



**In conclusion, Mr. President, we at Enron feel that human survival may simply not be economic.**

adapted from a cartoon  
courtesy The Ecologist



*Socrates*, 2,500 years ago, made a very strong argument that corporatism does not work. He presented one of his Socratic stories about human beings having first lived alone, which was boring and difficult

and pointless. So to create a real human society, Zeus sent Hermes out to distribute skills and talents among the people, setting up some as carpenters, others as cooks and so on. And while technically this worked out much better for humanity, these societies soon fell apart - because of course it is a corporatist model. And the point of this story is that societies based simply on self-interest and expertise fall apart - because they're not societies. Socrates in effect was dismissing with contempt the classic Chicago School approach to economics and the classic management view of organizations - what

has become the ruling truism of our day - that we are driven by self interest as defined by what we do. Of course, I am not the first person to make these observations. Sensible people have been saying this sort of thing for thousands of years.

So Zeus called Hermes in again and instructed him to go back and this time distribute among them *aidos* and *dike* - which is to say "reverence" and "right". Reverence means a sense of community, shared knowledge of restraint and belonging, a sense of community. And Right means freedom of speech, debate, justice, decision making, social order, public truth. Hermes was nervous about this mission, since the last one had gone so badly. He asked Zeus for more specific instructions: should he distribute reverence and the right the way he distributed expertise - a bit here and bit there? And then, in one sentence, Zeus summarized what society is. He told Hermes to distribute *aidos* and *dike* to everybody, "for societies cannot exist only if a few share in the essential qualities of the human race".

From, *A Wondrous Uncertainty* by John Ralston Saul, *Queen's Quarterly*, A Canadian Review. Spring 2002.

## **C is for Carbon ... or Corruption?**

Ricardo Carrere, coordinator of the World Rainforest Movement, explains that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) in the UNFCCC is a corrupt mechanism that will end up doubling emissions of greenhouse gases and result in accelerating the problem of global warming.

Ricardo Carrere has been following the climate change negotiations since COP 5 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Attending the ongoing COP 8 in New Delhi, he admitted to feeling extremely pessimistic about the United Nations (UN) negotiating process that he says is "like the band that kept playing on deck while the Titanic slowly sank into the sea".

According to Ricardo, the UNFCCC conference has become more of a trade meeting rather than a genuine attempt to address the problems of climate change. "There are a lot of financial

interests involved - there is money in climate change. Because it involves eliminating the use of fossil fuels which is a major problem. The countries of the North especially the US are totally avoiding any changes to their economic model that is based on oil".

The world's reservoirs of carbon exist both underground in deposits of coal, oil and natural gas, and above ground in natural ecosystems. Of the carbon stored in terrestrial ecosystems, the highest carbon resources are contained in forests. Hence, forests are considered "carbon sinks" and have therefore become a major focus of attention for countries both in the North and the South in the climate change negotiations.

With the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the major industrialised nation polluters came to a basic

agreement (some unwillingly) to cut their emissions of greenhouse gases by 5.2 per cent. Ricardo says that this reduction is "too little for too big a problem".

"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the emissions need to be cut by 60 per cent. But, however, even that meagre 5.2 per cent has become unacceptable for countries like the US on grounds of economics. The US has publicly stated that they don't care about the world's climate, that they can't take any measures that will affect the US economy, period".

"So these countries have tried to find mechanisms to enable them to not even fulfill this small commitment of 5.2 per cent reduction. The mechanism they have invented is called the Clean Development Mechanism. The CDM, however, is neither clean nor does it have anything to do with development. It is basically a way of avoiding cutting emissions.

"So, for example, if a country ratifies the Kyoto Protocol, instead of cutting 5.2 per cent at home, it can cut three per cent, and then go and establish tree plantations in Uruguay or Thailand or elsewhere to account for the remaining emissions. Because these plantations have now been defined as 'carbon sinks'".

According to the concept of plantations as carbon sinks, the trees grow and absorb carbon from the atmosphere that is stored in their woody biomass. But, as Ricardo explains, this means that not only are countries basically escaping their commitment to reducing emissions and avoiding any change to renewable energy resources, they are also causing a number of problems.

"This is not just about planting a few trees here and there. This requires establishing huge areas, hundreds of thousands even millions of hectares, of plantations. For the plan to make any sense from a carbon value, they will have to be planting anywhere from about 100 to 300 million hectares of fast growing trees".

