



Webchat on "Your carbon credit is to earth's benefit!" with Dr. Andrew Light, 12 Noon (IST) on Saturday, July 10, 2010.

TRANSCRIPT:

Moderator (CK): (7/6/2010 17:59) Welcome to our webchat on "Your carbon credit is to earth's benefit!" with Dr. Andrew Light, 12 Noon (IST) on Saturday, July 10. Your questions are welcome. Submit your questions now or anytime before or during the webchat.

Moderator (CK): (18:00) Hello. To see the full bio, please click here (<https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/lightabio/>)

Dr. Andrew Light: (7/10/2010 12:06) Hello, anyone there?

Moderator: (12:06) Hello. We are starting now.

Ramesh: (12:07) As youth we do a lot fo grass roots active work to benefit environment and reduce carbon footprint. How can we influence policy making also?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:09) Primarily to influence policy you need to be organized. Today this means both in person and on-line. I don't know enough about the Indian political system to recommend which pressure points will best achieve desired results but in the US our youth activists do everything from door to door canvassing to raise awareness on climate change to drops of literature at congressional offices to demonstrating.

Ramesh: (12:10) What is American Youth doing to influence climate change policy?

Moderator: (12:11) Dr. Andrew Light just delivered a talk "Youth for Environmental Values, Ethics, Practice and Pragmatism:How to Contribute to Policy?" at the American Center. A clip is posted to our Facebook site

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:12) All of the things that I mentioned in answer to the last question plus a lot of work in conjunction with youth in other countries. The best examples of activities can be found at 350.org, a group founded by my friend Bill McKibben and several students at Middlebury College which is now a global movement.

KS87: (12:12) Are you in India, How long have you been here and what do you think

about the youth activism on environment in India? Thank you.

KS87: (12:13) Where all do you travel in India and what will you be doing as a climate energy expert?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:14) I am in India, New Delhi right now. I arrive very late Thursday night and will be here until next Saturday. I will be going to Kolkata on Sunday and then to Mumbai on Wednesday. If you want to attend one of my talks contact the local American consulate for a schedule. So far I'm quite impressed with youth climate activism in India.

sunny: (12:14) Ecuador asking for USD 10 million for Not destroying its RainForest For Oil Drilling what do you think about it

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:15) Sorry, I haven't yet seen anything on this so cannot comment.

sunny: (12:15) ok

Yashita: (12:15) What we have seen at Bonn now, we do not see any definite text coming out of the talks..isn't it possible that we may have a repeat of what happened at COP15 last year...a hurried deal coming out with no transparent process

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:19) I don't think so. COP 15 didn't produce a hurried deal if by "deal" you mean a final agreement. It produced a political document which can be used as the basis for action. What we have out of Bonn now is a document which could be turned into an agreement though probably not by Cancun. To my mind this is good. The current "LCA" text is less than half the size of what it was at this time last year and I think could come together before we get to COP 17 in South Africa allowing for lots of additional review. We should not rush the process and it should be as transparent as possible.

Yashita: (12:19) why dependent on COP17 ,when we are very well aware of the politics of this entire issue

Sarthak 2: (12:20) I plan to tell my facebook friends to do something about the environment. Good if there's a Carbonville besides the farmville we constantly go to.

Sarthak 2: (12:20) For collecting carbon credits

Moderator: (12:20) Sarthak here's a link for environment related fun & games
<http://www.epa.gov/kids/game.htm>

sunny: (12:21) what steps are already taken by American Industries and Democratic Party recently I know lots for American Friends thinks same as me but is US will Do what our generation thinks should happen

sunny: (12:22) How New Entrepreneurs can Benefit from Carbon Credit and what is the process... n Do China Agree to it as it can make there Product Expensive which they dont want

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:23) I'm not depending on COP 17, I think of it instead as a new deadline. The Kyoto Protocol will run out that year and I think by then we'll know if the UNFCCC really can work in its current form. Many are worried, including me, that a process that allow everyone to have a veto has little of getting an agreement more ambitious than the Kyoto Protocol. If we can't get an agreement by COP 17 then we need to use or create a forum with different rules that could get the job done.

Sarthak 2: (12:23) Thank you.

