



Drumbeat: October 16, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on October 16, 2009 - 8:35am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[The Non-Tragedy of the Commons](#)

The 2009 Nobel Prize for economics is a useful reminder of how easy it is for scientists to go wrong, especially when their mistake jibes with popular beliefs or political agendas.

Elinor Ostrom of Indiana University shared the prize for her research into the management of “commons,” which has been a buzzword among ecologists since Garrett Hardin’s 1968 article *Science*, “The Tragedy of the Commons.” His fable about a common pasture that is ruined by overgrazing became one of the most-quoted articles ever published by that journal, and it served as a fundamental rationale for the expansion of national and international regulation of the environment. His fable was a useful illustration of a genuine public-policy problem — how do you manage a resource that doesn’t belong to anyone? — but there were a couple of big problems with the essay and its application.

[The sustainable economics of Elinor Ostrom](#)

It was not by chance that Elinor Ostrom was awarded this year's Nobel prize in economics.

Global warming, along with the preservation of the quality of our environment, has become the most pressing issue facing the human race.

The presentation of this year's Nobel prize in economics to Elinor Ostrom and Oliver E. Williamson--in particular Ostrom's dedicated researches in the inter-relationship between mankind and our ecological system, thus ensuring the sustainability of our water, forest, fishery and other shared resources--should serve as a loud and clear alarm to mankind, who have now come face to face with ecological disasters of unprecedented proportions.

[An Isolated Village Finds the Energy to Keep Going](#)

Its 200 residents have no guns, no police force, no cars, no mayor, no church, no priest, no cellphones, no television, no Internet. No one who lives in Gaviotas has a job title.

But Gaviotas does have an array of innovations intended to make human life feasible in one of the most challenging ecosystems, from small inventions like a solar kettle for sterilizing water to large ones like a 19,800-acre reforestation project whose tropical pines produce resin for biofuel and a canopy under which native plant species flourish.

[The Truth About Energy](#)

After oscillating within a trading range for several weeks, the price of crude oil has recently broken out to a new recovery high. Now, you will recall that we have been firm believers of 'Peak Oil' since 2003 and we were expecting this bullish resolution.

Look. Sceptics can say what they want; it does not change the fact that our world is struggling to maintain daily flow-rates. Whether you agree with us or not, the energy reality is that the supply of conventional crude oil is very close to its peak and no other fuel source can fix the problem.

[Russia's Gazprom accelerates Sakhalin-3 project](#)

MURMANSK, Russia (Reuters) - Russia's Gazprom, plans to start production at the Sakhalin-3 project's Kirinsky field in 2011 or 2012, two years earlier than planned, as it seeks to fill its pipeline to the Pacific port Vladivostok.

"It had been planned that development of Kirinsky will start in 2014. We think to begin production there at the end of 2011 or at the beginning of 2012," the head of Gazprom's subsidiary that oversees offshore projects, Alexander Mandel, told reporters on Friday.

[Embattled Pakistan faces its worst-case scenario](#)

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - The worst-case scenario facing Pakistan -- prolonged insecurity with militants launching bloody attacks on the key pillars of the state -- is no longer just a risk for markets and Western policymakers to fret over.

It is already here.

[California Utility Taps Arizona Solar Project](#)

Pacific Gas & Electric, the big California utility, asked regulators on Thursday to approve the purchase of electricity from an Arizona solar power plant, only days after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed legislation that would have limited utilities' ability to tap out-of-state projects to meet renewable energy mandates.

[U.K. wild seed bank hits 10 percent target](#)

LONDON - Britain's seed bank, the only one in the world aiming to collect all of the planet's wild plant species, has reached its goal of banking 10 percent by 2010.

The Millennium Seed Bank Project, run by Kew Gardens — one of the oldest botanical gardens — held a ceremony to officially deposit the 24,200th species on Thursday, a pink, wild banana from China.

[Solar Living, Without Compromising on Lifestyle](#)

“The idea is to prove to people that solar works, and you don’t have to give up your lifestyle to use it,” said Richard King, director of the biennial competition for the Energy Department, which gives \$100,000 to each team to get the projects started. The event is also meant to get the students to think about solving energy problems in affordable ways — all the projects have to be geared to a specific market, from low to high income.

