

INSIDE TRACK

“green
alliance...”



high hopes
prospects for the post-Stern era

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INSIDE TRACK

the quarterly magazine of
Green Alliance

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The views of contributors are not necessarily those of Green Alliance.

comment



Stephen Hale
director

Stern has surely brought home the case to all those willing to listen. With the economic and scientific case for action clearer than ever, it is now all about the politics.

Cameron's passion and commitment, as demonstrated at Green Alliance's annual debate this month, are encouraging. But we need much more from him. So far, the limited signs suggest that a Cameron government would be less interventionist. But tackling climate change and other environmental problems requires more leadership, not less.

This is the message for Gordon Brown. He holds the key to the future, as custodian of tax, spend and regulation policy, and almost certainly the next prime minister. If the government is to develop a new and successful approach, then it is he who must confront and rethink the constraints that have limited it to date.

The chancellor doubled aviation tax and announced an inflation-matching rise in fuel duty in the pre-budget report. But this is just tinkering at the margins. As Paul Ekins stresses in this issue, nothing big can be achieved until the market signals are right. Green Alliance's new reports: *Beyond Stern: the environmental challenge for the comprehensive spending review* and *A zero waste UK* both contain recommendations that would shift the government onto a new economic track in favour of the environment.

Of course this is a global challenge, and one in which Europe will play a critical role. So we are aiming to set an ambitious agenda for reform of the EU budget. Green Globe Network is developing recommendations now for the review in 2008-09.

Andrew Pendleton of Christian Aid was at the UN conference of the parties in Nairobi (COP 12) last month. He makes it clear in his article that an international climate agreement is bound to fail unless it can uphold the right to development for the world's poor. Again, the challenge is for the UK to provide clear international leadership to take us towards that.

The political space exists, now, to take action to deliver a far more effective approach to environmental issues. The environment has never been higher on the political agenda, public concern is growing and progressive companies are backing government initiatives.

But change will only come if it is driven from the top. The government should embrace the case made by Stern with passion and determination, and apply its lessons to every aspect of public policy, including planning.

beyond Stern

where now for the chancellor?

Green Alliance's new report, published ahead of next year's comprehensive spending review, challenges the chancellor to take an ambitious new approach to the environment.

In the last edition of *Inside Track* we outlined the importance of the chancellor's 2007 comprehensive spending review (CSR). Since then we have entered the 'post-Stern' era. It is a potentially decisive moment. It provides a powerful platform for a shift in thinking on tax, spending and regulation, and a welcome boost to our work on the spending review.

As a result we have chosen to call our report on the review *Beyond Stern: the environmental challenge for the comprehensive spending review*. This is very much tongue-in-cheek. We do not claim to have gone further than Nicholas Stern's analysis; we had rather less time and resources than the team that helped to generate his 700 page magnum opus. However, we do believe that the chancellor should capitalise on this unique opportunity and use the CSR to make a major shift in the Treasury's approach to policy-making on the environment as a whole. Stern was rightly targeted at a global audience. But domestic policy must not be insulated from his analysis.

It also has implications beyond climate change. The CSR provides the opportunity to develop a broader approach and plan the transition to a sustainable, resource-efficient economy. The report sets out what such

a transition could look like in five key areas: energy, transport, waste, water and biodiversity. It is not an exhaustive list of measures, nor is it our last word on any of these issues. The sharp minds in the Treasury could well develop something better but, above all, they must respond positively.

The chancellor has called the CSR a fundamental and far-reaching review of government policy. We have taken him at his word; hence our recommendations focus not just on public spending but also on taxation and charges. Our 'top ten' list of recommendations combines five ways to raise revenue whilst achieving environmental objectives and five ways to spend such revenue, again in ways that will tackle climate change and resource degradation.

The pre-budget report in early December was an important indicator of how far the Stern report, as well as the department's own analysis of the climate and natural resources challenge, had managed to shift mindsets.

In the end there were some welcome measures: the doubling of air passenger duty as called for in our report, as well as a bold announcement on zero carbon housing. The

commitment to consider raising the landfill tax escalator and go beyond the current £35 per tonne target was also welcome, and it is vital that the chancellor delivers on this in March's budget. We believe that a much higher target is needed to drive investment in more sustainable alternatives to landfill.

Transport is the most politically difficult sector in which to reduce carbon emissions, and a real test of whether the Stern report has had more than a superficial effect on Treasury policy-making. The decision not to reinstate the fuel duty escalator and to only add a timid 1.25 pence to fuel duty will make no significant contribution to reversing the trend of rising emissions from our roads. It is a worrying sign that the chancellor's recent speeches on environmental care have not yet been translated into bold policy measures and we hope that the March budget will deliver desperately needed progress on this front. With David Cameron likely to contest next year's local elections on a green ticket, the next few months are crucial in Gordon Brown's green evolution.