In the past, large-scale tree plantations all over the world, which is mainly of fast-growing tree

species such as eucalyptus, pine or acacia, have caused serious impacts to local communities by taking over lands and forests used for local livelihoods including farming, grazing, and collecting forest products. These plantations have also caused severe impacts on water resources.

Despite these problems, governments are now putting in place a number of agencies to either sell or buy carbon sinks, there's a huge interest in financial markets about carbon as a 'commodity', and the World Bank has created a 'prototype carbon fund' to promote the trade in carbon.

But the reality as always is not that simple. Ricardo says that, apart from their ecological impacts, given the past experience with forest fires, plantations can be an extremely unstable way of storing carbon as the stored carbon can disappear within hours.

"The US President Bush said recently that the solution to forest fires is to cut the forests. Even a country like the US with all its high-technology was helpless to put out those huge forest fires. How then can a country, say India or Uruguay, cope with a similar problem?"

But given the complexities involved with plantations and carbon sinks, how then did this concept become accepted?

Ricardo says that the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) as the expert body advising the UNFCCC set up a panel to put together a Special Report on Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry.

"The message from this panel that was given the task to assess plantations as carbon sinks was that plantations are good sinks for carbon. However, we did some basic Internet research and came up with some startling information about some of the members of the panel. We found that at least eight of the authors of the report are going to get money if this concept is approved - because these people are shareholders or work in some of the companies that are going to trade in carbon. This is corruption". (See Dirty Secrets.)

## Dirty Secrets

Sandra Brown of the US is a Coordinating Lead Author of Chapter 5 of the UNFCCC Special Report on Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry. Brown is Senior Program Officer for Winrock International, an Arlington, Virginia-based non-profit organisation which accepts contracts from "public and private" sources. Winrock provides forest carbon monitoring technical services to government agencies such as the US Initiative on Joint Implementation.

Pedro Mouro-Costa, another author of Chapter 5, is a UK-based executive of EcoSecurities Ltd., a consulting firm with offices in the US, Brazil, Australia, and The Netherlands. EcoSecurities "specialises in the generation of Emission Reduction Credits" and stands to make large profits from carbon-based forestry.

Gareth Philips of the UK, another author of Chapter 5, works for Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS) Forestry of Geneva, which expects to make money from designing, monitoring and certifying carbon forestry projects.

Richard Tipper of the UK, also an author of Chapter 5, is on the staff of the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Management, a consulting company which earns money from designing, assessing and monitoring carbon forestry projects. ECCM works closely with Future Forests, which has carbon forestry contracts with Mazda, Avis, BT and other companies.

Mark Trexler of the US, a Review Editor of the same chapter, runs Trexler and Associates, a firm that has made money - and is likely to make millions of more dollars - by promoting and monitoring carbon sequestration and other "climate mitigation" projects.

Peter Hill of the US, a Lead Author of Chapter 4, is with Monsanto Corporation. Monsanto has a large stake in genetically modified organisms, including, potentially, organisms modified to take up or store carbon more efficiently.

## Outside the UN Territory at Vigyan Bhavan **A view from South Africa**

To demonstrate that they are still out there and the communities feeling about the high profile COP 8, Basudev Jani and Naranga Pujari of Orissa Adivasi Adhikar Abhiyan, a tribal people network today organised a three hour indigenous cultural programme in front of the Vigyan Bhawan. The group comprised of 25 Adivasi youth and women through their cultural programme sent the message that it is the people whose life is at stake. The people are from the state from Orissa which was victimised by super cyclone in the year 1999 and is prone to severe drought and flood. For Basudev Jani, COP-8 meeting is a 'Big People's Affair'. They are only the victims of the decisions made by the elites in the big cities.

Most of the developing countries are for adaptation and mitigation but they are not sure how and when to start the process. For them CDM is good but difficult to implement, says Alhassance Adama Diallo, of South Africa, an observer to the COP 8 process. Hailing from a drought prone area, he feels that many developing countries delegates are uneasy with the CDM mechanism. He says the USA wants to protect its interest without realising that today what developing countries are facing is owing to the unsustainable lifestyle practices and hyper consumerism in the US. The country which is polluting the most and causing the greatest threat is advising us to stop development.

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