[Congress Approves Funding for Hydrogen Cars](#)

The hydrogen car may have legions of fervent fans, but Energy Secretary Steven Chu is not apparently among them. Earlier this year, the Nobel prize-winning scientist essentially zeroed government funding for the clean vehicles and came close to mocking their potential, saying the technology needs four "miracles" before it can become widely adopted.

"Saints only need three," he cracked in a magazine interview.

But the hydrogen car is back. On Thursday, the Senate agreed to restore nearly all the money for hydrogen car research that the administration had proposed to cut.

[Everything Under the Sun](#)

Energy Secretary Steven Chu argues that incentives for private-sector innovators are key to achieving breakthroughs in energy efficiency.

[Hybrid Cars May Include Fake Vroom for Safety](#)

The notion that battery E.V.'s and plug-in hybrids might be too quiet has gained backing in Congress, among federal regulators and on the Internet. The Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009, introduced early this year, would require a federal safety standard to protect pedestrians from ultra-quiet cars.

Karen Aldana, a spokeswoman for traffic safety agency, which is also working on the issue, said, “We’re looking at data on noise and E.V. safety, but manufacturers are starting to address it voluntarily.”

[U.S. Rejects Nuclear Plant Over Design of Key Piece](#)

WASHINGTON — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Thursday that it had rejected a design by Westinghouse for a new reactor because a key component might not withstand events like earthquakes and tornadoes.

The rejection raises the possibility of delays in building 14 planned reactors in the United States, including two twin-reactor projects in Georgia and South Carolina that are leading the pack. Westinghouse, which is owned by Toshiba, promised to conduct tests as quickly as possible to try to satisfy the agency staff that the design was sound.

[Even Rabbit Droppings Count in Nuclear Cleanup](#)

WASHINGTON — Anything that hops, burrows, buzzes, crawls or grazes near a nuclear weapons plant may be capable of setting off a Geiger counter. And at the Hanford nuclear reservation, one of the dirtiest of them all, its droppings alone might be enough to trigger alarms.

A government contractor at Hanford, in south-central Washington State, just spent a week mapping radioactive rabbit feces with detectors mounted on a helicopter flying 50 feet over the desert scrub. An onboard computer used GPS technology to record each location so workers could return later to scoop up the droppings for disposal as low-level radioactive waste.

[Shifting Demographics Set to Affect Global Markets](#)

Forces of change seem to come in one of two varieties: bumps and grinds.

Bumps are generally events contained in the short term that produce profound effects. Think about 9/11 or an earthquake. Grinds are slow, almost imperceptible events which produce significant change over longer time periods. Think climate change or the peak oil story.

Demographic changes are often thought to be a grind factor for obvious reasons. However, with the ebbing of the financial and economic crisis, countries will contemplate fiscal reform and the dramatic shifts in demographic influence will likely shape policy in powerful ways and may be experienced as both a bump and a grind.

[E.P.A. Vows Better Effort on Water](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency said on Thursday that it would overhaul enforcement of the Clean Water Act, as lawmakers sharply criticized the agency's decade-long lapses in punishing polluters.

[A perfect storm's brewing to cool petroleum demand](#)

TOKYO (MarketWatch) -- A perfect storm of influences is having a lasting effect on the world's petroleum markets and there's nothing on the horizon to sway its path.

With high oil and fuel prices, a weak global economy and worldwide government and consumer efforts to increase conservation and efficiency, some analysts doubt a return to the peak energy consumption levels seen just a few years ago.

"Bad economies breed efficiency," said James Williams, an economist at WTRG Economics. Consumers are forced to cut down on costs, including energy consumption, and in doing that, "they may find a more permanent solution for their energy needs."

So "when the economy in the U.S. recovers, we will not return to 2007 consumption levels for several years and perhaps never," he said.

[Bill McKibben: Organizing The Biggest Day Of Action The World Has Ever Seen](#)

Even two years ago, I was in complete despair about our chances of fighting climate change. But something's changed. It's not the science, which has gotten steadily worse. It's the first signs that the planet's immune system--conscious citizens ready to make a difference--is finally kicking in. Bloggers, in this metaphor, are key antibodies--they recognize threats, and rally people to take the steps needed. So this year's Blogger Action Day is, in a sense, a test: is the planet now wired together in a way that will let it act swiftly, nimbly, decisively against the great trouble we've ever faced?

In particular, we at 350.org need your help spreading the word about what's quickly turned into the biggest day of global action on climate ever--and perhaps the most geographically widespread day of political action the planet has ever seen. On October 24--a week from Saturday--citizens will hold thousands of rallies and events and demonstrations in almost 170 nations to demand that our leaders take tougher action heading to Copenhagen.

