

## Environment, Development & Security: New Ideas, Fast Action

### Can Do' rather than 'Cancun'?

Nobody expects the Climate Change COP in Cancun in December to be a success. Faced by the prospect of paralysis, pessimism and stale thinking the IES convened a distinguished panel of speakers at a seminar with Members of the European Parliament on 1<sup>st</sup> September.



The seminar looked first at re-defining climate change issues as development issues, given the examples of abrupt climate change that had characterised 2010 so far. The shift in the jet stream triggered by melting sea ice in the Arctic had brought forest fires to Russia, mud slides to China and devastating floods to Pakistan. In his keynote address Tom Spencer argued that we should break free from the tyranny of CO<sub>2</sub> and greenhouse gasses, as negotiated at the Climate COPs and concentrate instead on the other 50% of factors driving climate change. **Jo Leinen, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament's Environment Committee**, endorsed this approach and expressed his determination to explore new ideas. He announced in particular that his committee would be looking at sending a Parliamentary Delegation to the Montreal Protocol Conference of the Parties in November. **Tony Long of WWF Brussels** gave a thoughtful intervention on development and climate change. The ensuing debate focused on the challenge of changing perceptions and mindsets and recognised the need to explore carbon negative technologies, such as Biochar and Calera cement.

In the second session, the seminar turned to the relationship between development and security. **Air Marshal AK Singh (Rtd), from the Centre for Air Power Studies in New Delhi**, drew on his great experience of disaster management in South Asia. He underlined some of the ongoing consequences of the flooding of the Indus for the future of Pakistan and for geo-politics in the region. He drew attention to way in which deforestation in the Pakistani section of Kashmir had intensified the effect of the heavy Monsoon rains. He recognised that similar disasters could strike elsewhere in South Asia. The Air Marshal, who chairs the IES Military Advisory Committee, undertook to continue to carry the message about environment, development and security to the global military. **Edward Robinson, from the office of Nirj Deva, MEP**, outlined the Own Initiative Report that would be looking at the threat of glacial melt and consequent flooding and droughts across the developing world, focusing particularly on the Himalayas and the Andes. **Michael Stopford, the Deputy Assistant Secretary General of NATO**, spoke of the work which NATO was already doing in this field and called for an intensification of effort. **Rafael Jiménez-Aybar from GLOBE EU** outlined the work programme being pursued internationally by the GLOBE family of parliamentarians. The debate which followed laid emphasis on the urgent need to secure the full-hearted involvement of the military and the deployment of their intellectual, organisational and budget resources.

In summing up the seminar, IES President Wouter Veening stressed the urgency and excitement of pursuing new ideas and breaking the deadlock in climate change negotiations. "There is much that we can do. This is no time for pessimism or paralysis".