entrenched insistence on being treated as a global exception – contributing proportionately less to the GHG reduction programme than any other developed economy and stubbornly judging its own performance by different criteria from those by which it judges others.

President **Barak Obama**’s first term represents a modest improvement on the US under **George W Bush** – under Bush, as other mature economies began cutting GHG emissions, the US actually increased its emissions by 16%.

The US remains the only participant in the COP3 Kyoto gathering not to have signed the Kyoto Protocol, providing for GHG emission reductions. Although it insists it will achieve a 20% reduction within the same time-table as Annex I countries, its baseline is its 2005 emissions – after the Bush-era increase. Adjusted to Kyoto’s 1990 baseline, its commitment is to a cut of just 4%.

On this basis, and if China fulfils expectations and begins either voluntary or obligatory reductions or caps its emissions, the US will regain its long-held spot as the world’s worst polluter.

Washington also remains red-faced over WikiLeaks revelations that in 2008 (under Obama) it covertly bribed a range of developing nations with promises of aid to support US positions at COP15 in Copenhagen, and to lobby for greater leniency towards the US in the Copenhagen Accord.

The proposed introduction of **REDD-plus** provisions in Durban may serve as some enticement to the US to actually sign up the climate change programme. REDD-plus complements the **REDD** (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) provisions by rewarding “sustainable forest management”, “conservation” and “increasing forest carbon stocks” – benefitting particularly the US and Russia by recognising their vast commercial forests as major consumers of CO<sub>2</sub>.

**China:** The key to success (or failure) in Durban. It has the heaviest emissions of GHGs, but also the largest green re-

**International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane**



### Annex I countries

Developed countries and Economies in Transition which are parties to the UNFCCC convention and the Kyoto Protocol

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Australia      | • Liechtenstein         |
| • Austria        | • Lithuania             |
| • Belarus        | • Luxembourg            |
| • Belgium        | • Monaco                |
| • Bulgaria       | • Netherlands           |
| • Canada         | • New Zealand           |
| • Croatia        | • Norway                |
| • Czech Republic | • Poland                |
| • Denmark        | • Portugal              |
| • European Union | • Romania               |
| • Estonia        | • Russian Federation    |
| • Finland        | • Slovak Republic       |
| • France         | • Slovenia              |
| • Germany        | • Spain                 |
| • Greece         | • Sweden                |
| • Hungary        | • Switzerland           |
| • Iceland        | • Turkey                |
| • Ireland        | • Ukraine               |
| • Italy          | • UK & Northern Ireland |
| • Japan          | • USA                   |
| • Latvia         |                         |

### Annex II countries

Classified as developed countries and expected to contribute to mitigation costs of developing countries

- |             |                         |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| • Australia | • South Korea           |
| • Austria   | • Luxembourg            |
| • Belgium   | • Netherlands           |
| • Canada    | • New Zealand           |
| • Denmark   | • Norway                |
| • Finland   | • Portugal              |
| • France    | • Spain                 |
| • Germany   | • Sweden                |
| • Greece    | • Switzerland           |
| • Iceland   | • UK & Northern Ireland |
| • Italy     | • USA                   |
| • Japan     |                         |

search investment portfolio in the world and the largest amount of CERs (see **Glossary** on page 7).

If it chooses to remain behind the enviro-speak “firewall” – dividing countries legally bound to emission reduction or climate change mitigation from those without obligations – a range of developed economies have bluntly stated they will not sign up for “Kyoto 2” – a second, and more intensive, emission-reduction phase.

This is unlikely, and a commitment by Beijing to bind itself to Kyoto 2 is likely to be the cornerstone of a compromise deal in Durban.

**India:** After China, the global poster-child for non-Annex I performance. It contributes both to emission reduction and mitigation and adaptation programmes domestically, and in the other developing countries is a contributor to joint implementation and Clean Development Mechanisms (see **Glossary** on page 7). It produces 16% of the world’s Certified Emission Reductions. It is a vocal advocate of Kyoto 2.

**Sids:** Durban offers the 52 small-island developing states an opportunity to persuade the world to act against, rather than merely sympathise with, the imminent threat posed to the low-lying, environmentally fragile island states.

**G77:** Lead by China, the G77 (132 developing countries, not 77 as the name implies) is the biggest multi-national forum in the UN family. It represents a powerful voice for Kyoto 2 and other emission reduction and mitigation mechanisms.

**Japan:** Sides with the US and Canada in flatly refusing to consider signing up to Kyoto 2 unless there is major revision to the arrangement of who participates in emission reduction and by how much. Agreement on Chinese partici-

pation is likely to see it soften considerably. Unlike Canada and the US, Japan has actively worked to achieve its Kyoto-set reduction targets.

**European Union:** Staunch supporter of Kyoto and a major contributor to CERs. It is committed to Kyoto 2, although it demands a new format that includes more countries and spreads responsibility more widely. It is expected to ask that Iceland and Greece be excused of their obligations. It will clash with Africa on its proposed 31% reduction target by 2020 – the EU wants 20%.

**Australia:** Among the world’s highest per capita CO<sub>2</sub> polluters and a consistent critic of the Kyoto Protocol. This may change if China crosses the firewall, but Australia will support any sign of dissent.

