

Thursday, 4 July 2013

Subject: A letter from Addis Ababa

Dear All:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) integrates science, including social sciences and law, in debate and policy formulation relating to climate change. Informed by science and physics, the methodology of working with peer reviewed literature (but also allowing for grey literature in social sciences) preparing the reports also applies to economics, social science and law. WTI's contribution relates to the role and potential of preferential trade agreements in climate change mitigation: a process still at its beginning, but promising. Thanks to Kateryna for all her work on the topic! The review process is elaborated with comments to be dealt with systematically, and subject to further review. Contributing to chapter 14 on the role of regions on climate change, I was impressed by the work done, and the methods applied may also be inspiring in the trade field where policy and research in no way are formally linked. Compare IPCC with the WTO Public Forum, and you see the difference. The conference was attended by some 300 experts of Working Group III, organised in different chapters for the report. The conference was held at the UN quarters in the centre of the town (1-5 July 2013). I attended from 2-4 July.

I found Addis Abada in the rainy season, quite misty and gloomy. The town does not make a prosperous impression. Riding to town in an old and dilapidated Lada taxi, the driver unclear about destinations, I pass many young unemployed men sadly idle and hanging out early in the morning. At the same time, many building sites are uncompleted without work being done. Services do not seem to work well. I was not really prepared for this reality, travelling overnight (with an emergency landing in Belgium), and finding myself in a different world in the morning. After three days I leave the country with mixed feelings. What clearly stays in mind is the very beauty of the people, their complexion, their smile, in a country which gave birth to civilization long time ago.

Kind regards, on my way home.

Thomas