



International
Simultaneous Policy
Organisation

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Simpol Strategic Partnership Programme

What is the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) and how does it relate to your organisation?

Simpol is an international campaign that aims to address global problems such as climate change, weapons proliferation, unfair trade and unsustainability, and to do so in a way that complements and enhances existing NGO campaigns on these and other global issues.

The focus of Simpol is to overcome government's and politicians' fears that the unilateral implementation of stringent environmental controls and other necessary reforms would see capital, investment and jobs moving elsewhere, thus causing job losses, uncompetitiveness and a loss of votes. While NGO campaigning has achieved many notable successes, it is the fear of uncompetitiveness which so often results in governments responding inadequately to NGO demands.

The fear of competitive disadvantage is rapidly being recognised as the key barrier to solving global warming and many other global problems. The Stern report warned governments to act urgently to curb carbon emissions, but the *Financial Times* (6th Dec. 06) noted that "...governments remain reluctant to address this threat because any country acting alone to curb its greenhouse gas emissions, without similar commitments by other governments, risks damaging the competitiveness of its industries." David Miliband, UK environment minister, acknowledged this, noting that: "There is a collective action problem internationally."

What is the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol)?

Simpol is a range of policy measures to be implemented by nations *simultaneously*, only when all or sufficient governments have signed a pledge to do so. In this way, politicians and governments can sign the Simpol Pledge but need not implement the pledge until sufficient other governments have also signed it. The simultaneous implementation of Simpol therefore eliminates any risk to a nation's international competitiveness and thus removes this key governmental objection to many far-reaching policies that are urgently needed. In this way, Simpol opens the way both to building sufficient international and cross-party support for real change and for far more robust measures being adopted than those presently envisaged under existing, relatively weak agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol.

Crucially, Simpol provides citizens in all countries where national elections are held with a new way in which they can use their vote to compel politicians of all parties to realise that it is in their vital electoral interests to support Simpol. With Simpol voting process, citizens therefore have the potential to compel even uncooperative governments, such as the U.S. administration, to support its implementation. The number of UK MPs who have pledged to

implement Simpol alongside other governments as a direct result of this new kind of electoral pressure is increasing. They come from all the main political parties. For a full list of UK MPs that have signed the Pledge and for more details on how the Simpol voting strategy works, please visit our website www.simpol.org.uk

What can we do for each other?

We would like to propose that our two organisations enter into a strategic partnership for mutual benefit. We would ask you to consider adding to your existing policy demands, where appropriate, that your government should support Simpol. By simply adding Simpol to your campaign demands, you would eliminate any government objections on the grounds of economic uncompetitiveness. By combining your existing approach with Simpol in this way, you would be enhancing the effectiveness of your existing campaign while showing your members and campaigners that you have a coherent strategy for dealing with the competitiveness objection. This should assure them that their campaigning efforts will have maximum impact and won't risk falling at the competitiveness hurdle. Our partnership should thus benefit both parties.

What practical, co-operative actions could we take?

For example, we could both:-

- ❑ advise our respective memberships of the other's campaign or organisation and encourage them to join and become involved. Simpol members in your country have diverse activist concerns and many would be keen to learn about, and become involved in, your campaigns.
- ❑ list one another's organisations or campaigns on our websites or in each other's literature. (Most organisations would have a link to one of our national Simpol websites). We would propose listing you as an "Simpol Partner Organisation" and including a brief description of your activities and a website link.
- ❑ include news items or articles about our respective campaigns or other initiatives in each other's newsletters.
- ❑ distribute one another's literature to our respective memberships from time to time as part of regular mailings.
- ❑ invite one another's representatives to speak at our respective conferences, meetings, etc.
- ❑ engage in joint campaigning, when appropriate.

The above list is not suggested as an "all or nothing" proposal but more as a menu from which items can be selected or new items added which are suitable to both parties. In addition, our members would welcome your expert opinion on what appropriate and far-reaching policy measures could be included in Simpol. We look forward to discussing the above proposals with you in greater detail. If you would like to take this further, please contact Ms. Diana Trimble, Outreach Officer, at the address below.

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