

# The case for a global science-based Equity Review – a CAN view

Raising ambition, supporting development, building cooperation

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The science is clear: to avoid catastrophic impacts from climate change, global temperature rise must be limited to below 2°C. The challenge is thus to design a new global agreement in which all countries participate, and contribute their equitable share of the effort necessary to ensure that the 2°C limit is met. This agreement must facilitate equitable access to sustainable development, this to assist in eliminating poverty and to provide a decent level of living and jobs to both developed and developing countries' populations. It must also take into account that adaptation to future and already committed warming is a priority in developing countries.

Through this brief, CAN outlines the importance of a science-based Equity Review to ensure all countries feel that all are doing their equitable share to address the common human challenge of facilitating sustainable development in both developed and developing countries, in a manner that equalizes levels of development even as it accelerates the overall drive to low-emissions societies.

CAN also recognizes that an equitable and fair outcome on post-2015 agreement implies increased pre-2020 ambition by developed countries (of at least 40% below 1990) and the provision of the agreed US\$100 billion in financial and technological assistance to developing countries.

## Science-based Equity Review

CAN believes that the assessment of the adequacy and equitability of country contributions (INDCs) pre-Paris should be based on the Convention's core equity principles of **adequacy, CBDR+RC, and equitable access to sustainable development**. The following five indicators in combination address these principles sufficiently: **adequacy, responsibility, capability, sustainable development need, and adaptation need**. (For more details, refer to "*The core Convention-based equity indicators*" at [http://climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/can\\_convention-based\\_indicators\\_sept2013.pdf](http://climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/can_convention-based_indicators_sept2013.pdf)).

CAN is further of the view that a formal process of regular post-Paris equity and adequacy reviews in the framework of a formal and science-base Equity Review should be integral part of new agreement, this to ensure the countries' contributions are finalized only after adequate review and assessment. In our view, a science-based Equity Review based on the Convention's principles and the above indicators is an essential part of the ratcheting-up mechanisms of the Paris deal.

## An Equity Review is key to keeping to a strong 2°C pathway

CAN believes that major elements of the new agreement should be legally binding, and would have preferred an approach where commitments were explicitly based on a global effort to keep the warming below strong 2°C pathways. Unfortunately, the INDCs will be determined in a bottom-up manner and are likely to be, in aggregate, grossly inadequate. Thus, an Equity Review is critical to ensure adequacy of effort, both as a substitute for top-down approach and to enable processes in which the "ratcheting-up" ambition results in contributions that are in line with the equity principles of the Convention, as measured by indicators like those outlined above.

Furthermore, we must face the possibility that the new agreement will not initially contain strong legally binding commitments. In this context, an Equity Review, by establishing processes based on the transparent and methodical

application of established principles, would encourage moves towards a coherent set of equitable and adequate contributions, and thus preserve a clear path towards a stronger treaty in the years ahead.

### **Does an Equity Review shift responsibilities?**

CAN agrees with developing countries that the failure by developed countries to take ambitious mitigation commitments in line with the science and the Convention's equity principles shifts responsibility to developing countries. This situation is aggravated by the fact that international support for developing countries that wish to reduce their emissions remains totally inadequate. Thus, an ambitious outcome under WS2 at Paris is essential part of the future agreement.

The science-based Equity Review defines a country's equitable share and provides a process for countries to take on their equitable efforts. Thus the *Equity Review would affirm and clarify that the larger efforts lie with the developed nations, both in terms of domestic mitigation and provision of support to developing countries*. It would provide means of assessing both adequacy of aggregate effort and each country's equitable (or inadequate) contribution to adequate effort, thus preventing the transfer of responsibility from developed to developing countries. The review would ensure, through proper assessment of equitable shares, that developed countries will take the lead, as they should according to the Convention, and thus not leave an ambition gap to be filled by developing countries.

In fact, a proper Equity Review would show that any strong 2°C pathway is entirely out of reach, unless there are very significant increases in developed countries' international mitigation support and mitigation commitments. Further, for the lowest-income countries, all mitigation below baseline would likely remain contingent on international support.

### **Supporting equitable access to sustainable development**

CAN's proposed formal Equity Review is based on equity principles and indicators that explicitly take into account developing countries equitable access to sustainable development and adaptation needs. This ensures that equitable shares of developing countries' efforts explicitly recognize developing-country needs.

The Equity Review would take both the historic responsibility and higher capability of developed countries into account, and thus support demands for challenging emission reductions in the developed countries, and for much faster and more expansive development of low-carbon technologies around the world, and for mitigation support for the developing countries to facilitate their sustainable development through low-carbon development paths. These would not only benefit the climate, but also allow developing countries to shape the transformation towards low-carbon societies, minimizing the development differences between developed and developing countries and substantially reducing economic imbalances.

### **Building cooperation**

Acknowledging differences in order to build cooperation to address climate change is key to ensuring we stay well below the 2°C limit. To this end, it is critically important that all countries *perceive other countries to be doing their equitable shares in the common global effort*. A proper science-based Equity Review that builds on the Convention's core equity principles and recognizes the needs of developing countries is a critical tool for building that cooperation and sense of equity.