

PRESENTATION on CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY
at the “DEBT, CLIMATE & GLOBAL JUSTICE” CONFERENCE,
FEASTA, JUBILEE 2000, GCI, DUBLIN, 28th April 2004.



Linking Environment and Development, the conference debated a topic of the utmost importance: - what does it really take to avoid dangerous rates of global climate change? Can we switch from the present uneconomic system of ‘Expansion and Divergence’ to a sustainable global system based on ‘Contraction and Convergence’?

As the conference explored, central to the answer is the kind of money that's used. It was agreed that the present paper-money system of “Expansion and Divergence” is debt, growth and greenhouse-gas emissions dependent, and this makes it inherently unjust and unsustainable.

The answer considered was how JUBILEE 2000's, repudiation of debt and GCI's proposals for the international “Contraction and Convergence” of fossil fuel dependency might be combined with FEASTA's proposals for the International Energy Backed Currency Units [EBCUs], in order to establish the resource basis for a globally just and sustainable system.

In the morning, Mark Lynas [first from left in the picture above] author of climate best-seller “High Tide” showed before and after photographs of environments around the world already stressed by changing climate. [The picture alongside is a glacier in Peru as seen in 1980 and again in 2002].

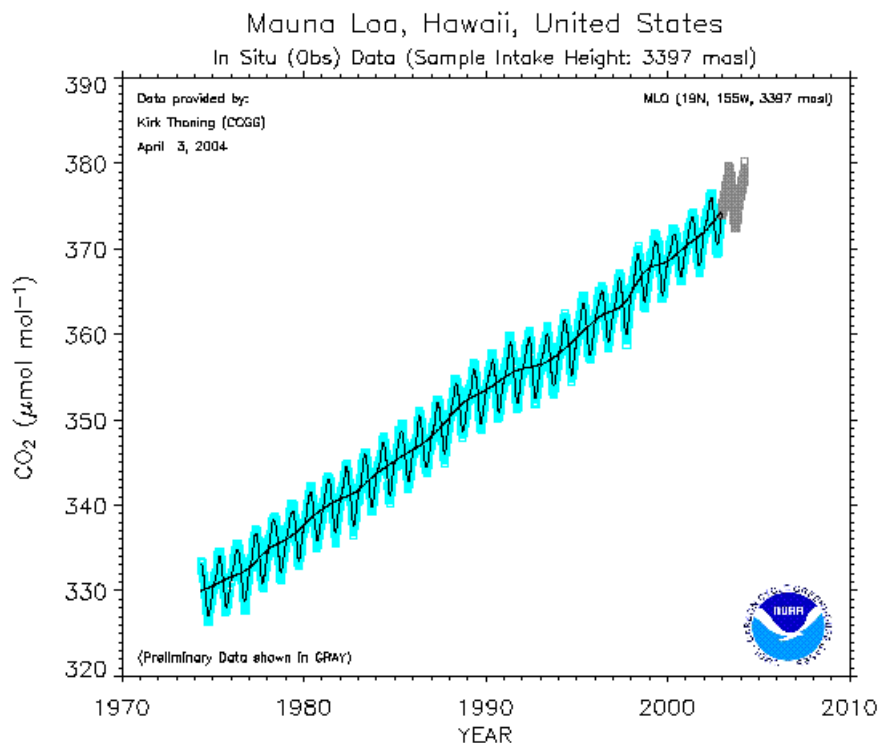


Anne Pettifor [second from left above] spoke about Jubilee 2000's campaign to “Break the Chains of Debt” and developments since then, as in “The Real World Economic Outlook”, making links to the imperative of fossil fuel “Contraction and Convergence” [Palgrave 2003].



Mr Patrick Finnegan [third from left of Mark Lynas above] of Climate Network Ireland, presented showed worsening disparities of fossil fuel consumption levels per capita as a key indicator in the current conditions of “Expansion and Divergence”.

Aubrey Meyer gave an update on the rise of CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere. Quoting NOAA data, he noted that the sharp rise recorded each year over the last two years, was roughly equal to half the weight of emissions from fossil fuel burning in each year. This was roughly equivalent to the loss of the biological sinks for CO₂ for those years and referred to the recent remark by a US Government expert working on the data that this is, “what positive feedback looks like”.



Mr Raphael Hanmbock of the Cameroon [standing in the photograph above], spoke about Africa’s plight under climate change. He endorsed the Jubilee 2000 campaign and presented the Africa Group’s proposals for “Contraction and Convergence” (C&C) to address these worsening conditions.



In the afternoon Aubrey Meyer of GCI distributed C&C materials and Tim Helweg-Larsen of GCI projected and took the conference through the C&C technical animation. He carefully demonstrated and stressed the point that to resolve the historic debt of climate change, the rate of convergence to equal per capita shares globally can be accelerated relative to the global rate of contraction. The faulty 'Kyoto' process has insisted that carbon shares must be tradable. This sharing feature of C&C enables the claims of the poor and the South for Sustainability with Justice to be structurally enacted within the rules of existing process.

Thereafter, Richard Douthwaite of FEASTA [looking at the notice board to his left in the first photograph] presented their scheme for Energy Backed Currency Units – or EBCU's - or an international currency system that is based on the resource-sharing standard created by C&C. Richard suggested that this was absolutely necessary as without it, C&C might just end up as a victim of the paper currency system. He said C&C might end up as another attempt to make a system do something that it isn't designed to do and even with the best will in the world, is incapable of doing.

The conference separated into five discussion groups returning with well-focused response points for sharply focused and inspirational plenary discussions two hours later. The numerous points made were assembled on the notice board shown in the first photograph.

John Jopling of FEASTA summed as follows: - the past is still with us in the form of unsustainable debt and the growing climate injustice of Expansion and Divergence.

The future must somehow embrace Contraction and Convergence. He pointed out C&C has hitherto been associated with the framework for climate change negotiations proposed and promoted by the Global Commons Institute, led by Aubrey Meyer.

He noted that when the concerns of debt and development, felt by so many attending the conference, are merged with C&C EBCU proposals, it was obvious that the combination has a far wider appeal. As was said from the audience, this becomes something around which so many issues converge. John suggested points for organisation and action.

This was a fitting end to the climate effort in the "Convergence" Festival, all brilliantly organised by the indefatigable and irreplaceable Davie Philip of FEASTA.