[Download a copy of *Beyond Stern: the environmental challenge for the comprehensive spending review* at www.green-alliance.org.uk](http://www.green-alliance.org.uk)

For more information about this work contact Hannah Hislop hhislop@green-alliance.org.uk

With thanks to RSPB, the Environmental Services Association and the East of England Development Agency for their support of this work.

setting the course for an environmental union

Our Green Globe Network seminar series is looking at radical reform of the EU budget to meet 21st century challenges

The European Union (EU) budget is not the most exciting thing in the world. But, like all government budgets, it is hugely important and is often where real political and policy commitments can be understood and measured.

Green Globe Network (GGN) is currently in the middle of a series of seminars looking at how the EU budget should change if we are truly going to meet Europe's international commitments – such as its Kyoto targets – and the desires set out in its Sustainable Development Strategy.

The task of reforming the EU budget is huge and one that member states have failed to grasp in recent years. The biggest problem seems to be the process for deciding priorities. Currently the EU forms its budget on a seven-year cycle called the financial perspective; a little like the UK's comprehensive spending review.

You would have thought that, with such long planning cycles, there would be ample opportunity to raise and discuss

major reform, but the reality is somewhat different. As we saw at the end of the last round of negotiations during the 2005 UK presidency, it usually boils down to the defence of narrow national interests and an unseemly squabble between member states in the last hours of negotiations. Whether it is the UK defending its rebate or France defending the CAP, the result is the same: very little change from one financial perspective to the next.



At the first seminar in our series, Professor Iain Begg of the London School of Economics summed it up very well when he said the budget “essentially maintained the same structure and priorities as it did in 1988. It has not reflected changes in 18 years of progress in the EU since then.” Even Tony Blair, when addressing the House of Commons in 1995 said, “It isn't a budget fit for purpose in the 21st Century.”

So what is to be done? Fortunately, agreement was secured at the European Council Heads of State meeting in December 1995 to review

the budget. The Council invited the European Commission “to undertake a full, wide ranging review covering all aspects of EU spending, including the CAP, and of resources, including the UK rebate, to report in 2008-09”.

Through GGN, Green Alliance will be making a series of recommendations to the government on how the EU budget could be reformed to ensure issues such as sustainable development and climate change are properly recognised and given the political priority they deserve. The EU needs to respond to the issues raised by Stern and must set an ambitious course towards becoming the ‘environmental union’ that David Miliband and others have called for.

While we don't expect anything radical to come from the 2008-09 review, we are determined to make sure it sets the right course for the major reform of the budget in its next financial perspective, starting in 2014.

For more details about the GGN seminars contact [Stuart Singleton-White](mailto:Stuart.Singleton-White@green-alliance.org.uk) at swhite@green-alliance.org.uk

making environment the easy choice

Identifying the behaviours we want people to change to live more sustainably was the focus of our recent work with Defra.

Behaviour change seems to be a buzz phrase at the moment. Government and environmental groups are trying to pinpoint how we can help people to make the right choices and act in a way that is beneficial to the environment. It is understood by the NGOs and David Miliband alike that our current consumption patterns are simply unsustainable.

The majority of the population seem to have got this message too. We are at an all time high for concern about climate change among the general public.

Not only are they concerned, it seems that people already know what to do: four out of five adults feel reasonably well informed about personal actions they should take to be more environmentally friendly. But when asked which of them they actually did, only around one in every fifteen said they regularly did more than a handful.

So, between the endless headlines on the urgency to act to avoid dangerous

climate change and the advice being handed down, the consumer is still not getting it. Or more accurately, they may be getting it but it is just too hard to do anything about it.

And the problem is how we are trying to get people to change. It has been well documented that simply providing information does not change behaviour. Policies that focused on information provision and communication, such as 'Are you doing your bit?' 'Recycle now' and 'Helping the earth begins at home' campaigns have shown that increasing levels of awareness of environmental issues do not necessarily translate into increasing levels of action.

Frequently, the barriers to taking environmental action extend beyond the control of the individual. If energy-efficient televisions aren't available in shops, how can consumers buy them? If electricity isn't metered in a clear way, how can householders have any idea of how much they are using? If there is no public transport nor safe cycle lanes, how can we blame commuters for using the car?

People are lazy and do not always operate in predictable ways. Change often comes about when the environmental choice is the easier choice or the economical choice or simply becomes the norm. Why are volumes of recycling increasing so quickly? The introduction of local authority recycling targets kick-started a step change in doorstep recycling provision. Policies, regulations and targets affect behaviour. But information is also vital for building understanding and support for a policy measure.

"...48 per cent of people agree that government has the right to intervene to require people to act more sustainably."

