

RTCC: Could you give us an idea of the state of preparations ahead of Durban?

We are very optimistic about Durban – let me start with the leadership of the South African incoming presidency that has done a fantastic job in getting into a leadership position and also being very responsible about all of the logistical preparations that are also very important for Durban. That side is on track.

On the negotiations side they are also on track. We will basically be having two big packages, two conceptual packages in Durban. One conceptual packages has to do with all of the deliverables that come out of Cancun...the Technology Mechanism, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Committee, reporting requirements...all of those things that were agreed to in Cancun, and also agreed to be designed this year and agreed in Durban...all of those issues are on track and we can talk about any of those that you want.

The other conceptual package is that which goes above and beyond Cancun, which is basically the mitigation package...what are countries going to decide what they want to do with the Kyoto protocol, how is the mitigation framework going to be strengthened under the Convention, and of course the issue of long-term finance.

So there are two conceptual packages...I will be transparent enough to say the first package – the institutional arrangements coming out of Cancun are well on track and we have very high hopes for that. The more politically challenging issues are in the second package, but that's why Durban is here.

RTCC: That said, President Zuma says there has been a 'low level of ambition shown by ministers' – perhaps ministers from other governments that his people have been speaking to...what do you think the reasons are behind that potential low-level of ambition?

The low level of ambition doesn't refer specifically to the ministers, it refers to the low level of ambitions that countries have put on the table with respect to their mitigation pledges – so compared to where we should be with respect to mitigation by 2020 we're actually only 60% there...if you total all of the mitigation pledges from both industrialised countries and developing countries, and that is certainly not enough. One of the very difficult issues that countries will have to face over the next few years is how do they close that gap – how do they actually get to the level of mitigation that the science requires?

RTCC: In relation to mitigation...you went on record in June this year calling for countries to aim for a 1.5C rise rather than 2.0C – what were your thoughts behind that call...?

The Cancun agreements are pretty clear about that...the temporary goal that countries have agreed to is below two degrees, but they have also committed to a review in the Cancun agreements that will start in 2013 and conclude in 2015, and the review will be about the adequacy with which countries are facing the mitigation challenge...and honestly we can already predict that the review will say not enough effort, the ambition needs to be raised and it's very likely that the combination of that review and the 5th assessment report that is coming out of the IPCC in the year 2014 will actually point to the fact that the effects of climate change are only growing and getting more intense, and that we will actually have to raise our ambition to a 1.5C as a maximum temperature rise...it's in the Cancun agreements and countries will have to deal with that...

RTCC: Where do you stand on the future of Kyoto – is everything still up for discussion?

The Kyoto Protocol second commitment period will end in 2012, and that is why countries have been grappling with the issue of what do they want to do about the future of the Kyoto

Protocol...it was a question that was evaded, skirted, politically dealt with but not really answered in Cancun, and that is a luxury governments can no longer afford. A very, very difficult issue in Durban is going to be trying to find a solution to the Kyoto Protocol – and as I say they will have to find on the one hand a way to continue the commitments of industrialised countries as they have on the first commitments period of the Kyoto protocol, and on the other hand bring on board the voluntary efforts that developing countries have put on the table, because it is only as a collective whole that we will be able to close the mitigation gap.

RTCC: How challenging a role is this for you personally heading into Durban...what role will you be playing in the lead-up and in Durban itself?

The Secretariat has been supporting the process of bringing all countries together...we are at their service – we provide the technical input they require and we are very anxious to always follow the political leadership that is established by the COP Presidency...in this case it is a political leadership that is already being handed over slowly, gradually but certainly from the Mexican Presidency to the South African Presidency. It's also very clear from President Zuma's address in Pretoria last week that South Africa is heading for high ambition – they are not heading for a Durban that is only going to be a step without major consequence – they really want to make a very clear step of progress in the climate change regime, and the Secretary is fully on board supporting South Africa with that goal.

RTCC: Turning to the Technology Mechanism...this is one of those interesting policies that has been developed quite a bit since Cancun – there might not be that much awareness of this Mechanism outside the UNFCCC and other negotiators – could you briefly explain the aims of the Mechanism?

