

Global Warming Scorecard



A report released by the UN states that while Britain and Sweden are on target for reducing global warming gases, other countries will either have to strengthen their policies or rely on carbon trading in order to reach their Kyoto goals.

In the United States, emissions of what are called greenhouse gases climbed by 16 per cent between 1990 and 2004. The figure in Canada was almost double the American experience, or 30 percent.

Relying on NASA satellite monitoring, some scientists contend that Greenland glaciers are dumping water into the sea at twice the level they were ten years ago. Also, warmer water creates disease conditions for coral reefs that have killed about one-third of them at official monitoring sites in the Caribbean since last year. NASA says that the warming trend is increasing the temperature by one-fifth of one degree Celsius every decade.

Of the 18 countries reporting on their progress (out of 36 signing countries), Britain has achieved its gains by closing coal-powered plants and switching them to natural gas. Based on current

trends, it will reduce its emissions by 19 percent by 2012. While the Netherlands will not reach its minus six per cent emission targets as a result of anything happening within its borders, it predicts that it will beat its target because of emission credits it receives for a Dutch wind powered project in India. Since India has not signed the Kyoto accord, it is not known whether this single wind project in the midst of India's massive industrialization effort will make any difference in terms of environmental quality within India. A total of 17 countries have yet to report on progress with respect to their Kyoto commitments.

Although the United States did not sign the Kyoto accord, some individual states have taken action on their own. In September, California established the most stringent pollution limits in the US, which will require utilities, oil refiners and other companies to cut greenhouse gases by 25 per cent over the next 14 years. Under the legislation, all industries will be required to reduce their emissions beginning in the next six years in order to meet the 14 year goal. It is expected that California will use emission credits or carbon trading in order to meet its goals.