

# Copenhagen Summary

**T**he December 2009 UN Climate Change Conference held in Copenhagen intensified worldwide speculation on an increasingly controversial topic. The two week conference marked the culmination of a two year negotiating process after UN talks were launched in Bali in 2007 and a continuous struggle emerged in agreeing to share the cost of cutting carbon emissions.

Negotiations were described as 'incredibly intense', with accusations the conference was 'far from perfect' and 'a waste of time'. While many hoped negotiations would result in a concrete plan to tackle climate change and global warming, the actual events of the conference somewhat differed.

Danish police tried to calm numerous riots and

protests outside. Inside world leaders could not agree on a solution to emissions targets—it was questioned whether it was a failure of leadership and cooperation across all nations after the conference failed to produce a legally binding agreement.

However, the 'Copenhagen Accord' was agreed on in the closing plenary of the conference which lasted nearly 13 hours. As a result, nations signing the accord will agree to temperature increases being kept within 2°C. The accord is significant in that it is the first agreement between rich countries and poor countries on action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd attended Copenhagen with his sights set on limiting the global average temperature increase to 2°C and effecting a 50% reduction in global

emissions by 2020. He was reported as saying Copenhagen was the toughest set of negotiations he has ever been involved in.

"Copenhagen was by no means a perfect result, but we did achieve some progress and the progress was to get the world community, for the first time, to agree", Rudd commented.

The Australian Greens, however, failed to see a positive side to the conference. "The near collapse of these talks is thanks to the complete failure of developed world leaders, including Mr Rudd, to understand the depth of global commitment to real action on the climate crisis", Greens Deputy Leader Senator Christine Milne said from Copenhagen.

The next conference will be held in Mexico this year, but a specific date has not yet been set. ■