

## CRITICAL QUESTIONS

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**Energy and Climate Change at the Upcoming G-8 Summit**

Sarah Ladislaw

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**Q1: Will energy and climate change be on the agenda for discussion at the G-8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, on July 8?**

**A1:** Yes. Energy and climate change have featured prominently in the last several G-8 meetings due to increased public awareness and political consensus over the need to address global climate change and due to concerns over energy security brought about by the high energy price environment. While energy prices have fallen from the highs of last year, climate change is a topic of particular interest for many of the G-8 members as they prepare for the upcoming global climate negotiations at the end of 2009 in Copenhagen. Energy and climate change will be part not only of the G-8 discussion but also of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate to be held on July 9 in conjunction with the G-8 summit.

**Q2: What is the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, and how does it relate to the G-8 and climate negotiations under the UN process?**

**A2:** The Major Economies Meeting was launched by the Bush administration at the Heiligendamm Summit in 2007 and relaunched under the Obama administration as the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF). The purpose of the MEF is to create political momentum and to promote dialogue among the world's 17 largest developed and developing economies (i.e., major energy consumers and major emitters of greenhouse gases) on issues critical to the UN climate negotiations.<sup>1</sup> These countries represent 80 percent of global emissions and are therefore viewed as the major parties necessary for any meaningful global approach to reducing emissions. The MEF process is designed to complement and not replace the UN negotiation process by providing a smaller, more focused group of discussions than is often possible at the larger UN forum.

**Q3: Will any significant outcomes or agreements on energy and climate emerge from these meetings?**

**A3:** The G-8 and MEF communiqués are likely to reaffirm many of the sentiments expressed in past communiqués: the need to provide affordable and reliable energy supplies to support economic well-being and development; the need to invest in clean energy technologies; the need to ensure adequate investment and sound investment frameworks; and the need for global action to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The major areas of focus for the MEF negotiations are emission reduction targets and technology cooperation. The big question this year is whether or not the MEF can deliver signs of progress on its two main areas of focus: targets for emissions reduction and technology cooperation. Among the MEF countries it is premature to expect any major breakthroughs on contentious issues like targets for emissions reduction or developed country financing of developing country efforts. It is more likely that the group will outline key areas of consensus on targets and principles governing emissions reductions and pledge new levels of support for key energy technology development and deployment efforts in terms of domestic and international technology cooperation.

**Q4: Do these meetings influence the ongoing U.S. domestic policy debate or the international climate negotiations under the United Nations?**

**A4:** Congress, having recently passed energy and climate legislation in the House, will be interested to see how its actions are received by the international community. Both opponents and proponents of domestic climate legislation are anxious to see if

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<sup>1</sup> The 17 major economies participating in the Major Economies Forum are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Denmark is also participating due to its role as host of the UN conference on climate change later this year.

there are signs of increased willingness to reduce emissions from countries like China and India. Success under the UN climate negotiations in turn may hinge on whether or not progress can be achieved both in terms of U.S. domestic efforts and finding areas of compromise among the major developed and developing economies.

*Sarah Ladislav is a fellow with the Energy and National Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

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