

eco



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Don't cross Bali lines in the sand

A year ago, on the beaches of Bali, a new consensus on cooperation was reached between Annex I and Non-Annex I parties, and new lines in the sands of progress were drawn. Very significantly, nations acknowledged the 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020 range for emissions reductions. Even this is not enough to keep temperature rise well below the 2°C danger point, but it at least marked a start for negotiating targets in a new climate deal.

Yet here in Poznan, many Annex I parties have seemingly lost their nerve to follow on from what was agreed. Negotiations should have started where Bali left off and focused on how to increase the level of ambition to the top end of the 25-40% range or beyond – recognising the point made by Tuvalu and others about new scientific evidence that has emerged since IPCC AR4.

ECO hears that countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan and Russia, that lacked enthusiasm for the range in Bali, remain resistant to progress here in Poznan. And instead of adequate aggregate quantified emissions reduction obligations, some of these countries are seemingly trying to push weaker non-science based sectoral or other bottom up alternatives to setting targets, instead of defining environmentally integral overall targets.

Let us not forget that the weaker the mitigation commitment, the greater the need for adaptation support, recognizing that there are points beyond which adaptation is impossible. Let us also not forget that the costs of inaction

are greater than the costs of action, and that delays increase costs – human, environmental and economic.

More and more we are seeing leadership coming from developing countries. This leadership is welcome – but it throws into sharp contrast the lack of leadership from the developed countries – the ones with the historic and economic responsibility to lead.

Developed countries also agreed at Bali to provide finance, technology and capacity building to enable and support mitigation actions and adaptation by developing countries. Since then, many of these have published details of actions they are already undertaking, as well as enhanced actions they would consider in the context of increased international support. But with a few honorable exceptions, such as Norway and Switzerland, the response from developed countries has been woefully inadequate and is undermining the prospects of a successful conclusion at Copenhagen.

In only twelve months, countries must sign up to a global climate deal to avert the climate crisis: to speed this process along the Chair must have a mandate to begin producing negotiating texts in a timely manner. Lack of progress means standing by and watching an unprecedented increase in human suffering, ecosystem destruction and species extinction. Annex I countries must renew their commitment to solving this crisis, with their individual proposed targets on the table by the March session. Anything less will result in failure in Copenhagen.

Annex I “Leadership” in Poznan:

Australia – the self described bridge builder between developed and developing countries is blocking inclusion of the 25-40% 2020 range – perhaps a precursor to arguing that “special circumstances” should net them a low target in the new deal. Kyoto shows they have form in this regard.

Canada – is trying to justify their abysmal progress so far on current targets. If continued this would land them way outside of the 25-40%, so they are desperate to fix the ranges to suit their current out of control emissions trajectory.

Japan – the host party who got us the first targets within Kyoto have suddenly become the bottom-up evangelists, pushing their sectoral target approach. Japan suggested that “aspirational”, “bottom up”, “sectoral” approaches would be all the world needs to tackle runaway climate change.

Russia – forgot to bring their targets, but are keen to make sure those Hot Air AAUs are kept in the system for future consumption.

EU – is weakening its own climate deal so much that it would currently fail to cut emissions by anywhere near the 25-40% range by 2020, or to deliver any finance for developing countries.

Open Letter to Ministers

Ministers, you know there is an urgent need for leadership and a commitment to act in order to keep global warming as far below 2 degrees as possible. Impacts are happening now!

Various developing countries are showing commitment through actions at home, without waiting for funding from industrialised countries. It is time for developed countries to recognise the profound challenges faced

by – but also the existing efforts of – developing countries, and to engage with the substance of their submissions, such as those of G77+China on technology and finance.

China has already almost achieved its 2010 renewable energy target of 10%: continuing the trend could achieve 19% by 2020. Premier Wen Jiabao has expressed confidence in achieving -20% in energy intensity by

2010. Its five-year plan also commits to a 20% increase in forest cover. In 2007 the national budget allocated \$4.5 billion to energy savings. The China Green Foundation for Forest Development mobilised an equivalent of \$50 million; its wind power installation at 3449 MW was behind only the US and Spain.

India's National Action Plan on Climate
–continued on back page, col. 1

Gender Agenda

History was almost made last week when a proposal was submitted under SBI to develop a gender strategy for the UNFCCC Secretariat. The 60th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights, is the right time to recognize gender equity in the Convention. Women tend to engage in activities which are climate sensitive such as growing food crops and collecting water, thus, they are feeling the greatest pressure of climate change. The UNFCCC is the only Rio Convention that does not address gender issues, despite clear evidence of the gender-specific impacts of climate change. The submission was supported by several delegations but was then missing in the revised draft text. Let's hope the chair of SBI makes gender equity a priority this week.

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Change provides for 1000 MW each of Solar thermal power generation and PV production; efficiency improvement in coal-based power generation, including retiring 10,000 MW of inefficient plants by 2017; trading of energy saving certificates for energy intensive sectors/industries and shifting to low-carbon development.