[Petrobras Surges to World's Fifth-Largest Company on Oil Rally](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil's state-controlled oil producer, surpassed China Mobile Ltd. and China Construction Bank Corp. this week to become the world's fifth-largest company by market value.

Petrobras's market capitalization rose to 353.9 billion reais (\$208 billion) as the company's preferred shares gained 2.7 percent since Oct. 9 and common shares added 3.5 percent. That compares with \$203.8 billion at China Mobile, the world's biggest phone company, and \$203.1 billion at China Construction Bank, the nation's second-largest lender, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

[Mexico hopes for deep water oil production in 2014](#)

MEXICO CITY -- Mexico's state oil company hopes to start deep-water oil production in the Gulf of Mexico by 2014.

Petroleos Mexicanos official Gustavo Hernandez says the company has found crude oil and gas in some of the 11 wells drilled in deep Gulf waters. He says the company, known as Pemex, hopes to start gas production in 2013.

[Saudi fuel oil exports for Oct highest in 5 years](#)

SINGAPORE: Saudi Arabia's fuel oil exports — at least 925,000 tonnes so far — have hit the highest level for the October month in five years, due to refinery outages and as peak summer demand tapered off.

The stream of cargoes from Saudi Aramco's refineries at Ras Tanura, Rabigh, Jubail and its joint-venture plant with ExxonMobil in Yanbu could continue into the first quarter, as electricity needs ease with the approach of winter, traders said yesterday.

[Sinopec "seeks communications" with Iraq on oil talks](#)

BEIJING/LONDON (Reuters) - China's Sinopec Group is trying to communicate with Baghdad as its qualification to participate in Iraq's second round of bidding for major oil deals is in question, a company official and media reported.

A top Iraqi official said early this month that Iraq has barred the Chinese state oil firm from new oil talks over its purchase of Swiss firm Addax (AXC.TO) that is active in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

[2009: A Chinese Energy Acquisition Odyssey](#)

The recent news that China, through one of its state-owned enterprises, is a likely bidder for 23 oil blocks in Nigeria, for up to a staggering US\$ 30 Billion, and another, separate \$5 billion deal in Uganda, certainly caught the eye of the international community.

However, while the intricacies of these potential deals are interesting in their own right, their significance is that they are only part of a much larger story. While this may seem like a short-term flurry of deal making, it is simply the continuance of feverish activities by the Chinese to secure oil & gas over the past few years, and most notably, in the year-to-date 2009.

[Canadian Oil Sands May Consider Bigger Syncrude Stake, CEO Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Canadian Oil Sands Trust would consider increasing its stake in Syncrude Canada Ltd., the world's largest oil-sands producer, if its partners in the venture want to sell, Chief Executive Officer Marcel Coutu said.

[Mexico utility shutdown no herald of broad reforms](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Mexican President Felipe Calderon's bold move to shut down a money-losing state electricity company is more likely a one-off event than the start of a big shake-up of the country's bloated public sector.

[Cordon Blues?](#)

Envy the lucky travelers of London. As you may know, in 2003 the city imposed a congestion toll of £5 (later raised to £8) on all vehicles entering the central district. In 2007, Transport for London, a government agency, did a cost-benefit analysis of the impacts ([find the full report here](#)).

...This adds up to £331 million in savings. Please note that even the driving public (who, after all, pay the tolls) come out slightly better than if the tolls did not exist.

Even if the considerable benefits to bus riders are ignored, and even if all the revenue were tossed onto a giant bonfire (or, even worse, sent off to the EU to subsidize French farmers), auto travelers win out or, at the very least, are no worse off.

[The Clash Over Clean Power: Utility chiefs are juggling the conflicting goals of green energy and low rates—and self-interest reigns](#)

Power companies used to have one simple task: providing inexpensive, reliable electricity to light up cities, power factories, and keep the economy humming. No longer. The once-stodgy utility industry is now in history's crosshairs. As the largest contributor to the emissions that cause climate change, it's being asked to spearhead a radical transformation to a cleaner, greener energy economy. This shift was a major topic at the G-20 meeting in September. And at the end of the month, the Senate introduced a bill to require reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, following up on a landmark bill the House of Representatives passed in June mandating an 83% reduction by 2050. If

Congress doesn't act, the Environmental Protection Agency will. Either way, the electricity sector would be radically reshaped. "It will force a technological revolution," says James E. Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy, a utility headquartered in Charlotte, N.C.

