

Canada's disgraceful record on climate change on display

December 13, 2008

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is taking place Poznan, Poland. In a report released Thursday, Canada ranked 56th on a list of 57 developed countries (only Saudia Arabia ranked lower) in terms of efforts to control climate change.

Environment Minister Jim Prentice, representing Canada, has argued that this assessment is wrong and that Canada plans to reduce carbon emissions 20 per cent by 2020.

This is baloney. Stephen Harper's Conservative government disingenuously continues to use a different baseline year (2006) from every other nation employing the Kyoto Agreement's 1990 baseline. By this yardstick, Canada's reduction targets are actually a meagre three per cent, compared to the 25- to 40-per-cent reduction level climate change scientists say needs to be achieved to avoid potentially catastrophic environmental consequences.

Is it any wonder that Canada has earned eight "fossil of the day" awards at the conference, putting it No. 1 among nations that have tried to block meaningful progress on climate change? It is a disgraceful record for a country once looked upon as a potential leader on environmental issues.

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