

# The International Response to Climate Change

Dennis Cunningham

International Institute for Sustainable  
Development

# The Big Picture

- Climate change requires an international response because:
- Green house gases are not confined by borders.
- Climatic impacts will be felt by all nations and people.
- Climate Change is a long term issue.

# The Framework Convention

- This agreement recognizes that climate change is a problem.
- Has an ultimate objective of stabilizing GHG concentrations at a level that would prevent human induced interference with the climate system.

And...

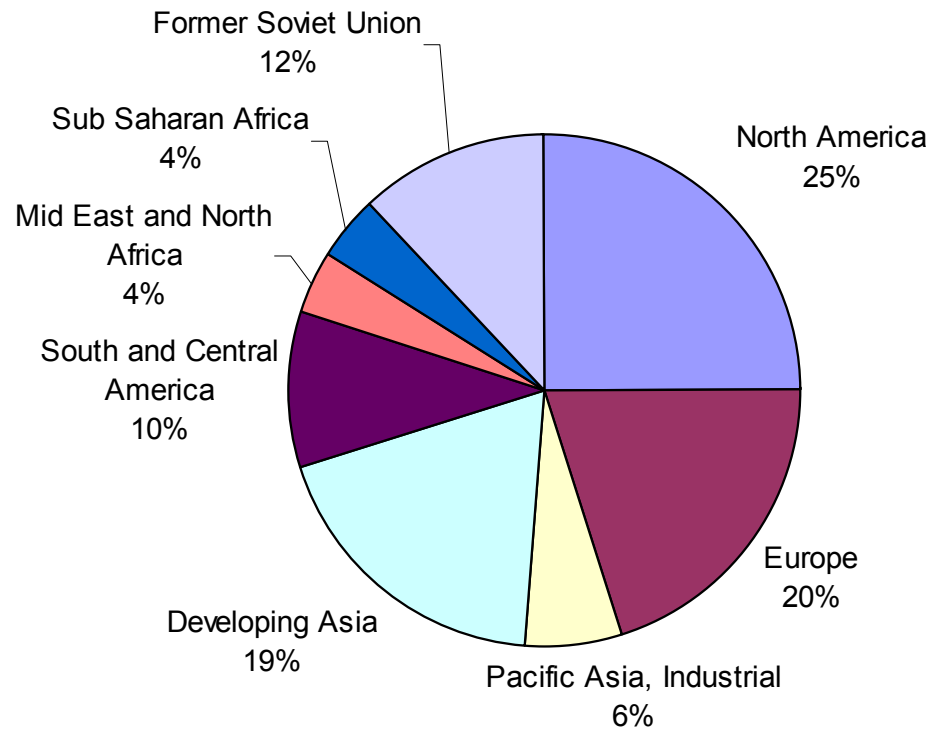
- Seeks to achieve that level in a sufficient time-frame for ecosystem adaptation, ensure food production security and enable sustainable economic development.

# The Framework Convention

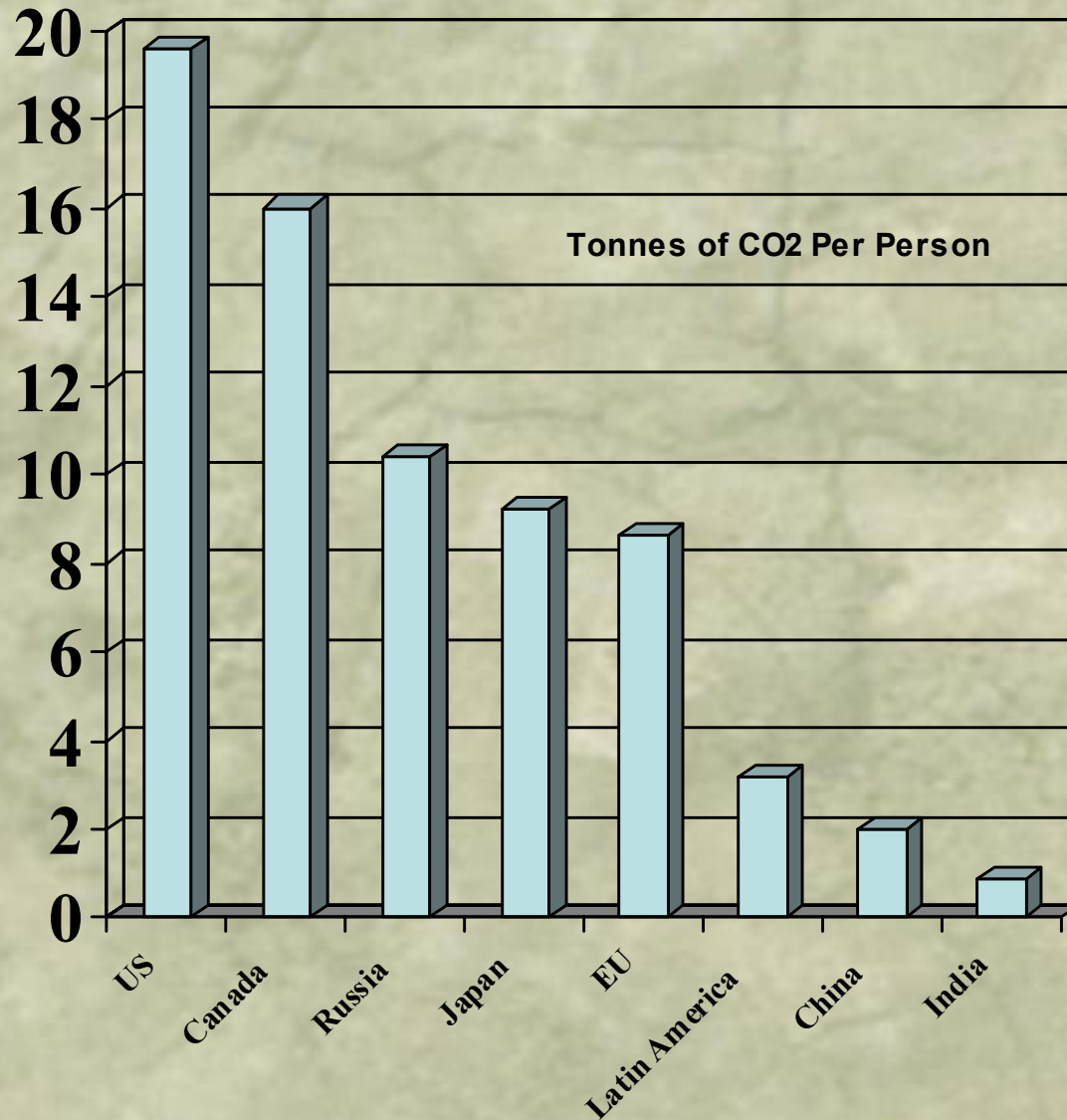
The Convention addressed concerns about uncertainty of current predictions by...