The challenges for the nation's 3,273 utilities are huge. "Inaction on climate is not an option," says John W. Rowe, CEO of Chicago-based Exelon. "But we'll throw away billions of dollars if we screw up." A company could go out on a limb with a \$10 billion nuclear plant, only to see demand plunge because of efficiency measures, or be undercut by cheap natural-gas-fueled electricity thanks to new gas field discoveries.

[Oil Drops After Touching Yearly High of More Than \\$78 a Barrel](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil fell for the first time in seven days on speculation that crude's surge to a yearly high above \$78 a barrel in New York is unsustainable.

Oil is headed for its biggest weekly gain in almost two months after the Department of Energy said U.S. inventories of motor fuel fell by 5.23 million barrels last week, almost five times the decline analysts forecast and the biggest drop in a year. The main rebel group in Nigeria said it resumed "hostilities" on oil facilities after a cease-fire lapsed.

Crude oil for November delivery traded for \$77.14 a barrel, 44 cents lower in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange as of 12:17 p.m. London time. Earlier it climbed to \$78.17 barrel, the highest intraday price since Oct. 15, 2008.

[Analysts Are Split on Direction of Oil Prices, Survey Shows](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News were split over whether crude oil prices will rise or fall next week amid above-average inventories and prices that are the highest in a year.

Twelve of 31 analysts, or 39 percent, said futures will drop through Oct. 23. Another 12 respondents predicted that oil will rise. Seven said futures will be little changed. Last week, 38 percent of analysts said prices would fall.

"The bulls are saying it doesn't matter about current supplies, that demand is going to go up," said Phil Flynn, vice president of research at PFGBest in Chicago. "Bears are saying that we have a glut of supplies and these prices are unsustainable."

[PetroChina to 'Rapidly' Increase Gas Output by 2015](#)

(Bloomberg) -- PetroChina Co., the world's second-biggest company by value, plans to "rapidly" increase natural gas production to help meet energy demand in the fastest-growing major economy.

Gas output may match that of crude by “about 2015,” while gains in oil production will be marginal, Vice President Li Hualin said in an interview in Beijing on Oct. 14. PetroChina produced gas equivalent to 170 million barrels of oil between January and June, compared with crude output of 418 million barrels, data provided by the state-controlled company show.

[Brazil's Tupi Is Producing 20,000 Barrels a Day, Diario Reports](#)

(Bloomberg) -- The Tupi field offshore Brazil is producing about 20,000 barrels a day, Diario Economico reported, citing Guilherme Estrella, director of exploration and production at Brazilian state-controlled oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA.

[Natural Gas Changes the Energy Map](#)

Vast amounts of the clean-burning fossil fuel have been discovered in shale deposits, setting off a gas rush. But how it will affect our energy use is still uncertain.

[Energy board orders shut-in production for 158 wells near Fort McMurray, Alta.](#)

The move will affect about 33 million cubic feet per day of production, with the wells licensed to Canadian Natural Resources Ltd., Paramount Energy Trust and EnCana Corp. The ERCB, after an interim hearing, concluded that these wells "may present a significant risk to future in situ bitumen recovery."

[Nigeria rebels says 'oil war' has restarted](#)

LAGOS (AFP) – The rebel group that has brought chaos to Nigeria's oil producing region on Friday ended a 90-day ceasefire and warned the oil industry and military to brace for attacks.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) has waged a three-year campaign demanding a bigger share of the oil wealth for the local population, severely cutting daily production. But the government says many of its fighters have laid down their arms in a recent amnesty.

[ANALYSIS - Iraq's oil power grows, but firms eye election](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iraq has taken a step closer to becoming a giant on the global oil stage, but political manoeuvrings either side of elections in January may yet stall plans to nearly triple oil output.

Baghdad is near to signing off on deals to pump millions more barrels per day from the world's third-largest reserves, potentially vaulting it to third from eleventh position in the league of top oil producers.

But for foreign oil firms, politics threaten the legitimacy of contracts and are a big investment risk. Disputes have already hindered attempts to attract the billions of dollars needed to overhaul an industry run down by years of sanctions and war.

