

Report #5 from Cancun - COP 16

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Profiting From the Global Taxing Scheme

One of the richest men in the world is so convinced of the imminence of global taxation for the new Climate Fund, that he has already devised a scheme to “eco-label” cargo ships that carry 85% of all goods worldwide, claiming it will align “economic and environmental interests crucial to facilitating needed capital flows.”

The 212th richest man in the world according to *Forbes* 2010 list of billionaires, Sir Richard Branson, is a British industrialist worth about \$4 billion. His new ***Carbon War Room*** aims “to support the shipping industry as it moves towards a low-carbon future,” an industry that today is mostly unregulated.

The CWR and its partners ***launched a website***, to be a knowledge hub for the shipping industry to tell an efficient, low-emission ship from an inefficient, heavily carbon-emitting one using the existing International Maritime Organization’s “Energy Efficiency Design Index.” The IMO would be the tax-assessor for the proposed global tax to be levied on international shipping and aviation. The U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change would then channel the money to poor nations.

The CWR’s objective is also to catalyze a market for third-party financing of retrofits for old ships to apply advanced hull coatings, air lubrication systems and even sails to improve efficiency. A spokesman for Papua New Guinea, an island nation, said that the “eco-label” could be used to set port fees and docking priorities for ships.

When asked whether the shipping and aviation industries have been consulted about the new Climate Fund tax, former Ireland president and former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson simply responded, “That is an excellent question...but with focused attention on the continuation of the Kyoto protocol and the establishment of a fair global Climate Fund, we can make Cancun a success.”

Observing U.N. negotiations in Cancun is like watching the movie, *Field of Dreams*. In the movie, the lead actor hears a voice as he walks through a cornfield saying, “If you build it, he will come.” If the U.N. succeeds in putting rules in place for a second commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and establishment of the Climate Fund, then the necessary momentum is there for next year’s meeting in Durban, South Africa, to realize global taxation.