CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA NOV-DEC 2011 NGO NEWSLETTER

G20-Mexico

Today, Mexico takes over the G20 presidency from France. When ECO learned President Calderon wants a green legacy and that he has put “green growth” and “climate finance” on the summit agenda for Los Cabos (17-18 June 2012), we were intrigued.

As we all know, leaders make plenty of promises, but the G20 has thus far largely failed to do its homework. There is no sound and sustainable solution to the financial crisis within sight, nor have G20 leaders delivered on their promise to phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

In fact, the G20 has done little more than pay lip-service to the climate crisis. Crucially, it never affirmed the need to limit warming to below the dangerous 2°C level, for climate equity, for a shared ambition to cut global emissions in half by 2050.

The one G20 work programme that moved swiftly through the system - largely unseen by civil society and without the necessary parliamentary oversight - was the Development Action Plan, launched at the G20 Seoul summit in 2010.

In the Plan the G20 commits non-G20 developing countries to an unsustainable economic growth agenda that is largely blind to the Millennium Development Goals and the climate mitigation and adaptation needs.

How can it be that the very same governments that profess a commitment to a climate transformation in Durban, instruct the multilateral development banks that they control to launch an ecologically disastrous infrastructure initiative and to prepare a food and water action plan, both of which shift responsibilities to public-private partnerships?

The Rio 2012 summit, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, will follow on the heels of the Los Cabos G20 summit. ECO would like to encourage the Mexican government and the other members of the G20 to further articulate their vision for “green growth” and specify how the existing G20 Programs and Action Plans can start to contribute to that objective by mobilizing the innovative sources of money required.

A difficult task? Come on, that is nothing compared to the financial mess in which we’re spiraling downward.

CCS in the CDM: Not So Simple

The eligibility of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) projects in the Clean Development Mechanism was opened up for SBSTA discussion yesterday. ECO was curious to see how proponents will explain some ‘interesting’ developments in the sector in the past year months, for example the flurry of CCS project cancellations in UK, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Australia and US.

For one, there is a big fight between ScottishPower and Shell with the UK Treasury because they demanded an increase of public funding from GBP1.5 billion for the construction of a CCS coal power plant.

Meanwhile, the Australian government had to fight in court to recover some of the public funding from the collapsed CCS Flagship project.

The Norwegian CCS company Aker Clean Carbon closed down earlier this month with the CEO saying ‘the market has disappeared’. And the EU is not on track to deliver the funding from GBP1 (1.5) billion for the construction of a CCS coal power plant.

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A Submission on Ambition: Mitigation for Developed Countries

In order to assure staying below 2°C, and keep 1.5°C alive, developed countries must increase their targets to more than 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. Delegates, you may remember agreeing at Cancun that developed country targets should be within the 25-40% range, and you may also remember agreeing to consider ways to increase your ambition. You’ve neglected to undertake that consideration yet – so ECO is providing these useful pointers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unconditional pledge on the table</th>
<th>Conditional pledge (upper end)</th>
<th>What they need to put on the table at Durban</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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| Australia | 5% below 2000 levels by 2020 (4% below 1990) | 25% below 2000 levels by 2020 | 25% below 2000 levels by 2020 | Australia has set conditions for moving its target from 5% to 15% to 25%. The conditions for the 15% target have been met, according to government briefings. Australia should move to 25% immediately and unilaterally, as this is the best way to achieve the 25% target.
| Belarus | 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 35% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 55% reductions by 2020 would hardly be an achievement, but rather the result of increasing emissions in the country without any really significant actions towards reductions. It’s time for Belarus to stop deceiving themselves and others, putting unrealistic GDP growth in emissions forecasts and exploiting the “economy in transition” status.
| Canada | 17% below 2005 / c.3% above 1990 | 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 25% below 2000 levels by 2020 | The Canadian Government was the only party to leave Copenhagen and weaken their GHG reductions target. Worse is that the Canadian government has no plan in place to meet its current (very unambitious) target. -25% below 1990 is the minimum amount that Canada needs to do and still be within the IPCC’s indicative range. Furthermore, economic modeling by Toronto Dominion Bank has shown that Canada can reach that target while maintaining a healthy economy and strong job creation.
| European Union | 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 56% below 1990 levels by 2020 | Emission reductions in the EU to 2020 were already 17.3% below the 1990, so the 20% target for 2020 is practically met. And as if this wasn’t easy enough, simply implementing the EU’s existing renewable energy and energy efficiency targets would result in domestic emission reductions of 25% in 2020 as acknowledged by the European Commission in the 2020 Low Carbon Roadmap in March 2011.
| Japan | 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 | Confirm and keep 25% GHG below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050, Process for Low Carbon Development in 2011. | Japan has confirmed and legalized the mid-term and long-term reduction targets. After the earthquake and nuclear accident, there is tremendous pressure to withdraw the mid-term target. Passing the climate change bill would confirm and legalize the target. The bill also includes language for a long-term plan which works as a Low Carbon Development Strategy.
| New Zealand | 10% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 40% by 2020 | Write the low carbon development plan that you agreed in Durban. Develop countries should do. Listen to nearly a quarter of a million New Zealanders who have called on the Government to adopt a 40% target and match Denmark. Convert your emissions trading scheme into a credible tool for cutting emissions rather than a covert means of corporate welfare.
| Norway | 30% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 | 40% by 2020, with REDD funding in addition to mitigation target | Going to 40% in Durban would be an important contribution towards a new legally binding treaty.

The updated emission gap report from UNEP also reveals the ambition gap, and this has clear implications. If countries do not step up their individual and collective efforts, loss and damage from climate change impacts will dominate the world’s agenda more and more.

During yesterday’s informal group on loss and damage, there was a good spirit in the room when the chair sent Parties off with a text for a draft decision for loss and damage. As COP 18, for example in the form of a mechanism. ECO hopes that the outlined activities will be a useful way forward to advance understanding between Parties on this important matter. In designing expert meetings and workshops, Parties should assure that all stakeholders have the chance to contribute.

However, Parties should not lose sight of the goal. COP 18 needs to take substantive steps and bringing the international response to loss and damage to another level, (e.g., through establishing a mechanism. Hence, any decision in Durban should articulate this goal. Loss and damage due to climate change is only going to get worse given the lack of ambition by developed countries to reduce their emissions. Parties need to make it clear that they will substantially increase the international response on loss and damage at COP 18, for example in the form of a mechanism). The way forward has to come through an essential set of activities along with a schedule, allowing for careful considerations of potential steps at COP18. The public will welcome Parties taking serious action against the adverse impacts of climate change.

Stepping Forward on Loss and Damage

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Footnotes:

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