[U.S. Congress oks sanctions on Iran's fuel suppliers](#)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Senate on Thursday approved legislation to punish foreign oil companies that export gasoline to Iran, marking the first time both chambers of Congress have cleared the same bill imposing economic sanctions on Iran to protest its nuclear program.

The U.S. House of Representatives approved the same measure earlier this month to ban companies that sell Iran gasoline from also delivering crude oil to the U.S. emergency petroleum stockpile. The bill now goes to President Barack Obama, who is expected to sign it into law.

[\\$400 per gallon gas to drive debate over cost of war in Afghanistan](#)

The Pentagon pays an average of \$400 to put a gallon of fuel into a combat vehicle or aircraft in Afghanistan.

The statistic is likely to play into the escalating debate in Congress over the cost of a war that entered its ninth year last week.

[Mexico City traffic halted by power workers' march](#)

Traffic in Mexico's historic center district was halted on Thursday by thousands of protesters marching against the closing of the country's money-losing power utility of Central Light and Power (LFC).

The city government had earlier warned the drivers off the center district to avoid possible long delays caused by the march of sacked power workers. The march is expected to enter the city's Constitution Square, known as the Zocalo, at around 6.30 pm. Local time. (0030 GMT Friday)

[Halliburton's Third-Quarter Profit Declines to \\$262 Million](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Halliburton Co., the world's second-largest oilfield-services provider, said third-quarter profit dropped 61 percent after crude prices declined.

Net income fell to \$262 million, or 29 cents a share, from \$672 million, or 74 cents, in the third quarter of 2008, Houston-based Halliburton said today in a Business Wire statement.

[Canada Consumer Prices Fall for Fourth Straight Month](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Canada's consumer prices fell for the fourth straight month in September, the longest stretch since 1953, on lower energy prices.

The consumer price index fell 0.9 percent in September from a year earlier, following August's 0.8 percent decline and matching July's 0.9 percent drop that was the biggest in more than half a century, Statistics Canada said today in Ottawa.

[Canadian manufacturers need to adapt to par dollar](#)

Rubin, author of the book on peak oil, *Why Your World Is About to Get a Whole Lot Smaller*, expects the Canadian dollar will be a premium currency against the greenback for the "foreseeable future," largely because he sees Canada becoming an increasingly important supplier of oil to the United States over the next five years.

As global recovery sparks a rise in oil demand it will, once again, lead to triple-digit crude prices, he said. This will drive up the Canadian dollar beyond where it sits now.

[Obama Pledges Climate Push After Health Care; Senate Timing in Flux](#)

President Obama gave a nod yesterday to a budding bipartisan Senate effort on energy and climate legislation during a New Orleans town hall meeting where he also pledged to push for the bill's passage once Congress finishes its work on health care.

"What I think we need to do is increase our domestic energy production," Obama said in response to a question about environmental policy from an audience member. "I'm in favor of finding environmentally sound ways to tap our oil and our natural gas."

[Navy Going Green](#)

U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus says the Navy will go "green" in the next few years. Mabus appeared at the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Symposium Lecture Series Friday at the Jackson State University Student Center, where he surprised Myrlie Evers-

Williams, the wife of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, with the announcement that he was naming a 700-foot naval supply ship in her husband's honor.

Mabus also spoke eagerly about the Navy's growing resolve to create more fuel-efficient ships and aircraft, and its adoption of energy-saving policies and the use of fuel from renewable sources. "I think my chances (of arranging green mandates for the Navy) are pretty high," Mabus told a group of reporters. "... It's a strategic war-fighting thing. And the big advantage we have is that we build our ships, and we control our bases, and as we move into new energy technologies, we can design them into our ships and our aircraft."

[Highway expansion goes green](#)

SANTA CRUZ -- In a county known for its environmental savvy, transportation leaders are moving forward with plans to rate new road and infrastructure projects based on how well they help protect Earth.

Members of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission on Thursday unanimously approved early plans to join a pilot project with a fledgling Portland, Ore., group that would examine the green credentials of the possible construction of Highway 1 carpool lanes.

[Florida May Ban Paper, Plastic Bags](#)

PEMBROKE PARK, Fla. -- Florida could soon become the first state in the nation to ban disposable paper and plastic bags, a move that would benefit the environment but could cost residents money, Miami television station WPLG reported.

Eliminating disposable bags would benefit the environment and reduce oil consumption because plastic bags are made from petroleum products. People in Florida use more than 5 billion disposable paper and plastic bags each year.

