

recent developments

INTERNATIONAL

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

On 26-28 April 2006, the 25th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (*IPCC-25*) was held in Port Louis, Mauritius. The IPCC was established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization for the purpose of understanding and evaluating human impacts on climate change.

During IPCC-25, the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Gas Inventories were accepted and its Overview Chapter adopted by the 270 participants from government, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations. The Guidelines will serve as a standardised framework for estimating greenhouse gas emissions and form the basis of an international climate change regime.

First Working Session for Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change

As discussed in the Autumn 2006 edition, Australia, the United States, China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea have entered into the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate Change (*AP6*), a regional partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. On 18-21 April 2006, delegates from AP6 met in Berkley, California for the first working session.

The delegates adopted Action Plan Guidelines (the *Guidelines*) for the purpose of ensuring that each member state is consistent in both the elements they address and the goals they set in devising Action Plans. Each state will be required to review their energy sectors and report on the development and implementation of strategic frameworks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Action Plan also calls for individual and collective goals that take into account the economies and resources available in each state. An Action Plan outline, divided into three parts (Sector Review, Objectives and Partnership Actions) has been published and is available at <http://www.asiapacificpartnership.org/ActionPlanGuidelines.pdf> (at 4 September 2006).

The Action Plan task forces for each state are required to finalise their draft Action Plans by mid-2006 for review by the AP6 Committee.

ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting

On 27 July 2006, the 24th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (*ASEAN*) Ministers on Energy meeting was held in Vientiane, Lao. The Ministers noted the importance of energy efficiency and the move towards renewable energy sources (including the possibility of power trade cooperation) in an effort to overcome the regions' dependency on increasingly expensive imported oil. The Ministers also made progress towards the finalisation of the ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding on the ASEAN Power Grid, with the aim of signing the agreement at the upcoming December 2006 ASEAN Leaders' Summit in the Philippines. The agreement will result in a shared gas pipeline and electricity interconnection project in the region.

US-Australia Solar Energy Partnership

On 14 August 2006, Solar Systems (Australia) and Sectrolab Inc (US) finalised an agreement, pursuant to the US-Australia Climate Action Partnership (*CAP*) to develop and implement a world first 'full-scale ultra-high efficiency photovoltaic generator' for land-based use. The agreement is estimated to be worth \$10 million and will deliver a generator capable of producing at least 26 gigawatt hours of electricity per year. According to the former Australian Minister for Environment and Heritage, Senator Ian Campbell, the new generator is three times more efficient than current solar panels and will facilitate the global uptake of economically viable and environmentally efficient solar power.