Swastee Ranjan: (12:25) Essentially the COP accords are political agreement, and as we know political agreements are essentially influenced by external variables. What is the united States in deference to these variables, going to influence the future of Climate dialogue? AND in your personal opinion, do You think, it is possible for an international consensus to emerge by 2050?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:27) I think the Democratic party is working dilligently to get a climate bill finished in the US senate. The problem is that they are not getting any support right now from the Republican party. This is a problem given the complicated rules of the US Senate. Before April Senator Kerry was working on a bill with a Republican, Lindsay Graham of South Carolina, on a bi-partisan climate bill that I think would have passed but unfortunately Senator Graham abruptly pulled out of the process. Now, in order to get a bill through that has hope of getting any Republican votes it has to be made much less ambitious than the bill passed through our lower House last year. That bill however did get a lot of support from American industry as more and more sectors of our economy are realizing that a climate bill would be in their interests.

Swastee Ranjan: (12:28) a minor correction, a 'LEGAL' international COnsense'

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:31) Actually, I would disagree that the COP accords are only political agreements. The Kyoto Protocol is a binding international treaty and so has legal status. What we want is a new agreement ideally to sit along side the KP that would also be legally binding and that is what we are trying to produce right now in the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long Term Cooperative Action. I think that the US government is divided on whether they want to sign a legally binding agreement or not but that is the key for all of us -- there is disagreement so we can put pressure on those who oppose a binding agreement and support the efforts of those who want a binding agreement. And yes, I do think we will have some kind of agreement in place by 2050. As my good friend Joe Romm puts it, before too long we will have no choice but to act since we will soon see how bad the world is affected by climate impacts.

Anoop: (12:32) Europe is not in favor of another instrument to get USA on board while

they sign up to KP, they fear differential treatment.. how can USA also become a party to the same document as Europe?

Yashita: (12:32) if the Kyoto expires without any deal in place, what hope do we have for a viable deal to replace and not something like the Copenhagen accord which if made legally binding is more harmful than productive

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:33) The EU position on a two treaty solution is not clear at this time. Some, like the UK have said that they support such a solution, other individual states are opposed to it. I think that in the end they will accept whatever gets the US to accept binding commitments.

ss: (12:33) How does people in less developed country really get affected if there is no "deal" or agreement on Kyoto or COP17 ?

ss: (12:35) More than any kind of deal as a short-term measure with life of say 20-50 years, climate is an issue on which UN should grow into a global sovereign with a global democracy of 6 Bn people on earth. We need technology for global democratic voting rather than "clean" technology to reduce carbon emission to "some" extent.

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:35) If the KP expires without a replacement or an extension then all hope is not lost. What we'll have by then are a cluster of national action plans which will continue progress until we get a new international deal. What you have to realize is that the national action plans put forward right now under the Copenhagen Accord are primarily motivated by self-interest. These parties -- which include all the major emitters -- realize that they will gain more economically and environmentally from low carbon development than from high carbon development and that fundamental self interest is what will continue to move us along.

arvind: (12:36) talk about reducing carbon emissions is superfluous. More important is contemplating and envisaging non-conventional possibilities. Of course short distances are worked well by bicycling. We cherish clean non-polluting energy utilisation. Available is highly limited. Battery operated transport, but then at the end of the day, battery is charged by electricity produced in thermal power stations. There is announcements by governments on decreasing carbon emissions, however how has the public been knowing and involved in the use of desirable sources of energy?

Moderator: (12:37) Read how carbon is so instrumental to life, and has always been... in the book *The Carbon Age* by Eric Roston. The book is available in the American Library. It's the story of carbon—the building block of life that is, ironically, humanity's threat.

ss: (12:38) Can we address the issue more holistically by mixing 'Global' ethics with climate, rather than focusing on carbon emission only ?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:39) To SS: I don't see any likelihood that the UN will become a

global sovereign power short of a terrible disaster scenario. I also don't see the world's population stabilizing or shrinking at 6bn without some other disaster scenario happening or other unthinkable scenario. People in less developed countries will be harmed by climate change faster and more dramatically and sooner than other people on the planet. This is a very good reason for cooperative action now.

Rj: (12:39) Here's a question from a AmCenter Facebook fan: Sunny Dhabhai what steps are already taken by American Industries ?isnt this true it all we are seeing as Global Warming Today is because of Industrialization UK and USA in 1970's ?

Rj: (12:41) How do we manage the critical balance between development and sustainability?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:41) Arvind: Unfortunately reducing emissions is not superfluous. Depending on the source of greenhouse gas emissions these pollutants can persist in the atmosphere for 80-150 years. And while they are up there they will continue to produce the greenhouse effect and continue to warm the planet. If we were to burn all our remaining oil, coal, and natural gas unabated then we would doom the world for future generations. That would be the most irresponsible thing we could do and future generations would justifiably hold us in complete contempt.