[Transition Towns - coming to a neighbourhood near you](#)

Climate change, acid rain, the ozone layer, over-fishing, polluted rivers... the list of environmental problems can seem daunting – and then when solutions appear, it seems there's another problem just waiting to pop up behind it!

What seems to be needed is a concerted effort to reform the foundations of our cities and towns into more sustainable entities that work in harmony with our planet: Fortunately, this is just what several grassroots environmental movements are trying to do. Between the Transition Towns, the Sustainable Neighborhoods, and Agenda 21, cities all over the world (and all over Belgium!) are taking concrete steps to become more sustainable and to cut off environmental problems before they even start.

[But Not For Long](#) (book review)

A selective plot summary of Wildgen's second novel reads like propaganda from a peak-oil doomsayer. Sinister events pile up over three days in Madison, Wis. Local gas stations are mysteriously short on gas. A prolonged blackout hits. Honeybees have vanished. Eventually people start to break out their bikes and forage for mushrooms, and the ominous mood gives way to hope. By all rights this should be preachy, terrible fiction. But the tone is so far from didactic, and the characters are so skillfully developed, that it succeeds. The third-person narrative dwells equally on the three members of a housing co-op: Hal, a vegetarian who works at a hunger-relief nonprofit; Karin, an athletic writer for a trade magazine about cheese; and the weary Greta, who has moved to the co-op to escape her alcoholic husband.

[USDA's Vilsack Pushing EPA to Raise Ethanol 'Blend Wall' to 15%](#)

(Bloomberg) -- U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he is pushing the Environmental Protection Agency to raise the amount of ethanol allowed in gasoline as the deadline for a decision nears.

Science indicates that a higher "blend wall" is safe for automobile engines, Vilsack said yesterday in an interview at a conference on global hunger in Des Moines, Iowa. Increasing production of ethanol, made from corn in the U.S., would also meet national goals of energy independence and aid the industry as it attempts to expand.

[Predicting the 2020 EV Market: Consider the Wild Cards](#)

How many battery electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids and just plain hybrids will sell in 2020? I can make only educated guesses, which is also the case for Lux Research, which just released its latest report, "Unplugging the Hype Around Electric Vehicles." In that study, it predicts the size of the market based on different oil-price scenarios. Roughly, the higher the oil price, the more EVs will be sold. If oil reaches \$200 a barrel by 2020, for instance, Lux thinks that light plug-in hybrids will be the best-selling EVs in the U.S., with a million units sold annually. "At lower oil prices, plug-in hybrids and battery electrics languish."

Even a million EV cars and trucks is not a lot when you consider that the entire auto market today is around 10 million (down from 16 million annually). That's a dent, but not a huge one.

[Gates calls biotech seeds critical to fighting hunger](#)

Poor farmers will need access to genetically engineered seeds if they are to raise enough food as the planet gets warmer and more crowded, says Bill Gates, the Microsoft Corp. chairman who is pouring part of his fortune into alleviating global poverty.

Gates used the keynote address Thursday at the annual World Food Prize symposium to make his first major speech on agriculture. He said food production must be boosted globally without harming the soil and water, but he challenged environmentalists to drop their resistance to high-yield, high-tech agriculture. Some of them are "instantly hostile to any emphasis on productivity," ignoring the threat to future crop yields posed by global warming, he said.

[Climate change exposes sharp divides in US industry](#)

Washington - US companies are struggling to speak with one voice both on the threat posed by global warming and how to deal with climate change. With the US Congress locked in a testy battle over the necessity and cost of curbing the emissions blamed for global warming, the issue has exposed similar rifts within the US business community.

[FACTBOX - What is holding up progress in climate talks?](#)

REUTERS - U.N. climate talks on expanding the fight against global warming have largely stalled, making the outcome of a major climate summit in Copenhagen in December uncertain.

With less than 60 days to the Copenhagen meeting, negotiators face serious differences in finding a way to get the United States and large developing nations to sign up to a deal that leads to big reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Following are efforts to expand or replace the Kyoto Protocol climate pact.

[US must help poor nations deal with climate change: experts](#)

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Experts and aid groups called Thursday for the United States to help poor countries deal with the effects of global warming, as Congress considers key climate change legislation.

Testifying before a Senate panel, humanitarian organizations called for US aid to help countries with "adaptation solutions" in response to the effects of climate change.



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