Green Alliance's recent series of participative workshops with Defra and civil society organisations aimed to identify the key behaviours that we wish to see changed. Part of this process involved addressing the consumption patterns people are locked into and the policy measures that drive those patterns.

Evidence suggests that people are ready and willing to see new policies introduced that will help them to achieve changes in their behaviour. Polls show that 48 per cent of people agree that government has the right to intervene to require people to act more sustainably. Not only does the government have the 'right' to intervene, but evidence shows that changes will often not happen without this intervention.

Clear information, advice and branding need to be linked to measures designed to encourage the consumer. First we need to address external factors such as infrastructure and pricing, and then internal factors such as attitudes. That means linking information to financial incentives, for example giving VAT reductions on the most energy efficient goods alongside a clear labelling scheme; shifting the relative cost of public and private transport; and using regulation to limit the availability of unsustainable products.

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Our new report, published with IPPR, shows how we can get rid of our throwaway culture

a zero waste UK

Most people, if asked, would probably have guessed that the UK was behind its European neighbours in the recycling league tables. Just how far behind was revealed when Green Alliance published comparative figures in August, ahead of November's publication of *A zero waste UK*. The results hit the headlines.

Commissioned by the Institute of Public Policy Research and based on a survey of international zero waste initiatives, the pamphlet sets out not just to shame, but to persuade opinion leaders that we can bridge that gap between current UK performance and best practice worldwide.

A zero waste UK demonstrates that what makes the difference in other countries boils down to two crucial elements: political will from the top and a readiness to employ a mix of policy measures, including regulations, taxes and charges, voluntary agreements and public education. Commitment of this kind has resulted in recycling rates of 70 per cent in some countries, while the UK is currently celebrating 27 per cent for municipal waste.

However, zero waste is not just about recycling rates. Zero waste practitioners recognise that to achieve the goal, we cannot continue to accept waste as it currently is, the nature of the products that give us the waste has to change. The cradle-to-cradle concept (see *Inside Track* 13) points the way to products designed for resource efficiency and recycling, aiming to keep resources in productive use ad infinitum, rather than allowing them to escape as waste in a matter of months.

With these goals in mind, *A zero waste UK* recommends a mix of measures, including pricing not just disposal

through higher landfill tax, but also charging householders for waste not recycled, and levying wasteful products.

There also needs to be more ambitious targets for the recycling and prevention of waste, including adopting the Belgian tactic of setting a target for per capita residual (non-recycled) waste.

Like a personal carbon budget, this would quickly focus the minds of householders and companies on the waste implications of every product on the market. The government could lead the way in inducing much greater producer responsibility through its own procurement practices, and even ensure that major public sector bodies such as the NHS and the Environment Agency set their own zero waste goals.

