



Intervention of Climate Action Network International in LCA Shared Vision

April 6, 2009

Last week AOSIS and a number of other Latin American and African countries issued a call for Annex 1 countries to collectively reduce their emissions by 45% on 1990 levels by 2020 and by more than 95% below 1990 levels by 2050. CAN applauds this intervention and commends these countries on the ability to swiftly adjust to the publication of new peer-reviewed science. Scientific analysis, particularly that of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report and subsequent peer-reviewed literature, should be the basis for any negotiations or discussions under the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol. The final statement of the Copenhagen Climate Change science congress in mid March issued a strong 'urges' for quick and wide-ranging action also pointing out that the worst case scenario of AR4 were already being realised, or even surpassed.

Annex 1 countries must take the lead. They have a triple obligation to support adaptation, dramatically cut their own emissions and provide the finance, technology and capacity building to enable mitigation by developing countries. Non-Annex I countries such as South Africa have submitted more detailed proposals on Annex I and Non-Annex I mitigation than most Annex I countries themselves. The refusal of many Annex 1 countries to put clear science-based 2020 targets on the table, or any definite offers of finance and technology for developing country action has understandably caused Non-Annex 1 countries to doubt their commitment.

Nevertheless, despite this, many Non-Annex 1 countries are leading the way by taking mitigation actions. Countries such as China, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, South Korea and Papua New Guinea have already taken steps towards developing national plans to reduce emissions as part of their wider sustainable development strategies. The Copenhagen agreement should recognise these efforts and provide strong incentives for enhanced mitigation actions to slow the growth of their emissions substantially below the business-as-usual trajectory.

Strong, early action can help put countries onto a sustainable growth path and reduce the risks of catastrophic climate change. Such actions include policies and measures to discourage carbon intensive growth and encourage investment in clean, efficient and safe technologies. The global transition to a low carbon economy will create vast new markets for environmentally sustainable goods and services and new industries generating millions of jobs. Countries that delay action risk missing out on opportunities for technological advancement.

Last Thursday G20 leaders resolved to do whatever is necessary to bring the world economy out of recession. The following day brought reports that a massive Antarctic ice-sheet the size of Jamaica has collapsed, underlining once again the real and urgent impact of climate change. These impacts will hit the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. Nobody benefits from delay. The climate crisis must be tackled with the same urgency and resources as the economic crisis. The time for action is now.