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## **At U.N. Talks on Climate, Plans by U.S. Raise Qualms**

By **ELISABETH ROSENTHAL**

BONN, Germany — At the start of the [United Nations](#) climate talks here 12 days ago, the Obama administration's chief climate negotiator, Todd Stern, received a round of rowdy applause. It was the first appearance of the new negotiating team at any global meeting.

But by Wednesday, as the meetings drew to a close, some delegates — and even some United Nations officials — were grumbling that the United States was not moving fast enough to take action on [global warming](#).

On Wednesday, Mr. Stern's team offered the first broad hints of a new international climate policy for the United States, noting that more details would be submitted in a proposal to the United Nations later this month. But even in its broadest brush strokes, the American proposal differs significantly from other plans to curb carbon dioxide emissions enacted by the United Nations and the [European Union](#).

The Obama administration's plan would require all countries, including developing nations like China and India, to curb greenhouse gas emissions, said Jonathan Pershing, the deputy special envoy for climate change, at a news conference. The plan's main focus is on long-range goals — as distant as 2050 — for greenhouse gas reduction.

Under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, initial emission-reduction targets for the developed nations that signed the agreement were set for 2012. And most other proposals to lower emissions, including the plan in use in the European Union, focus on 2020 as an initial target. Though he praised Europe's efforts, Mr. Pershing said, "U.S. policy is something we're developing at home, according to what we see as the science and political capacity."

But many officials here were clearly impatient. "We are still waiting for the U.S. to put its position on the table," said Michael Zammit-Cutajar, a top official of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "They have asked us to keep the door open, and it is," he said.

Mr. Pershing said that the Obama administration was working to fill in the plan. "We promise

in June to come back with a much more detailed set of policies,” Mr. Pershing said. Negotiations resume here on June 1.

Mr. Pershing said the United States was committed to working within the United Nations process. He suggested, however, that specifics — like how much the United States would reduce emissions, when the reductions would take place and how much money would be spent on curbing emissions — were unlikely to be forthcoming by June. “Those numbers will be determined by Congress,” he said. Congress has started debating legislation to curb carbon dioxide emissions through a cap-and-trade system.

Under the Bush administration, the United States never accepted binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions — a policy that Mr. Obama promised to overturn. During the campaign, he proposed that the United States should reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and reduce levels progressively to 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050.

At the time, many environmental groups regarded the 2020 target as inadequate. The European Union has proposed reductions of between 25 and 40 percent compared with 1990 levels by 2020. Various plans floated here by China, South Africa and the Philippines would require developed countries to reduce emissions by up to 50 percent by 2020. Mr. Pershing dismissed such proposals as a “a negotiating gambit.”

Even so, many said the lack of any numbers from the United States was holding up progress.

“Countries are very, very nervous to come forward without seeing the United States’ numbers,” said Harald Dovland, the official in charge of negotiations among countries that signed the Kyoto Protocol.

The Obama team held dozens of bilateral meetings here with other countries, contributing to a generally positive atmosphere.

“Its great to have them reengaged,” said Keya Chatterjee, deputy director of the climate change program at WWF in Washington. “But they’ve got to come back with some concrete proposals — with some goods — next time to really get the negotiations going.”

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