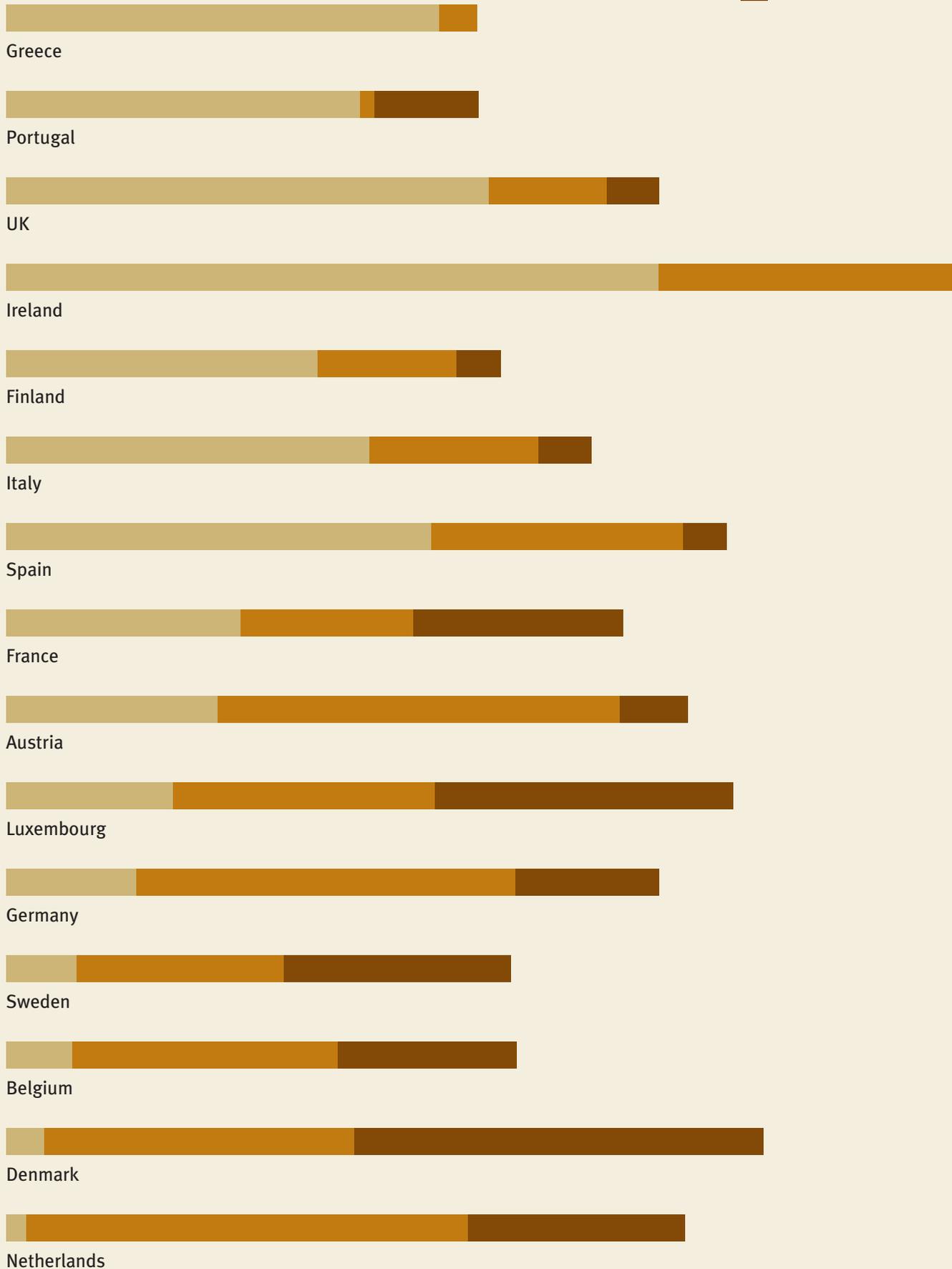
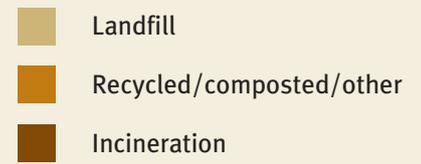
Zero waste isn't rocket science. We are repeatedly told that the tools and the technologies exist. Environment minister Ben Bradshaw acknowledged as much when he launched the pamphlet last month. We hope that together IPPR and Green Alliance have set UK politics on the road towards a goal every bit as vital as combating climate change.

A zero waste UK, published by IPPR and Green Alliance (November 2006) is just one aspect of the work under our closing the loop theme. Find out more and download *A zero waste UK* free from www.green-alliance.org.uk

“...we cannot continue to accept waste as it currently is, the nature of the products that give us the waste has to change.”

Municipal waste management in the European Union

How the UK compares



Totals in waste/capita (Kg). For the full figures behind this chart, see table 3.1, page 17, *A zero waste UK* (Green Alliance/IPPR)



Effective price signals are the only way to make climate change policy really work, says **Paul Ekins**

time to get real

The huge global interest in the Stern report has provided a once-in-a-decade opportunity to address climate change in particular and environmental problems more generally.

The challenge is relatively easily stated: both industrial and industrialising countries need radically to reduce resource flows and associated flows of wastes; reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; reduce local environmental emissions; reduce habitat/biodiversity loss and deforestation; and greatly increase resource productivity for resources to be available for global development.

The context in which this challenge must be addressed is not particularly propitious. Most resources in today's world are allocated through markets. These markets generate many consumer economic benefits, but they are subject to multiple failures, which are now fairly well understood in principle.

Most importantly from an environmental point of view, most environmental impacts escape prices, a phenomenon that economists persist in calling 'externalities', despite the obvious fact that the environment is the foundation for economic activity and any terminology that identifies it

“Most importantly from an environmental point of view, most environmental impacts escape prices, a phenomenon that economists persist in calling ‘externalities’...”

Just as importantly, people and businesses are generally grossly misinformed or under-informed about their resource use and the environmental impacts of their consumption, because resource prices are too low; pollution charges are low or non-existent; and public awareness of both environmental impacts and of available low-impact technologies is low. Yet, as any first-year economist knows, ‘perfect’ information is a key requirement for market efficiency and is often routinely assumed in economic modelling and analysis.

The only way to address market failure is through environmental policy. The available policy portfolio is now relatively well understood, and includes:

- **market-based instruments** (also called ‘economic instruments’) which directly affect the price of the targeted activity: emissions trading, environmental taxes and charges, deposit-refund systems, subsidies (including the removal of environmentally-harmful subsidies), green purchasing, liability and compensation;
- **environmental tax reform (ETR)** ie. increased revenues from environmental taxes/auctioned emission permits, reduction in other taxes;

- **regulatory instruments** which seek to define legal standards in relation to environmental performance, pressures or outcomes;
- **voluntary agreements** (also called ‘negotiated agreements’) between governments and producing organisations;
- **information-based instruments** (eg. eco-labels) that may be mandatory or voluntary.

