

## 'Now Is the Time for a Green New Deal

December 01, 2008

With the world gathered in Poznan, Poland to work out a successor deal to the Kyoto Protocol, UN Environment Program Director Achim Steiner spoke with SPIEGEL ONLINE about sustainable transportation and the failures of the auto industry.

**SPIEGEL ONLINE:** On the eve of the United Nations conference on climate protection in Poznan, Poland, the EU is considering weakening its climate protection goals. Can we keep up with our environmental commitments in the face of this financial crisis?

**Steiner:** On the contrary -- we need to use this moment to increase support for renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner cars if we are going to ensure some sort of future. Now is the time for a green "New Deal."

**SPIEGEL ONLINE:** Members of the Christian Democrats and the automobile industry are pushing for looser emissions restrictions and temporary exemptions.

**Steiner:** I just don't understand why it's taking so long to negotiate these emissions restrictions, since they've been worked out at the EU level for almost a decade. We've had similar protracted discussions in the past over the introduction of catalytic converters, unleaded gasoline, and diesel filters. Those are all lost years.

**SPIEGEL ONLINE:** The auto industry is also worried about protecting jobs.

**Steiner:** That's exactly why they need to make sure their products are attractive to customers. In the future, the question of mobility will involve a lot more than who's offering a three-liter engine.

**SPIEGEL ONLINE:** Like what?

**Steiner:** Our system of transportation -- in which everyone drives their own car -- doesn't fit the times we live in, and isn't going to work in developing countries. The car, along with buses, trains and subways, is going to be just one part of a network of transportation systems. The auto industry needs to offer products that fit with the goal of protecting the environment.

**SPIEGEL ONLINE:** And a speed limit?

**Steiner:** This debate has taken on quasi-religious overtones. Wait and see where we are at the end of the decade. If there's a better answer for cutting carbon dioxide from cars, it belongs on the table.

*Interview conducted by Sebastian Knauer*

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