

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **Provisions Concerning Nuclear Energy**

Part 2 of the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (CoP-6bis)  
Bonn, Germany, 16-27 July 2001

The “Bonn Agreement” negotiated at CoP-6bis is an important step forward. The IAEA and others have often noted that nuclear power produces virtually no greenhouse gases. Nuclear power reduces current annual global carbon emissions by about 600 million tonnes compared to what they would be otherwise. But this advantage of nuclear power has been invisible to investors because it has not been convertible to cash on the bottom line. Except for a very few instances, there have been no restrictions or taxes on greenhouse gas emissions and thus no economic value to their avoidance. The Bonn Agreement represents important progress towards widespread, coordinated restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions, and thus towards attaching a tangible economic value to nuclear power’s avoidance of such emissions.

In reporting on CoP-6bis, much of the nuclear press focused on the Bonn Agreement’s exclusion of nuclear projects from two of the three flexible mechanisms, Joint Implementation (JI) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The IAEA Secretariat has consistently taken the position that in climate change negotiations nuclear power should be judged on its climate change attributes (see [http://www.iaea.or.at/worldatom/Press/Statements/DDGs/wallersp\\_unfccc2000.shtml](http://www.iaea.or.at/worldatom/Press/Statements/DDGs/wallersp_unfccc2000.shtml) for CoP-6 IAEA statement). The exclusion of any technology with clear climate benefits from any of the flexible mechanisms can only limit options, flexibility and cost-effectiveness. However, given the realities of political bargaining, the Bonn Agreement, even with the nuclear exclusion for CDM and JI, is clearly superior to no agreement.

Without the nuclear exclusion for CDM and JI the bargain struck in Bonn would have been more consistent with the conclusions of the April 2001 Ninth Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development, CSD-9 ([http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9\\_2001.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm)). CSD-9 was the first time the Commission focused specifically on energy, and offered the best forum to date for a full diplomatic discussion of nuclear power and sustainable development. The Commission took full advantage of the opportunity. Nuclear power was among the most controversial and consuming issues discussed. The final conclusions, after a two-year preparatory process and two-week final session, were two:

- Agreement by countries to disagree on the role of nuclear power in sustainable development, but
- Full agreement that “The choice of nuclear energy rests with countries”.

Although the Bonn Agreement would have been more consistent with these principles had it left out the nuclear exclusion for JI and CDM, it is not contrary to CSD-9. The Bonn Agreement does not impinge directly on the principle that nuclear energy is a sovereign choice although it does restrict the international market for selling greenhouse gas emission reductions due to nuclear power to just one of the flexible mechanisms – Emissions Trading – and thus to just the Annex I, or developed, countries.