One of the major policy lessons of past decades is that it will frequently be necessary to implement a number of policies together, in a policy package, to meet a number of policy objectives and avert unintended consequences.

So far there are a few notable examples of these instruments being implemented, to the extent that it is clear that they can all work and be effective when appropriately designed, but the general level of ambition in their implementation has been woefully weak. Thus, the ETRs that have been implemented in six north European countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany,

as external to that activity starts at a disadvantage in terms of addressing environmental problems.

Many renewable resources, especially fish and forests, are subject to open access ownership arrangements that make their conservation effectively impossible. The prices of non-renewable resources do not give systematic indications of greater scarcity; there is inadequate production of public goods, including such fundamental environmental functions and characteristics as clean air, clean water and biodiversity, and the eco-innovation that would permit these problems to be more successfully addressed.

“The only way to address market failure is through environmental policy.”

“The 2007 budget provides a golden opportunity for the Treasury to show that it is taking the advice of its chief economist seriously.”

Netherlands, Sweden and the UK) have, without exception, been very small. Denmark has the highest proportion of environmental taxes, at 4.8 per cent of GDP, but the EU average of 2.8 per cent is hardly evidence of a determination to use the tax base to drive environmental priorities.

Yet, all these ETRs have been positively evaluated for both their environmental and economic effects. They reduce environmental resource use and achieve environmental improvement at least cost by promoting both static and dynamic efficiency, through equalising abatement costs and giving incentives for innovation respectively. They raise awareness of inefficient resource use and stimulate new technologies that can lead to new industries. The revenues can allow other, distorting, taxes to be reduced, lowering the net

“The fact is that, in market economies, the kind of structural economic reform that will be necessary to address climate change is nearly impossible if it is working against market signals.”

cost of abatement. If the benefits of innovation, awareness, industrial cost reduction, and reduced distortions are greater than abatement costs, environmental improvement can be achieved at net gain to the economy.

Systematic implementation of ETR through escalators - modest annual percentage increases in resource taxes and pollution charges - would give people and businesses time to adjust, but over time would transform the economy. It is not clear that the dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions called for in the Stern report can be achieved in any other way. The 2007 budget provides a golden opportunity for the Treasury to show that it is taking the advice of its chief economist seriously.

If prices were to start pointing in the right direction, then a whole range of other policy instruments could be deployed for specific objectives and would be more effective. There is ample evidence of this from both the Climate Change Agreements associated with the Climate Change Levy, and improvement in the recycling rate since the imposition of the escalator on the landfill tax.

The fact is that, in market economies, the kind of structural economic reform that will be necessary to address climate change is nearly impossible if it is working against market signals. If it

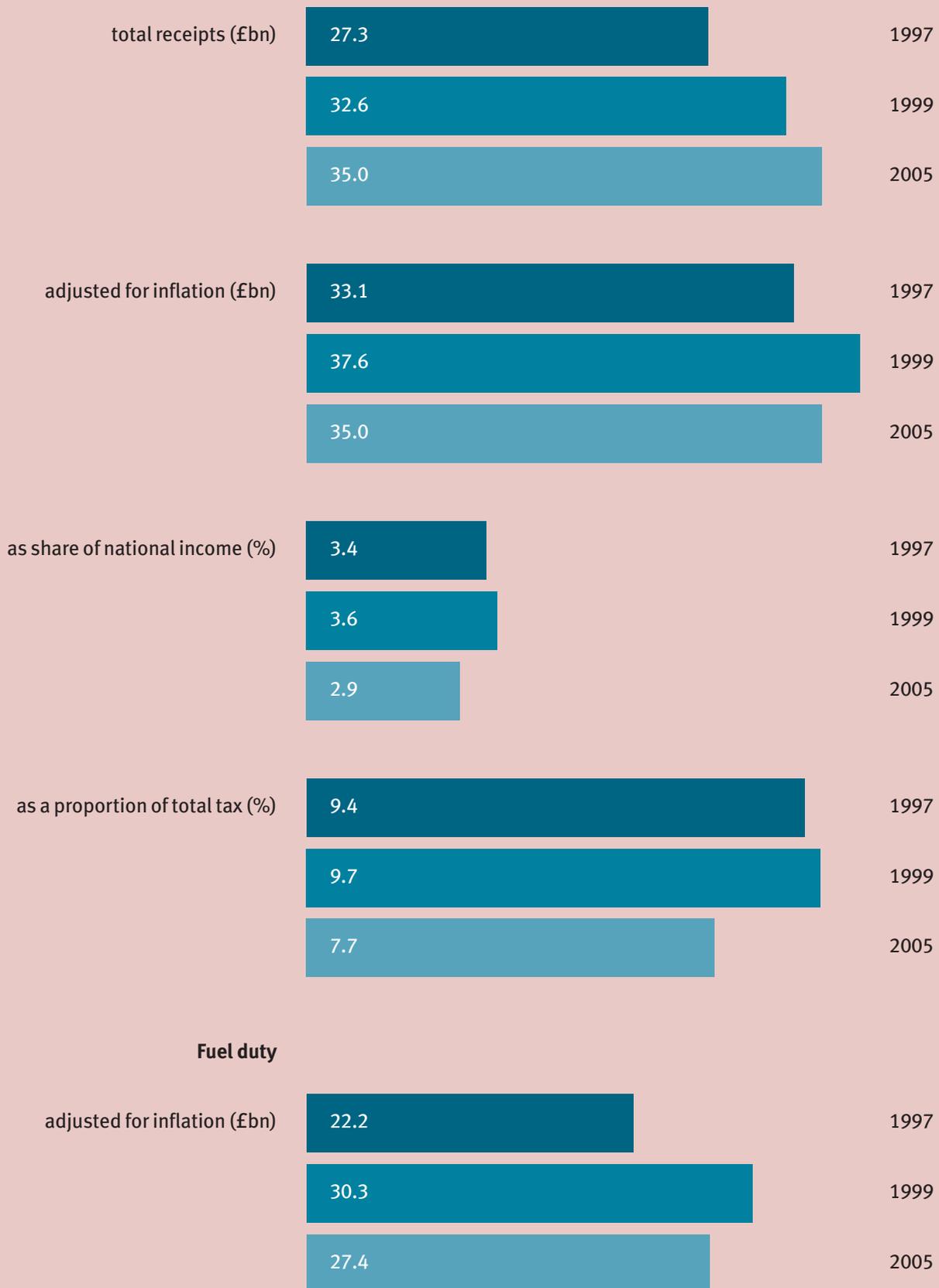
relies only on other policy instruments, it will be costly and, probably, ineffective.