South Africa has published a long term mitigation scenarios document and committed to an increasing price on carbon, mandatory targets, e.g. for efficiency, laying the basis for a net zero-carbon electricity sector in the long term. At a side event last week, delegates were informed that the stabilisation of emissions agreed by Cabinet, between 2020 and 2025, should plateau at 550 Mt CO₂e – a deviation from baseline of over 35%.

The Philippines new renewable energy law should result in about 50% of energy supply, an increase from the current 33%, avoiding about 25-30% of BAU emissions. Paraguay has committed to net zero deforestation by 2020, and Indonesia in Sumatra by 2015.

The need for global emissions to peak within ten years requires both developed and developing countries playing their part. This demands a comprehensive response by developed nations that will build capacity, provide financial support at the appropriate scale and drive technology innovation, diffusion and deployment in order for developing countries to take further actions for both adaptation and mitigation.

We call upon you as political leaders to bring a spirit of cooperation and confidence building by providing a constructive response to the proposals on the table that enables mechanisms and institutional arrangements for scaled up action by all parties.

Poznan is a critical opportunity to act as a global community, converting the challenges of climate change to an opportunity to build a low carbon, climate resilient, and clean world for future generations.

What is Left of Rights?

Those engaged in turbulent climate negotiations could be forgiven for not noticing that today is International Human Rights Day and also the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the springboard to modern day human rights law.

It is increasingly accepted that climate change impacts are human rights impacts; climate change results in natural disasters, ongoing deterioration in natural resources; migration flows and conflict. As a result, The UN High Commissioner on Human Rights has recognized that climate change threatens “a wide range of universally recognized rights, such as the right to food, to adequate housing and water, and indeed the right to life itself” and will be issuing a report next year on the linkages between climate change and human rights. By its reference to the Stockholm Declaration, the UNFCCC itself acknowledges the link between the attainment of fundamental rights and a healthy environment. In the case of the populations of SIDS, the Arctic, low-lying coastal states and others, climate change undermines the most fundamental right of all - the right to life.

Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the Aarhus Convention both recognise that environmental issues are best addressed with the participation of all concerned people. However, civil society remains at the sidelines of the UNFCCC process. This is particularly true in the case of indigenous peoples and other frequently marginalized communities.

The protests in the hallways yesterday by

indigenous peoples demonstrate this point. Without their participation, several states were able to amend draft REDD text to remove references to indigenous peoples or their rights. This despite the fact that some of the proposed solutions to climate change such as REDD, CDM and agrofuels threaten basic rights of local and indigenous communities, including land, resource, culture and livelihood rights.

Climate change negotiations are often regarded as science-based and technical. Yet surely their core aim is to preserve our future existence- behind the talk of ranges and structures, climate change has a very human face and negotiations should not be divorced from this context.

Crucially, the transformational societal changes required to come up with real solutions to the problem must not be developed or implemented without recognition of their human dimension, such as the vital role played by local and indigenous communities in conserving the resources on which the climate depends. Human rights must be central to the definition of both the problem and the solution. Equally, future treaty obligations can only be met if the global public participates in the development of the obligations, and has access to effective mechanisms for participating in their implementation and enforcement at the local, national and international level.

As we approach the midnight hour, for how long can we continue to separate people from the planet?

Actions speak louder than words

ECO is always pleased to hear from the EU and other Annex 1 countries as to how serious they are on adaptation financing. But these fine words have long sounded a tad hollow, and this week, their reluctance to extend the 2% levy currently on the CDM also to Joint Implementation and Emissions Trading makes them sound almost empty.

ECO would like to remind Annex 1 Parties that financing for adaptation in the near-term, currently made available through the 2% levy on the CDM, is woefully insufficient. Attempts to shift the issue to the LCA as a bargaining chip might be a clever move in game theory. But ECO wonders if vulnerable people in developing countries, for whom climate change is already a bitter reality, would consent.

Let there be no doubt: the Copenhagen agreement will need a comprehensive mechanism to generate tens of billions of dollars annually (and much more if emissions are not cut fast and far enough) to cover the costs of

adaptation in developing countries, especially the most vulnerable ones. Such a mechanism needs to be carefully negotiated: ECO still considers the Norwegian proposal to auction a proportion of AAUs one of the best ideas currently on the table for generating the needed finance for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries.

But that mechanism will likely not come into force before 2013. There is an urgent need to scale up the funding base for implementing adaptation already in the first commitment period. Concrete decisions now to extend the share of proceeds would go a long way to demonstrate good faith and build trust, both key to reaching a deal in Copenhagen. This would be evidence that the EU and other Annex 1 countries do care about supporting adaptation for the most vulnerable people in developing countries. They should do this now, and not hold the most vulnerable people hostage to post-2012 negotiating tactics.