Moderator: (12:42) The chat will be over in another few minutes. Please send your questions soon

ss: (12:43) Are we essentially looking for a "deal" essentially to agree amongst ourselves on how slowly we can damage our mother earth ? Otherwise why does the word "deal" get such an importance and prominence in such discussions ?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:43) SS: The question should not be about global ethics or carbon reduction but how we are to ethically reduce our production of CO2 and other greenhouse gases. We have to share the burden of these reductions in a way that does not produce unreasonable demands on the world's poorest people but which does in fact reduce emissions.

ss: (12:44) As "life" is non-negotiable in civic society, so does "climate" for the global community including other life-forms on surface and in oceans. Who are really representing those non-humans on this planet ?

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:46) RJ: There is a recent report that I have not yet seen but which I understand claims that most emissions which are currently responsible for climate forcing began in the 1970s. I won't say more though until I have a chance to look at it. Regardless it's well known that the bulk of emissions were from the OECD countries and they have accepted as of last July that this means they must cut their emissions at least 80% by 2050.

ss: (12:46) Instead of putting cap on carbon emission can the countries agree on a cap

for a per capita "Gross Domestic Consumption of material goods extracted from mother earth"?

Anoop: (12:47) What according to you are the emission targets we must be zeroing in the global treaty ideally which will get a consensus from all countries. We have failed in the past, but what will be the win win situation in the future. The Copenhagen accord was a compromise. But is there a possibility of having those targets which will favor everybody's interest in terms of targets?

sunny: (12:48) China is in no way agree to Cut Down its Green House emissions recent trend we saw that is Unable to Persuade China or put Pressure on it. How Americans at UN can Do about it

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:50) On China it is not true that they are doing nothing. In fact, China is responsible for more overall reductions in emissions now than any other country though they are also increasing their overall emissions profile. I do believe that they will eventually sign on to a global deal in part because they have realized how much they have to gain from energy efficiency, switching to renewables, and probably most importantly capturing the export market in clean energy technologies. What everyone needs to realize is that we are in a race now to capture the new markets that are being created as solutions to this problem.

Anoop: (12:50) How do we move the senate in taking action ?

Moderator: (12:51) This is the last question posted for today. Thanks to all of you for joining us!

Moderator: (12:54) The bio at <https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/lightbio/> has links to many works of Dr. Light.

Dr. Andrew Light: (12:56) Anoop: Very good question. The global goal as established by the IPCC is that we need to cut all emissions in half by 2050. The minimum responsibility for OECD countries is 80%. What we need to do now is a new, more accurate calculation of how much remains to the 50% tab after developed countries cut by 80%. But, before running these calculations we need to come up with an agreed upon fair share of the remainder by developing countries. If the result of the calculation then gives us a remaining amount for developing countries to cut that is in accord with those principles of fairness then we will know the contribution need from developing countries that need to be stipulated in a new climate agreement. The US EPA has been running a few new models on what these numbers could be in their analysis of the American Power Act which were released three weeks ago. If you go to my home page at the Center for American Progress website then you will find a link to my analysis of their analysis and why I think it

sunny: (12:56) Thanks to you Both for This Stuff . Have a Nice Day

Moderator: (12:57) Thanks to Dr. Light!

Anoop: (12:59) Thank you Dr Light- Ruchi , IYCN

Dr. Andrew Light: (13:01) On the US Senate Anoop I think that at this point we need to do a couple of things. First we have to put together a bill that includes provisions that some senators want -- like new rules on oil companies -- but that are in a package of broader provisions that they don't want -- like a cap on our power sector. This will force some to vote for a bill that is much more ambitious than they would have voted for otherwise. It's the same way that the House climate bill was passed last summer. Second though, I think that we need to appeal to the people retiring from the Senate that they are taking a "legacy" vote. We've captured about all the votes in the Senate we are going to get from arguments about energy security and green jobs. For the few "gettable" votes left we need something new. And I think the best appeal is that they are casting a vote that is similar to the votes passed to expand civil rights in America and give women the right to vote. Those who vote for the climate bill will be on the right side

Dr. Andrew Light: (13:04) of history. Those most vulnerable to this appeal will be those who are retiring and who will not be bound by the pressing political needs of the day but who can think about how they will be remembered by their grand children and the rest of history.

Moderator: (13:05) Thanks again Dr. Light. We close the chat now. Have a great day.