The technology mechanism was agreed to in Cancun for the very specific purpose that it is clear that the very specific Transformation that needs to occur round the world will not occur without a quantum leap in the development of clean technologies...so one of the Institutional arrangements that we put in place was the Technology mechanism that is divided into two pillars...the technology executive committee has already had its first meeting here in Bonn, and it function as the policy arm of the Technology Mechanism. The CTCN (Climate technology Centre and Network) is basically a network that still needs to be populated, but it is conceived as a network of experts and business and all kinds of stakeholders that have access and interest in the deployment of clean technology...and the CTCN will work as an enabler of the exchange of information around technologies. The two of them together will actually be what creates the Technology Mechanism – that is actually on track to be operational in 2012 as was agreed in Cancun.

RTCC: In terms of this Mechanism being a business opportunity for countries and business around the world, how is that aspect being explained....?

It is absolutely a business opportunity – it's very clear that governments at an international level need to set the signal, which they are already doing. At a national level they need to put the policies in place, but the motor of this whole thing is the private sector – it's the private sector that needs to make the investments, to green its investments so that they're not continuing to invest in technologies that are already obsolete, so that we don't move into even further capital stock lock-in...it is the private sector that is already responding - the growth in investments is already palpable, and it is the private sector that needs to take advantage of these opportunities, realise that we're heading to a low carbon economy across the world and be able to move in with the capital investment power that only they have

RTCC: And in terms of providing incentives....are programmes like the technology mechanism an alternative to top down mitigation targets...in the sense that they encourage bottom-up growth?

I think the strongest incentive – to use your word – has already been given in Cancun, which is the signal that we are moving to an at least below 2C and very soon to a 1.5C...that already tells business that we're going towards a low-carbon economy...so that's the incentive, that's the vision and those that get in first will actually reap the best benefits. In

terms of the Technology Mechanism what this seeks to do is to enable the transfer of technology, and also the research and development of technology and the transfer and deployment of technologies across the world

RTCC: What timescale are you looking at with this mechanism....five years down the line what would you hope to have achieved?

The TM is planned to be operational next year, I see no reason why that should not be the case...the TEC would be scheduled to meet at least a couple of times next year to begin to establish policies. The Network should also begin to be established....that will be a gradual process that will grow over time...

RTCC: Ok – let's look at the world economy...how do you make climate change important to world leaders who have domestic electorates that are worried about the price of food or simply whether they will be able to get by...how can you make climate change relevant to those leaders?

Well – those leaders are also affected by all of the natural disasters that have occurred around the world. Unfortunately those disasters are wake-up calls that countries are continually getting and will in fact increase in their intensity and frequency. I don't think we need to remind leaders – all they have to do is look at the losses that are already being incurred, both socially and economically through natural disasters. Furthermore Cancun proved that countries are taking this very seriously...countries are making extraordinary investments – certainly in Cancun but even throughout this year, to make sure that the web of institutional support that they envisioned in Cancun is actually being put in place. And they have been making very serious efforts throughout this year to tackle the question of the Kyoto Protocol and the mitigation pledges...from what I see governments continue to take this issue very seriously – if anything they are taking it even more seriously every year because the evidence is staring them in the face

RTCC: That said, in countries like the UK polls suggest fewer people are concerned about climate change than perhaps two years ago – what do you think that and what we have recently seen at the Republican Presidential debates – what does this tell us about the state of the climate change debate at the moment?

Well – I think the Republican Party in the United States is quite an interesting case...I wouldn't even want to compare them with anything else. In the UK I disagree – if there is a government that is responding to pressure from the public and being very avant garde about its engagement with climate it is precisely the UK...we have been very appreciative and quite admiring of the leadership displayed by the UK government as with many other European governments, as with China, as with most countries around the world, the United States being a sad exception to that rule. Sooner or later they will catch up with physics...

RTCC: Would you like more effort from some European states...obviously they're not direct affected by these huge weather changes we have seen in Africa, India or North America...

Of course I would like more effort from everyone...the European Union has traditionally been a leader and continues to be a leader in these negotiations and in their domestic efforts they have very seriously internalised many of the climate change policies into their own domestic legislation – and that is certainly to be admired. I would want to see the same from many other countries who are already in the process of internalising climate policy into their domestic legislation as a very important step...

RTCC: Finally – today's children are the ones who will inherit whatever climate change occurs – what role can education play in enhancing the climate change debate?

Very important role – and I have been really impressed to see how many countries have already or are in the process of internalising climate change into even grammar school. I thought maybe they'd get to it eventually when they get to university – but that's not so...I've

recently been able to review three grammar school programmes that have been specifically targeted at children six to ten years old, so that children realise and can in fact become social agents at home and in school and in their communities...and I've been impressed by that because as you say - it's about them....