Not only is the price mechanism essential for resource reduction, but price signals also increase the impact of other instruments, such as information and voluntary agreements.

The ball of carbon mitigation, so deftly lobbed into the higher reaches of the policy agenda by the Stern report, is now in the Treasury's court. It remains to be seen whether it is as determined in addressing the problem as it was skilled in analysing it.

Paul Ekins is head of environment group at the Policy Studies Institute and Professor of sustainable development at the University of Westminster
www.psi.org.uk

green tax



Source: ONS Environmental Accounts/ Institute of Fiscal Studies

Andrew Pendleton makes the case for an agreement that bridges the gap between climate and development policy.

bridging the gap

“Our whole life has been spent moving, but we are desperate people. People who have lost our livelihood,” says Mukhtar Aden, an elder in a settlement known as Quimbiso in north eastern Kenya. “We didn’t settle here by choice, it was forced upon us.”

Northern Kenya is home to three million pastoralists: semi-nomadic herds-people. Their whole way of life, one that has supported them and their ancestors for more than 3,000 years, could soon fall prey to the increasingly frequent drought. Changes in the climate, typical of those predicted to take hold as the earth warms further, are forcing them out of pastoralism and towards an uncertain future in a region that offers few alternatives.

Everywhere there are tales of huge livestock losses. In one roadside settlement, which now depends on selling milk from its few remaining animals to passing trucks, a man produces a book recording the dark days of the drought. One entry, for 15 February, shows that the community lost more than 500 sheep and goats and 250 cattle. In that single day.

Some 25 families have come together here, all of whom used to operate as

“...one-third of pastoralists living in the region – around half a million people – have already been forced to abandon pastoralism due to adverse climatic conditions.”



independent units in the old nomadic way. For most, this is their first experience of settlement. Noorissack Ahmed, who lives here with his two wives and 12 children, says they couldn’t have gone to any of the area’s towns, as they would have found it impossible to fit in with urban life.

“This is a village of destitutes,” he says.

According to research commissioned by Christian Aid, hundreds of thousands of herders have been forced to forsake their traditional culture and settle because consecutive droughts have destroyed their livestock in recent years.

Earlier this year, Christian Aid commissioned livestock specialist, Dr David Kimenye, to examine how pastoralists were coping with recent drought. Over a two-month period, Dr Kimenye talked to more than 200 pastoralists in five areas across

Mandera district, home to 1.5 million people. He also spoke to elders in the region, and politicians, academics and civil society organisations across the country.

The study found that the incidence of drought has increased fourfold in the Mandera region in the past 25 years. It also found that, as a result, one-third of pastoralists living in the region – around half a million people – have already been forced to abandon pastoralism due to adverse climatic conditions. Of those who remain, around 60 per cent need outside assistance to recover. Their surviving herds are too small to support them.