- Establishing a process for negotiating specific actions later.
- Taking some primary steps to deal with the problem (national programs, information & technology sharing).
- Encouraging more science.

## Contributors to Climate Change (1900 to 2000)



Source: WRI, Options for Protecting the Climate, 2002



3-D Column 1

# Taking Responsibility

- Developed countries generate the vast majority of GHG emissions. The convention places the bulk of the burden for dealing with climate change on their shoulders – including taking financial responsibility.
- Supporting developing countries above and beyond current development aid already provided.
  - Poor nations have a right to economic development
  - Poorer countries are also especially vulnerable to climate change.

# A New Path

The Convention called for...

- Increased emphasis on sustainable development.
- Development and sharing of environmentally sound technologies and know-how.
- Education about climate change.

# The Kyoto Protocol: Taking Real Action?

- Sets legally binding targets for reducing developed country emissions.
  - Canada 6% below 1990 levels
  - must make demonstrable progress by 2005
- Six GHG's targeted.
- Emission reductions must be credible and verifiable.

# Big Changes & Tough Decisions

The Goal is to make a transition to more climate friendly lifestyles and economies. To achieve this the Kyoto Protocol encourages...

- National governments to develop effective domestic policies and measures for reducing emissions.

And

- To work with other governments to reach mutual goals.

