

STEPHEN HARPER DOESN'T UNDERSTAND CLIMATE CHANGE

Prime Minister Harper found himself isolated at the Commonwealth Conference in Uganda last week. World leaders, led by Britain, had attempted to get Canada to agree to a commitment on fixed and binding targets on greenhouse gas emissions. They were joined by the island nations, whose very existence is being threatened by rising sea levels. Without Canada's agreement on this goal, they were forced to accept a very mild resolution on the Climate Change Action Plan.

This week, opposition leader Stéphane Dion is attending the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali on behalf of all Canadians, despite the unprecedented decision by Stephen Harper to exclude representatives from the opposition parties in the delegation.

The world faces a difficult, but vital task at this meeting — to decide on a framework for the post-2012 period, when the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol comes to an end. Mr Dion is pursuing three objectives in Bali:

- Helping the world community come to an agreement that it will not allow the global climate to change temperature by more than 2°C;
- Helping developing countries to adopt the new technologies and forestry practices that will help them reduce their emissions; and
- Making real monetary commitments to help developing nations adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change.

When Stéphane Dion chaired the UN Montreal Climate Change Conference as Environment Minister in 2005, Canada played a key role in bringing together delegates from all over the globe to achieve a major breakthrough after years of deadlock, resulting in the Montreal Action Plan. In the same spirit, as former President of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), **Mr. Dion will play a constructive role** in whatever way he can to help achieve success in Bali.

Unfortunately, Stephen Harper doesn't understand climate change. He doesn't appreciate that Canada is also highly susceptible to increases in temperature. As a northern country, our existing ecosystems are in jeopardy, along with much of our economy. In British Columbia, we are already experiencing the effects of global warming with a drastic reduction in the number of salmon returning to spawn and the spread of the mountain pine beetle that threatens the entire forest industry.

For the past two years, **Stephen Harper has blocked real action on climate change** and we cannot trust him to represent vested Canadian interests on this important global matter. I am proud that we have an experienced and internationally respected environmental leader in Stéphane Dion in Bali who can do just that.



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