And so the climate and its increasing variability threatens to entrench poverty. In a world of runaway climate change – even with an increase of two degrees Celsius in global average temperatures – the most important conflict on the planet, the war against poverty, may be lost.

Like many developing world cities, Nairobi is a place of stark contrasts. It has its own problems – a rapidly increasing crime rate and a constant influx of people from the countryside – but its glossy shopping malls and international hotels are worlds away from the grinding poverty of pastoralist communities in Kenya’s northern districts.

Power outages are commonplace as the city’s ageing energy infrastructure groans under the increasing load of an expanding urban economy. In the city’s slums, just as in Kenya’s poor rural communities, many people are without power – the human face of the statistic which enumerates the global level of ‘energy poverty’ – two billion people are without any modern form of power. As a whole, Kenya’s carbon emissions are insignificant but, as a city, Nairobi’s are not and they are growing fast.

Ironic then, given the three challenges of poverty, energy and climate change, that the UN’s 12th Conference of the Parties (COP 12) – its second after the Kyoto Protocol came into force – recently concluded in Nairobi. Delegations from the 189 countries attending took back the outcome of the meeting to their people calling it an ‘agreement’.

There was agreement of sorts. The Adaptation Fund, to help those most at risk to cope with climate change, will be launched next year and is likely to be majority controlled by poorer countries themselves. This is a victory. The Kyoto Protocol will be reviewed in two years time, although the wording of the final text appears to rule out countries making further commitments to reduce their emissions. Most importantly, there were no major setbacks. The status quo in the global effort to tackle climate change was maintained.

And yet, compare this timid response with the task at hand. The latest science suggests that remaining below plus two degrees involves global emissions peaking within the next

“...if the global effort to tackle emissions is not matched with the emerging scientific reality we can kiss goodbye to the internationally agreed target of halving poverty by 2015...”

seven years and then declining by around four per cent each year thereafter. Although Kyoto is important, in that it is all we have, it sets a one-off reduction target of five per cent by 2012 and the biggest emitter, the US, is not even involved. Nairobi’s ‘agreement’ has, for the next two years at least, dismissed any chance of accelerating and deepening these cuts.

Given the impact of climate change on poor people – that which we can already observe and that which we cannot avoid – if the global effort to tackle emissions is not matched with the emerging scientific reality we can kiss goodbye to the internationally agreed target of halving poverty by 2015, along with many other human aspirations.

But development – meaning jobs, services, a higher standard of living, health care and education – also threatens efforts to tackle climate change at the global level. Because for those countries with large numbers of poor people, including Brazil, India and China, development cannot be sacrificed in an agreement on climate change.

While such countries see the main emitters and those historically responsible for the problem – Europe and north America in particular – resisting anything more than paltry cuts in their emissions, it is easy to see how they too will resist taking on any promises on climate change, even those that involve them merely managing the growth in their emissions as their economies grow.

In effect, while rich countries remain unwilling to make sacrifices and, in doing so, fail to push the global economy in the direction it must go to save us all from climate catastrophe, it is unreasonable and unfeasible to expect poorer countries to act. So a climate agreement, of the type that must be reached within the next two years, has to be elegant enough to bridge the climate and development gap: it has both to describe the necessary action to stop climate chaos and to uphold the right to development for poor people.

Achieving this will not be a blame game, but it will involve working out the size of the mitigation effort required both in rich and – importantly for the right to development – in poor countries. It will also involve apportioning responsibility for dealing with this along the lines of responsibility for the problem itself.

Along with US academics EcoEquity, Christian Aid has been working on a reference framework for a climate regime that takes these twin aims into account.

This is not posited as the last or even the most authoritative word on the issue of development and climate change. But if climate change is to be tackled so that the pastoralists in northern Kenya cannot merely survive but can enjoy some choice in how they live and earn a living, then the polluter must not only stop polluting, but must also take responsibility for the damage done.

Andrew Pendleton is senior climate change analyst at Christian Aid, which is a member of Stop Climate Chaos.

An early draft of the reference framework being developed by EcoEquity and Christian Aid, prepared for the Nairobi COP 12, can be viewed at: <http://www.ecoequity.org/GDRs/>

For more information visit www.christian-aid.org.uk and www.stopclimatechaos.org



a fresh approach: four new themes for Green Alliance

Green Alliance's primary objective is to make environmental solutions a priority in British politics. So we have welcomed the renewed focus on the environment over the past twelve months. All three main parties now seem to be taking a greater interest in climate change, and to a lesser extent in the broader environment agenda.

But we do not confuse a broad rhetorical commitment to the environment with effective and sustained action. Working with our partners and supporters, we have a huge amount to do if we are to make the most of this opportunity to bring about real change.

Our work from 2007-09 will be focused on the following four strategic themes. We will be developing new partnerships and programmes around these themes to deliver change at the scale and speed needed.

