

A Synopsis of the Hartwell Paper

London School of Economics (LSE) convened a meeting at Hartwell House in Buckinghamshire in February 2010 to rethink about the climate policy. The effort culminated in a thesis, entitled “Hartwell Paper” in April, 2010. LSE Mackinder Programme and the Institute for Science, Innovation and Society, University of Oxford, published the thesis in May, 2010. The detailed thesis is 42 pages long and is divided into three parts.

In Part I, it discusses the reasons why the effort in reducing greenhouse gases through Kyoto protocol has failed. It starts with the history of climate policy since Rio summit in 1992 till the Copenhagen meeting in 2009, wherein the policy had practically collapsed due to total lack of any consensus among the participating countries. In addition to this political chaos, there has been a continual erosion of public trust about the sincerity of the statements of the climate scientists, so much so that the legitimacy of the institutes of climate policy and science are no longer ensured. In July 2009, a number of scholars from the globe framed together a paper, entitled “How to get climate policy back on course”. The Hartwell paper is a filtered version of those preliminary ideas.

In Part II of the thesis a radical change in climate policy has been suggested. The authors believe that the new approach will be successful in decarbonisation by making it politically attractive and pragmatic. The three organizing principles of the proposal are: (a) to ensure energy supply for all, (2) to ensure that no development would undermine the functioning of earth system, and (3) to ensure that the society should be robust enough to live with the climate risk. Section B of Part II sketches the way in which the climate policies had been framed from time to time and how those policies had been utilized for entirely diverse purposes by the politicians or activists or theologians. In the final section of Part II, a modest and practical way of using science in relation to earth system has been suggested in the frame work of three principles, stated above.

Part III of the thesis, entitled “A radical departure from business-as-usual in climate policy” is divided in three sections. Section A emphasizes three points: (a) Instead of harping only on the reduction of Carbon dioxide, there should be separate policies for reduction of both short lived (like black soot, aerosol, methane, tropospheric ozone etc.) and long lived (like carbon dioxide, halocarbons, nitrous oxides etc.) climate forcing agents, (b) To restore moisture and energy balance, deforestation should be avoided as far as possible and in the urban areas, forest cover should be provided, (c) The governments should be convinced that the reduction of greenhouse gases not only slows down the climate change or global warming, it also helps a lot towards the improvement of the public health, agricultural productivity and environmental quality. Section B explains why the energy efficiency is a prerequisite for making a country more productive, particularly efficiency in the most energy intensive sectors like power production, Aluminium, Cement and Steel productions. This section also hints at the possibility of accelerated decarbonisation through indirect methods, rather than the direct methods, followed so far. Lastly in Section C, the thesis recommends low carbon tax, which may be suitably channeled for the development of technologies for energy extraction from non-carbon sources so that it may become competitive with the energy produced from the fossil fuels.

For the complete paper see,
www.lse.ac.uk/collections/mackinderProgramme/theHartwellPaper/