



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

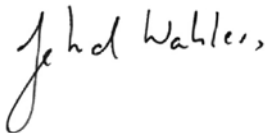
Participants at the global climate conference held in Cancún (Mexico) at the end of last year once again failed to agree on a binding treaty on climate protection. However, some important steps were taken towards a global climate agreement, such as the approval of the two degree target. But it remains to be seen whether this will be enough to reach an agreement at the climate conference to be held later this year in Durban (South Africa). The dangerous consequences of global climate change make it all the more important for negotiations to be brought quickly to a successful conclusion.

It is now a matter of great urgency that an international climate protection treaty should be put into effect without delay. For this to happen, participants will need to learn from what happened with the Kyoto Protocol. This means that all industrialised nations will have to play their part in reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, and the USA is no exception. It will of course be necessary to take into account the state of economic development in the various emerging nations and to consider the character of individual developing countries. However, it is not acceptable for countries such as China and India to try to avoid their responsibilities. China recently announced that environmental pollution represents a serious threat to its future development, so it is to be hoped that this assessment will be reflected in future negotiations on climate protection. It will be necessary to replace the economic instruments which were used in the past but which proved to be largely ineffective. We should however welcome any economic instruments that encourage voluntary steps towards climate protection.

The European Union is taking the lead on climate protection issues and is currently setting the international standard, especially in light of the tactical manoeuvrings and sometimes open opposition to an international climate treaty.

What is now required is a binding and consistent regulatory framework for environmental and climate protection. But this framework must also safeguard individual economic freedoms and so ensure that individual societies can protect the environment and the climate for future generations while at the same time creating prosperity.

Environmental and climate protection is therefore not just a regulatory issue. It is also first and foremost a responsibility to protect the whole of creation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary-General

gerhard.wahlers@kas.de