Green living: the buck stops where?

How do we establish a society where the natural choices for individuals are also the right ones for the environment? People want clear direction to help them make the best decisions. What are the respective roles of government, business and individuals in influencing how choices are made?

If we are to secure a step change in individual action, it is imperative that government plays a leadership role. Politicians of all parties are downplaying their power to alter the framework within which individual choices are made. The current approach to behaviour change is fragmented and uncoordinated.

The politics of success

Green Alliance will be working with the UK's top environmental organisations, and with partners from business and other sectors, to deepen the commitment of all the main political parties. We want to see a politics of the environment in which all parties offer solutions commensurate with the scale of the challenge. Through a variety of initiatives we will be working in coalition with others, to bring new voices into the debate on public policy, and demonstrate the intrinsic connections between the environment and other challenges. We will also be researching and debating new ways to advance the politics of the environment.

Green Alliance is uniquely placed to chart the way forward on this difficult agenda. We plan to work with partners in the private and voluntary sector to support government decision-makers in developing strategies and approaches that will lead to a step change in the public's contribution to achieving environmental outcomes.

Climate change: breaking through

The scientific and economic case for action has never been clearer. But the window of opportunity is closing. The 2010 target for CO₂ reduction now looks almost unachievable, and the 2050 target appears both insufficiently ambitious and too remote to provide sufficient urgency for the public policy debate. Thanks to the Climate Change Bill, this looks set to change. But the current debate is not focusing on the key interventions that could drive emissions reduction.

Green Alliance plans to develop a programme of work on the critical actions needed to deliver emissions reductions in the next phase of the political cycle, around 2015. It is critical that government encourages the right investment now in new technology and infrastructure. We will focus on key

breakthrough interventions needed now in energy, transport and housing if we are to get on track for deep emissions cuts, and develop an integrated and workable package of recommendations for the future.

Waste and resources: closing the loop

We have a proud tradition of working with businesses, environmental groups and governments to develop new approaches to waste and resources. Waste is a poor use of limited resources, and bad economics. Most resources stay in the economy for less than six months before they become waste. To reduce waste and preserve resources we are going beyond recycling to join up product and waste policy and close the loop.

Our ambition for a 'zero waste' UK isn't pie in the sky. Our recent pamphlet on this agenda has caught the attention of media and government, and is at the heart of our work to influence the forthcoming waste strategy. In 2007 we will focus on new economic instruments, packaging and the construction industry.

If you or your organisation could provide financial or other support for our plans in these areas, we want to hear from you.

To find out more, contact Stephen Hale, director of Green Alliance, at shale@green-alliance.org.uk or Russell Marsh, head of policy at rmarsh@green-alliance.org.uk

www.green-alliance.org.uk

Green Alliance is an independent charity. Our mission is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the environment is at the heart of decision-making. We work with senior people in government, business and the environmental movement to encourage new ideas, dialogue and constructive solutions.

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full debate

David Cameron spoke to a packed audience at our annual debate on 5 December



It was well timed, taking place on the eve of David Cameron's first anniversary as Conservative leader, the day before the pre-budget report announcements and on the same day the Barker review of land use planning was published.

In an enthusiastic speech, he made clear his willingness to engage and his personal commitment to the issues. Apart from re-emphasising a commitment to annual carbon reduction targets, we were disappointed that he said very little about how he would actually deliver

on these targets and the other challenges he set out, other than a reformed carbon levy and an increase in green taxes.

With standing room only left for many, the audience nevertheless stayed for the long and interesting debate around current environmental politics. Questions were taken by David Cameron and our panel: Fiona Reynolds, director-general of the National Trust and Peter Melchett, policy director at the Soil Association.

If you couldn't come, don't worry you can watch the speech and read more of our analysis at www.green-alliance.org.uk

enews debut

The first issue of our *enews* went out in November. Sent out monthly via email, it includes topical political commentary by Green Alliance and up to date information on our work.

We are sending it automatically to all members and supporters where we have email addresses. If you aren't receiving it and would like to sign up, go to www.green-alliance.org.uk and click on the *enews* link.

change of identity

We hope you like our relaunched identity, designed by Howdy. It updates the original created for us by Interbrand in 1998. The refresh has given us a stronger logo and new colours to work with. As you will have noticed, *Inside Track* has also benefited from the makeover.

new members

Welcome to:

Individuals

Andy Atkins
Steffie Broer
Patrick Grady
Robert Hull
Catherine Lecavalier
Adrian Lovett
Mari Martiskainen
Gavin Prentice
Sarah Quinnell
Ben Shaw
Chris Shipway
Neil Stockley

Business circle

Royal and Sun Alliance
Asda

Go to www.green-alliance.org.uk to find out more about supporting us