**Russia:** Ahead of COP17, it has pushed for expanding responsibility for GHG emission reduction to include a far broader range of countries. REDD-plus represents a major inducement. ♦

#### Countries with highest GHG emissions per capita

Rank	Country	CO <sub>2</sub> e ton per year per capita
1	Qatar	55,5
2	United Arab Emirates	38,8
3	Kuwait	35,0
4	Luxembourg	27,5
5	Australia	26,9
6	Bahrain	25,4
7	USA	23,5
8	Canada	22,6
9	Trinidad & Tobago	19,6
10	Turkmenistan	18,9
11	New Zealand	18,8
18	Russia	13,7
36	UK	10,6
37	Japan	10,5
47	France	9,0
48	South Africa	9,0
73	China	5,5
74	Brazil	5,4
120	India	1,7

#### GHG emission by country: between 1% and 1,6%

Based of 2005 figures

Rank	Country	% of global GHG emissions
11	Mexico	1,57%
12	UK	1,55%
13	Korea (South)	1,38%
14	Italy	1,32%
15	France	1,30%
16	Australia	1,29%
17	Iran	1,27%
18	Ukraine	1,12%
19	Spain	1,07%
20	Nigeria	1,04%
21	Venezuela	1,03%
22	South Africa	0,98%
23	Turkey	0,98%

#### GHG emission by country:

#### between 0,5% and 0,9%

Based of 2005 figures

Rank	Country	% of global GHG emissions
24	Saudi Arabia	0,88%
25	Poland	0,85%
26	Thailand	0,83%
27	Malaysia	0,83%
28	Argentina	0,80%
29	Taiwan	0,68%
30	Netherlands	0,65%
31	DRC	0,61%
32	Myanmar	0,59%
33	Pakistan	0,55%
34	Egypt	0,52%

## GLOSSARY

**Additionality:** The requirement set out in the Kyoto Protocol that any emission reduction project must be in addition to those projects already undertaken or planned, and without funding by an Annex I country.

**Annex I parties:** The 41 countries to which the Kyoto Protocol assigned the burden of emission reduction to apprehend climate change (*see page XX for the full list*). Categorized as “economies in transition”, these countries have jointly committed to an overall 5,2% emissions decrease by 2012.

**Annex II parties:** There are 23 Annex II countries, classified as developed countries (*see page XX for the full list*). They cover some climate change-related costs of developing countries and are the major funders of the flexibility mechanisms.

**Cap & Trade:** Each government sets a limit or “cap” on the amount of a pollutant that can be emitted. This cap is allocated or sold in the form of carbon credits to entities needing to increase their emission permits. Thus the buyer pays a charge for polluting, while the seller is rewarded for having reduced emissions.

Market and incentive driven, this is known as Cap & Trade and is provided for in the Kyoto Protocol.

**Carbon credits:** A generic term for any tradable certificate or permit representing the right to emit one ton of carbon dioxide or the mass of another greenhouse gas with a CO<sub>2</sub>e.

**Carbon leakage:** Refers to industrial practises intended to distort emission reduction figures: operations – and thus emissions – are relocated from a developed country to a less regulated country, thus reflecting as emission reduction.

**Carbon sink:** An emission reduction method which removes dispersed atmospheric emissions from the environment rather than stopping the emissions from being produced. Reforestation is one such method.

**Certified Emission Reductions (CERs):** A unit equal to 1 ton of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent established by the Kyoto Protocol, CERs are issued for emission reduction projects (or CDMs) carried out by developed countries in developing countries.

**Clean Development Mechanism (CDM):** One of the three flexibility mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries may finance greenhouse gas emission reduction projects in developing countries, for which they are awarded credits towards their own emission reduction commitments.

**Climate change:** Refers to changes in temperature and weather world wide caused by pollution.

**Emission trading:** One of the three flexibility mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol, sources of a particular pollutant are given limited government permits to release a specified number of tons of the pollutant. The owners of the permits may keep them and release the pollutants, or reduce their emissions and sell the permits. The fact that the permits have value as an item to be sold or traded gives the owner an incentive to reduce their emissions.

**Flexibility mechanisms:** The three methods outlined in the Kyoto Protocol to reduce emissions and aid Annex I countries in meeting their reduction goals. They are Joint Implementation, Emission Trading and Clean Development Mechanisms.

**Green Climate Fund (GCF):** An operating entity of the UNFCCC, funded by donations, which supports projects, programmes, policies and other activities undertaken by developing countries on their own initiative to combat climate change.

**Greenhouse gases (GHGs):** Atmospheric gases responsible for causing climate change. The major GHGs are carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Less widespread – but significant – GHGs are hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.

**Joint implementation:** One of the three flexibility mechanisms in the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries may invest in emission reduction projects in any other developed country as an alternative to reducing emissions domestically.

**Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD):** Activities tied to financial incentives to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases caused by deforestation and forest degradation.

**REDD-plus:** Expands the scope of REDD beyond just avoiding activities that cause deforestation and degradation to include activities which promote forest restoration, sustainable management and reforestation. The expanded scope means that countries with low rates of deforestation and degradation which could not participate in REDD can now be included in sustainable forestry projects.

**Second commitment period/Kyoto 2:** Refers to the possible extension of the Kyoto Protocol after its emission reduction timeline ends in 2012. Its supporters would like to see it based on latest scientific data and economic information, and for it to include new emission reducing mechanisms. Its detractors anticipate that it will have the same fundamental flaws as its predecessor, the Kyoto Protocol.

**Sustainable development:** The use of resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

# *Southern Africa* REPORT

The SADC bulletin of political and economic intelligence

## A new perspective on Southern Africa

November 2011

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For more information contact our administrator Thami Hlatshwayo on:

**Tel:** +27 11 486 9520

**Email:** administrator@southernafricareport.com

**Post:** PO Box 752610, Gardenview, 2047, Gauteng, South Africa