# Different Countries Face Different Challenges

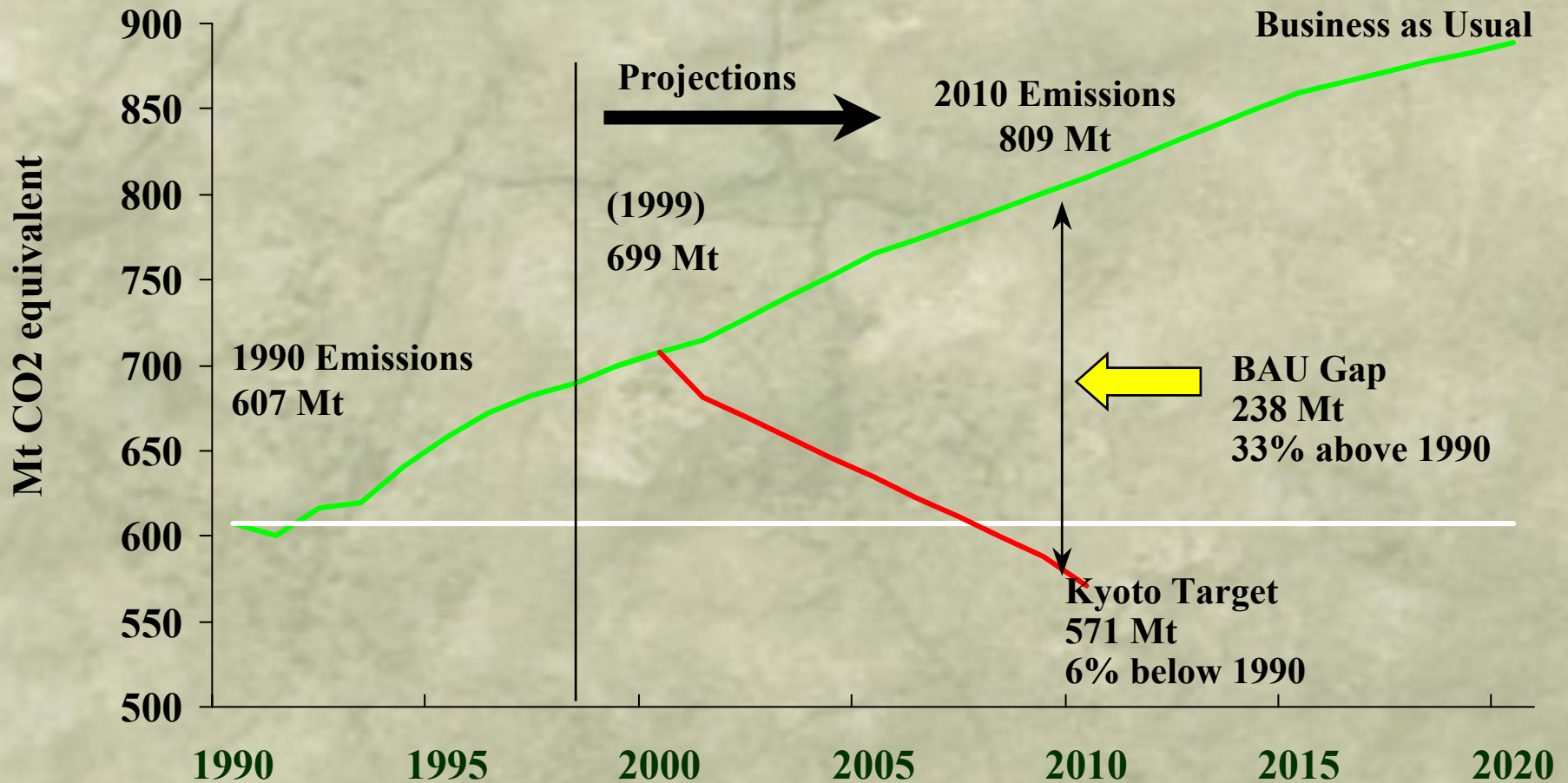
- Each country has a national target. No uniform target for all countries.
- Countries with economies in transition have greater flexibility in some rules.
- Reconfirms the overarching commitment of all countries – developed and developing to meeting the challenges of climate change

# Minimizing Cost & Maximizing Investment Value

The Kyoto Protocol allows for...

- Countries to achieve credit for reducing emissions in other countries through:
  1. An international emissions trading regime
  2. Clean Development Mechanism
  3. Joint Implementation

# Canada's Projected GHG Emissions



# The Federal Implementation Plan

- 240 MT reduction estimated as required to meet Kyoto targets by emissions reduction to meet Kyoto targets by 2012
- 80 MT to come from plans already underway including 30 MT from existing
- 100 MT to come from new actions including 55 from industrial emitters
- 60 MT to come from other incentives negotiated with provinces, industries and communities

# Potential Problems with the Plan

- Incentives and allocation system may not provide necessary GHG reductions
- The Federal implementation plan could allow for the expansion of coal fired power generation for export to the US
- It needs firmer commitments to:
  - —reducing the expansion of coal fired power
  - —east--west power grid
  - —Wind and solar power
  - —Hydrogen Fuel Cell development
  - —national ethanol mandate

# Why Kyoto Matters

For Manitoba it means an emphasis on rapid transit, hydrogen fuel production, greater hydro generation and distribution, ethanol, innovative building technologies, and public information resources like Climate Change Connection.

All this will result in economic growth, a cleaner environment and better informed, healthier citizens.

# Making the Plan Work

## What Does Manitoba Need to Do...

- Support mandatory requirements to increase overall building energy use efficiencies.
- Ensure that the Manitoba government is fully involved in the design of any Canada-wide emissions trading system – to protect Manitoba's interests, and to ensure that there is 'one window' for trading participants.

# Making the Plan Work

## What Does Manitoba Need to Do...

- Develop strong public outreach and engagement strategies: the suggestion by the government for a 1 tonne per citizen is an innovative idea that holds a lot of interesting potential.
- Take our international responsibilities seriously.  
We need to develop ways to show why climate change is a critical element for mainstream development activities such as food and energy security.

# Leadership in Making the Transition

Real leadership means:

- Ensuring that actions taken to meet Canada's Kyoto commitment maximize reduction opportunities at home and provide environmental, technological and health benefits for all Canadians;
- Promoting Canada's transition into the emerging new economy advancing Canadian innovation, supporting the competitiveness of Canadian industry, and provide incentives for low emission technologies;

# Conclusions

- The economic impacts felt from ratifying Kyoto will be minimal and will steer Canada towards greater technical innovation and achievement.
- Manitoba is well placed to continue to provide leadership in Canada's Climate Change plans.
- There is much individuals can do to reduce their own emissions. These efforts will result in economic growth, and environmental and health benefits.